

Jarkko Haapanen

# Adaptation to World Trends

A Rereading of the May Fourth Movement  
Radicalization



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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Editors

Jussi Kotkavirta

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä

Pekka Olsbo, Harri Hirvi

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a rereading of the May Fourth movement radicalization. Instead of studying ideologies as such, the study examines the political languages that were used in May Fourth Movement journals in China before the official establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in July 1921. It argues that the radicalization of the May Fourth Movement cannot be explained only through 'outside forces', or reactions to 'outside events'. One should also take into account interpretations of the borderline between possible and impossible and struggles related to these interpretations. These struggles are perceived in this study through competing interpretations on world trends. The study shows that reinterpretations of prevailing world trends and socialist trends played a vital role in acts of redirecting the debates in the May Fourth journals: prevailing trends were reinterpreted as Comintern versions of revolutionary Marxism and class struggle whereas other versions of socialism were rejected.

The research strategy in the study is inspired by John Pocock's writings on political languages. Conceptual transformations during the May Fourth period are analyzed through the interaction of two 'languages': the 'language of mutual aid and democracy' and the 'class struggle language' within which the concepts were used. The debate on the relevance of the class struggle was related to different visions of China's development and difference versions of the outside world that involved competing interpretations of "world trends" that China was supposed to follow. With the help of the concept of world trend a version of the 'outside world' was created in which China belonged to a worldwide proletarian class that was struggling against international capitalism. The trends that China was to follow were revolutionary trends of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. 'World trend' was not the only concept that was given a meaning that would support the idea of following the Soviet Russian example in development. 'Real democracy' and 'real freedom' became ideals that could be realized only through class struggle. Individualism, on the other hand, became a negative concept associated with selfishness and inefficiency.

Keywords: world trends, history of concepts, rhetoric, May Fourth Movement, mutual aid, class struggle

**Author's address** Jarkko Haapanen  
Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy /  
political science  
P.O. Box 35, FI-40014  
University of Jyväskylä  
jarkko.t.haapanen@jyu.fi

**Supervisor** Pekka Korhonen  
Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy /  
political science  
University of Jyväskylä

**Reviewers** Associate Professor Luo Tianhong  
Doctor Marko Kauppinen

**Opponent** Associate Professor Luo Tianhong

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CDX = Collected Works of Chen Duxiu

GCD = Communist

HDB = Republican Journals database, Institute of Sinology, University of Heidelberg

JS = Construction

LDJ = Labour Circles

LDZ = Collected Works of Li Dazhao

XQP = Weekly Review

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the May Fourth Movement radicalization by focusing on how competing interpretations on China's international environment were applied before the official establishment of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in July 1921. The study claims that the radicalization of the May Fourth Movement cannot be explained only through 'outside forces', or reactions to 'outside events'. One should also take into account interpretations of the borderline between possible and impossible and struggles related to these interpretations. In this study, these struggles are perceived through competing interpretations on world trends. The study shows that reinterpretations of prevailing "world trends" and "socialist trends" played a vital role in acts of reframing the debates in May Fourth journals: socialist trends were reinterpreted as Comintern<sup>1</sup> versions of revolutionary Marxism and class struggle whereas other versions of socialism were rejected. The study also pays special attention to conceptual contestations related to the introduction of class struggle language and holds that some of the key concepts were given new meanings so that they would fit to the idea of utilizing Soviet Russia and class struggle as models for China. These conceptual contestations are perceived through the argumentation structures in which the concepts in question appeared. These structures are discussed with the help of John Pocock's concept of 'political language'.

In this study, 'political' does not refer only to activities directly related to modern political institutions, such as governments, parliaments and parties. Here 'political' is used in a wider sense referring to activities related to collective decision making in general. Thus, questions such as "how should we organize our society?" or "what kind of ideas should our society follow?" are seen as political questions even if the debaters were not members of any established political institutions. Accordingly, my perspective on politics comes close to George Orwell (1946) who states that "all issues are political issues"<sup>2</sup>. Following

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<sup>1</sup> The Communist International, also known as the Third International, was initiated in Moscow in March 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Orwell 1946/1962, 154.

Michael Oakeshott (2006), politics is seen here as an activity that is concerned with deliberating alternative courses of action and alternative arrangements for making collective decisions<sup>3</sup>.

Explanations of historical events and historical phenomena are always and inescapably simplifications of complex interactions. There are differences in how these simplifications are constructed and some versions are more convincing than others. Hayden White discusses the nature of historical explanations in his *Metahistory* [1973]. White writes about “metahistorical elements” that are “precritically accepted paradigms of what a distinctively historical explanation should be”.<sup>4</sup> One of White’s main points in *Metahistory* is that the outcome of a historical study is highly dependent on the chosen perspective and on the chosen narrative strategies. One of the aims of the current study is to challenge precritically accepted paradigms on ‘ideologies’ that have been used in the existing research literature on the May Fourth Movement. The intention is not to somehow ‘politicize’ the debates, but to make explicit the political relevance of certain styles of writing.

Even if many have now, and I would say justly, questioned the readings in which the May Fourth Movement is portrayed as “the Chinese Enlightenment”, or “the Chinese Renaissance”<sup>5</sup>, nobody has claimed that the Marxist political argumentation, which was adopted in these journals at that time, became insignificant in Chinese politics in the following decades. The class struggle paradigm that was introduced in China during the May Fourth period was not officially discarded by the CCP until 1978 – almost 60 years after the May fourth demonstrations of 1919.<sup>6</sup>

According to a study by Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng (2009), this period is also highly significant in the development of Chinese political concepts. Jin and Liu claim that a majority of modern political concepts, which were introduced in China in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, went through three different stages. *First*, after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese authors used old Chinese words to express new Western concepts. *Second*, between 1895 and 1915 they began to use words, which were not from the classics, to express foreign concepts in order to avoid confusion between old Chinese concepts and new Western ones. Many of these words were borrowed from Japanese sources<sup>7</sup>. *Third*, after 1915, and especially after 1919, the conceptual confusion began to ease and certain Chinese versions of these originally Western concepts began to become established. Jin and Liu claim that after the New Culture Movement period (roughly 1915-1925)

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<sup>3</sup> Oakeshott 2006, 34-38.

<sup>4</sup> White 1973, ix.

<sup>5</sup> Yü 2001; Sun 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Related to the relevance of early socialist ideas in China, Wei Zhengtong writes that the decades following the May Fourth period were decades of socialist thought in China and socialism influenced a great majority of Chinese intellectuals during this period. If one wishes to understand modern Chinese political thought, one should carefully study early socialist ideas in China. Wei 1985, 80-82. According to A. James Gregor, for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese sought to understand their reality with the help of conceptual categories borrowed from Marxism. Gregor 1995, 10.

<sup>7</sup> For a list of such words, see Li, Y.N. 1971, 69-107.

central political concepts have encountered relatively little transformations. Therefore, the conceptual developments of this period should be given special attention.<sup>8</sup>

The most important single piece of writing in this study is Chen Duxiu's 陳獨秀 (1879-1942)<sup>9</sup> article "On Politics" that was published in *New Youth* (新青年 *Xīn Qīngnián*) in September 1920<sup>10</sup>. In this article Chen, one of the founders of the CCP in 1921, began to defend class struggle in China. The current study does not only analyze the arguments *pro and contra* related to the class struggle paradigm and conceptual struggles, but it is a rereading of wider intellectual conflicts related to this change of policy around the influential *New Youth* journal. In a broader sense, the debate on the relevance of the class struggle was related to different visions of China's development. These debates were also related to struggles between different versions of "world trends" that China was supposed to follow.

What is 'radical' and what is not is naturally a question of perspective. For example, Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟 (1886-1964) (1945) has written that the *New Youth* (established in 1915) was "radical" from the very beginning of its existence<sup>11</sup>, and thus it would make no sense to talk about radicalization in 1918-1921<sup>12</sup>. In this study, I use 'radicalization' to refer to the adoption of a political language that I call 'class struggle language'. When this paradigmatic change from using one type political 'language' to another is analyzed in this study, the various writings about 'world trends' and the necessity to adapt to these trends are given special attention. One of the main tasks that these journals had commissioned for themselves was the introduction of Western science to Chinese readership. Accordingly, the writings about trends were related to these journals that were full of summaries of various authors and schools of thought. Writings about 'needs of time' and the 'prevailing trends' are perhaps not always as pivotal, as they were in the May Fourth period China, but I do believe that the various modes of talking and writing about prevailing trends should always be examined critically. This is because the statements about 'current trends' affect the limits of what is seen to be possible. In other words, they should be seen as claims about the prevailing circumstances. Instead of taking certain version of the circumstances as given and using that version to evaluate these authors, this study concentrates on their own interpretations of these circumstances. There

<sup>8</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 7-9. Franz Schurmann refers to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a period of "intellectual liveliness": socialism, anarchism, and the nature of the world and society were actively discussed. According to Schurmann, this liveliness faded away after the communists canonized their theory and turned their attention to "practice". Schurmann 1968, xlvi.

<sup>9</sup> Chen Duxiu was the editor of *New Youth* and the dean of the college of letter at Beijing University. He was also the leader of the Chinese Communist Party from 1921 to 1927. For a biography of Chen see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 1, 240-248.

<sup>10</sup> According to Chester Tan, this article was a "definite turning point" in Chen's writings on communism. Tan, C. 1971, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Chiang 1945/1963, 110.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Bernal has claimed that all the Chinese students in Japan in the early 20th century were almost inevitably radicals. Bernal 1976, 132.

was no agreement on the limits between possible and impossible. By this, I mean that there was no mutual agreement on the borders between scientific and utopian, moderate and radical, and which ideas were in 'accordance with the trends' and which were not. All these disagreements are important in understanding the specific intellectual context in which Chen Duxiu's "On Politics" appeared. The main purpose in this study is not to look for reasons why some authors became interested in Marxism at that time<sup>13</sup>. The purpose is, in this respect, to analyze how these authors justified the relevancy of the theories of Marx to their contemporaries and how class struggle was claimed to be necessary. That is, the focus is on the political languages related to this radicalization.<sup>14</sup>

One of the central theoretical premises of this study is J.L. Austin's (1962) statement that words are not only used to describe things but "to do things"<sup>15</sup>. Instead of taking writings about 'world trends' in this context as objective descriptions of the world, or as true descriptions of the circumstances, they should be taken as active interpretations. These writings should not be taken literally and uncritically, but they should be treated as speech acts that were used to reshape the understandings of the circumstances and what was 'possible' and 'necessary' within them. Neither should these writings be treated as epiphenomenal products of an 'outer reality'. Here, epiphenomenality means a tendency to explain 'mental states' of particular authors by certain 'physical states' of the world. The outer reality does not look identical from different perspectives and to different individuals. The problem of epiphenomenal explanations is that they decidedly undervalue the importance of the inner dynamics of intellectual interactions and conflicting interpretations about the 'outside world' related to them. In this study intellectual life is not treated as 'superstructural', as something that was, more or less, determined by the material base.<sup>16</sup>

Epiphenomenality is also related to another controversial issue: the issue of 'behaviour' against 'action'. Some scholars, like Robert Dahl (1963) and David Easton (1965), have sought to use behavioural analysis to explain political action. This means that they have tried to find causal models to explain what happens in politics. These models rely on the assumption that human action is possible to render to a set of logical causation with the aid of various analytical models of the circumstances. Thus, according to these models, 'political action' can be

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<sup>13</sup> In the existing research literature this has been a typical aim. For instance, Lin Yü-sheng has explained Chen Duxiu's conversion to Marxism through his antitraditional attitudes. Similarly, Gu Xin has explained this through Chen's desire to modernize China. Lin, 1979, 155; Gu 1989, 229-235.

<sup>14</sup> Arif Dirlik has written that the Chinese authors in the early 1920s did not have a proper understanding of Marxist theories. Dirlik 1978, 19-20. The level of orthodoxy is not, however, a pertinent issue in this study as the focus is on the political language these particular authors used, not on Marxism as a fixed ideology. What is important in this study is the change of agenda in these journals (especially in *New Youth*), not the level of understanding Marxism (not to mention that it is very difficult to define what is proper Marxism and what is not).

<sup>15</sup> Austin 1962/2009.

<sup>16</sup> For further discussion about superstructure and base see Skinner & Fernandez Sebastian 2007.

presented as 'behaviour', as reaction to the changes in the environment.<sup>17</sup> If we were trying to clarify phenomena in Chinese political history with theories that aim to downplay the relevance of contingent political action, it would also, quite easily, lead to descriptions where we would also minimize the relevance of creative political thought and action of the Chinese people we are supposed to study. In this study, the writings in the May Fourth journals are seen as 'action', not as 'behaviour'. This means that the writings about the 'trends' are not treated as passive 'behaviour' which were 'caused' by the events that took place.

## 1.1 The Setting

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century China, the number of reform-minded authors was growing rapidly. Among those, who had a firm belief in the need to reform China, there seemed to be a remarkable number of people who believed that the only possible way to save China was to learn from the Western nations as Japan had done some decades before. Naturally, this viewpoint was connected to the several late Qing military defeats; the Opium Wars (1839-1842 & 1856-1860), the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) probably being the most well-known examples. The relations between China and the West date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Jesuit missionaries first went to China. More large-scale attempts, such as sending Chinese students abroad to learn from the West did not, however, take place before the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Robert Morrison translated the Bible into Chinese already between 1813 and 1823, but there were not many other translations on Western books before the 1860s.<sup>18</sup>

It had become clear for those who wanted reform that China had to learn from the concrete technological advancements of the West. However, there were conflicting views when it came to more abstract questions of 'Western schools of thought'. There was no agreement on what were the 'prevailing world trends' of thought that the Chinese had to follow.

When we consider this frequently echoed need to reform China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, we should take into consideration one particular set of ideas that had gained exceptional popularity among Chinese scholarly circles after the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Social Darwinist ideas and slogans were introduced to China in the late 1890's. Among reform-minded scholars, evolutionary theory gained huge popularity and soon almost everyone was expressing the need for change through Darwinist framework.<sup>19</sup> What is relevant in this popularity of

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<sup>17</sup> Dahl 1963; Easton 1965. For more on behaviour and action see Ball 2002, 22-26. What is a causal explanation in social action is of course a very complex question. For further discussion, see Skinner 1988b.

<sup>18</sup> Kwok 1965, 3-11; Lippert 2001, 57-59; Xiong 2001, 69-71. Michael Mi has shown that there were texts on Aristotle in Chinese already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Mi 2001, 249-251. For a more detailed description of the coming of the Europeans to China, see Fairbank, Reischauer & Craig 1965, 3-79.

<sup>19</sup> See Pusey 1983.



Darwinism for this study, is its tendency to highlight the necessity of adaptation: only those who were able to adapt to the prevailing circumstances, would survive. Although slogans like “the survival of the fittest” and “the struggle for survival” were constantly criticized in May Fourth journals as being signs of outmoded thought, the high importance given to adaptation remained. This importance of adaptation was manifested in the constant writings of changing China according to ‘the prevailing trends of thought’.

Sun Lung-kee (2008) calls the year 1919 “a year of left-right polarization”<sup>20</sup>. Undeniably, there were events that could be included in the narratives of “socialist world trends”: the Spartacist uprising in Berlin in January, the inauguration of the Communist International in Moscow in March, and the establishment of Munich People’s Republic in April. In addition, widespread unemployment after the First World War in Europe and in China was also connected to the increasing number of writings about “the labour question”. Communist parties were established between 1919 and 1921, for instance, in the United States (1919), Great Britain (1920), France (1920), and Italy (1921). According to Arif Dirlik (1989), it was simply the “awareness of worldwide social conflict” that resulted in a new reading of China’s problems.<sup>21</sup> This study begins from a premise that there was no single awareness of worldwide social conflict but different versions of it. This is, the meaning of events is dependent on one’s perspective.<sup>22</sup>

The spread of socialism can be seen as a byproduct of the development of capitalism, or as a corollary of industrial development. We should not, however, forget that there have been industrial societies without significant socialist movement and there have been powerful socialist movements in places where the process of industrialization has barely begun as Donald Sassoon (2001) has pointed out. The United States is a case in point: in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the fastest growing capitalist society, but it did not have a powerful socialist movement.<sup>23</sup> Actually, the “Knights of Labor”, the most powerful labour union in the US in the 1880s, wanted to distance themselves from all socialist parties<sup>24</sup>.

What seems to be a ‘natural phenomenon’ is that workers started to demand for better living and working conditions. The ‘inevitability’ of this phenomenon was also pronounced by many authors of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, Karl Kautsky (1892) wrote that the elevation of the working class was a “necessary” and “inevitable” process<sup>25</sup>. It is very difficult to deny the connection between industrialization and the organization of labour. Still, from

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<sup>20</sup> Sun 2008, 285.

<sup>21</sup> Dirlik 1989, 9, 22, 57-58. Dirlik’s account on the events advisedly concentrates on the external influences on Chinese intellectuals. This setting situates his narration closer to the ‘cause and effect’ style of explanation than for example the study of Benjamin I. Schwartz who pays more attention to the interactions between Chinese intellectuals. See Schwartz 1951/1967.

<sup>22</sup> Also Lin Yü-sheng notes that although historical circumstances played a role, there was nothing inherent in those circumstances to dictate the intellectual transformations would move in a certain direction. Lin, Y. 1979, 39-41.

<sup>23</sup> Sassoon 2001/2008, 50-51.

<sup>24</sup> More about Knights of Labor, see Fink 1983.

<sup>25</sup> Kautsky 1892/1910, 173.

this we cannot conclude that certain types of organizations were inevitable. There were numerous possibilities of the kind of demands labour organizations should make and what types of theories on labour questions they should apply.

It is also possible to find events that could have been used in writings about the decline of 'socialist trends', such as the downfalls of the Slovak and Hungarian Soviet Republics in the summer of 1919 or the election results in France in October 1919 (the conservatives won) or in Italy in May 1921 (the socialists lost). Moreover, as the comprehension of 'world trends' in China was often a matter of following certain authorities, Bertrand Russell's - who was lecturing in China at the time - negative response after visiting Soviet Russia could have easily been included in narratives of the failure of Soviet Russian Bolshevism. Furthermore, the support of legal political participation instead of illegal modes of direct action within German Social Democratic Party could have been interpreted as a sign of the decline of more radical trends<sup>26</sup>. Zhang Guotao 張國燾 (1897-1979)<sup>27</sup> (1971) notes that during these years there was also a huge amount of anti-communist propaganda circulated all over the world<sup>28</sup>. There was plenty of material to use if someone wanted to verbally attack, or to demonize, the Bolshevik government. Thus, it is clear that there were possibilities of conflicting interpretations.

Socialist movements, like any other political movements, should not be seen only as products of 'outside forces' as they always require active recruiting and successful literary campaigns in order to gain mass support. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was the century of the emergence of mass politics. New sophisticated methods of recruiting support for different political movements were created.<sup>29</sup> Language use is, naturally, the most important device of recruiting. Thus, the rise to power of the CCP should not be seen as an outcome of 'outer necessities', but as a result of active struggle. They did not fight only with tangible weapons, but also with words. This battle of words and concepts was ongoing already before the party was officially established in 1921. Similar perspective to the rise of the CCP has also been offered by Rana Mitter. According to Mitter (2004), the official CCP version of Chinese history has actively downplayed the relevance of the possibilities of alternative paths of the May Fourth period. As Mitter points out, in the 1910s and early 1920s the socialist movement was unpromising and there

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<sup>26</sup> Some members of the German Social Democratic party had previously supported more direct class struggle. In *New Youth* Li Da interpreted the turn towards more moderate methods as a sign of the decay of the German Social Democratic Party, not as a decline of revolutionary Marxism. Li Da. *Marx Restored*. 馬克思還原. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 5. January 1921. HDB.

<sup>27</sup> Zhang Guotao was one of the leaders of the CCP in the 1920s and 1930s. He left the party after a conflict with Mao Zedong in 1938 and moved to Hong Kong in 1949. For a biography of Zhang see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 1, 77-82.

<sup>28</sup> Chang, K. 1971, 88.

<sup>29</sup> Freedon 2001/2008b, 1-2. According to Freedon, the emergence of new kind of practical political thinkers took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This started a struggle over the minds of men and women. Freedon 2003, 31-32.

was nothing inevitable in the rise of the CCP.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the ‘inevitable’ rise of Chinese communism and Sino-Soviet co-operations has not been a version supported only by CCP historiography. According to Allen Whiting (1954), both Marxist and non-Marxist authors have written about the “inevitability” of “historical forces”.<sup>31</sup>

There certainly were events during the May Fourth period that made it easier, for example, to make claims about the supremacy of Marx over Kropotkin, such as the failure of “the mutual aid groups” in China in 1920<sup>32</sup>. However, I do not believe that certain perspectives, certain frameworks, and certain interpretations of the challenges China was facing, like “the labour question”, in the writings of the period, were somehow necessitated by certain events. This is to say, the mere awareness of the labour question did not mean that Soviet Russia should have been the only possible model for China. There were also contradictory accounts on the meanings and the consequences of the October Revolution. Some Chinese authors associated the revolution with the ‘trend of democracy’.<sup>33</sup> Although one might claim that writings like these were a matter of misunderstandings, I believe it is more sensible to talk about different interpretations as it is impossible to define indisputable meanings for events. There were, and there always are, a countless number of possible interpretations and these interpretations are inescapably selective.<sup>34</sup> The only possible way of studying these biased versions of the world, is by studying concepts and language that have been used to comprehend the outer reality.

Hayden White (1987) has defined a formalist perspective to history as a perspective, which holds that “any historical object can sustain a number of equally plausible description or narratives of its processes”<sup>35</sup>. The perspective in this study could also be seen as a formalist one, as the context in which the authors wrote is not seen as something that determined the content of the writings. Instead, the context is treated as a sphere of various possibilities. Conflicts between competing interpretations of the meanings of events are treated in this study as a struggle over the meanings of ‘reality’, not as a matter of various misunderstandings of it.

The main temporal focus of this study is the period between November 1918 and July 1921. This means that the focus is on the period before the establishment of the CCP. The First World War, on the other hand, and

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<sup>30</sup> Mitter 2004, 103-104. Conservative alternatives of the period have been discussed for instance in Furth 1976.

<sup>31</sup> Whiting 1954, 3.

<sup>32</sup> More about these groups in chapter 3. Also Mao Zedong had admired Kropotkin before he started to support class struggle. See Chen, Je. 1987, 512.

<sup>33</sup> Many May Fourth period authors claimed that the October revolution in Russia was primarily an expression of the power of democracy, not socialism or Marxism. See for example Xu Deheng. *National Thought and the World Trend*. 國民思想與世界潮流. Citizen. Vol.1. No.2. February 1919. HDB.

<sup>34</sup> Already Michael Oakeshott wrote that no response to a political situation can be said to be a “necessary” response, because interpretations of the situations are inherently contestable. Nardin 2012, 184.

<sup>35</sup> White 1987/1990, 76.

interpretations of its consequences had a very central position in the writings about the “new trends of thought” in these journals. Consequently, these interpretations also had a great effect in changes in the political languages in use. Therefore, this study concentrates on the period after the armistice was signed in November. As this rather short period already indicates, this study concentrates mainly on the synchronical, and not so much on the diachronical aspects of the use of concepts.

The study consists of two main parts presented in six separate chapters, including the introduction and the conclusions. The first part includes chapters one and two. The introduction is, in the following, continued with three subchapters in which different definitions of the movement are introduced (section 1.2), previous scholarship of the movement is discussed (section 1.3) and the research material used in this study is introduced (section 1.4). Chapter 2 forms the theoretical backbone of the study. In this chapter, the reason why language and rhetoric should be studied in the first place is clarified (section 2.1). As the central theme of this study is the writings about ‘the needs of time’ and ‘the prevailing trends’, section 2.2 is devoted to the debate between different conceptions of time in China. According to some sweeping statements, during the late-Qing period, there was a change from a cyclical conception of time to a linear one that was adopted from Western authors. Therefore this section (2.2) considers the problems of this assumption, makes a brief comparison between this debate and the Western studies on the changes of conceptions of time in Europe, and the current study is situated in this academic context. The stress on the need to adapt to the prevailing trends in the May Fourth journals, and the relevance of this stress, is shown in section 2.3. The idea of political languages and the relation of these languages to ideologies are discussed in section 2.4.

The second main part consists of Chapters three, four, five and the conclusions. In chapters three (the language of mutual aid and democracy) and four (class struggle language) the study shows how the two political languages were used in the journals. The aim is to outline sets of regularities of certain ways of argumentation that were employed to direct the debates into certain directions. The key concepts and their usages within these languages are given special attention. (sections 3.3 and 4.4). Lastly, in Chapter 5, the focus is on the interaction between these two languages. The ‘radicalization’ is manifested in the writings of ‘the world trends’ (section 5.1) and some key concepts (like “democracy”) are given different meanings than before (section 5.2). These findings are briefly summarized (section 5.3) before the conclusion (Chapter 6).

## 1.2 Definitions

Before moving on to a discussion of the previous studies related to this study, it is worthwhile to clarify how the “May Fourth Movement” is commonly used in literature of this period and what kind of disagreements are related to the

meaning of this name. The May Fourth Movement (五四運動 *Wǔsì Yùndòng*) in a narrow sense, or “the May Fourth incident”, refers to demonstrations that started in 4 May 1919 in Beijing. The demonstrations were connected to the events in the Paris Peace Conference that had started in January 1919. In a broad sense, the May Fourth Movement refers to an incoherent reform movement, which gathered around certain study groups and journals. First, we will briefly go through the events of that famous day<sup>36</sup>.

Students at the Beijing University became active in the spring of 1918 and they sent a petition to the president Feng Guozhang 馮國璋 (1859-1919) in May 1918. In this petition students expressed their concern on Japanese imperialism and Japan’s growing influence in China.<sup>37</sup> Student activism rose to a higher level in the following year. On 4 May 1919, about 3000 students gathered at the Tiananmen Square to protest the favoring of Japan at China’s expense in the Paris Peace Conference<sup>38</sup>. Japan had concluded agreements with Great Britain, Italy, and France during the war and it was thus able to gain control of the former German concessions on the Shandong peninsula<sup>39</sup>. As a result, these concessions were not returned to Chinese jurisdiction as many people in China had hoped. This black spot between Sino-Japanese relations of the period is usually referred as “the Shandong question”. The Beiyang government<sup>40</sup> in Beijing had declared war against Germany and had sent “working battalions” (also known as “labour corps”) to Europe in order to support the Allied side. On the one hand, the dissatisfaction of the demonstrators was targeted towards Japan’s foreign policies and imperialism in general. On the other hand, it was targeted towards the powerlessness and alleged unreliability of the Chinese delegation in Paris. Many claimed that the delegation had betrayed the Chinese people. Cao Rulin 曹汝霖 (1877-1966) was one of these “traitor diplomats” and as a kind of culmination point of the demonstrations, his house was burned down in Beijing. This was not, however, the end of the turmoil. About two weeks later, on 19 May, a general anti-Japanese student strike started in Beijing and it gradually spread to more than 200 cities in China. In Shanghai more than 20 000 students went on strike on 26 May<sup>41</sup>. The officials responded by suppressing many of the student publications. Finally, on 1 June, President Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855-1939)<sup>42</sup> proclaimed martial law for Beijing. A few days later, arrests followed. As a result,

<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed description of these events see for example Chow, T. 1960/1967. (especially the chapters II, III, IV and V); Mitter 2004 (the chapter 1) or Chang, K. 1971, 53-69.

<sup>37</sup> Chang, K. 1971, 48.

<sup>38</sup> Zarrow 2005, 151. In the declaration it was said that their purpose was to demand rights from diplomats of different nations. Li Z. 1987, 14-15.

<sup>39</sup> Zarrow 2005, 156.

<sup>40</sup> The Beiyang government was a warlord government that took power soon after the revolution of 1911. For more about Beiyang and the Beiyang-dominated elections of 1918, see Nathan 1976, 57-74, 101-103.

<sup>41</sup> Zarrow 2005, 154-156.

<sup>42</sup> Xu replaced Feng Guozhang as president in October 1918. According to Andrew Nathan, the role of president in the Beiyang government was merely ceremonial. Nathan 1976, 66.

more than 1100 students were imprisoned in their own schools and over 5000 students were protesting these arrests on the streets of Beijing. On 7 June authorities tried to end the conflict by giving the students permission to leave, but they refused to do so. On the following day, the students finally gave up and walked out. At the end, the controversial peace treaty with Germany was never signed by the Chinese delegation in Paris.<sup>43</sup>

As it is well known, “the May Fourth Movement” is not used only to refer to these demonstrations and things become much more complicated when we try to define the movement ‘in a broad sense’. There is no clear-cut definition of what the May Fourth Movement was, what the starting point of it was, or what its main purpose was. Also the famous May Fourth slogans, touting democracy and science, had ambiguous meanings<sup>44</sup>. What is common to all subsequent ‘admirers’ of the movement is that the admiration has always been selective. This selectiveness of certain aspects of the movement at the expense of others has probably been most obvious in the CCP and Guomindang (GMD) depictions of ‘the movement’s legacy’. According to Vera Schwarcz (1986), “the battle for the political capital embodied in May Fourth” was most severe in the 1940s and 1960s. During these battles both sides made claims about how the opposing side had ‘misunderstood’ the movement.<sup>45</sup>

One of the very first authors who publicly used the name “May Fourth Movement” (五四運動) was Luo Jialun 羅家倫 (1897-1969)<sup>46</sup> in *Weekly Critic* (每週評論 *Měizhōu Pínglùn*) in 26 May 1919. The title of Luo’s article was “The Spirit of the May Fourth Movement”. According to Rudolf Wagner (2001), this article “fixed the term in print”<sup>47</sup>. Luo himself noted that the name had already been

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<sup>43</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 142-160, 168-170; Zarrow 2005, 153. According to Nathan, president Xu and Beiyang leader Duan Qirui, who did not approve the demonstrations, wanted to sign the treaty. Nathan 1976, 159.

<sup>44</sup> There was a new widespread belief that “scientific method” (科學方法 *kēxué fāngfǎ*) could be used to solve all kinds of problems. See Peng M. 1999, 363. There was also widespread belief that it was science and democracy that made Western powers powerful. See for example, Chen Duxiu. *Reply to the Criminal Case against this Journal*. 本志罪案之答辯書. New Youth. Vol. 6. No. 1. January 1919. HDB. More about Chinese reception of Western science before the revolution of 1911, see Juliette Chung’s Ph.D. thesis. Chung 1999, 42-74.

<sup>45</sup> Schwarcz 1986, 250. For more about CCP historiography and attempts to connect the May Fourth Movement with the battle against feudalism, see Gu 1992.

<sup>46</sup> Luo Jialun was one of the student leaders of the May Fourth Movement. He later served as the president of Tsinghua and National Central Universities. For a biography of Luo, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, 428-431.

<sup>47</sup> Wagner 2001, 70. According to Jin and Liu the first reference to May Fourth Movement (五四運動 *Wūsì Yùndòng*) appeared already in 18 May in a telegram note of the student union of the Beijing University. This name was also used in *Morning News* on 20 May. Jin & Liu 2009, 415. It might still be true that it was Luo’s article in *Weekly Critic* that made the name popular as Wagner has mentioned.

widely used and thus he was not the one who invented it<sup>48</sup>. After May, this name was used also in other Chinese journals<sup>49</sup>.

Before discussing the meanings given to the movement afterwards, it is necessary to mention some relevant developments behind the movement. First of all, learning from the West, which certainly was a central theme in this movement, was connected to the increased international mobility of students. The amount of Chinese students abroad had steadily increased in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first set of Chinese students, which was sent abroad, was sent to the United States in the early 1870s. Between 1872 and 1877, 120 Chinese students went to the United States to study military science, navigation, and shipbuilding<sup>50</sup>. In the 1880s other Chinese students went to England and Germany to study in military schools. By 1915 more than 1200 Chinese students had studied in the United States. However, the majority of Chinese students, who went to study abroad, went to Japan. The number of Chinese students in Japan began to grow rapidly during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1903 the official number of Chinese students in Japan was about 760, in 1906 already about 13 000. By 1912 more than 35 000 Chinese students had studied in Japan.<sup>51</sup> Many of the May Fourth Movement 'leaders', like the founder of *New Youth* journal, Chen Duxiu, had studied in Japan. Martin Bernal (1976) stresses the significance of Japan by writing that the Chinese got almost all of their knowledge of the West from Japan between 1903 and 1919.<sup>52</sup>

Besides students abroad, translation activities in China and Japan increased the interest on foreign ways of thought. The College for Foreign Languages (同文館 *Tóngwénguǎn*) was established in Beijing in 1862. This college was also a research institute for the dissemination of Western knowledge in China. Chinese intellectuals widely relied on Japanese translations. Especially Nakamura Masanao's 中村正直 (1832-1891) and Nishi Amane's 西周 (1829-1897) translations were influential both in Japan and in China.<sup>53</sup> The number of reform-minded journals had increased dramatically since the late 1890s, especially after the revolution of 1911.<sup>54</sup> According to James Reeve Pusey (1983), these journals provided the only modern education as at the time there was "no time to write books"<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Luo Jialun. *The Spirit of the May Fourth Movement*. 五四運動的精神. Weekly Critic. No. 23. May 1919. HDB.

<sup>49</sup> Wagner has pointed out that, for instance, GMD publication *Construction* (建設 *Jiànshè*) used the name. Wagner 2001, 81.

<sup>50</sup> Bailey 1990, 228.

<sup>51</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 26-31; Chen, Je. 1979, 152-153.; Grieder 1981, 141-142. Chow's and Grieder's figures on the number of Chinese students in Japan are partly contradictory. According to Chow, there were about 13 000 in 1906, whereas Grieder's figures indicate that the number was not greater than 4000 before 1908.

<sup>52</sup> Bernal 1976, 7.

<sup>53</sup> Lippert 2001, 57-62.

<sup>54</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 44. According to Zarrow, between 1915 and 1923 there appeared more than 700 new publications in China. Zarrow 2005, 134.

<sup>55</sup> Pusey 1983, 85-86.

When talking about the May Fourth Movement one should not forget the significance of Beijing University. The university, which was established in 1898, was reformed after the former minister of education Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940)<sup>56</sup> became its chancellor in December 1916. Chen Duxiu had become the Dean of Humanities of the university in the same year. This reformed university became the fountainhead of the May Fourth Movement<sup>57</sup>. Related to this, Chow has used “May Fourth period” to refer to a period from 1917 to 1921<sup>58</sup>. Leo Ou-fan Lee (2001) points out that the May Fourth generation was a product of a modern university system and it thus differed greatly from traditional Chinese scholars.<sup>59</sup> The traditional examination system, which had long been the principal way to become a scholar in China, had been abolished in 1905.

Another ‘movement’ that is tightly associated with the May Fourth Movement is the “New Culture Movement” (新文化運動 *Xīn Wénhuà Yùndòng*). What makes things rather complicated is that these two are often used interchangeably.<sup>60</sup> In January 1915, the Empire of Japan sent its “21 demands” to Yuan Shikai’s 袁世凱 (1859-1916) government in China. Among other things, the Japanese demanded extensive economic rights in Manchuria and Inner-Mongolia, privileges in coal and iron industries in China, stationing of Japanese police forces in North China and new commercial rights in Fujian province. These demands were negotiated and the result was a set of agreements signed between Japan and China in May 1915. These agreements substantially strengthened and consolidated Japan’s influence in China. As a response to these events, about 4000 students left Japan as a protest and Japanese products were boycotted in China between March 1915 and December 1915. This activism is sometimes presented as a prelude to the May Fourth Movement and the starting point of the New Culture Movement.<sup>61</sup> Other authors have named the establishment of the *New Youth* journal as the starting point of the New Culture Movement and have stressed its ‘cultural’ nature (language reform, ethical reform) that differentiates it from the ‘political’ May Fourth Movement<sup>62</sup>. The beginning of the New Culture

<sup>56</sup> Cai Yuanpei served as minister of education (1912-1913) and chancellor of Beijing University (1916-1926). He was also the first president of Academia Sinica. For a biography of Cai, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 3, 295-299. Cai was a veteran of the 1911 revolution and according to Zarrow, by 1919 the staff of Beijing University was full of other 1911 veterans. Zarrow 2005, 159.

<sup>57</sup> For more about the Beijing University and the education reform, see Lin, X. 2005, 7-91.

<sup>58</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 1. The length of “the May Fourth period” is certainly not fixed and universally agreed. For instance, Lee Ou-fan Lee has used “May Fourth Era” to refer to a period from 1917 to 1927. On the other hand, Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova and David Der-wei Wang have used “May Fourth Era” to refer to a rather lengthy period from 1910s to 1930s. See Lee 2002, 155.; Dolezelova-Velingerova & Wang D. 2001, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Lee 2001, 53.

<sup>60</sup> For instance, Germaine Hoston has used the designation “May Fourth New Culture Movement” which refers to a period from mid-1910s to mid-1920s. Yang Yi uses a similar designation. Hoston 1990; Yang 1989.

<sup>61</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 24-25; Lin, Y. 1979, 19-20; Spencer 1990, 285-286. In the Paris Peace Conference the Chinese delegation called for renouncement of the 21 demands but the topic was not accepted to the agenda. Chang, K. 1971, 52.

<sup>62</sup> See Dirlik 1989, 58. and Li, Z. 1987, 8. Sun Lung-kee has noted that in his autobiography Hu Shi called the May Fourth student movement “an unfortunate political interference”



Movement has also been connected with the protests against Yuan Shikai's attempts to restore Confucianism as the official basis of China's political system in 1915-1916<sup>63</sup>. It must be borne in mind that neither of these "movements" was uniform or well-organized. There was neither established leadership nor commonly accepted agenda. The only shared intention was to re-evaluate tradition and promote new learning. Beyond these, the spirit of unity was only superficial, as Chow (1960) points out.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the increased number of Chinese students who had studied abroad, the increased number of reform-minded journals, the reorganization of Beijing University, and the growing anti-Japanese sentiments after the 21 demands, also the language reform should be brought up at this point. The espousal of written vernacular Chinese (白話 *báihuà*) was a key theme in the writings of reform-minded journals of the period. According to the May Fourth reinterpretation of Chinese literary history, vernacular literature represented the dominant part of Chinese literature. This reinterpretation was a central piece in the project that aimed to strengthen the prestige of vernacular Chinese and to question the esteem of classical Chinese (文言文 *wényánwén* or 古文 *gǔwén*). The project was successful and written vernacular Chinese became, for instance, the official language in all primary school textbooks in the early 1920s. Also a great majority of journals and newspapers began to use vernacular Chinese. This did not mean, however, that classical Chinese would have disappeared. It was still widely used, especially in poetry.<sup>65</sup>

The most famous author and driving force behind this project was Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962)<sup>66</sup> who was supported by Chen Duxiu. The two had started correspondence over the matter in 1917 and Hu Shi introduced his tenet about the dominance of vernacular Chinese in *New Youth* in January of that year.<sup>67</sup> Hu's and Chen's ideas about the language reform and its historical justifications were not accepted by everyone. Among western educated Chinese scholars there were also highly critical voices. Probably the most well-known groups of resistance were gathered around Liu Shipei's 劉師培 (1884-1919) *National Heritage* (國故

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and he thus tried, in retrospect, to delink the New Culture and the May Fourth. Sun 2008, 276-277.

<sup>63</sup> Mitter 2004, 18. Also Jin and Liu have portrayed the New Culture Movement as a reaction to the failure of the Chinese republic. According to them, this failure led to the rejection of Confucianism and Chinese tradition. Jin & Liu 2009, 276.

<sup>64</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 215.

<sup>65</sup> Lee 2001, 50-52. Pusey mentions that the idea of literary revolution was supported by Liang Qichao already in 1902. Pusey 1983, 438.

<sup>66</sup> Hu Shi had studied in the United States and he was a student of John Dewey. He was a professor of philosophy at the University of Beijing. For a biography of Hu see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, 167-174.

<sup>67</sup> Hu had depicted classical Chinese as a "dead language" and had written about literary revolution (文學革命 *wénxué gémìng*) already in 1915. Chen, on the other hand, called the language reform also a process of democratization of literature. Lu Xun's first short story written in vernacular Chinese, "The Diary of a Madman", was published in *New Youth* in May 1918. Dolezelova-Velingerova 2001, 148, 152. For a brief summary in English of Hu Shi's article, see Lee 2002, 157-159; Lee 2001, 46-47; Jin & Liu 2005, 492.

*Guógù*) journal in Beijing and *Critical Review* (學衡 *Xuéhéng*) journal in Nanjing.<sup>68</sup> Although Sun Yatsen (Sun Zhongshan) 孫中山 (1866-1925) was associated with these ‘cultural conservatives’, such as Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868-1936) and Liu Shiwei, he did his best to depict the May Fourth Movement as a part of GMD-led revolutionary project. Sun urged members of the GMD to learn from the student movement and patriotic youths who had prepared themselves for the revolution.<sup>69</sup>

Later on, Hu Shi propagated the idea in the West (especially in the United States and Britain) that the May Fourth Movement was “China’s Renaissance”. When Hu was lecturing in Britain in the mid-1920s, he was introduced as “the father of Chinese Renaissance”. In 1933 Hu explained that China’s Renaissance meant three things: vernacular language against classical Chinese, freedom against tradition and authority, and humanism. For Hu, it was especially the literary revolution that was the core of the Renaissance. He also claimed that the Renaissance in the West had been the true beginning of modernity<sup>70</sup>. His last attempt to strengthen this interpretation was, according to Yü Ying-shih (2001), in 1960 when Hu claimed that there had been three Renaissance periods in China, all related to transformations in literature and philosophy, already before the May Fourth.<sup>71</sup>

In the early 1930’s Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 (1899-1935), a central figure in the Chinese Communist Party, wrote about May Fourth as “A Cultural Revolution” (文化革命 *wénhuà géming*). Sun Lung-kee (2008) suspects that this idea of May Fourth as Cultural Revolution was borrowed from Stalin’s “Cultural Revolution” of 1928-1931.<sup>72</sup> In 1936 another widely spread interpretation of the movement appeared, namely “China’s Enlightenment”<sup>73</sup>. This formulation was created by

<sup>68</sup> According to Wang Runhua the main goal of *Critical Review* was to stop the New Culture Movement. Wang, R. 1978, 231. About *Critical Review* see also Dolezelova-Velingerova 2001, 158 and Lee 2002, 162. More about *National Heritage* see Bernal 1976, 199-200. Language reform has been portrayed in a critical light also in contemporary research literature. Christoph Harbsmeier says that despite popularizing intentions the reform did not clarify the language. According to Harbsmeier, the process should be seen as a Westernization effort of the intellectual elite. Harbsmeier 2001, 380-381. More about the conflict between supporters of cultural reform and conservatives, see Yang 1993, 342-358.

<sup>69</sup> Sun also wrote that the New Culture Movement could be “a useful instrument” for GMD. Quoted in Schwarcz 1986, 245-246.

<sup>70</sup> Renaissance had been discussed already in 1899 by Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) who wrote about Chinese Renaissance after “a long dark age” that referred to the stagnation of the Chinese Empire. Sun 2008, 272. When exactly did the Chinese modernity begin was a matter of controversy. For instance Liang claimed that the Chinese modernity had begun already in 1796. Tang, X. 1996, 44.

<sup>71</sup> Yü 2001, 300-302, 306-307.

<sup>72</sup> Sun 2008, 272-273.

<sup>73</sup> The Chinese term for Enlightenment, 啟蒙 *qǐméng*, was created by late-Qing scholars who borrowed the term from the Japanese intellectuals of the Meiji period who had called themselves “Enlightenment scholars” (啟蒙學者 *qǐméng xuézhě*). See Schwarcz 1986, 30-32.

Chen Boda 陳伯達 (1904-1989) who started a movement called “New Enlightenment” (新啟蒙運動 *Xīn qìméng yùndòng*). At that time, Chen Boda was a chief of propaganda of the North China Communist Party. The New Enlightenment movement was claimed to be a continuation and development of “the May Fourth Movement Enlightenment”. Besides Chen, another central author behind this formulation was Ai Siqi 艾思奇 (1910-1966) who strongly connected Enlightenment with patriotism. According to Yü Ying-shih (2001), the main motive behind the New Enlightenment Movement was to gain broad support for the resistance against Japan. The reason why they preferred to use the name “Enlightenment” instead of “Renaissance” was that it was easier to connect it with Marxist theories of history. Partly, this was because in Europe “Enlightenment” had often preceded revolutions.<sup>74</sup>

Later Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) claimed that the May Fourth Movement had been an integral part “of the world revolution of the proletarian class”, along with the Russian Revolution of 1917. Mao defined the period from 1911 to 1919 as the period of “old democracy”. Post-1919 was to be the period of “new democracy” which referred to the dominant role of the CCP. Mao also called the May Fourth Movement “a cultural revolution”, as Qu Qiubai had done earlier.<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that the May Fourth Movement is still an official turning point in the divisions of historical periods. According to the official historiography of the PRC the period from 1840 to 1919 is designated as “early modern period” (近代 *jìndài*), from 1919 to 1949 as “modern period” (現代 *xiàndài*).<sup>76</sup>

In the early 1940s, the GMD was still trying to underline the patriotic spirit of the movement, as Sun Yatsen had done before. Chiang Kaishek’s (Jiang Jieshi) 蔣介石 (1887-1975) attitude towards other aspects (vernacular literature, interest in Western thought) of the movement was highly critical. Chiang claimed that interest in Western thought might lead to blind worship of foreign nations and could mean a dangerous rejection of China’s own culture heritage. In the 1950s Chiang wanted to add another element to the May Fourth slogans “democracy and science”. Not surprisingly, this addition was to be “patriotism”. Chiang tried to associate the May Fourth Movement with his own New Life Movement project that espoused Confucianism, nationalism and authoritarianism. According to Vera Schwarcz (1986), Chiang turned the meaning of “the enlightenment movement” to its very opposite.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Yü 2001, 302-305.

<sup>75</sup> Schwarcz 1986, 248-249. For Mao’s attempts to combine communism with the May Fourth Movement see also Chen, J.T. 1970, pp. 79-81.

<sup>76</sup> Sun 2008, 276. The starting point of “early modern period”, 1840, refers to the first Opium war that took place in 1839-1842. 1949 is the year when the People’s Republic of China was established after the Chinese Civil War.

<sup>77</sup> Schwarcz 1986, 246-247.

### 1.3 Previous Research on the May Fourth Movement and the Origins of the CCP

In his *Discovering History in China* [1984] Paul Cohen questions the style of explanation according to which reforms in China since the 19<sup>th</sup> century took place only as a result of 'China's response' to 'Western impact'<sup>78</sup>. Cohen does not deny the importance of Western influence, but he points out that the intellectual reach and the limitations of this 'impact-response' model have not been clearly spelled out. Obviously, the model is simplistic and one-sided and it does not take the inner dynamics of the Chinese intellectual world seriously into account. According to Cohen, it is misleading to talk about direct Chinese responses as Western ideas could be communicated only through Chinese thought and Chinese language that reworked the original ideas. It is also problematic to reduce the meaning of reform to Western impact, the initial collision. It is problematic if one does not take into account the complex effects set in motion by this collision.<sup>79</sup>

The perspective that is chosen to guide a research work should direct the scholar towards the context, not away from it. In this respect, Schwarcz's (1986) formulation that Chinese intellectuals had to provide an answer to Kant's perennial question of Enlightenment is problematic. Assumptions of perennial questions, which 'had to be asked and answered', direct the scholarly attention away from the questions and answers that might have been more important for authors under study. The simplistic understanding of the 'Chinese tradition' as incapable of change without Western influence is another apparent example of this kind of highly problematic preconceived paradigm<sup>80</sup>. It forces the scholar to search for evidence of changes, which took place as results of Western influence, and at the same time, it disregards contrary findings.

There is yet another issue in the existing research literature that this study aims to challenge: the tendency to take certain versions of the dividing line between possible and impossible, or between realist and utopian, for granted, as if we could somehow with the help of critical analysis draw these dividing lines in a neutral manner.<sup>81</sup> In the current study the perspective is different as the aim is to underline the fact that there were conflicting interpretations on what was possible and what was not. These conflicting interpretations are of critical

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<sup>78</sup> Although I have here focused on China, similar styles of writing about the non-West have also appeared elsewhere. Edward Said discusses the epistemological problems in Western studies on Middle Eastern history and culture. See Said 1979. About the relevance of Said's book on Chinese, Japanese and Indian studies, see the reviews by Robert Kapp, Michael Dalby, David Kopf and Richard Minear. 1980. pp. 481-517. *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol. 39. No. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Cohen 1984, 9-21, 55, 76.

<sup>80</sup> Tejaswini Niranjana has called this style of depiction of the colonial subject as unchanging and immutable a "classical move of colonial discourse". Niranjana 1992, 37.

<sup>81</sup> For instance, in Chen Xiaolin's article on the conflict between May Fourth idealism and realism Chen does not problematize different possible versions on the dividing line between the two at all. Chen X.L. 1989.

importance if we are trying to understand the situation and the context in which these authors were acting.

Although Jin and Liu's studies of the development of Chinese political concepts have been very useful in conducting this particular research, the method of studying concepts in this study differs from theirs in certain aspects. Jin and Liu (2009) studied the conceptual transformations over a period of 100 years (1830-1930) and thus focused on diachronical aspects of conceptual transformations. Their way of studying concepts can be called lexicological as they rely on statistical analysis based on word frequencies. The current study, on the other hand, focuses on a short period of time. This type of research of concepts can be called synchronical. Moreover, this study does not rely on lexicology, but on a rhetorical approach to conceptual change. That is, this study has concentrated on argumentative structures around conceptual change. These structures are further analyzed with the help of the concept of 'political language' that is introduced in the Section 2.4. Obviously, when one is focusing on synchronical aspects of conceptual transformations, and not on diachronical ones, one should have reasons to defend the significance of the chosen period under study. In this respect, Jin and Liu's study, and especially their conclusion on the importance of the New Culture Movement period, is certainly relevant to this project.

The May Fourth Movement and the May Fourth period have been studied extensively from the 1930s onwards<sup>82</sup>. By the 1960s one could speak of a 'tradition' of May Fourth scholarship. Primarily, this meant studies by scholars who themselves were contemporaries of this movement. Probably the most famous of these studies is Chow Tse-tung's *May Fourth Movement* [1960]. According to Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova and David Der-wei Wang (2001), the tendency to take for granted assumptions of the May Fourth leaders has been typical. For instance, views of Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu on Chinese literary history have been treated as indisputable.<sup>83</sup> Edward Gu (Gu Xin) (1992) shows us how many of the studies in mainland China on the May Fourth Movement have served political purposes. In the official CCP historiography the movement has been portrayed as the endpoint of the "old democratic revolution" (旧民主主义革命 *jiù mínzhǔ zhǔyì géming*) and the starting point of a "new democratic revolution" (新民主主义革命 *xīn mínzhǔ zhǔyì géming*) in China. Besides being a historical turning point, the movement has been depicted as a prelude to the CCP itself. According to this version, the May Fourth Movement was the last stage of the struggle against feudalism and the CCP was the leader of this struggle.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> For a fairly comprehensive list on the studies of the May Fourth Movement see Guojia Tushuguan Cankao Zu 2009.

<sup>83</sup> Dolezelova-Velingerova & Wang D. 2001, 1-3.

<sup>84</sup> According to Gu, typical example of Marxist interpretation of the May Fourth Movement is Ding Shouhe's and Yin Xuyi's book 从五四启蒙运动到马克思主义的传播 (*From May Fourth Enlightenment Movement to the Spread of Marxism*) [1979]. Gu 1992, 36-37, 76-77.

Recently, there has been a critical tendency to question the sanctification of this movement<sup>85</sup>. The overemphasis of this movement has undoubtedly deemphasized the significance of the developments in pre-May Fourth period and developments that took place simultaneously, but outside these antitraditional university circles. My intention is not to ‘revitalize’ or to ‘rescue’ the appreciation of this movement as such. Although I do believe that this period of time in Chinese history was certainly a very significant one, my goal is to continue to challenge sanctified readings of this movement.

In 1960, when Chow Tse-tung’s work about the movement was first published, Chow called the movement an “intellectual revolution”. About 25 years later, Vera Schwarcz (1986) decided to call it “Chinese Enlightenment”. Schwarcz began her work by asking what was modern China’s answer to Kant’s question “what is Enlightenment?”. According to Schwarcz, Chinese intellectuals had to ask and answer Kant’s question in their own terms. Enlightenment in the Chinese context meant “a program of disenchantment that would replace religious superstitions with truths derived from the realm of nature”. Schwarcz differentiated the “advocates of Enlightenment” from the “purely patriotic revolutionaries” by stating that, unlike the latter group, the former group refused to place the blame for China’s backwardness on outside aggressors.<sup>86</sup> The movement has also been called Enlightenment by Li Zehou (1987), who has approached the May Fourth Movement as a kind of battlefield of two competing tendencies, Enlightenment (启蒙 *qǐméng*) and salvation (救亡 *jiùwáng*), of which the latter finally won out<sup>87</sup>. Lydia Liu (1995) notes that both Li and Schwarcz take the grand narrative of the European Enlightenment as a “fixed, unproblematic site of meaning against which the success (or failure) of the Chinese Enlightenment is to be measured”. Liu argues that the Chinese Enlightenment was capable of creating its own meanings and terms of interpretation.<sup>88</sup>

More critical distance to these comparisons between Western and Chinese development stages has similarly been suggested by Sun Lung-kee (2008). He claims that the depictions of the movement as a “Renaissance” or “Enlightenment” have “always served a sanctifying purpose”. That is to say, these analogies have been used to elevate the importance of the movement as if it

<sup>85</sup> See especially Gu 1992; Dolezelova-Velingerova & Kral 2001; Chow, K., Hon & Price 2008.

<sup>86</sup> Schwarcz was, of course, well aware of Chen Boda’s usage of the term in the 1930s and clearly distanced her own work from the CCP project. Schwarcz 1986, 1-3. Kant’s original text Schwarcz was referring to is *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* Kant 1784.

<sup>87</sup> Li, Z. 1987, 7-50. About Enlightenment and salvation, see also Huang, Z. 1989; Gu 1992, 33-59. Although Lee Ou-fan Lee did not write about a Renaissance or Enlightenment, nevertheless he has also focused on comparing Chinese and Western periods of development. He says that it is unfortunate that most scholars in Chinese studies have been “unwilling and unprepared to tackle issues of modernity”. According to Lee, Chinese modernity within literature was achieved through “a performative declaration”. This means that although Chinese intellectuals borrowed some Western concepts to express a sense of Chinese modernity, they were not engaged in “the full semantic context of modern Western modernity”. As a result, Lee calls May Fourth “intellectual project” an “incomplete modernity”. Lee 2001, 31-34.

<sup>88</sup> Liu, L. 1995, 83-84.

was not significant enough without such comparisons.<sup>89</sup> Yü Ying-shih (2001) has also challenged the meaningfulness and validity of these comparisons. Yü states that we should try to understand May Fourth “in its own terms” instead of getting entangled with these analogies. Thus, it is less misleading to talk about “new culture” and “new thought” than Renaissance or Enlightenment.<sup>90</sup>

In this study, the perspective to the May Fourth Movement follows Yü’s suggestions as the stand is that *ex post facto* classifications and names of the movement tend to direct our attention away from the more contextual perspectives of the intellectual interactions of the period. Thus, these writings whether or not the Movement should be seen as a “Renaissance”, an “Enlightenment” or a “fin de siècle” inform us less about the interactions during the movement itself than about our own academic interactions of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

This problematic nature of the mentioned *ex post facto* classifications and designations is also evident in some views on the ideological commitments of the period. For instance, in his classic book on the movement Chow Tse-tung (1960) dedicated one chapter to the “ideological and political split” between 1919 and 1921. Chow divided the May Fourth authors into four major “intellectual groups”: liberals, leftists, Guomintang members, and Progressive Party members. Chow himself commented on the classification: “For convenience of discussion, we may ignore minor complications and classify the intellectuals into four major groups...”<sup>91</sup>

One obvious “minor complication” in this classification is that it uses a different classification method for different groups. On the one hand, ‘liberals’ and ‘leftists’ refer to ideology and, on the other hand, Kuomintang and Progressive Party groups are defined by party memberships – regardless of the ideas these members might have possessed. Furthermore, Chow’s division between “leftists” and “liberals” is itself somewhat uncertain and Chow admitted that neither of these labels was used during that period. He used “leftist” to include all the “radical factions” who advocated “extreme social, economic, and political changes, except purely nationalistic revolutionaries”. Chow named Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1888-1927)<sup>92</sup> as the key members of the group. Chow used “Liberals” to refer to those authors who “advocated freedom of thought and expression” and who tended to stress “democratic procedures”. The

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<sup>89</sup> Although Sun criticized these analogies, he also went on to suggest another analogy: “My contention is that the May Fourth era was closer both in time and spirit to the European fin de siècle than it was to the Enlightenment, not to mention the Renaissance”. Sun 2008, 271, 279.

<sup>90</sup> Yü 2001, 312. Also David Der-Wei Wang has commented critically attempts to squeeze China into Western models of modernity and post modernity and has claimed that Qing fiction actually included many modernities. Wang, D. 2001, 259.

<sup>91</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 215-216.

<sup>92</sup> Like many other prominent May Fourth figures, Li Dazhao had studied in Japan. From February 1918 onwards he was the chief librarian at the Beijing University and concurrently a professor of history, economics and political science from September 1920. He was also one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party. For a biography of Li see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, 329-333.

key figures of the group were, according to Chow, Hu Shi, Cai Yuanpei, Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉 (1865-1953)<sup>93</sup>, Gao Yihan 高一涵 (1885-1968)<sup>94</sup>, Tao Menghe 陶孟和 (1887-1960), Jiang Menglin, Zhang Weici 張慰慈 (1890 - ?)<sup>95</sup> and Tao Xingzhi 陶行知 (1891-1946).<sup>96</sup>

It clearly seems that a great majority of writers in the reform-minded journals of the period advocated freedom of thought and expression. At least Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao defended them<sup>97</sup>. Thus, it is misleading to give credit of this advocacy only to a very limited group of people.<sup>98</sup>

Before some of the May Fourth authors began to write about Marxism and explain affairs through the class struggle framework, there were other isms and frameworks in use which underlined certain problems and certain solutions for a better future. In the existing scholarship this point is usually neglected, as if there was nothing political in the writings before the so-called radicalization, or if there was something, it was not significant. Surely, the 'mutual aid language' that was inspired by Kropotkin's writings, could be seen less important if our evaluating criterion is determined by subsequent developments in Chinese politics and the language used within it. This becomes especially evident if we compare the mutual aid language to the class struggle language that was used, in one form or another, for decades after the May Fourth period. If we want to enhance the contextual understanding of the advancement of the class struggle framework, it is not possible without taking into consideration other frameworks in use. Besides, it is also worthwhile to attempt to bring out 'the history of the losers' of the story.<sup>99</sup> This side of history is important because it helps us to understand the

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<sup>93</sup> Wu Zhihui was interested in anarchist thought. He became later a prominent member in the GMD. More about Wu, see Zarrow 1990, 60-72.

<sup>94</sup> Gao Yihan was a professor of political science at Beijing University from 1918 to 1927. In 1927 he moved to Law and Politics University in Shanghai. For more about Gao, see Lin, X. 2005. pp. 169-170.

<sup>95</sup> Zhang was a faculty member of political science at Beijing University in the 1920s and 1930s. For more about Zhang, see Lin, X. 2005, 171-173.

<sup>96</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 215-216. Hu Shi wanted to concentrate on the cultural and language reform and was not eager to comment on politics or discuss political theories. Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, on the other hand, were willing to do this and this was one of the main reasons why they established the *Weekly Critic* journal. This dividing line seems to correspond, at least partly, to Chow's division between "leftists" and "liberals".

<sup>97</sup> For examples of articles where Chen and Li defend freedom of speech and freedom of thought, or both, see Li Dazhao. *Dangerous Ideas and Freedom of Speech*. 危險思想與言論自由. *Weekly Critic*. No. 24. June 1919. HDB; Chen Duxiu. *Law and Freedom of Speech*. 法律與言論自由. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 1. December 1919. HDB.

<sup>98</sup> Besides Chow for instance Jerome Grieder has also used categories 'liberals' and 'radicals'. By 'liberals' Grieder has called May Fourth intellectuals who wanted to stay 'out of politics' and who stressed cultural reforms instead. See Grieder 1989. This standpoint could also become misleading if one assumes that the writings of these liberal authors were somehow more neutral than the ones that are called 'radicals'.

<sup>99</sup> Reinhart Koselleck has said, referring to Walter Benjamin, that there is no reason why conceptual history should not celebrate also the ones who have been defeated. Koselleck, Fernandez Sebastian & Fuentes 2006, 27-28.



literary interactions of the period, whereas 'the history of the winners' versions tend to annul the significance of these interactions and disagreements in order to create a more consistent and logical narrative of their own past<sup>100</sup>.

Customary categories, such as leftists and liberals, do not necessarily inform us much about the viewpoints of the individuals we try to understand. This is because these ideological categories fail to get a hold of changing viewpoints and different combinations of various frameworks. By analyzing the language instead, it is possible to provide interpretations which are better contextualized and which take the dynamics of intellectual interactions into consideration. Even if some styles of constructing the external reality seem to be impossible to fit into certain fixed ideological categories, it does not mean that these writings would be meaningless. Especially in cases where authors waver between different ideas and ideologies a scholar writing about ideologies might have to twist and remould the original ideas in order to fit them to these compartments. Presumably, this is what Chow meant by "minor complications".

As this study concentrates on the introduction of class struggle language to Chinese readership, it naturally is related also to the studies on the origins of the Chinese Communist Party. The origins of the party have been at the center of numerous studies before. For the readership in Europe and in North America the most well-known studies on the origins of this party are probably Benjamin Schwartz's *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* [1951] and Arif Dirlik's *The Origins of Chinese Communism* [1989]. In addition, Michael Luk's *The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism* [1990], Maurice Meisner's *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* [1968] and Lee Feigon's *Chen Duxiu: Founder of the Chinese Communist Party* [1983] are all well-known studies on the subject.

Despite the abundant merits of the existing scholarship, these works have failed to pay proper attention to the transformations and struggles on political language and concepts that took place in the forums Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and other relevant authors wrote for before the establishment of the party. It seems that these issues have been set aside because the authors have been trying to answer other questions seen to be more pertinent ones, such as what 'caused' the communist movement in China or how communism was 'transplanted' to China<sup>101</sup>. Mutual understandings on the meanings of historical events, prevailing circumstances and the prevailing thought trends are always created with the use

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<sup>100</sup> Studies on Chinese anarchism are one example of the 'history of the losers'. Some authors, like Michael Gasster, have downplayed the importance of anarchism in Chinese modern political thought whereas Peter Zarrow has claimed that early 20th century anarchism left a permanent influence on Chinese communism. Zarrow 1990, 29-30; Zarrow 2005, 140.

<sup>101</sup> For instance Shao Weizheng's article on thought trends and trend of Marxism in this context does not pay attention struggles related to words and concepts. Although Shao writes about struggle, at the end is the 'reality' that proved the validity of Marxism, not argumentation, rhetoric and certain use of words and concepts. Shao 1991. Also Arif Dirlik tends to belittle the importance changes in language level, if the "essential premises" of the related theories were not fully grasped. Dirlik 1978, 19-20. Conceptual arrangements of the early days of the Chinese communist movement have been studied before by Timothy John Stanley in his MA thesis at the University of British Columbia in 1981. In his study, Stanley concentrated largely on the *Communist* journal that was established in 1920. Stanley 1981.

of language. Language should not be seen as a neutral medium that is used to 'describe' the outside world, but it should be seen as a device that is used to create meanings. That is, events and phenomena do not carry meanings within them; meanings are attached to them by speech acts, written or spoken. Therefore, when we aim at interpreting ideological developments of political movements, we should pay special attention to language and concepts that are used to give meanings to the 'outside world'. Politics is not passive behaviour, mere reactions to circumstances. It is always also action, active interpretation and struggles between different understandings of the needs and necessities of the environments in which people organize their communal life. These struggles involve persuasion, argumentation and rhetoric. The relationship between language and 'the outside world' has not been problematized, and has been largely neglected, in the existing research literature on the May Fourth Movement. Use of words and concepts has been treated as something of only secondary importance. This has made it easier to canonize the movement and to create depictions in which the movement was a part of a 'necessary' continuum of the rise of Marxism and the triumph of the CCP.

Collective understanding of complex things around us, from beginning to end, is based on communication and language use. This might not be the case when it comes to relatively simple issues. For example, we could agree that 'it rains' even if we do not say anything. When the question is about more broad and complicated issues such as the 'development of society', 'economic crisis' or 'world trends', communication inevitably comes into play. Expressing one's views or reaching an agreement on the nature of such things is impossible without communication and use of words. Dealing with this type of complex issue involves concepts without which discussion on, for instance, the development of society, would become very difficult. Customarily, there are certain concepts that seem to appear in the center of debates all over the world in modern politics. When people exchange their views on how to develop their society, they talk about concepts such as freedom and liberty, equality, democracy, individuality, justice and others. How these concepts are used and what kinds of specific meanings are attached to them varies from one context to another. These things may vary also from one individual to another in the same context. Even though the views about the needs and necessities of the situations people are acting in might differ from each other substantially, they might still use similar words to promote their ideas. Because of this, concepts such as democracy have been given very different meanings during different times and in different places. This is not to say that the 'key concepts' would always be the same, regardless of the context in question. There are contextual peculiarities and a scholar should be able to recognize the most important concepts in the context one is studying.

The purpose here is not to identify any ideas 'behind ideological debates' or to 'go inside someone's mind' and enter the thought-processes of theorists. Rather, the aim is to understand their beliefs, so far as possible, by grasping their concepts and following their distinctions and ways of argumentation. The texts

they left behind are, after all, the only evidence of their beliefs. This matter should not be approached by making any assumptions in advance of the correct ‘meanings’ of concepts, but the meaning should be studied by studying what can be done with them in argumentation.<sup>102</sup> It would be an embarrassing error to explain their concepts by using meanings that are given in our own language in our own time, and this is why the only sensible method to avoid these anachronisms is to study how different concepts interact with each other in the text under study. This does not mean, however, that some kind of ‘truth’ of the authors’ beliefs can be revealed by this kind of approach; the point here is only that this approach gives the most sensible basis for interpretation.

Michael Freeden (1996), whose research concentrated on ideologies, writes that rhetoric is inextricably connected with ideological language and even insincere rhetoric displays many of the characteristic of genuine belief-systems.<sup>103</sup> The distinction between what authors wrote and what their ‘true beliefs’ were, is not a pertinent one, not to mention how difficult such a distinction is to make. In some cases an author might try to avoid problems of fitting other authors into ideological groups by diminishing the importance of some problematic writings by interpreting them as something that was not in accordance with author’s true beliefs or that the author had not yet properly understood the given ideology. In this study these ‘problematic writings’ (writings that seem to contradict customary ideological border lines) are taken seriously as the question is not when and how some of these authors reached a certain level of ideological orthodoxy<sup>104</sup>. The focus is on the heterodoxy of different ideas and their use in political languages. According to the basic tenets of social constructivism, language constructs the way we perceive the world surrounding us. This is true also with ideas and ideologies: one should not take a certain version of some ideology as obvious, but should pay attention to different versions of it and the interplay between these competing versions in certain contexts.

#### 1.4 Research Material

The primary research material of this study consists of five different May Fourth journals: *New Youth* (新青年 *Xīn Qīngnián*), *New Tide* (新潮 *Xīn Cháo*), *Weekly Critic* (每週評論 *Měizhōu Pínglùn*), *Young China* (少年中國 *Shàonián Zhōngguó*) and *Citizen* (國民 *Guómín*)<sup>105</sup>. During the May Fourth period, the

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<sup>102</sup> Skinner 2002, 3-7.

<sup>103</sup> Freeden 1996/2008, 35-36.

<sup>104</sup> The question of ideological orthodoxy is equally complex one in later Chinese versions of Marxism. See Gregor 1995, 10, 34, 262.

<sup>105</sup> Besides these five, the collected works of some central authors, such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, GMD publications *Construction* (建設) and *Weekly Review* (星期評論), and early

amount of newly established journals was exceptional. According to some estimates, there were no less than 400 journals available<sup>106</sup>. Most of these journals were short-lived and remained relatively unknown. In this study the research material consists of those journals that had more stable financial backing and were thus able to maintain more or less steady publishing activities. Although these journals are perhaps the most well-known of the May Fourth period, one should still be careful in extending the findings of this study to other May Fourth journals: the May Fourth Movement was not a unified movement and different journals had their own preferences.

The scope of the themes discussed in these journals was wide. Although in this study the main focus is on the articles that dealt with themes such as the industrialization of China, international relations and political theory, these journals also included many articles on literature, poetry, language reform and education in general.

#### 1.4.1 New Youth<sup>107</sup>

The *New Youth* was established in 1915 in Shanghai by Chen Duxiu. Originally, the title of the publication was *Youth* (青年 *Qīngnián*). It is and was the most well-known May Fourth publication. As mentioned above, the establishment of this journal has also been associated with the beginning of the New Culture Movement<sup>108</sup>. It was also more lasting than most of the others; the journal ceased operation in 1926. According to Lin Yu-sheng (1979), *New Youth* was the journal that started the radical antitraditionalism of the New Culture and May Fourth Movements. The origin of *New Youth* was related to Yuan Shikai's attempts to reinstate the monarchy in China. The journal was established only one month after the Yuan's monarchical movement was officially launched. Yuan had tried to manipulate Confucianism for his own purposes and with the support of Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927)<sup>109</sup> he tried to establish Confucianism as a state religion. Related to this, the main theme in the early days of *Youth* was anti-Confucianism.<sup>110</sup> The purpose of the journal was declared to be the reformation of the thought and behaviour of youth<sup>111</sup>.

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CCP publications *Communist* (共產黨) and *Labour Circles* (勞動界) have been used as auxiliary research material.

<sup>106</sup> Kwok 1965, 14.

<sup>107</sup> For a more detailed description on the establishment of the journal, see Chow, T. 1960/1967, 42-48.

<sup>108</sup> Dirlik 1989, 58; Li, Z. 1987, 8; Gu 2001, 591.

<sup>109</sup> Kang was a scholar and a late-Qing reformer. He was a leading figure in the 100 days reform in 1898. For more about Kang, see for instance Hsiao 1975.

<sup>110</sup> Lin, Y. 1979, 7, 69-71. Chen's previous journal *The Tiger* (甲寅雜誌 *Jiǎyín Zázhì*) had been suspended by Yuan Shikai in 1915. Also many other *New Youth* contributors, such as Li Dazhao and Gao Yihan, had contributed to *The Tiger*. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 44-45.

<sup>111</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 45.

During the early years, 1915-1917, of the journal, Chen Duxiu managed the journal largely by himself. From January 1918 onwards the journal was run by a six member editorial committee that consisted of Chen himself, Qian Xuantong 钱玄同 (1887-1939), Hu Shi, Li Dazhao, Liu Bannong 劉半農 (1891-1934) and Shen Yinmo 沈尹默 (1883-1971). The editorship of individual issues was circulated between members of this editorial board. Starting from 1918, the journal almost exclusively used vernacular language in its articles. The French title *La Jeunesse* was added to the journal in January 1919. Other well-known authors, such as Gao Yihan, joined the editorial board later. The editorial board convened once a month. Besides the board itself, major contributors, such as Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967)<sup>112</sup>, also joined these meetings that decided on the policies of the journal.<sup>113</sup> The circulation of *New Youth* in its early days was about 1000, but it rose to about 16 000<sup>114</sup>.

*New Youth* was a monthly journal and its publishing activities were on a more stable ground than the activities of most of the other May Fourth publications. Between late 1918 and the summer 1921, there were three breaks in publication. The first one took place between April (Vol. 6. No. 4.) and November (Vol. 6. No. 6.) in 1919, the second between May (Vol. 7. No. 6.) and September in 1920 (Vol. 8. No. 1.) and the third one between January 1921 (Vol. 8. No. 5.) and April 1921 (Vol. 8. No. 6.). During the first disruption of activities, only one issue (Vol. 6. No. 5.) was published. This special issue on Marxism was supposed to be published in May 1919, but it did not come out until September<sup>115</sup>. The reason for this interruption was the May Fourth incident and official measures after it: the journal was temporarily closed down and Chen Duxiu was taken into custody. After his release in September 1919, Chen established the New Youth society that consisted of the editorial board and the main contributors. At this point, the journal also moved from Beijing back to Shanghai. The second break of publication is related to the breakdown of the New Youth society in the summer of 1920. People such as Hu Shi, Qian Xuantong, Liu Bannong, Lu Xun, and Zhou Zuoren left and the journal was again in Chen Duxiu's personal control who, by the time, had established contacts with the Comintern. The journal ran into troubles in Shanghai when the secret police raided their facilities in February 1921. This event caused the third disruption of activities and it led to the move of the journal to Guangzhou.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Zhou Zuoren was a brother of Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren). During the May Fourth period he worked at the Beijing University and was a well-known essayist and a translator of Western fiction into Chinese. For a biography of Zhou, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 1, 424-427.

<sup>113</sup> Lee 2001, 43; Chow, T. 1960/1967, 42-48.

<sup>114</sup> Feigon 1983, 112-116.

<sup>115</sup> Yang 1989, 614.

<sup>116</sup> Already before 1919, the journal had been printed in Shanghai, but it had been edited in Beijing from 1917 until Chen's arrest. The journal decided to cease its monthly publication activities in late 1921 and the final issue came out in July 1922. The journal resumed publication as a quarterly in June 1923 with Qu Qiubai as its editor. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 42-48.

### 1.4.2 New Tide

*New Tide* journal was a monthly publication of a New Tide student society at the Beijing University<sup>117</sup>. This journal was published between 1919 and 1922. Originally, the idea of setting up a new tide student society came from Fu Sinian 傅斯年 (1896-1950)<sup>118</sup>, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) and Xu Yanzhi 徐彥之 (1897-1940). They were joined by Luo Jialun and others. Hu Shi acted as advisor to the group. The first formal meeting of the society took place in October 1918 and the first issue of the journal came out in January 1919. Luo Jialun supported the Chinese name 新潮 (*New Tide*) for the journal. There had been a journal with the same name in Japan a decade earlier. Although Luo's suggestion prevailed the journal also used an English sub-title *Renaissance*. This idea was originally Hu Shi's and had been supported by Xu. Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao helped the journal financially and Li also acted as an advisor in the management of the journal.<sup>119</sup>

At first, the editor-in-chief of the journal was Fu Sinian and Luo Jialun worked as the editor. In November 1919 Luo succeeded Fu, who moved to England to continue his studies. Zhou Zuoren was the only New Tide member who came from the faculty, all others were students. Zhou joined the society in May 1920 and he became the editor-in-chief in October 1920. The activities of this group began to slow down in late 1920 as many of the key members moved abroad to continue their studies. The final issue of *New Tide* came out in March 1922.<sup>120</sup>

Partly related to the advisory role of Hu Shi, *New Tide* is usually referred as a more 'liberal journal' compared to *New Youth* and *Weekly Critic* that were led by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. The New Tide society did not, however, possess a coherent political view. For instance, one of its key members, Tan Pingshan 譚平山 (1887-1956)<sup>121</sup>, wrote about socialism on the pages of *New Tide* and he was later a prominent member in the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>117</sup> For a more detailed description on the establishment of the journal, see Chow, T. 1960/1967, 55-57. On the New Tide Society, see Schwarcz 1986, 67-76. For a complete list of members, see Schwarcz 1986, 303-308.

<sup>118</sup> Fu Sinian was one of the student leaders of the May Fourth demonstrators. Later he became the director of Academia Sinica's institute of history and philology. During the Sino-Japanese war he acted as director of the Academia Sinica. For a biography of Fu see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 1, 43-46.

<sup>119</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 55-57; Sun 2008, 272.

<sup>120</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 55-57.

<sup>121</sup> Tan Pingshan was one of the editors of *New Tide*. In 1921 he took part in organizing a CCP cell in Guangzhou. For a biography of Tan see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 3, 217-220.

<sup>122</sup> Schwarcz 1986, 68.

### 1.4.3 Citizen

*Citizen*, like *New Tide*, was a student journal of the students from Beijing University. It was a journal of “Students for Saving the Nation Society” (學生救國會 *Xúesheng Jiùguó Huì*) and it was published between 1919 and 1921. The journal and the society were established by students who had returned from Japan in 1918. These students in Japan had demanded the return of Shandong to China. They organized demonstrations that were suppressed by the Japanese officials. As a protest many Chinese students decided to return to China. The main themes of the journal were opposing warlords and Japanese imperialism. Central figures in this journal were Xu Deheng 許德珩 (1890-1990)<sup>123</sup>, Zhang Guotao and Deng Zhongxia 鄧中夏 (1894-1933). This journal was funded mainly by the Citizen Society that was established to support the journal. According to Chow (1960), among the many student groups organized in Beijing University at this time, New Tide Society and Citizen Society were the most influential ones.<sup>124</sup> According to Zhang Guotao (1971), more than 100 students took part in activities related to *Citizen*. Zhang himself was the head of the circulation department.<sup>125</sup>

Citizen Society had many things in common with the New Tide Society. The leading members of these societies, especially Fu Sinian, Luo Jialun and Xu Deheng, had been the key architects of the May Fourth incident. Furthermore, both of these societies started publishing their monthly journal in January 1919. In comparison to *New Youth* and *New Tide*, *Citizen* had, especially in its early days, a more patriotic outlook. This is to say, “saving the nation” was a theme constantly upheld. Chen Duxiu had more reservations concerning this student society than Li Dazhao who supported it, but Chen also began to support the journal after the May Fourth incident. Although Cai Yuanpei wrote an introduction to the journal, he did not approve the patriotic line of the journal. Because of Cai’s unappreciative attitude, unlike *New Tide*, *Citizen* was not allowed to use the facilities of Beijing University.<sup>126</sup>

At first, the journal used classical Chinese in its articles. It turned to vernacular only after the May Fourth incident. Because of this, some of the authors who were against the language reform supported by *New Youth* and *New*

<sup>123</sup> Xu Deheng was one of the most influential student leaders of the May Fourth Movement. After his studies he held professorships in social sciences in Chinese universities from the 1920s to the 1940s. He joined the communist government in 1949. For a biography of Xu, see Klein & Clark 1971, vol. 1, 361-363.

<sup>124</sup> Originally, the name of the society was the Patriotic Society of Students (學生愛國會 *Xúesheng Àiguó Huì*). Xu Deheng was also one of the students involved in setting fire to Cao Rulin’s house. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 81-82, 97; Schwarcz 1986, 18-19, 86-90; Dirlik 1989, 159.; Zhang, Yin, Hong & Wang Y. 1979, 690-691; Li, Z. 1987, 15-16.

<sup>125</sup> Chang, K. 1971, 49.

<sup>126</sup> Schwarcz 1986, 86-90; Zhang, Yin, Hong & Wang, Y. 1979, 723-726.

*Tide* wrote first for *Citizen*. According to Xu Deheng, Li Dazhao played a key role in journal's decision to start using the vernacular.<sup>127</sup>

#### 1.4.4 Weekly Critic

*Weekly Critic* was a rather short-lived (1918-1919) journal. It was founded in December 1918 by Li Dazhao, Zhang Shenfu 張申府 (1893-1986)<sup>128</sup> and Chen Duxiu – the same group that would two years later prepare the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party. The original reason for establishing *Weekly Critic* was that it provided a channel for Chen and Li to be able to comment on politics more freely than was possible in *New Youth*<sup>129</sup>. This type of more direct criticism of the existing power elite also led to the speedy suppression of the journal in the summer of 1919.<sup>130</sup> During its short lifespan, this weekly publication was able to publish 37 issues. Although *Weekly Critic* did not last long, it did arouse wide interest among Chinese intellectuals and students. According to Li Zehou (1987), there were at least 400 different weekly journals trying to follow the style of *Weekly Critic*<sup>131</sup>.

In the introduction of the journal, Chen Duxiu connected the establishment of the journal with the defeat of Germany in the First World War. For Chen, this was a sign of the triumph of 'reason' (公理 *gōnglǐ*) over 'power' (強權 *qiángquán*) and this journal was supposed to support this course of development.<sup>132</sup> In more concrete words, Chen was hoping for the defeat of those who maintained their privileges with the help of their sheer power in China and in East Asia. In China this meant the defeat of warlords, especially Duan Qirui's 段祺瑞 (1865-1936) power regime in Beijing<sup>133</sup>. In East Asia, this meant the defeat of the military power of Japan.

#### 1.4.5 Young China

The Young China Association (少年中國學會 *Shàonián Zhōngguó Xuéhuì*) was initially established in June 1918. Like the Students for Saving the Nation, this society was also established by students who had returned from Japan. Many members belonged to both of these societies (for instance Huang Rikui 黃日葵

<sup>127</sup> Zhang, Yin, Hong & Wang, Y. 1979, 723-726.

<sup>128</sup> Zhang taught logic at the preparatory school for Beijing University. He held close connections with Bertrand Russell. Zhang joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. More about Zhang see Schwarcz 1992.

<sup>129</sup> According to Shao Weizheng, also Hu Shi took part in the editing work of the journal when Chen Duxiu was arrested in 1919. Shao 1991, 90.

<sup>130</sup> Meisner 1968/1973, 103; Chow, T. 1960/1967, 57; Dirlik 1989, 33.

<sup>131</sup> Li, Z. 1987, 15-16.

<sup>132</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Opening Words for Weekly Critic*. 每週評論發刊詞. *Weekly Critic*. No. 1. December 1918.

<sup>133</sup> More about Duan, about his rise to power and about his conflicts with other warlords see Chi 1976, 18-32.



(1898-1930), Xu Deheng, Zhang Guotao and Deng Zhongxia). The leading members in this society were Wang Guangqi 王光祈 (1891-1936)<sup>134</sup> and Zeng Qi 曾琦 (1892-1951). Li Dazhao also belonged to this society. This association was not active until the May Fourth incident. The society began to publish its journal, *Young China*, one year after the initial establishment the society, in July 1919. At this point, the society had 74 members. Later on the number exceeded 100. Most of the participants were students, educators and journalists. The society was to support scientific spirit in order to create “Young China”.<sup>135</sup> Unlike the New Tide society and Students for Saving the Nation, the Young China Association was not only a society of the Beijing University. It had side branches also in Nanjing, Chengdu, and Paris. Many of the members came from other cities, such as Shanghai, Tianjin or Guangzhou. The society remained active until 1925.<sup>136</sup>

In its publishing activities *Young China* was able to maintain stability and the journal was able to publish regularly. The Young China Association also established another less well-known journal in Shanghai in January 1920 titled *Young World* (少年世界 *Shàonián Shìjiè*). As was the case with other student societies of the day, the Young China Association was also heterogeneous in terms of ideological inclinations. In the Nanjing conference in July 1921, the society’s attitude towards socialism aroused controversies. Representatives from Beijing, such as Deng Zhongxia and Huang Rikui supported commitment to socialism, whereas others, such as Zeng Qi and Li Huang 李璜 (1895-1991)<sup>137</sup>, opposed the idea of taking Soviet Russia and Lenin as models for Young China.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Wang was a friend of Li Dazhao and he wrote also for *Weekly Critic*. He moved to Germany to continue his studies in 1920. More about Wang, see Gustafsson Chen 1998, 36-45.

<sup>135</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 80, 188-189.

<sup>136</sup> Zhang, Yin, Hong & Wang, Y. 1979, 218, 350-351.

<sup>137</sup> Li Huang was one of the founders of Young China Association in 1918 and China Youth Party in 1923. For a biography of Li see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, 302-304.

<sup>138</sup> Zhang, Yin, Hong & Wang, Y. 1979, 284-285, 350-351.

## 2 POLITICAL LANGUAGES AND TIME

Michael Schoenhals (1992) states that contemporary literature on China has very little to say about the political uses of language and that the literature on language in politics is rarely ever about China<sup>139</sup>. Studies on language in Chinese politics and Chinese rhetoric have remained in the background, since then there has been more work in this field. For example, Lu Xing (1998, 2001) has studied ancient Chinese rhetorical tradition and has written a rhetorical analysis of the Chinese Culture Revolution, and furthermore Alan Kluver (1996) has studied the legitimation of Chinese economic reforms from a rhetorical perspective<sup>140</sup>. Moreover, Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng (2009) have conducted research on 'key concepts' of Chinese politics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>141</sup>. Still, the overall number of studies concentrating on political uses of language appears to be modest. Perhaps, the apparent reason for this lack of interest in the political usage of language within the May Fourth Movement is that persuasive elements of language use may be seen as somehow less important than 'concrete events' or 'ideological' developments of the period. The standpoint in the current study is that the only sensible way to approach 'ideologies' is through language use, through rhetorical documents<sup>142</sup>. Ideologies should not and cannot be separated from the language that is used to express them.

When studying movements that aim at reform, one should also pay attention to language and rhetoric. Robert Cathcart states that political movements are

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<sup>139</sup> Schoenhals 1992, vii.

<sup>140</sup> Lu 1998; Lu 2001; Lu 2004; Kluver 1996. Also for instance Huang Shaorong has studied Cultural Revolution rhetoric. See Huang, S. 2001.

<sup>141</sup> Jin & Liu 2009. See also Jin & Liu 2005.

<sup>142</sup> Michael Freeden has also stressed the importance of language in studying ideologies. For those, who want to draw a dividing line between 'genuine ideological assertions' and 'exercises of rhetoric', this connection between ideology and language could be a problematic one. Freeden has offered four different answers to this problem: 1) the scholar should study the context carefully in order to find out possible traces of this difference (between genuine beliefs and rhetoric); 2) the question of sincerity of beliefs is actually not pertinent one, because mass consumption of ideologies is of equal importance; 3) rhetoric is inextricable from ideological language; 4) even insincere rhetoric will display many of the features of genuine belief-systems. Freeden 1996/2008, 1-9, 35-36.

essentially rhetorical in nature and they are carried forward through language. Moral conflicts in societies arouse tensions. These tensions are expressed through language use.<sup>143</sup> The aim here is also to underline the possibility of conflicting interpretations of events. When we are interested in the ideological developments of the period, we should pay attention to the conflicting interpretations of events and we should not assume that in some cases there was only one possible interpretation that caused certain effects in political thought. Thus, for instance, the First World War did not cause the May Fourth authors to think in certain ways, but the interpretations of the meanings of the war were used to support certain perspectives and to denounce others.

In this chapter the theoretical backbone of this study is presented. *First*, section 2.1 presents reasons why political science should be interested in language use in the first place. *Second*, section 2.2 provides reasons why we should give more critical attention to writings about time and ‘prevailing trends’. *Third*, section 2.3 both clarifies the significance of writings about the need to adapt to the prevailing trends, and demonstrates how this need was constantly reiterated in the May Fourth periodicals. *Fourth*, section 2.4 elaborates reasons why one should pay attention to political ‘languages’ in use, instead of ‘ideologies’ in a more abstract sense.

## 2.1 Language, Historical Research and Politics

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) challenged the prevalent understanding of the role and meaning of language in his well-known *Philosophical Investigations* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*) that was published posthumously in 1953. In this book, he wrote about “language games”. These language games are, according to Wittgenstein, patterns of linguistic habits and these socially maintained patterns of language use is all there is to the “meaning” of language. All natural languages, the ones we normally use to communicate, are comprised of a family of language-games. The meaning of words lies in their use, not in any mental representation one might associate with them. Wittgenstein wrote that this simple setting is often obscured because so many meaningless questions, which are based on more abstract understandings of ‘meaning’, are asked by philosophers.<sup>144</sup> When one aims at understanding the meaning of words and concepts, one should not try to do this without taking into consideration the conventions of the context within which they were used<sup>145</sup>.

Another well-known author who focused in similar matters was J.L. Austin (1911-1960) whose series of lectures on *How to Do Things with Words* was published posthumously as a book in 1962. The starting point of Austin’s lectures

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<sup>143</sup> Cathcart 1972, 86-87.

<sup>144</sup> Wittgenstein 1953/2001, 3-11, 15-31.

<sup>145</sup> Greenleaf 1968, 117-118.

was that the role of language is not just to objectively describe a given reality. The main duty of sentences is not to state facts, being *true* if the statement is successful or *false* if the statement fails to do so. On the contrary, language should be seen as a practice that can be used to invent and affect realities. Words are not only used to report things, but to do things. Austin pointed out that only a small number of sentences have actual truth-values. Performative sentences or utterances, on the other hand, are not truth-evaluable and these kinds of expressions are not used to describe.<sup>146</sup> Wittgenstein's and Austin's ideas, which are presented in a very brief manner here, have affected many scholars and not only philosophers studying language, but also scholars focusing on various aspects in the history of political thought.

Language and conceptual settings in politics has been discussed by many authors also in fiction. According to Terence Ball, these matters have been used, in the works of Mikhail Lermontov, Honor de Balzac, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, Henry James, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Charles Dickens, Thomas Mann, Heinrich Böll, George Orwell and Milan Kundera<sup>147</sup> to name a few examples. The example of Orwell is especially felicitous as Ball brings out in this quote taken from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought?', says the bureaucrat in charge of compiling the Newspeak dictionary. 'In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept [...] will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten.'<sup>148</sup>

Dissemination of thought and ideas are always linked to language that is used to express them. The example from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an example of the relation of power to the meaning of words. Political change involves changes in the use of language. If one could control the meaning of words, one could also control thought and action.

Besides fiction, the importance of language Chinese in politics and governance has a long history dating back to Confucius 孔子 (ca. 551-479 BCE) and Mozi 墨子 (ca. 470-391 BCE). For example, 正名 *zhèngmíng*, or the 'rectification of names', is a well-known Confucian doctrine that underlines the role of language in maintaining stability and social order. Mozi was interested in the power of language.<sup>149</sup> From the point of view of power holders the ideal state of governance is the one in which words have strictly defined single meanings.

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<sup>146</sup> Austin 1962/2009, 1-11. Another well-known author who has written about speech acts is John Searle. Also in Searle's usage speech act refers to creation and invention of meanings. See Searle 1969, 16-18.

<sup>147</sup> Ball 1988, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Orwell 1949/2009, 55; Ball 1988, 3.

<sup>149</sup> About the rectification of names, see for example Legge 1893/1971, 263-264. According to Lu Xing, it was the School of Ming in China that first recognized the power of words in shaping perceptions of reality. Lu 2001, 6. About Mozi, see Pocock 1971/1989, 42, 52. Pocock has called Confucianism and Taoism as schools of political philosophy whose doctrine has been founded on the rejection of the word. Pocock 1973, 2-3.

The fact that the 'word - concept' relation cannot be perfectly controlled has always bothered those who wished to maintain the status quo.

One of the authors inspired by Wittgenstein is Quentin Skinner, who has criticized a field called the "history of ideas". Arthur Lovejoy, who is sometimes considered to be one of founders of this field, gave a lecture series in 1932-1933 that was later published as a book *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of a History of an Idea* [1936]. In this book, Lovejoy stated that the task of an intellectual historian was to uncover and trace perennial and unchanging "unit ideas" beneath the surface of ideological debate<sup>150</sup>. Skinner's (1999) version of what is and what should be meaningful historical research is different and he has called for a more contingent approach. According to Skinner, there cannot be a history of unit ideas as such, only a history of the various uses to which they have been put by different agents at different times. That is, one should not try to trace "unit ideas" beneath the surface. For Skinner, the understanding of concepts is a matter of understanding what can be done with them in argument. In other words, one should try to understand concepts through the debates in which they are used as tools and weapons.<sup>151</sup>

Besides the assumption of the existence of "unit ideas" R.G. Collingwood also questioned the assumption of the existence of "permanent problems". Collingwood, whose research work greatly inspired Skinner, questioned the assumption of "permanent problems" in his *Autobiography* in 1939. Collingwood states that if there was a permanent problem P, we could ask what Kant, Leibniz and Berkeley thought about P. But there is not such a problem. There are only a number of transitory problems P1, P2, P3 whose individual peculiarities are blurred by the "historical myopia" of the scholar who collects them together under the same name P.<sup>152</sup>

Ball (1988) explains the relevance of rhetoric and argumentation: "Who and what we are, how we arrange and classify and think about our world - and how we act in it - is deeply delimited by the conceptual, argumentative and rhetorical resources by our language". According to Ball, language is not and cannot be a morally or politically neutral medium and the concepts used in politics always have contingently contested meanings. The limits of political language mark the limits of political world.<sup>153</sup> In the current study, the contestability of the meanings given to words and concepts are the very focus. The purpose is not to compare meanings given in May Fourth journals with 'correct meanings'. The aim is, instead, to consider what kind of standpoints different meanings were related to and what kind of purpose they served.

Studies on political uses of language and concepts are important, because they help us to critically evaluate the linguistic arrangement and structures around us. Our social world is constituted by our concepts. Successful

<sup>150</sup> Lovejoy 1936, 3-23. Skinner criticizes Lovejoy in Skinner 1999, 61-62. See also Skinner 1969.

<sup>151</sup> Skinner 1999, 61-62. Kari Palonen has clarified that the intention of this type of approach is not to devalue concepts, but to make their political significance explicit. Palonen 1999, 47.

<sup>152</sup> Collingwood 1939/1987, 68-70. See also Ball 2002, 14.

<sup>153</sup> Ball 1988, ix, 4. See also Pocock 1973.

transformation in the use of a concept constitutes a change in our social world.<sup>154</sup> In this study the purpose is to pinpoint certain regularities in how the world was arranged and classified in May Fourth journals. Certain phenomena and certain ideas were repeatedly presented as threats whereas some other ideas were presented as preferable.

Before moving on, one central issue needs to be clarified, namely, the difference between concepts and words. Some authors, like Raymond Williams in his *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [1976] tend to equate the two<sup>155</sup>. Other authors, such as Quentin Skinner, tend to take a different view. According to Skinner (1989), to argue for any such equivalence is undoubtedly a mistake. Concepts are not equivalent to words and a concept might exist before there is a word to express it. Skinner also provides examples to clarify this: the poet John Milton wrote in his *Paradise Lost* [1667] that he had decided to deal with “things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme”. We could say now that he was interested in the ‘originality’ of prose, but the word ‘originality’ did not enter the English language until a century or more after Milton’s death. On the other hand, words might exist without sensible and consistent concepts behind them. As Skinner has pointed out, it is possible that general terms like ‘being’ or ‘infinity’ can be used in a whole community of language users with perfect consistency, but yet it might be possible to show that there is simply no concept which answers to any of their agreed usages. Although words and concepts cannot and should not be equated, there is still a systematic relationship between the two to be studied. Actually, studying concepts is possible only by studying words and their uses in different contexts.<sup>156</sup> A similar stance to the relation between words and concepts has also been taken by Michael Freeden (1996). According to Freeden, words are the outward forms of concepts. Terms of political discourse are the signifiers that are used to refer to political concepts that are the signified.<sup>157</sup>

The “history of ideas” has not been the only field of study which has tended to overlook the importance of the language level. Ball (1988) has noted that for instance Anglo-American analytical philosophers have often treated moral and political concepts as if they had no history and as if their having a history was an issue of little or no philosophical interest or importance<sup>158</sup>. Conceptual historians, on the other hand, have focused on the usage of concepts in particular contexts. John Pocock (1971) states that the subversion of political philosophy by linguistic analysis actually took place already in the mid-1950s. This turn was strengthened

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<sup>154</sup> Skinner 1988a, 276, 286-287.

<sup>155</sup> Williams 1976/1988. Skinner comments Williams in Skinner 1989, 6-8.

<sup>156</sup> Skinner has noted that the possession of a concept will at least “standardly” be signaled by the employment of a corresponding term. But “standardly” does not mean necessarily nor sufficiently. Skinner 1989, 15-16.

<sup>157</sup> Freeden 1996/2008, 48-50. Although the current study focuses on the relations between words and concepts, this so called representational aspect of meaning is not the only possible object of study when one studies conceptual history. One could also study the referential aspect of meaning that refers to the relations between concepts and objects. More about representational and referential aspects of meaning see Ifversen 2011, 70-73. For more about signifiers and signifieds see Saussure 1916/1966, 65-78.

<sup>158</sup> Ball 1988, 4.

by Thomas Kuhn's well-known book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. According to Pocock, this book showed that "any formalized language is a political phenomenon in the sense that it serves to constitute an authority structure". Pocock holds that the first problem in studying the history of political thought is to identify the language and vocabulary with and within which author operated and to show how it functioned.<sup>159</sup> Conceptual studies can help us, according to Skinner (2002), to provide insights into changing social beliefs and theories; insights into changing social perceptions and awareness; and insights into changing social values and attitudes<sup>160</sup>. Conceptual changes are not only changes which tell us what kind of changes took place in intellectual atmosphere and language as a result of political struggles, but these changes can also have, and often do have, a lasting impact on later developments within societies.

Political use of language does not only mean attempts to limit the possibilities of language use as in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Skinner (1999) has underlined the role of language in changing what can be said and in opening up new possibilities. According to Skinner, ideological debates are always a matter of different definitions and uses of concepts. He has also differentiated three types of conceptual changes. *First*, there are long-term shifts in which old concepts disappear or lose their former social significance. For instance, words such as "cad" or "bounder" are not commonly used in English language anymore because the patterns of conduct they were used to evaluate have lost their social significance. The *second* type includes two possible ways of conceptual change. A term that is usually used to commend an action or a state of affairs may be used to express disapproval, or a condemnatory term may be used suggest that, what is being described is deserving of praise. For example, during the Renaissance "shrewd" and "shrewdness" were in commonly used to condemn action, but later, the same expressions have been used to commend action. *Third*, an action or state of affairs may be described by means of an evaluative term that would not normally be used in the given circumstances. That is an act where an author or speaker is trying to persuade the audience by replacing a given evaluative description with a new one in order to place it in a contrasting moral light. For instance, one could call something an act of liberality instead of prodigality, or one could call something an act of carefulness instead of avarice. Skinner calls conceptual changes belonging to this third type as "rhetorical redescriptions". An "innovative ideologist", on the other hand, is someone who is engaged in these kinds of acts of manipulating a normative vocabulary. According to Skinner, Machiavelli was exceptionally audacious in this sense as he challenged the political morality of his age.<sup>161</sup>

These kinds of "rhetorical redescriptions" are commonplace in politics and in political argumentation. Opposing sides are always trying to manipulate the language in order to make their ideas to look more sensible, more righteous, more advantageous and more efficient than the ideas of the opposing side. In the

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<sup>159</sup> Pocock 1971/1989, 12-15, 25.

<sup>160</sup> Skinner 2002, 171-172.

<sup>161</sup> Skinner 1999, 64-69. More about rhetorical redescription see. Skinner 1996, 138-180.

current study, the focus is mainly in conceptual changes belonging to the second and third groups. Obviously, the ones belonging to the first group are beyond the scope of this study because of the short period of time that is in focus. The change from one political language into another includes a variety of conceptual changes which are further connected to various speech acts. New formulations need to be repeated many times and probably by various authors before the new formulation becomes widely spread and long-lasting. In the case of the May Fourth journals, especially in *New Youth*, the adoption of the class struggle language was enforced by numerous articles in which certain concepts were used in new ways. In the fifth chapter of this study these conceptual changes related to the 'radicalization' are discussed in more detail. Special attention is given to concepts of "democracy", "freedom" and "individualism".

Having said all this about the connection between language and politics on a general level, we will next proceed to a more detailed explanations on how this all is related to the writings about world trends in the May Fourth journals and what kind of aspects of politics the current approach is trying to clarify. In the following, the relation between depictions of trends, historical development and political language is further clarified and hence also the relevance and significance of research on depictions of time is brought into focus.

## 2.2 Rhetorical Approach to Time

The main focus in this study is not in any metaphysical questions about the characteristics of time in China or anywhere else. The focus is, instead, in how time and trends are depicted by doing things with words. Here, this approach is called 'rhetorical'. The following part aims to clarify what kind of rhetoric this is.

Following Kari Palonen and Hilikka Summa (1996), rhetorical studies can be classified into three types: 1) rhetoric of speeches and presentations, 2) rhetoric of argumentation, and 3) rhetoric of tropes and mental impressions. In the *first* type the focus is on speeches, texts or presentations 'in their totality'. In such studies, the scholars evaluate the skillfulness and impressiveness of presentations from the point of view of the audience. The *second* type of research, the rhetoric of argumentation, asks how different figures of speech and other rhetorical devices are used in order to strengthen the arguments. These studies focus on aspects of presentations that are aiming to change or strengthen the audience's understanding of things around them. The *third* type is based on Kenneth Burke's book *A Grammar of Motives* [1945]. In this book Burke writes about four basic "tropes": *metaphor*, *metonymy*, *synecdoche*, and *irony*. According to Burke, these are the basic dimensions of thought and understanding.<sup>162</sup> The style of studying depictions of world trends in this study belongs to level number two, that is "the rhetoric of argumentation". The depictions of world trends and of time in general are seen as attempts to affect the audience's understanding of things around

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<sup>162</sup> Palonen & Summa 1996, 10-11; Burke 1945/1962.



them. In politics it is commonplace that one tries to depict one's own policies as the 'necessary' ones, as the only possible ones. It is equally commonplace that one is trying to discredit the policies of the opposing side by making claims about their impossible nature. There are numerous ways of creating and supporting such claims. For instance, in contemporary politics, politicians often use economists to make adequate claims about the current economic situation, and necessities within it, in order to support their own economic policies. Talking and writing about time is one way of attempting to affect the ways the public sees the surrounding world and its limits of possible and impossible. References to 'the needs of the time' are often used to underline the competence and topicality of the policies one wishes to support (A is necessary in a time like this). Similarly, one can use these descriptions of time to make allegations of the old-fashioned (maybe B was sensible thing to do in the past, but not now) or premature (time is not right for C, it is too early) nature of the policies they wish to oppose.

It has been stated above that language itself is not and cannot be a morally or politically neutral medium. It has also been claimed that the meanings of concepts are contested and that a scholar should focus on different usages of concepts. Concepts related to time and depictions of time are not exceptions in this sense. The more difficult it is to define certain 'extradiscursive elements', such as trends, the more reasons we have to question representations on these elements, especially the ones that claim to be 'true representations'. Here, extradiscursive elements refer to elements that exist outside the discourse, that is, outside the language used to describe it. It might still make sense to think about trends, as something that would exist without discourses on them. But, the abstract nature of this type of element makes it impossible to define the exact nature of such things. Thus, the possibility of conflicting interpretations is ever-present in narrations on such elements.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) have written that our experience of time is understood almost entirely in metaphorical terms, through spatialization<sup>163</sup>. In other words, when we talk or write about time, we do it by using expressions about space. If speech and language use in general cannot be politically neutral, metaphorical speech is more obviously non-neutral as there are numerous possibilities of which metaphor to use. Writings about time become politically important when they are connected to decision making, negotiation, persuasion, argumentation, justifications and legitimizations. Even if one accepts that speaking about time cannot be neutral and cannot escape its interpretational nature one might still remain unconvinced. What makes depictions of time important, as there are a myriad of other areas to be covered in political language?

Pocock (1971) states that human life, as experienced in time, is disseminated in a society and it is an important part of that society's understanding of itself, of its structure, what legitimizes it, and which modes of action are possible in it<sup>164</sup>. Writings on 'the requirements of time' or on the 'nature of current period of time'

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<sup>163</sup> Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 5, 118.

<sup>164</sup> Pocock 1971/1989, 233.

are relevant because they are claims about prevailing circumstances that can be used to delimit and to redefine the scope of the 'possible'. Contradictory usages of concepts are related to contradictory versions of the world. These versions can be related to competing ideological complexes. Opposing parties seek to impose their definitions of what will count as 'truth' and 'reality'. According to Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress (1988) these attempts are decisive moments in the battle for social control and it is these battles that are fundamental in the social construction of meanings.<sup>165</sup> Usages of time speech can be seen as attempts by different authors to define the limits of the 'possible'. To use J.L. Austin's expressions, these kinds of claims do not have actual truth-value but they are often masqueraded as statements of facts<sup>166</sup>. The contestability of these claims is, at least partly, hidden and made to disappear. By using these types of claims on what the 'current period of time requires' or what kind of action is 'necessary' in order to 'keep up with progress', the policies or argumentation of the opposing side can be claimed to be 'outdated' or 'regressive'. When someone is claiming that time or trends 'require' certain kind of action, one should consider these claims suspiciously and treat them as performatives, not as objective descriptions of some imagined outer reality.

Writings on world trends in the May Fourth context did not create new 'problems' out of thin air, nor did they hide existing concrete problems. Nevertheless, they affected the emphasis of certain problems and the frames of discussion that were used to analyze them. Chinese intellectuals were concerned about issues such as development of Chinese industry, reform of the education system, regional disintegration under various warlord regimes<sup>167</sup>. How to approach and analyze these concrete issues was a question that was related to the question of what kind of ideas belonged to the prevailing world trends.

In the following sections, the May Fourth writings about 'the needs of time' are located in a wider intellectual context by discussing the styles of narrating history and unilinear time. In the existing scholarship on the Chinese conceptions of time there seems to be a consensus about the new enthusiasm of progress in the late Qing and May Fourth periods. Whether the concept of progress did exist in much earlier periods is a controversial question as will be shown below.

### 2.2.1 Cyclicity, Linearity, and Evolution

During Imperial China dynastic cycles were used in interpretations of the durations of different ruling regimes. According to Michael Loewe (1986), the idea that nature works in cyclical fashion originates from third century B.C. The major cycle consisted of birth, decay and rebirth and the changes were brought about by the alternate pressures of 陰 *yīn* and 陽 *yáng*. In this setting, it was the

<sup>165</sup> Hodge & Kress 1988/1991, 3-4, 121-123.

<sup>166</sup> Austin 1962/2009, 4.

<sup>167</sup> This disintegration culminated in the war between Zhili and Anhui warlords cliques in July 1920. Zhili clique led by Wu Peifu, Cao Kun and Zhang Zuolin was victorious in the conflict. This conflict marked the end of Duan Qirui's (Anhui leader) ascendancy. Chang, K. 1971, 97-98.

God (帝 *dì*), who was said to be in control of human destinies. Men's duty was to adapt themselves to the changing circumstances which were directed by forces bigger and stronger than humans. Strange events such as eclipses, earthquakes or appearances of comets were seen as warnings to the emperor and possible signs of the coming end of the dynasty. Because of this, it was a duty of officials to report such occurrences to the emperor.<sup>168</sup> Chan Wing-tsit (1963) locates the rise of the importance of the "cyclical theory of history" to the Han period (206 BCE-220 CE). However, the original idea of periods of chaos and order in succession is much older. This idea was already evident in the works of Mencius 孟子 (Mengzi, 372-289 BCE). According to Chan, Mencius said that every 500 years there would be a king or a sage who would put the world in order. Later, it was the Han scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 BCE) who integrated the *yin* and *yang* cosmology to the Confucian ethical framework and turned it to a definite theory. According to Chan, this cyclical interpretation of history has been "a persistent one in Chinese history" and it is not confined to the interpretation of history as it is thought to characterize all changes in human life.<sup>169</sup>

This abbreviated depiction of the cyclical conception of time is of course facile and there have been different variations of this model during different periods in China. Many authors, like Joseph Needham, Tu Wei-ming or Chen Chi-yun have also questioned the whole notion of a cyclical model of time as a principal conception during imperial China. According to Needham (1965), during the imperial period there were both conceptions, cyclicity and linearity, but the linear was the predominant one. Although the Chinese society was stable and self-regulating, the idea of scientific and social progress was there. Hence, Needham called the widespread Western belief that traditional Chinese culture was static or stagnant as "a typical occidental misconception". Needham also suggested that instead of "static" or "stagnant" we should call the society during imperial period "homeostatic" by which Needham referred to tendency to restore it to its original character.<sup>170</sup> Tu Wei-ming (1985), on the other hand, has claimed that the conception of time during the Imperial era should not be called cyclical or spiral, but transformational. By this, he refers to ancient ideas of cosmos as the unfolding of continuous creativity, that is often referred to as the "great transformation". In this transformation, it is 氣 *qì*, or 'life energy' that plays the key role. *Qì* is everywhere and the great transformation means the flow of *qì*. This transformation is indeterminate and unceasing, and there is no linearity or cyclicity.<sup>171</sup>

In more recent scholarship Chen Chi-yun (2006) has challenges the thesis about cyclical, ever-recurring time in China. Chen points out that this age-old

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<sup>168</sup> Loewe 1986, 662, 690, 711.

<sup>169</sup> Chan, W.T. 1963/1969, 72, 245-246.

<sup>170</sup> Needham 1965, 44-50.

<sup>171</sup> Tu 1985, 35-46.

thesis has been supported in the West by prominent authors like Hegel, Condorcet, Herder, Marx, Ranke, and Wittfogel. Chen questions the myth of a changeless China by pointing out that the “real history of China” has endured as many drastic changes, turmoil, and upheavals as any Western country. It is true that the dynastic histories were written in a style that suggested a cyclical concept of time. Dynastic historiographers had to decide what to include and what to exclude in a packaged dynastic history and they were aware of the limitations of that manner of representation. They also took care to make clear the complexity of marking human events into dynastic spans. Chen writes that the Chinese never claimed that real history, even dynastic history, or time ever “repeated” itself. Thus the misconception is simply a result of conventions of narrating dynastic histories.<sup>172</sup>

It is also possible to find examples of ideas of development in pre-20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese texts. For example Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), a late-Ming and early Qing philosopher, wrote that past is different from present and thus the past cannot be a pattern for today. Ancient institutions were meant to govern the ancient world, not the present one. Wang also believed that later societies were much more civilized than the earlier ones.<sup>173</sup>

Even if the role of the cyclical narrations of the dynastic histories has often been overemphasized and even if there were ideas on progress and development before, many authors have been convinced that there was ‘a change’ in the Chinese conceptions of time and history during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, Chang Hao (1987) has taken the stance that the seemingly linear view in ancient Chinese texts was still uttered within a larger cyclical framework which differed from Western views on progress<sup>174</sup>. Viren Murthy (2008), too, has held that the progressive notion of history was totally foreign to the Confucian tradition<sup>175</sup>. Moreover, Leo Ou-fan Lee (1990) has written that there was “a new historical consciousness” based on a new conception of time and human progress in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century China and this new consciousness caused changes, especially during the May Fourth period, in political persuasion and forms of literary creation. In the “popular May Fourth parlance” to be “modern” was to be “new”. This newness was defined in a context of unilinear time and unilinear sense of history that was “characteristically untraditional and western”. According to Lee, Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921) and Kang Youwei had fully embraced the unilinear thinking about time and history with faith in progress by 1895. Evolutionism entered the May Fourth discourse through the writings of Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun<sup>176</sup> and others. Lee also noted that the general outline of this change was well known by 1990 and that it had been taken for granted by most scholars but still remained little

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<sup>172</sup> Chen, C. 2006, 45-50.

<sup>173</sup> See Chan, W.T. 1963/1969, 693, 701. Chan Wing-cheuk has characterized Wang the only genuine “philosopher in history” in premodern Chinese philosophy. Chan, W.C. 2006, 115.

<sup>174</sup> Chang, H. 1987, 51-52.

<sup>175</sup> Murthy 2008, 160.

<sup>176</sup> Lu Xun referred to himself as the one who “believes only in evolution”. Pusey 1983, 206.

studied.<sup>177</sup> Huang Chun-chieh and Erik Zürcher (1995) have stated that it was the anti-Qing journal *Min Bao* (1905-1908) that was essential in this change from “cyclical time” to the “futuristic revolutionary notion of time”. This change also meant Chinese participation in the universal world history.<sup>178</sup>

Luke Kwong (2001) reiterated Lee’s (1990) statement about the lack of research on the rise of linear history in China. According to Kwong, before this period of change a cycle was central to the Chinese perception of the dynamics of the universe. If linearity was a conceptual alternative to the cycle in traditional China, as Needham had insisted, it was “more a function of human memory and mental projection than a meaning-conferring symbolic device”. Writings about history and time in linear terms of the late Qing period were something new and not a matter of reviving an old narrative style of the past. According to Kwong, the historical cycle lost its explanatory power in the face of the “unprecedented change” (未有之變局 *wèiyǒu zhī biànjú*) that became a catchphrase in the 1870s after Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823-1901), an influential Qing official, had used the expression. Also the various theories of development stages of history, which appeared during this time, were according to Kwong, evidence that there was a new discourse of change. He asserted that linear history was employed in order to enable China to enter the global age, beyond the Sinocentric cyclical world.<sup>179</sup>

The supposed change in the conceptions of time is closely related to the introduction of the evolutionary theory in China that undoubtedly set the parameters for historical narratives. For instance, Jerome Chen (1979) and James Reeve Pusey (1983) have demonstrated the massive influence of Western progressive and evolutionary depictions of history in Chinese scholarly circles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both of these authors have underlined the importance of Yan Fu’s<sup>180</sup> translation of Thomas Henry Huxley’s work *Evolution and Ethics* into Chinese as 天演論 *Tiānyǎnlùn* in 1898<sup>181</sup>. It has to be borne in mind that it was not a rigorous translation as Yan added his own ideas and interpretations about Taoism and Confucianism. To his version of *Evolution and Ethics*, Yan also added notions about Darwin that were not part of the original work.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>177</sup> Lee 1990, 110-114.

<sup>178</sup> Huang, C. & Zürcher 1995, 8.

<sup>179</sup> Kwong, 158, 170, 174-178. Diana Lin notes that Li Hongzhang was not the only author who wrote about “unprecedented change” or “great change” after the Opium Wars. There were also different terms referring to this concept, for example 創局 *chuàngjú*, 變局 *biànjú*, 世變 *shìbiàn*, 大變 *dàbiàn*. Lin, X. 2005, 6.

<sup>180</sup> Yan Fu and Liang Qichao are usually named as the most important introducers of Western science to the Chinese audience in the 1890s. According to Jerome Chen, Yan tended to invent new Chinese terms for Western words whereas Liang mainly followed Japanese translations. See Chen, Je. 1979, 198.

<sup>181</sup> Jerome Chen has noted that Yen Yung-ching had translated a few works of Herbert Spencer into Chinese already by the 1880s, but these translations remained somewhat unrecognized. According to Chen, “the intellectual atmosphere was not ready for them”. Chen, Je. 1979, 179.

<sup>182</sup> Yan Fu 1898; Pusey 1983, 164-165. According to Federico Masini, Yan preferred to use ancient expressions for foreign concepts. Despite being a well-known translator of Western

According to Jerome Chen (1979), after *Evolution and Ethics* became well-known, “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest” became the starting points of “almost all the discourses on Chinese politics and society in the 1900s”. In the writings of the period, imperialism was usually portrayed as an expansion of nationalism. It was thus justifiable and admirable and it was seen by many as a goal for China.<sup>183</sup> Pusey (1983) held that “survival of the fittest” was the most quoted Darwinian slogan and for a time it was a valid argument for almost any kind of action. Also Darwin’s name was much cherished. Pusey stated that for almost 20 years approximately everyone who had anything to say mentioned Darwin. Hence, it was Pusey’s argument that Darwin, not Hegel or Marx, revolutionized Chinese concepts of history.<sup>184</sup>

Even if it is debatable whether there was a clear change at all in the Chinese conceptions of time, there seems to be unanimity about the matter that there was a new popularity of writings on progressive history in that period. In other words, the prevalent structure of historical narratives changed with the influence of evolutionary theory. Another thing that changed was the scope of the narrative. During the late Qing period there appeared attempts to depict China as a part of world history, which was – something that was out of the question in the old sinocentric historiography. China was contracted from a world to a nation in the world, as Joseph Levenson (1968) has phrased the setting<sup>185</sup>. Tang Xiaobing (1996) has called the change in narrations of history “a historiographical revolution”. In his study, Tang has demonstrated how Liang Qichao wanted to write a Chinese history that would narrate China as a historical nation and relocate China as a member of the modern world of nation-states. Dynasty was to be replaced by the nation-state as the central actor of history.<sup>186</sup> This historiographical change, like many other changes of the period, was connected to Japan. Similar changes had taken place earlier in Japan and Chinese scholars in

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science in the early 20th century, only a few terms, such as 烏托邦 *wūtuōbāng* for ‘utopia’ and 生存 *shēngcún* for ‘to exist, to survive’, which Yan coined, have survived. Masini 1993, 115-116, 206. For more about Yan Fu’s translations see Chung 1999, 69-71. Fascination with progress and Darwinism was also related to Japan. According to Jerome Grieder, Herbert Spencer enjoyed a wide popularity in Japan. This popularity had begun already in the 1870s. By the end of the century there were more than 30 Japanese translations available. Grieder 1981, 147-148.

<sup>183</sup> Chen, Je. 1979, 69, 277. About the acceptability of imperialism in late Qing writings, see also Tang, X. 1996, 21-25, 179.

<sup>184</sup> Pusey 1983, 4, 86, 116, 193. Also in Beijing University, history and literature were approached through evolutionary perspective. See Lin, X. 2005, 91-94. Excitement with evolution in this context meant primarily social evolution. Social evolutionism can be seen as one type of philosophy of history. According to Gilbert Rist, unlike biological evolution, social evolution is based on an unverifiable teleological hypothesis. In Darwin’s biological evolutionism there was no such pre-established schema. Social evolutionism was able to gain a certain scientific credibility by its semantic proximity to Darwinism. Rist 1997/2002, 42.

<sup>185</sup> Quoted in Tang, X. 1996, 2. Levenson refers to a cosmological reconstruction from “all under heaven” (天下 *tiānxià*) concept to the concept of a nation state (國家 *guójiā*).

<sup>186</sup> Tang, X. 1996, 3, 14, 42, 72.

Japan were influenced by the Japanese experiences. These experiences also set new parameters for Chinese historiography. One important guideline for Chinese authors on Chinese history was a collection of various Western-style textbooks on Chinese history which had been written by Japanese sinologists.<sup>187</sup>

Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that this new style of narrating history was not accepted by everyone. For instance, authors like Huang Ren 黄人 (1866-1913) and Zhang Binglin attacked the evolutionary theory of history during the late Qing dynasty. Huang claimed that evolution of a cultural system did not proceed along a straight line. Historical evolution consisted of moves forward and backward, interruptions, and returns. Zhang, on the other hand, wanted to question the blind belief in progress and wrote that change does not always lead to more virtuous societies. Zhang also refuted the popular belief that all the nations would follow similar paths of development.<sup>188</sup>

For the sake of consistency, we should differentiate two separate questions concerning Chinese conceptions of time which tend to intermingle and further confuse the discussion. *First*, there is the question whether or not the belief in progress existed during the imperial period. *Second*, there is the question of the narrative conventions in historiography. It seems to be rather evident that the image of Imperial China as static and cyclical has been overstated. Although the official dynastic historiography presented history in cyclical form, it does not mean that there could not have been ideas of development or progress. On the other hand, it seems to be equally evident that there was something new in the evolutionary models of historical explanations in the late Qing period. The setting in which nation-states were considered to move forward in a more or less unified evolutionary process hardly existed before the transformations in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, even if the claim that the idea of progress was completely new in China can be seriously questioned, we still have reasons to treat the period from late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as 'a period of change' in Chinese conceptions of history.

### 2.2.2 Temporalization and China

As it is well known, similar questions of conceptions of time and history have been discussed also in academic literature that deals with writings about history in the West. Cyclical interpretations of history also existed in ancient Greece and they affected later formulations. According to Gilbert Rist (1997), Augustine (354-430) was a central author in the change from cyclical depiction of history to the linear one. Augustine preserved the constituent parts of the Aristotelian cycles, growth and decay, but excluded the idea of the return of the same as there was only one cycle. This opened the way to a linear vision of history. Rist states that the ideology of progress entered the intellectual landscape in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the idea of progress was visible

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<sup>187</sup> Dolezelova-Velingerova 2001, 126-127.

<sup>188</sup> About Huang Ren, see Dolezelova-Velingerova 2001, 142. About Zhang Binglin, see Murthy 2008, 161-165.

already in the writings of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). The belief in progress became stronger in the following decades and, for instance, in Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776] progress was presented as an "order of things which necessity imposes in general".<sup>189</sup> Further, Hannah Arendt (1968) calls Vico (1668-1744) "the father of modern history" since he was the first one to depict history as a man-made process. Hegel (1770-1831), on the other hand, was the first who saw the whole of world history as one continuous development and he transformed metaphysics into a philosophy of history.<sup>190</sup>

Reinhart Koselleck, one of the main figures behind the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* project in Germany, dedicated most of his academic career to the study of the concept of history in German-speaking areas. According to his (1985) temporalization (*Verzeitlichung*) thesis, there was a major change in the ways of portraying history in Europe between 1750 and 1850<sup>191</sup>. During this period of time the idea of progressive and collective history became the dominant model of outlining history in the German-speaking areas of Europe. This change diminished the role of past experiences in predictions of the future because from then on the future was believed to offer things before unseen. Before this period it was only possible to connect history with a certain subject or object, such as the 'history of France'. But after this transition it was possible to talk and write about history in general.<sup>192</sup>

Kari Palonen (2006) differentiates three separate dimensions of Koselleck's thesis. The *first* dimension is the relocation of past and future with respect to each other. The space of experience diverged from the horizon of expectations. This relocation does not mean that the space of experience would become insignificant in future expectations, but it means that its role is significantly diminished during this transformative period. The strengthening of the belief in progress also increases the importance of future expectations. *Second*, temporalization also means denaturalization. It means the disengagement of history, which is bound up with social and political actions, from natural time. The circles of planets and natural inheritance of thrones cease to be key points in outlining history, and progress becomes the main category of viewing historical events. The *third* dimension is a metaphorical one. Concepts of space are used to describe temporal

<sup>189</sup> Rist 1997/2002, 33-34, 37-40; Smith 1776/1976, 402.

<sup>190</sup> Arendt 1968/1993, 28-29, 57-58.

<sup>191</sup> Koselleck's purpose was to identify a period that was exceptionally significant in the development of concepts. Jin and Liu (see previous section), on the other hand have claimed that the New Culture Movement period in China was of vital importance in the development of Chinese political vocabulary. In this sense, the comparison between Koselleck's thesis and China is not totally groundless.

<sup>192</sup> Koselleck 1985/2004, 3-4, 16-19, 36-37; Koselleck 1997, 19. Although Koselleck's thesis concentrates on the period of 1750-1850 in Germany, he argues that there were already similar developments in the 17th-century France. Another name that is often used to call Koselleck's temporalization period is "saddle time" (*Sattlezeit*). According to Koselleck himself, the name *Sattlezeit* was invented by him to promote the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* project and to sell more issues, but he did not like the name because it was too ambiguous. Koselleck, Fernandez Sebastian & Fuentes 2006, 22-23. Quentin Skinner has questioned the applicability of Koselleck's findings in the English case. Skinner & Fernandez Sebastian 2007, 114.



phenomena. This metaphorical change takes place because former ways of language use are incapable of expressing the new progress-orientedness.<sup>193</sup>

According to Koselleck (1985), it was not only the conception of history that changed. The temporalization caused a large-scale transformation that was evident especially in social and political concepts: from then on concepts included a new kind of future-oriented dimension. This new temporal tension in concepts assigns the past and future in a new way. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the concept of democracy opened up a new horizon of expectations which could not be explained solely by the past. In this concept hope and action come together. Democratism, like all the other isms, has a certain temporal structure. They are movement concepts that are not based on a common experience and they refer to a future outline which is *supposed to be realized*. Before temporalization, there could not be such concepts, because the future was not open. In the eschatological world, the future was thought to be controlled and tied by God.<sup>194</sup>

Whether or not there has been a transformation in China that could be compared with Koselleck's understanding of the temporalization in Europe is a question that is obviously a very complicated one to answer and certainly beyond the scope of this study. It might still be worthwhile to speculate a little about the relevance of Koselleck's notions in the Chinese context. For instance, if we look at the first of the three dimensions of Koselleck's thesis it also seems to be valid in the Chinese case. As many scholars have demonstrated the evidential value given to past experiences has been remarkable in Chinese history. Luke Kwong (2001) states that in China, history as a repository of examples of how past rulers had behaved, has served as guideline for instructing the present and predicting the future stronger than anywhere else<sup>195</sup>. Huang Chun-chieh (1995) notes that for instance Mencius argues that no benevolent ruler can govern without historical precedents. According to Huang, Chinese thinking related to history is "interpenetrative and intersubjective". This means that time is reciprocal: the past is giving 'factuality' to the present and the present is giving meaning to the past.<sup>196</sup> The idea that Chinese classics or imperial history could offer valuable guidelines for the future was strongly challenged in the May Fourth 'antitraditionalist' writings. Although it would be misleading to claim that the authors in the May Fourth journals did not use past history in their argumentation at all, it can still be said that the role of the past in future prognoses had diminished during the late Qing and May Fourth periods compared to earlier periods.

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<sup>193</sup> Palonen 2006, 17-18. According to Koselleck, there are periods of "rapid historical acceleration" in which changes take place in a faster pace than normally. During these periods, the importance of past experiences diminishes as arguments based on history do not seem to quite fit into what is happening. Koselleck, Fernandez Sebastian & Fuentes 2006, 23.

<sup>194</sup> Koselleck 1985/2004, 80-90; Koselleck 1997, 20-21. Terry Nardin has noted that "teleocratic expressions", such as socialism, national socialism and communism have been used simultaneously to express the purpose of governments and to justify their authority. Nardin 2012, 193.

<sup>195</sup> Kwong 2001, 163.

<sup>196</sup> Huang, C. 1995, 74-77.

According to Harro Höpfl (1989), there were two periods in European thought that were particularly productive of isms. The first one of these was the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century (baptism, Platonism, barbarism etc.), and the second one was the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (nationalism, capitalism, socialism etc.).<sup>197</sup> In China, majority of these concepts were adopted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century due to translations of foreign books. This fact brings us to Koselleck's thesis of the future-oriented dimension of social and political concepts that is especially evident in the various isms. The political discourse during the May Fourth period was closely connected to the isms that were adopted from Western literature. For instance socialism, anarchism, individualism, communism, humanism and pragmatism and many others were repeatedly discussed in the journals. The future-orientedness of these concepts already directed the discussions into certain directions. Here, future-orientedness means that these discussions were usually related to different conceptions of China's future: what kind of ideas and ideals China should follow in order to make the future better than the present. There seemed to be overall consensus about the matter that the Chinese society should be transformed in a way that would radically differ from what the society had been before<sup>198</sup>. If we look at the popular Kropotkinian conception of evolution or the class struggle theory of Marx, both of them are connected to a strictly forward-moving process that would lead to a future before unseen. Although the class struggle theory was used to explain past events ("the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle"<sup>199</sup>), it also provided tools for conceptualizing the future.

### 2.2.3 Cyclicity, Linearity and Evolution in May Fourth Journals

Although the belief in evolutionary progress was often demonstrated in the writings of the period, it would be deceptive to conclude from this that all the May fourth authors believed in linear progress. Like Huang Ren and Zhang Binglin in the late Qing period, there were authors who explicitly challenged strictly linear views also in May Fourth period, and not only in the more conservative journals such as *National Heritage* or *Critical Review*. In the following we will look at few extracts from some May Fourth journal articles in which the main focus was related to the characteristics of evolution and progress. The aim is to indicate by these examples that the conceptions of time and historical progress during the May Fourth period were often neither linear nor cyclical but more complex combinations of the two.

First, Wei Shizhen's 魏時珍 (1895-1992) essay "All Sides of Human Evolution", which was published in *Young China* in two parts, is an interesting example of combining cyclicity and linearity. The first part of the essay was

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<sup>197</sup> Höpfl 1989, 5-10.

<sup>198</sup> Genesis Chen has noted that the late Qing marked a change in the scope of reform thought. The form of government was never an issue in Chinese thought until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Chen, G. 1989, 58.

<sup>199</sup> Marx & Engels 1848.

published in the opening issue of the journal in July 1919. Wei wrote that because of the World War many people had started to doubt the idea of human evolution and some say that there was no evolution at all. Some people, on the other hand, had said that there are periods of progress (進 *jìn*) and periods of decline (退 *tuì*). Wei's own view was closer to the latter view:

我們人類的進化. 固有時急向上昇. 卻也有時慢向下降. 我們試一翻世界史. 就可知道這話不錯. [...] 也有時平平常常. 毫無昇降. 我們人類處此. 實在尋不出一根線率. 定他何時當升. 何時當降. 也實在想不著一條律例. 推他能降幾許. 能升幾許. 祇好隨著時勢潮流. 順他宛轉.

Our human evolution surely has periods of rapid rise, but sometimes it also slowly declines. When we look at world history, we know that it is like this. [...] Sometimes there is nothing out of the ordinary, no rise or decline and our humankind is there (just continues to live). Actually, there is no guiding line that would determine the times of rise and fall. And actually, there is no law that would allow the rises and falls to happen. It is best just to go along with the current trends and move along them.<sup>200</sup>

In the second part of the essay, which was published two months later, Wei divided the history of human evolution into six periods: 1) the ancient period (太古時代 *tàigǔ shídài*); 2) the period of Egypt (埃及時代 *Āijí shídài*); 3) the period of Greece and Rome (希臘羅馬時代 *Xīlà Luómǎ shídài*); 4) the period of the Pope's power (教皇政治時代 *Jiàohuáng zhèngzhì shídài*); 5) the period between new and old (新古時代 *xīngǔ shídài*) and 6) the current period (近世時代 *jìnshì shídài*). "The period between new and old", which seems to correspond to the period that is nowadays often referred to as the scientific revolution, began from the 'discovery' of America and lasted until the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Wei stated that during this period the intellectual development of humankind left the period of stagnation (停頓時代 *tíngdùn shídài*) and entered the period of evolution (進化時代 *jìnhuà shídài*). For instance, human understanding concerning celestial bodies changed dramatically during this period by the research work of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). The "current period" in Wei's model began when James Watt (1736-1819) invented the steam engine and this period is thus related to the industrial revolution. From then on the evolution of humankind has been impossible to restrict. But, Wei underlined, the evolution of humankind was not linear or cyclical; it was a combination of both.<sup>201</sup>

Still, the fact that evolutionary models of history cannot be equated with the ideas of linear progress does not mean that the stated future-orientedness (see Koselleck above) would also be delusory. The rise and fall in Wei's presentation

<sup>200</sup> Wei Shizhen. *All Sides of Human Evolution, Part 1*. 人類進化的各面觀. Young China. Vol. 1. No. 1. July 1919. HDB.

<sup>201</sup> Wei Shizhen. *All Sides of Human Evolution, Part 2*. 人類進化的各面觀. Young China. Vol. 1. No. 3. September 1919. HDB.

refer, on the one hand, to the frequency of changes that take place in the developments of human societies. There are periods of relative stability and there are periods of vivid transformations. On the other hand, it refers to the desirability of these changes: change does not always imply progress because sometimes the developments can also be harmful. Neither of these aspects contradict the basic evolutionary setting that moves from past to the future as there is no reference to some kind of return to the past. On the contrary, Wei's message stresses the significance of the future by pointing out the importance of human decision-making: wrong decisions, wrong policies and wrong ways of thought can lead to a period of decline. Thus progress is not something that would come regardless of human action. This is why it is important what kind of "trends" (潮流 *cháoliú*) people decide to follow.

Wei's article is an example that questions the meaningfulness of the rigid distinction between cyclical and linear conceptions of time. This popular juxtaposition tends to denigrate conceptions which are neither linear nor cyclical. Wei's article also shows us that we should not hastily equate the belief in evolution with the belief in linear progress in the May Fourth period; linearity did not always follow from belief in evolution. Wei's article also demonstrates that the belief in progress, which has been often stressed in the literature of the period, was not accepted blindly in the May Fourth journals.

The course of evolution was also discussed in *New Tide* by He Siyuan 何思源 (1896-1982). He's article "Scientific Method in Sociology" was written in early 1920, at the time he had already left China and was studying in the United States. According to He, understanding the course of evolution, and the development stages within it, was one of the main themes of research in sociology. In this kind of research one was to pay special attention to the relation between evolution and the present and to the relation between evolution and the future. Before one could study evolution, one also had to conduct historical research. He claimed that the recent World War broke out because of the failure to understand society.<sup>202</sup> Compared to Wei Shizhen's article on evolution, He's treatment seems to imply a stronger belief in the regularities of evolution. Wei stressed the unpredictability of evolution, whereas He Siyuan saw evolution as something that could be soundly studied. According to He, the regularities of evolution could also be revealed by scientific research and further utilized in present problem solving and in future predictions. He Siyuan was aware that his account of the regularity of evolution was divisive as he noted that some people do not accept this kind of baseline of research where human action is given mechanical overtones.<sup>203</sup>

Like He Siyuan, many other authors in the May Fourth journals sent their contributions to these journals from abroad. One of them was Li Huang, a

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<sup>202</sup> He Siyuan. *Scientific Method in Sociology*. 社會學中的科學方法. *New Tide*. Vol. 2. No. 4. May 1920. HDB.

<sup>203</sup> He Siyuan. 'Scientific Method'.

student in France, whose article about French philosophy was published in *Young China* in April 1921. In the sixth section of his lengthy article, which was based on Henri Bergson's book *La Philosophie Française* [1915], Li introduced French philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to the article, the belief in Godly truths began to wobble in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and freedom of thought increased. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century and before ideas of progress (進化)<sup>204</sup> were nonexistent as these matters were thought to be controlled by God (上帝 *Shàngdì*). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the situation changed and the key philosopher in this sense was Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715-1780) who wrote that progress had no limits. Later, Lamarck and Darwin took this idea further and created biological explanations of evolution. Li's article of the history of French philosophy shows us that at least some authors at the time were aware of the Western writings about history of progress and the distinction between God-controlled time and progressive time:

十七世紀以前的進化說可以用一根豎線代表由人起點上昇至於上帝。十八世紀以後的進化可以用一根橫線代表，由人起點，向前以至無窮。

Before the 17th century progress was represented with vertical line that started from human and ended to God. After the 18th century it became possible to represent progress with a horizontal line that started from human and was not limited.<sup>205</sup>

Li pointed out that there were also philosophers who were not excited about the idea of progress. For instance, Rousseau's attitude towards progress was highly critical.<sup>206</sup>

Whether or not historical motion was seen as linear or as one, which includes periods of decline and progress, there seemed to be wide consensus among May Fourth authors that some kind of motion was necessary. It is noteworthy that afterwards the May Fourth Movement has been glorified as the one which "made China to move". Vera Schwarcz has written that this claim remains "the core of the myth" of the May Fourth.<sup>207</sup> Still, Needham has questioned this myth by noting that if by "Enlightenment" it is meant the belief in progress it took place well before the May Fourth movement<sup>208</sup>. Certainly, there had been attempts to break out from the image of 'stagnated China' before, but the number of these attempts seemingly increased during the May Fourth period due to the increased number of reform-minded publications. The idea of

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<sup>204</sup> Li had chosen to translate French "progrès" as 進化 and in some cases as 進化說, terms that were usually used to refer to evolution and evolutionary theory. Another, and more common, translation for progress would have been 進步. It is possible that Li did not want to make a distinction between the two at all and this is why evolution and progress were used interchangeably.

<sup>205</sup> Li Huang. *French Philosophy*. 法蘭西哲學思潮. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 10. April 1921. HDB.

<sup>206</sup> Li Huang. 'French Philosophy'.

<sup>207</sup> Schwarcz 1986, 7.

<sup>208</sup> Needham 1965, 50.

getting China to move was strongly connected to the conception of the necessity of adaptation to the outside world.

### 2.3 Adaptation to the Needs of Time

The evolutionary portrayal of nations as parts of a unified world history is essentially related to the May Fourth writings about the need to adapt to the prevailing trends. It is improbable that there could have been such emphasis on the adaptation to trends that 'came' abroad before this evolutionary setting of international competition was introduced during the late Qing dynasty. However, adaptation to one's environment was not a theme that was introduced in China by the writings on Darwinism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The need to adapt to nature, to the will of Heaven or to 道 *dào* had been a central theme in Chinese philosophy for ages. The Social Darwinist setting of the survival of the fittest did, nevertheless, add new features to this theme: adaptation would take place in the international arena in which nation states were competing against each other. Only those nations who would be able to fit to the changing circumstances, would survive and advance in the competition.

Darwinism and Taoism were also discussed during the May Fourth period by Gao Yihan who wrote an article of Herbert Spencer's political philosophy for *New Youth* in March 1919. Gao noted that Spencer and Laozi 老子 (604 BC - ?) both had a firm belief in nature and in natural laws. Both authors highlighted the importance of processes bigger than human life and both of them believed that human action should not disturb these processes. For Laozi it was *dào*, whereas for Spencer it was evolution.<sup>209</sup> Michael Loewe (1986) states that in the Taoist tradition man was only one element of operative unit of universe. Within this mindset, human plans were thought to succeed only if they were consonant with the order and process of nature.<sup>210</sup> This setting was evident, for instance, in the writings of Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) about the "force of the times" (勢 *shì*). Liu was a Tang dynasty (618-907) scholar who mixed Taoism with Confucianism and Buddhism in his works. Liu argued that the 封建 *fēngjiàn*, a governmental system that refers to decentralization and is often associated with feudalism, was supported by the "force of the times" during the Zhou dynasty (1046 - 256 BC), but not anymore during the Tang.<sup>211</sup>

One major difference between the Taoist adaptation and the Darwinist one is that the former stresses inaction and tranquility whereas the latter requires activity and ability to change. During late Qing dynasty, and before the May

<sup>209</sup> Gao Yihan. *Spencer's Political Philosophy*. 斯賓塞爾的政治哲學. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 3. March 1919. HDB.

<sup>210</sup> Loewe 1986, 654. More about Taoist philosophy and Laozi, see for example Chan, W.T. 1963/1969, 136-176.

<sup>211</sup> Murthy 2008, 154.

Fourth period, several authors had stressed the need to adapt to the prevailing competition among nations. Liang Qichao was one who wrote that imperialism belonged to the Darwinian struggle and that Chinese imperialism would be the way of the fit. Democracy, on the other hand, was to be sought because it was the government of the fit.<sup>212</sup>

Another example of the emphasis laid on the need to adapt in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century China is Hu Shi 胡適. Hu was very excited about Yan Fu's version of *Evolution and Ethics*. Hu, whose original name was Hu Hongxing 胡洪騷, took the name Hu Shi in 1910 in which Shi 適 referred to the ability to fit in the Darwinist survival of the fittest schema.<sup>213</sup> Like Liu Zongyuan centuries earlier, Hu also wrote about the force of the times (時勢 *shíshì*). According to Murthy (2008), Hu's usage differed from Liu's. This was because in the late-Qing dynasty, time was given a new meaning as it was associated with linearity.<sup>214</sup> The emphasis on the need to adapt to the prevailing circumstances or to the new trends of thought was a widely discussed theme. For example Lu Xun wrote that his personal mission was "not to lag behind trends of thought in the world outside"<sup>215</sup>. A similar frame of writing was evident also in Chen Duxiu's text "Call to Youth" in the opening issue of the *Youth* in 1915 (the title of the journal was later changed to *New Youth*) in which he wrote that the Chinese race would be destroyed without adaptation:

於此而言保守，誠不知為何項制度文物，可以適用生存於今世。吾寧忍過去國粹之消亡，而不忍現在及將來之民族，不適世界之生存而歸削滅也.... 世界進化，未有已焉。其不能善變而與之俱進者，將見其不適環境之爭存，而退歸天然淘汰已耳，保守雲乎哉！

Speaking of conservatism, we indeed do not know which of our traditional institutions may be fit for the survival in the modern world. I would rather see the ruin of our traditional "national quintessence" than have our race of the present and future extinguished because of its unfitness for survival. ... The world continually progresses and will not stop. All those who cannot change themselves and keep pace with it are unfit for survival and will be eliminated by the processes of natural selection.<sup>216</sup>

As this quotation shows, the Social Darwinist version of the world was visible in Chen Duxiu's writings. The necessity of constant improvements was repeatedly underlined. After the First World War, Darwinism and Darwinist slogans were constantly criticized in the May Fourth journals. These ideas and slogans were blamed for the outbreak of the war. Although Social Darwinist

<sup>212</sup> Pusey 1983, 311-312, 333-335.

<sup>213</sup> Kwok 1965, 87-88.

<sup>214</sup> Murthy 2008, 173-175. Unlike Murthy, I would prefer to stress the future-orientedness, not the linearity, as the most relevant aspect in the late Qing formulations compared to the earlier ones. According to Wang Runhua, the "new trend" in Hu Shi's writings usually referred to the literary revolution. Wang, R. 1978, 228-229.

<sup>215</sup> Lu Xun. "On Cultural Extremes". Quoted in Qian 2003, 297.

<sup>216</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Call to Youth*. 敬告青年. Youth. Vol. 1. No. 1. September 1915. HDB. The English version from Chow, T. 1960/1967, 46.

ideas that stressed the use of force and aggressive expansionism were criticized, the emphasis on adaptation did not disappear. The May Fourth journals were full of articles claiming that the ones who did not adapt to the changing circumstances, the unfit, would perish. For example, Wang Guangqi wrote in *Young China* that adaptation to world trends was a necessary requirement for development<sup>217</sup>. In this context, identification of the strongest trends and adaptation to them was connected to adaptation and the way of the fit. For instance in one of the articles in *Young China*, understanding of the great world trends (世界的大勢 *shìjiè de dàshì*) was identified as one of the main functions of education<sup>218</sup>. There were, nevertheless, clear differences in comparison to the older writings about adaptation. Unlike the writings of Liang Qichao and Yan Fu in the late Qing period, in the May Fourth journals "imperialism" and "militaristic spirit" were told to be against the current trends of thought and thus something that was to be avoided in adaptation to world trends.

The need to reform China, and new ways of thought in relation to this, was constantly underlined in the May Fourth context with expressions such as "new tide", "new trend", "today's tide of thought", "trend of thought", "trend of world thought" or "new trend of world thought". For instance in *Weekly Review* there was a subsection in the journal titled "World Thought Trends" (世界思潮 *shìjiè sīcháo*).<sup>219</sup> Different things could be claimed to belong to these trends. These trends were used to make claims about what was possible and necessary and what was not for the May Fourth movement, for the Culture Movement or for Chinese people. Authors could try to gain legitimacy for their own views by writing that these particular views corresponded with the prevailing world trends. The end of the world war was in many cases interpreted as a beginning of a new period of time and a new trend. For instance Chen Duxiu wrote that after the war all the nations should reform their ways of thought. This meant that also people in the East should adapt (適應 *shìyìng*) to the great trend of change (大變的潮流 *dàbiàn de cháoliú*).<sup>220</sup> The same point was also raised in the opening issue

<sup>217</sup> Wang Guangqi. *Young China Study Society News*. 少年中國學會消息. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 2. August 1919. HDB.

<sup>218</sup> Su Jiarong. *The Future of the Culture Movement: Expansion of Education*. 今後的文化運動:教育擴張. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 5. November 1920. HDB.

<sup>219</sup> This was not only a May Fourth phenomenon. In Japan there had been a series of student journals under the title "new thought trends" already in the first decade of the 20th century. Also *New Century* journal had written about "waves of revolution" a decade before the May Fourth period. Peng Minghui has written that there were similar debates between new and old thought already during imperial China. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 55; Kwok 1965, 12-13; Peng M. 1999. p. 358.

<sup>220</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Consciousness and Demands of the Eastern People after the European War*. 歐戰後東洋民族之覺悟及要求. *Weekly Critic*. No. 2. December 1918. HDB. From the same journal, see also Li Dazhao. *Fierce Battle between New and Old Trends of Thought*. 新舊思潮的激戰. *Weekly Critic*. No. 12. March 1919. HDB.



of *Citizen*. It was stated that the world trend (世界潮流 *shìjiè cháoliù*) had changed recently and Chinese people should act accordingly. “Old thought” (舊思想 *jiù sīxiǎng*) was not compatible with the new trend (新潮流 *xīn cháoliù*).<sup>221</sup>

Anything that belonged to the pre-war period could be claimed to be outdated. The idea that the post-war period was a new beginning was not expressed only by writings about new trends; the world was also stated to be ‘new’ and ‘young’. In *Young China* Yun Daiying 惲代英 (1895-1931)<sup>222</sup> wrote that the Young China Study Society aimed at building the “young China” (少年中國 *shàonián Zhōngguó*) that would be consisted with the “young world” (少年世界 *shàonián shìjiè*)<sup>223</sup>.

“World trends” or “trends of thought” were given much stronger emphasis than mere temporary fashions. These trends referred to something more solid and important than suddenly changing vogues. This kind of separation between trends and fashions was sometimes also clearly spelled out. For instance, when Luo Jialun wrote about the emancipation of women in *New Tide*, he regretted that in China many people seemed to think that writings about the theme was just “trendy chitchat” (時髦話 *shímáo huà*), where these discussions should be seen as part and corollary of a developed worldwide trend<sup>224</sup>. Li Huang, on the other hand, wanted to make a distinction between trends of thought and tides linked to natural water courses. He wrote that the latter part, tide (潮 *cháo*)<sup>225</sup>, in “thought trends” (思潮 *sīcháo*) was not the same thing as the tidal bore in the Qiantang river (錢塘潮 *Qiántáng cháo*) or waves in the sea (海洋潮 *hǎiyáng cháo*). Still, the thought trends could be seen as a kind of collection of minor currents.<sup>226</sup>

The concept of world trend itself was the focus in Hu Shi’s article “The Meaning of the New Trend” in *New Youth*. Hu wrote that despite the fact that so many people were writing about ‘new trends’, none of them had dealt the issue adequately. According to Hu, the new trend meant a new type of critical attitude;

<sup>221</sup> Yi Keyi. *Discussion with Zhang Junmai*. 記張君勸先生談話. *Citizen*. Vol. 1. No. 1. January 1919. HDB.

<sup>222</sup> Yun Daiying was one of the leaders of the Young China Association. He was a key figure in the establishment of the Hubei branch of the CCP. For a biography of Yun see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 4, 92-95.

<sup>223</sup> Yun Daiying. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 11. May 1920. HDB.

<sup>224</sup> Luo Jialun. *The Emancipation of Women*. 婦女解放. *New Tide*. Vol. 2. No. 1. October 1919. HDB.

<sup>225</sup> In Li Yuwen’s dictionary from 1921, *cháo* was given two different meanings: 1) tide; 2) moist, damp, humid. Li Y.W. 1921, 325.

<sup>226</sup> Li Huang. ‘French Philosophy’. Also Cai Yuanpei used metaphors of water when discussing the new thought trends. Cai compared new thought trends to flood (洪水 *hóngshuǐ*). Cai Yuanpei. *Floods and Beasts*. 洪水与猛兽. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB.

it meant a desire to analyze positive and negative aspects of important matters. This new attitude was realized in discussions on the problems of the society and presentations of new Western knowledge.<sup>227</sup> In *Young China*, Zong Baihua 宗白華 (1897-1986)<sup>228</sup> wrote that it was important to make a distinction between a new world trend of thought (世界的新思潮 *shìjiè de xīn sīcháo*) and subjective views on the new trends (個人主觀的新思潮 *gèrén zhǔguān de xīn sīcháo*). This meant that the authors should not advocate any ideas before thorough research on them. Especially socialism was not, according to Zong, studied enough. The new world trend of thought meant “true scientific spirit” and not writings about empty theories (空論 *kōnglùn*).<sup>229</sup> If scientific spirit usually meant being in accordance with the trend, religiousness at the same time meant being against it. For example, the spread of Christian schools in China were opposed in one article in *Citizen* on the basis that they were incompatible with “the modern trend of thought” (現代思潮 *xiàndài sīcháo*)<sup>230</sup>.

Social Darwinist dramatics was visible in some of the writings on world trends: it was often claimed that without adaptation to world trends the Chinese state was doomed<sup>231</sup>. Adaptation to world trends was also compared to adaptation in nature. In *New Tide*, He Siyuan wrote that human success in the world of survival of the fittest was dependent on brainwork and thinking (ability to understand the world trends), whereas in the animal world it was a matter of different features, such as protective coloring.<sup>232</sup> These kinds of writings about adaptation were customarily used against conservative views. That is, attempts to slow down the spread of “new tides of thought” was said to harm the vital process of adaptation to world trends. On the other hand, it was often said that at the end it was impossible to keep the ‘world trends’ outside of China. For instance, Luo Jialun wrote that despite attempts to stop the world trend (世界的潮流 *shìjiè de cháoliù*), it was moving forward like a landslide<sup>233</sup>.

<sup>227</sup> Hu Shi. *The Meaning of the New Trend of Thought*. 新思潮的意義. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 1. December. 1919. HDB.

<sup>228</sup> Zong Baihua was one of the editor of *Young China*. See Chen, X.M. 2007, 27.

<sup>229</sup> Zong Baihua. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. Young China. Vol. 1. No. 3. September 1919. HDB. Similar distinction between objective and subjective view of trends was made also by Li Huang. Li Huang. *French Modern Sociology*. 法蘭西近代群學. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 4. October 1920. HDB.

<sup>230</sup> Zuo Shunsheng. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. Young China. Vol. 1. No. 7. January 1920. HDB.

<sup>231</sup> See for example Xu Deheng. ‘National Thought and the World Trend’.

<sup>232</sup> He Siyuan. *The True Meaning of Thinking*. 思想的真意. New Tide. Vol. 1. No. 4. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>233</sup> Luo Jialun. *Welcoming Our Brother: The Renaissance of Oxford*. 歡迎我們的兄弟: “牛津的新潮”. New Tide. Vol. 2. No. 1. October 1919. HDB. Hu Shi had written already in 1915 that

Different matters could be claimed to be a matter of adaptation to the trends. In *Citizen* one article connected the need to adapt to the trends to finding a balance between conservatives and reformists. The author did not accept the viewpoint that in order to create something new, the old (thought, norms etc.) should first be destroyed. Thus “the modern trend” (現代的潮流 *xiàndài de cháoliù*) in the article meant moderate approaches in reform, not radical or extreme endeavours.<sup>234</sup> Other themes associated with world trends were, for instance, the new village movement<sup>235</sup> or the emancipation of women<sup>236</sup>.

Besides associating new trends with “critical scientific spirit”, new trends were commonly connected with activity. Passivity, on the other hand, was something that was against the trends. For example, in *Citizen* one article stated that China’s passivity in international activities was against the trends.<sup>237</sup> In a similar style, Yun Daiying warned that “narrow nationalism” was dangerous as it could prevent the Chinese intellectuals from understanding the great trends of the world<sup>238</sup>. In *Young China* it was also said that China should not follow the Japanese education system, because Japan was a monarchy and monarchy, as a form of government, was against the trend of the times (時代之趨勢 *shídài zhī qūshì*)<sup>239</sup>.

‘Being against a trend’ was not used only as an argument in topics related to the future of China. It was also used in explanations of events that had already taken place. For instance, in *Weekly Critic’s* commentary on the General Elections of the United Kingdom of December 1918, the defeat of H.H. Asquith’s Liberal Party was explained as a result of its inability to respond to the trend of the times (時代之趨勢)<sup>240</sup>. Different things were evaluated by their ability to respond to ‘trends’. For example in *Young China*, an article stated that the value of literature was based on its ability to respond to trends<sup>241</sup>. Being against the trend was as serious accusation as being against the May Fourth treasures democracy and science. In an article on Russian socialist movement in *Citizen*, the author

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the literary revolution belongs to a new tide that could not be stopped. Quoted in Chow, T. 1960/1967, 28.

<sup>234</sup> Chang Naide. *On Construction*. 建設論. *Citizen*. Vol.1. No. 3. March 1919. HDB.

<sup>235</sup> Guo Shaoyu. *A Study on New Village*. 新村研究. *New Tide*. Vol. 2., No. 1. October 1919. HDB.

<sup>236</sup> Luo Jialun. ‘The Emancipation of Women’.

<sup>237</sup> Qu Xuanying. *Thoughts about the World War*. 大戰爭之回想. *Citizen*. Vol. 1. No. 3. March 1919. HDB.

<sup>238</sup> Yun Daiying. *How to Create Young China? (Part 1)*. 怎樣創造少年中國？(上). *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 1. July 1920. HDB.

<sup>239</sup> Yang Xiaochun. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 8. February 1921. HDB.

<sup>240</sup> Anonymous. *The Result of the General Elections in England*. 英國總選舉之結果. *Weekly Critic*. No. 4. January 1919. HDB.

<sup>241</sup> Wu Ruonan. *Six Great Modern Poets from France and Belgium*. 近代法比六大詩家. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 9. March 1920. HDB.

wrote that if the government in China acted against the world trend (世界潮流 *shìjiè cháoliú*) and suppressed the Chinese people, then the people should also use terrorism against it as the early Russian socialists had done.<sup>242</sup>

This rather long list of examples above shows us that the concept of world trend appeared in all kinds of debates, not only in discussions on the predominant scientific theories. In the current study, the main focus concerning the writings of predominant trends is related to paradigms that were employed to explain and analyze the future of Chinese society and politics. These paradigms are further expounded in the following section.

## 2.4 Political Languages

It seems to be quite a common practice to piece together ‘the intellectual atmosphere’ of a studied period by classifying authors by their ‘ideological commitment’. This practice is not necessarily foolish in itself, but it can become such if the classification methods are flimsy. For instance, some authors could be branded ‘liberals’ if their mentor or associates were seen to be ‘liberals’. If one took part in a study group on socialism or wrote an article on socialism, she might be labeled ‘a socialist’.<sup>243</sup> Sometimes a scholar might also make oneself guilty of anachronism, if he labels someone to be a proponent of an ideology in a given moment A because this person was verifiably committed to this ideology in a later moment B. This is to say; later actions are used to evaluate earlier convictions because the ideological commitments are seen to be somehow unchangeable. Instead of stability that often is illusory, and based on the scholar’s desire to find coherency for the narrative he is creating, we should underline dynamics and contingency in building standpoints that can be seen as ideological in order to provide more contextual and credible interpretations of the period under study. That is, we should pay attention to the language that is used in politics and not to try to find some ‘perennial ideas’ behind the debates. As Skinner (1966) states, a historian’s interpretation can be based on constructing doctrines that are more abstract than any which the author in question might seem to have held<sup>244</sup>. In order to avoid this, and in order to get a better understanding of the dynamics of changing viewpoints related to intellectual interactions we should focus on words, concepts and arguments as they were used in that context. Focus on the language used allows us to provide more contingent and also more realistic descriptions of the developments in political thought. Naming someone liberal, anarchist or socialist does not necessary increase our understanding of the research subject, but it can actually

<sup>242</sup> Zhou Binglin. *How Should Socialism Function in China?* 社會主義在中國應該怎麼樣運動. Citizen. Vol. 2. No. 2. June 1920. HDB.

<sup>243</sup> Skinner has written that attempts to trace influences are irreducibly arbitrary. It could be that a writer’s influence could derive from a chance remark or even from a misunderstanding of a remark. Skinner 1966, 209-210.

<sup>244</sup> Skinner 1966, 209-210.

mislead us by seriously simplifying matters. Various isms (socialism, liberalism, anarchism etc.) should not be treated as 'real things' that would exist without the language that is used to produce them.

In the case of the May Fourth Movement, the problematic nature of ideological classifications has been often recognized in the attempts to provide accounts that are coherent and at the same time precise. Chow Tse-tung's classification of "ideological groups" and the problems related to it was already reviewed above (see section 1.2). The problematic nature of these classifications has also occurred when scholars have tried to define the ideological standpoints of particular journals. For example, in Jin Guantao's and Liu Qingfeng's (2005) study the authors claimed that *New Tide* journal was "liberal" because: "Terms like shehuizhuyi (socialism) were frequently used in *The New Youth*, but rarely appeared in *Renaissance*, which we take as evidence of the latter's liberal stance and rejection of Marxism-Leninism."<sup>245</sup> Instead of merely counting the number of occurrences of some keywords, we should also pay attention to the usages of words. On the other hand, the mere absence of some 'keywords' should not be taken as sufficient evidence of some other convictions. This is to say, we cannot conclude from the mere shortage of word socialism that this particular journal was "liberal".

The distinction between 'isms as real things' and political languages has been drawn by Kari Palonen (2003). Palonen states that all the isms should be seen as historical constructions and not as 'real things'. He points out that for example liberalism can be defended with a number of conflicting political languages. Thus, it is often more advantageous to replace the ism by more specific language such as 'contractarianism' or 'evolutionism'. This notion is related to the Austinian standpoint that language use is always a matter of naming things, not about the nature of things. The process of naming is always contingent and established names imply success in political struggles.<sup>246</sup> Central in this study is the focus of the treatment of political languages, which is in their tendency to direct the debates into certain directions by asking certain questions and providing certain solutions for them. This comes close to what Thomas Kuhn meant by 'paradigm' in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [1962]. By "scientific revolutions" Kuhn meant changes from one paradigm to another. Kuhn defined paradigm as a universally recognized scientific achievement which, for some time, produces the main problems and solutions of an academic community<sup>247</sup>. In the May Fourth Movement circles, paradigmatic changes were presumably much swifter than in the academic communities that Kuhn was referring to. But the basic idea of leading paradigms is still relevant in studies of political thought since the legitimacy of different perspectives in politics is often gained by claims

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<sup>245</sup> Jin & Liu 2005, 469.

<sup>246</sup> Palonen 2003, 18-20.

<sup>247</sup> Kuhn 1962/1996, 10-11. Arif Dirlik says that the arrival of materialist conception of history in China achieved a scientific revolution in a Kuhnian sense. See Dirlik 1978, 6. Sheldon Wolin also comments on paradigms in politics. According to him, political theories can be best understood as paradigms and many theorists have aimed at the creation of new paradigms. Wolin 1968, 139-140.

of the scientific nature of the perspective in question<sup>248</sup>. Marxism as the advocate of 'scientific socialism' is a well-known example, not to mention "the scientific development concept" (科学发展观 *kēxué fāzhǎn guān*) of the 21<sup>st</sup> century CCP leadership<sup>249</sup>. Yet, in the May Fourth journals it was not only Marxism that claimed to be scientific; Pusey (1983) points out that the anarchists also claimed their ideas to be based on science<sup>250</sup>.

Initially, the idea of "political languages" in this study is borrowed from John Pocock (2009) who writes that if one is interested in political language and the 'paradigms' which operate within it, one should be interested in the study of dialogues between the actors who are capable of exploiting the resources of language and performing speech acts within the patterns imposed and permitted by the dialogue<sup>251</sup>. By 'language' Pocock refers to a field of inquiry or other intellectual action which gives priority to certain organizations in the field while tending to screen out others. It is a matter of acting, speaking and thinking in certain ways that are intellectually and politically biased. Language games are performed within 'languages' so as to change what it permits to be said. In a society several 'languages' are used at the same time, in debate and in interaction with one another. They are plural, flexible, non-final and speech acts can modify them from within. They possess their own terminology, style, and conventions. Pocock stresses that when the history of political thought is studied, the scholar should become familiar with these 'languages' and their interactions.<sup>252</sup> To be able to play the language game in a certain context requires that one understand the basic 'rules' of the game. If one aims at introducing a new idea or a new way of seeing some issue, one should be aware of the concepts and their usages that are commonly used to deal with the issue in question in that context. If such awareness is missing, it makes the attempt much more difficult: one could end up using words and concepts that are actually harmful to one's own interest.

Michael McGee (1980) deals with similar issues. According to him, ideology is in practice a political language and it is upheld in rhetorical documents. The importance of these languages lies in their capacity to dictate decisions and to control public beliefs and behaviour. McGee holds that ideology is a set of

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<sup>248</sup> See Pagden 1987, 14. Paradigms in Chinese political thought have been previously studied by Genesis Chen who focused on Chinese classics in his Ph.D. thesis. In his study, Chen made a distinction between "open paradigms" and "closed paradigms". Paradigms in political thought Chen calls "open paradigms". The ones in science, are "closed paradigms". Chen, G. 1988, 18.

<sup>249</sup> Kenneth Burke has analyzed 'scientific Marxism' from a rhetorical perspective, see Burke 1950/1969, 101-110.

<sup>250</sup> Pusey 1983, 373. In this context science was tightly associated with Darwin's name. Evolutionary theory was, of course, used for political purposes also in the West. See for example Blackledge 2002.

<sup>251</sup> In this study I have mainly written about 'languages' instead of 'discourses'. Discourse analysis has commonly focused on issues of identity and power. According to Jorge Larrain, Foucault tends to reject the centrality of the subject and conceive it as constituted by discourse in his attempts to expose forms of domination. Larrain 1989, 102; Freedden 1996/2008, 126, 136; Freedden 2003, 103-109. More about Foucaultian discourse analysis, see Foucault 1969/1989, pp. 21-76.

<sup>252</sup> Pocock 2009, 69-79; Pocock 1985, 2-11.

commitments that supports one illusion of truth instead of another and these illusions are produced by persuasion. Thus, 'truth' within politics is always an illusion. The most obvious access to persuasion and to ideology is through the discourse used to produce it.<sup>253</sup> It is not only a matter of repeating certain questions and offering certain solutions for them. The act of directing the discussion into particular directions is supported by specific use of key concepts or "ideographs" as McGee calls them. According to McGee, political language has a vocabulary of ideographs. By studying ideographs in political rhetoric we can try to uncover the structure of public motives. These languages are used to control power and to influence the character of each individual's "reality". They function as guides, assurances, reasons, or excuses for different types of beliefs and behaviour. Specific vocabularies also act as devices in acts of uniting and separating individuals. According to McGee, ideographs are used in creating political unions and separations.<sup>254</sup>

The relation between ideologies and language has also been studied by Michael Freeden (1996, 2003) who says that ideologies assemble concepts into particular patterns. Ideologies are characterized by a "morphology" that displays core, adjacent and peripheral concepts. In Liberalist ideologies it is commonly liberty, individuality and rationality that are given the core position. From the liberalist perspective, legitimacy of government is evaluated on its ability to protect individual liberties. In socialist ideologies the central concepts usually are group solidarity, equality and labour.<sup>255</sup>

It can be said that Pocock's ideas about the interplay of 'languages' in politics, McGee's ideas about ideographs which constitute political language and ideologies, and Freeden's thoughts about the relation between ideologies and concepts primarily deal with similar aspects of politics and language. What needs to be added to this point of examination here is a suggestion of how these 'languages' could be identified and analyzed in a particular context. This is to say, the following suggestion deals with the synchronic, and not diachronic, relationships of 'languages'. Even if one is concentrating on a short period of time (synchronical study), the conceptual developments of a longer period of time (diachronical) should not be forgotten. That is, one should be able to justify the significance of the selection of that particular period of inspection by pointing out its relevance in a bigger picture. As already mentioned, Jin and Liu have underlined the importance of this particular period by claiming that Chinese modern political vocabulary, to a large extent, took shape in this period of time. Furthermore, the language of class struggle, which was used for decades afterwards, became established during this period of time. This is not to claim that the language of class struggle would have been immutable until the official rejection of the class struggle paradigm in 1978. It is still more or less self-evident that at least some of the main premises (antagonism between the proletariat and

<sup>253</sup> McGee 1980, 4-5. McGee's understanding of 'truth' in politics comes close to A.J. Ayer who states that there is no such thing as absolute truth - what we call 'truth' is in fact an assertion which we ourselves believe in. Ayer 1936/1972, 116-119.

<sup>254</sup> McGee 1980, 7-10.

<sup>255</sup> Freeden 1996/2008, 77-79; Freeden 2003, 51-65.

capitalist classes, espousal of Marx and Lenin, class struggle as a necessary part of economic development etc.) of this language were referred to for decades.

The purpose here is to try to avoid some of the problems of ideological classifications by approaching the debates in the May Fourth journals from a different perspective: instead of uncovering ideologies behind the debates, the aim is to provide an interpretation of two political languages, 'the language of mutual aid and democracy' and 'the class struggle language', which were used in these journals between 1918 and 1921. This is not to deny the possibility that there were other constructions in these journals that could be seen as 'languages' in the Pocockian sense. By naming these 'languages' the aim is certainly not to claim that they would be enduring ones, regardless of context. Instead, patterns like these are always restricted to certain contexts. The class struggle language is of course relatively institutionalized in the sense that similar argumentation had been used in different places around the world. The focus in this study is in how this new paradigm was made to appear relevant for the Chinese readership. This, naturally, cannot be understood without the context within which it was introduced and without the speech acts that were used to defend this relevancy.

It is important to keep in mind that in some cases authors might use a 'language' that is related to ideas and perspectives that are not in accordance with their own convictions. Thus using, for instance, concepts from class struggle theory does not necessarily imply that the author in question is a 'Marxist'<sup>256</sup>. Why would someone who opposes these ideological standpoints use the language that is related to them? It could be, for instance, a matter of convincing one's audience: that is, a matter of persuasion. In situations where certain political 'language' has gained the upper hand, it could be harmful for the author's purposes not to use this language to make his or her opinion heard. For example, Hu Shi, who has been often associated with "Chinese liberalism", used formulations from the Marxist historical materialism in his verbal attack against the neo-taoists<sup>257</sup>. Similarly, the point is that neither those who used the 'language' what is called here 'the language of mutual aid and democracy' were not necessarily 'anarchists'<sup>258</sup>, nor those who wrote about class struggle were not necessarily 'Marxists'. In this sense, this depiction of the usages of these 'languages' should not be seen as an attempt to reveal the 'true beliefs' of these authors. Authors might use certain 'languages', in a manner of speaking, also by accident, by following other authors. This does not mean that these languages would be somehow innocent or neutral; they directed the discussion into certain directions and they portrayed some things in a negative light and some others in a positive light. For instance, both of these languages took a critical view towards capitalism.

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<sup>256</sup> Also Arif Dirlik has noted that historical materialism should not be equated with devotion to Marxism. Dirlik 1978, 19-20.

<sup>257</sup> See Jin & Liu 2009, 15.

<sup>258</sup> Kropotkin wrote about social revolution and the destruction of the state institution. In the May Fourth context, Kropotkin was primarily praised because of his writings about evolution, not about revolution. About Kropotkin's views on social revolution, see for example Kropotkin 1897.



One of the main discomforts in talking about fixed ideologies instead of more variable languages within the May Fourth journals is that the discussions on ideologies tend to direct the attention to more philosophical debates on some 'eternal questions'. This tendency is also evident in some discussions on the historical significance of the May Fourth Movement. For instance Schwarcz (1986) states that the Chinese intellectuals of the time were trying to find an answer for Kant's enduring question, what is enlightenment? (see section 1.1 above). Rather than focus on Chinese 'contributions' to liberalism or to socialist theory as such, the focus of this study is on how certain isms (主義 *zhǔyì*) were made to appear as the most relevant for China. In order to locate the isms to more contextual problem situations and to clarify the link between 'world trends' and certain isms in argumentation, the common style in the May Fourth journals of justifying the need of these isms can be depicted, as a syllogism, in the following manner:

- 1) China belongs to a world where only the fittest survive.
- 2) Survival requires adaptation to the prevailing world trends.
- 3) X represents the strongest trend.

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 Conclusion: China should follow X, and understand her environment according to X, in order to survive and prosper.

This model is of course generalized and should be seen as a tool of illustration, not as a universally applicable model. The first premise had been a central piece in the frameworks that were used in discussions on China's future and her international role since the 1890s as has been demonstrated in the existing scholarship and also summarized in this study above.<sup>259</sup> It is also important to note that the first and the second premises were tenable only to those authors who believed that China should be radically reformed by following foreign examples. Unlike some more conservative forums of the day, the May Fourth journals showed hardly any opposition for these standpoints. Instead, there were differences of opinion in the case of premise three. This is to say, some authors wrote it was the X, some others claimed it was Y, and others said it was Z that should be taken as the guideline. This particular disagreement of what represented the prevailing world trends was an essential question in attempts to legitimize certain perspectives for China's future development. There were

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<sup>259</sup> In his well-known essay on the May Fourth Movement Li Zehou has described the developments of the movement through juxtaposition between "enlightenment" (启蒙) and "national salvation" (救亡). By enlightenment, Li referred to a cultural and intellectual movement, which espoused science and democracy, and was somehow independent of politics. According to Li, the latter finally subdued the former through the spread of Marxism. See Li Z. 1987, 25-41. In my own reading, which is based on research on publications in the post-WWI period, these two are not treated as separate competing forces, but as aspects of same discourse. The idea of national salvation within the world of the survival of the fittest was still stressed, even though Social Darwinism was heavily criticized after the World War.

also many authors who claimed that there was no single theory that could have served as a guideline in all different problem situations. These authors thus did not accept the third premise of this generalized model at all. This ‘pragmatist approach’ was strongly inspired by John Dewey<sup>260</sup> and his disciple Hu Shi. On many occasions, Hu claimed that journals, such as *New Youth*, should not concentrate on discussions on theories, but they should discuss more concrete problem situations. This was not accepted by Li Dazhao who engaged in a debate over the matter with Hu in *Weekly Critic*. The debate, which took place in the latter half of the year 1919, is known as “the debate between problems and isms” (more about this in Chapter 4.2 below). What is indicated here by X (or Y, or Z) is not only isms (such as socialism or anarchism), but the X could also be an abstraction of the ideas of some authority or a group whose ideas the author wants to promote. In this particular study the most relevant authorities, whose prestige was bolstered in these May Fourth journals, were Kropotkin, Marx and Lenin. The first one was related to the ‘language of mutual aid and democracy’ whereas the latter two were obviously connected with the claims of the necessity of the class struggle.

How exactly should this adaptation to the surrounding world take place? What kind problems should be solved and what were the most important and urgent of these problems? Answers to questions like these varied according to the ism that one was advocating. If one wrote that Kropotkin’s mutual aid thought represented the prevailing trends, then the main problems were different from those who claimed it was Marx and historical materialism that should be in the key position in all the attempts to analyze the society and its development. But at the same time ‘languages’ are by no means definite and they do also overlap. This is to say that competing languages do not conflict with each other in all matters, only in some. For instance, the criticism of capitalism was characteristic to both of these languages; ‘capitalist’ was used only in a negative sense. There were also concepts that were, on the face of it, supported by everyone. For instance democracy (民主 *mínzhǔ*), equality (平等 *píngděng*) or humanism (人道 *réndào*) seemed to be concepts with universal support. However, different political languages use words in different ways. Consequently, the struggle between competing perspectives of society, and the struggle between competing languages, is above all a competition over the definitions of key concepts. One should also bear in mind that the ideas that are used to criticize certain concepts, are not fixed. For instance, the “spirit of democracy” within the mutual aid language was primarily used to criticize imperialism. In another context the “spirit of democracy” could be used in a very different manner. This is to say, when we are studying the specific usages of concepts in a certain context, we should also pay attention to their ‘counter concepts’, the concepts they are used to denounce. These counter concepts are relevant, because they help us to piece together the argumentative structures of the concepts we are

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<sup>260</sup> Dewey was lecturing in China between May 1919 and July 1921.

studying. Counter concepts vary according to specific languages: languages create counter concepts, concepts do not carry their 'opponents' by themselves.

Pocock (1987) warns that when one is trying to read out a political 'language' from texts one should be careful not to confuse *parole* with *langue*. This is to say, one should not mix individual styles of utterances with patterns of argumentation that are used by more than one author. Accordingly, the scholar should show that different authors used the same language for carrying out variant acts in order to convince the reader that the language was not his own invention.<sup>261</sup> Keeping this in mind, we will next move on to our suggestion of identifying and analyzing political languages within debates.

The Kuhnian paradigm, as something that constitutes model problems and model solutions, could be used as a useful starting point in identifying 'languages' in debates. These problems and solutions should, of course, be broad enough so that they could be used to constitute a general explanatory model. In identifying 'languages' within debates we should *first* try to find what is or what are the main overall concern(s), problem(s) or threat(s) (for example, 'militarism' or 'the labour question'), which concerns the whole community and its future and which is repeatedly underlined and upheld by this 'language'. The connection between upheld problems and ideological standpoints has also been recognized by Murray Edelman (1988). According to him, social problems are constructed. They are rarely solved, but occasionally they might disappear from the agenda, or they might be discussed in changed terms as if they were different problems.<sup>262</sup> The question of social problems is a question over agenda. For instance, the class struggle language seems to require that labour issues are given enough emphasis. If they are not, then it is very difficult to offer the overall solution of class struggle. Therefore, there seem to be certain requirements concerning the agenda before such a 'language' can become popular.

*Second*, and accordingly, we should trace the main overall solution to this main problem (or these problems) in order to understand the 'paradigm'. This question can also be posed as 'what kind of action is required in order to solve the main problems of the society and to make the future better than present?' This second suggestion is connected to the ways in which the future development is explained. Political 'languages' are customarily future-oriented; they tend to underline certain problems and to offer certain roads for 'a better future'. These problems and solutions should not be seen as something that had been determined by the circumstances. This is because there are always competing interpretations of the nature of these circumstances as there are competing interpretations about the paradigms that should be used to analyze such situations.

Although this study concentrates primarily on 'languages' instead of ideologies as such, Michael Freeden's thoughts about the relation between ideology and time can also help illuminate the relationship between political languages and time. Freeden (2001) argues that because politics is related to

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<sup>261</sup> Pocock 1987, 26-27.

<sup>262</sup> Edelman 1988, 12-35.

decision-making it is always related to future. Ideologies are devices that are used to project developmental trajectories. It is the control of time-as-narrative that helps maintain the internal harmony that complex ideologies would otherwise lack. Freedden has also classified ideologies according to their ways of structuring time. Time may be frozen (reactionary conservative), repetitive (traditionalism), accumulative (enlightened conservatism), incremental (liberalism and social democracy), radically forward-looking (socialism) or imaginary (utopianism).<sup>263</sup> Obviously, these classes are idealized types and they hardly appear as such; they more likely appear as mixtures of these. If we look at 'languages' that are in the focus in this study and their ways of structuring time, both 'languages' use radically forward-looking styles. Probably, this is characteristic to all modern reform-movements. In many cases their structure could also be called imaginary<sup>264</sup>. Similarly, reform-oriented language tends to posit the opposing side as the one that is frozen and decadent. This comes close to what Joao Feres Jr. has called "temporal asymmetric opposition". It means that the other is defined as being in time different from that of naming collective self.<sup>265</sup>

Another rather obvious side of this kind 'reform style' language is the underlining of the newness of their own thought and endeavours. Thus one important act that is related to the topicality of certain perspectives, or ism, or theory, is the naming of things old and new, outmoded and modern. This dichotomy was a central one during the May Fourth period and already during late Qing dynasty as has been noted by Sun Lung-kee (2008). In the 1890s there were a lot of writings about the need of "new learning" and Liang Qichao wrote about creating "a new citizen". The importance imposed on 'newness' is also evident if we look at the names of famous publications of the period: *New Citizen Journal*, *New Century*, *New Youth*, *New Tide*.<sup>266</sup>

Before anyone explained history and progress through class struggle in the May Fourth Movement journals the prevailing style of writing about future progress was the evolution based on mutual aid. However, it was not only the way of explaining future progress which changed but the change took place in other ideographs or concepts (evidently 'democracy' and 'freedom' were used differently within the class struggle 'language' than before) as well and these changes were enforced by a countless number of speech acts. The aim here is not to claim, however, that changes in political 'languages' always require a clear change in the style of outlining progress. 'Languages' are not static and minor changes take place within them all the time. But on the other hand, the change in the ways of explaining progress without any changes in 'languages' seems to be unlikely.

The *third* part of our suggestion is related to the competing interpretations of the prevailing circumstances and to the needs of that particular moment. That

<sup>263</sup> Freedden, Michael. 2001/2008a, 201-202.

<sup>264</sup> For instance Li Dazhao's writings on the advent of the Great Unity (大同) (see Chapter 3) could easily be called utopian.

<sup>265</sup> Feres 2009, 5.

<sup>266</sup> Sun 2008, 282.

is, we should pay attention to what kind of ideas are claimed to be necessary in that moment. In the May Fourth context, writings on 'world trends' were essentially related to this issue. By linking different ideas with the prevailing trends the May Fourth authors made claims about the relevancy of things that were discussed. It was a way of relocating ideas and isms from a more analytical sphere (presentations, summaries) to a more political sphere (what kind of isms they should advocate and study). If one claims that X belongs to the current trends, it is a claim that X is something that is highly relevant right now, at this given moment. The necessity of acting according to X, or at least studying X, is performed by the claims about 'the needs of time'.

The aim here is to make explicit the contingency of these claims of what belongs to 'current world trends' and what does not. It was not only a passive reaction to 'new trends', but the use of these figures of speech also meant active interpretation and recreation of the 'possible' and 'necessary'. In the May Fourth journals these expressions were repeatedly used to define the limits of 'possible' and 'sensible' by making claims that adaptation ("requirements of the time") to this exceptional moment ("new era") in the course of history or to the powerful worldwide trends is necessary in order to save China from chaos and possible decay. These depictions of time and trends were not tightly connected to any political 'language', but they are contestable and can be used to elicit support for any of them.

### 3 LANGUAGE OF MUTUAL AID AND DEMOCRACY

As this study seeks to provide a conceptual and contextual presentation of the radicalization of the May Fourth Movement, it is essential to analyze the textual context in which the new class struggle language was introduced and deployed. This chapter aims to show how politics, both international and domestic, was discussed in these journals before class struggle thematic came into play. There was a certain political language, which was widely used, to deal with the development of China and the challenges China was facing. Here this language is called the 'language of mutual aid and democracy'. A political 'language' tends to underline certain key threats and to offer certain solutions to them, presenting some ideas as more desirable than others. Political languages can thus be seen as biased styles of language use. They impose certain limitations on the possibilities of language use that can diminish the autonomy of the subject. This is to say that in particular situations where a certain 'language' has become widely used, the authors need to take these partialities into consideration when they are trying to present their views in a favorable light and to convince their readership. It is important to note, that adapting one's utterances to common styles of argumentation is not necessarily conscious; the acts of following examples of other authors might also happen unconsciously and without any deeper ideological reasoning.

The 'syntax' of this particular language can be summed up in five main assertions: 1) mutual aid is a more important component in evolution than mutual struggle and the First World War has proved this to be true; this is, Kropotkin's version of evolution is the most appropriate; 2) instead of the spirit of militarism people should follow the spirit of democracy; 3) people should follow the spirit of mutual aid and not mutual conflict; 4) people should strive for equality, internationally and domestically, and oppose systems that protect the privileges of the few, especially aristocracy and capitalism; 5) the prevailing world trends support mutual aid and democracy and these trends must be followed.

This 'language' was essentially directed against militarism and against the power of warlords. The purpose here is to outline the characteristics of 'the

language of mutual aid and democracy' by demonstrating which ideas were constantly praised and what kind of ideas were criticized in connection to writings about the need for the spirit of mutual aid. This kind of branding is usually not a straightforward act of naming something desirable and something else undesirable. The process is more subtle and complex. In the May Fourth journals the key argumentative strategy that holds this 'language' together, was that some matters were claimed to be in accordance with "the world trends" whereas some others were claimed to be against them.

In comparison with the 'class struggle language', which later became a widely used framework within these intellectual circles, the 'language of mutual aid and democracy' was much less institutionalized, more abstract, and therefore also more difficult to specify. Although mutual aid was connected to the admiration of Kropotkin, and although Peter Zarrow (1990) states that many concepts of the early anarchists were central in the May Fourth radicalization<sup>267</sup>, it would still be misleading to equate these writings on mutual aid with ideological commitments to anarchism. The part of Kropotkin's writings highlighted within this language was his writings about evolution, not about state institution or state power.

According to Michael Freeden (1996), ideologies aim at cementing certain word - concept relationships. This means that in ideologies, concepts do have certain meanings, which are referred to with a certain word. Ideologies thus attempt to establish 'correct' usages to words. Freeden calls this "decontestation" of concepts.<sup>268</sup> In the language of mutual aid and democracy, this element of decontestation seems to be, at least partly, missing. For instance, 'democracy' was given many different meanings instead of just one. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that these meanings given to democracy were also selections of a wider range. The lack of distinct decontestation does not mean that any meaning would have been possible or that this set of meanings would have been neutral or apolitical. Noel O'Sullivan (1989), on the other hand, argues that ideology always presupposes a programmatic vision according to which the society is to be organized<sup>269</sup>. Also this aspect is rather unclear in the case of 'language of mutual aid and democracy'; there seems to be no clear programmatic vision. Thus, equating this language with a particular ideology could be problematic and misleading also in this sense. However, even if we are unable to connect a political language with a fixed ideology, it does not mean that this language would not have an ideological significance as it supported a biased version of the 'outer world'.<sup>270</sup>

The obvious danger in attempting to outline a 'political language' is that the interpretation could be based more on a scholar's own assumptions than evidence found in the research material. John Pocock (1987) notes that one of the

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<sup>267</sup> Zarrow 1990, 221.

<sup>268</sup> Freeden 1996/2008, 76-77.

<sup>269</sup> O'Sullivan 1989, 210.

<sup>270</sup> Also Hodge and Kress have discussed the connection between meaning of words and ideologies. According to them, semiotic acts, which are related to the construction of meanings, are always related to ideological standpoints. Hodge & Kress 1988/1991, 37-40.

main methods of ensuring that a language is not an invention of the scholar himself, and that one is not confusing *langue* with *parole*, is to demonstrate that the particular style of writing was used by different authors to carry out various acts<sup>271</sup>. In the following, we shall not concentrate only on well-known authors such as Li Dazhao, but we will also look at writings by less known authors.

Besides mutual aid and democracy also freedom, equality, and humanity were presented as pivotal elements of “the new trends”. This particular period did not create the general importance of these concepts, as their introduction to Chinese reform discourse had taken place earlier. Many of the foreign political concepts were introduced in China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Within this context, claims that something (a group of people, an idea etc.) was against these particular ideas would have meant a serious accusation. Similarly, this ‘language’ gave negative meanings to some other concepts, such as capitalism and militarism. This is to say: within this context connecting something with capitalism meant depicting in a negative light. For some readers it might sound self-evident that ‘militarism’ was used only negatively and was referred to as something that the society should decidedly oppose. However, one should keep in mind that in early 20th century China many authors wrote about the need for militaristic spirit in order to bolster China’s international prestige.<sup>272</sup>

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Section 3.1 briefly introduces the background of the Kropotkinian mutual aid concept and its introduction to the Chinese audience. Section 3.2 concentrates on the May Fourth journals and shows how mutual aid was used in them and what kind of ideas were connected with it. In some cases, the discussions on mutual aid were connected to two projects: the New Village Movement and Work-Study Mutual Aid Groups, which are briefly introduced in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. The more abstract references to “the spirit of mutual aid and democracy” are their connection to “world trends” is discussed in 3.2.3. Section 3.3 aims to sum up the conceptual settings related to the ‘language of mutual aid and democracy’.

### 3.1 Origins and Sources

If the numberless facts which can be brought forward to support this view are taken into account, we may safely say that mutual aid is as much a law of animal life as mutual struggle, but that, as a factor of evolution, it most probably has a far greater importance, inasmuch as it favors the development of such habits and characters as insure the maintenance and further development of the species, together with the greatest amount of welfare and enjoyment of life for the individual, with the least waste of energy.<sup>273</sup>

This excerpt is from Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid* [1902] that aimed to challenge the prestige of Social Darwinist version of evolution. Social Darwinist explanations of

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<sup>271</sup> Pocock 1987, 26-27.

<sup>272</sup> See for example Pusey 1983, 269, 326.

<sup>273</sup> Kropotkin 1902, 16.



evolution had been popular in Europe in the late 19th century (see chapter 2 above). These ideas were also popular in China after the latter half of the 1890s.<sup>274</sup> Social Darwinism was strongly connected with militarism. Both of these, social Darwinism and militarism, were often the very targets of criticism in the May Fourth journals. Kropotkin's version of evolution underlined mutual aid instead of mutual struggle. Therefore, his writings offered an alternative for those who did not want to depict competition and struggle as the key elements in future development. In *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin's main target was Thomas Huxley, the same author whose work *Evolution and Ethics* [1893] had brought the evolutionary language to China through Yan Fu's translation in 1898.<sup>275</sup> Kropotkin was impressed by Karl Kessler's lecture about mutual aid in a Russian Congress of Naturalists in January 1880. According to Kropotkin (1902), Kessler, a zoologist at St. Petersburg University, had sketched these ideas only cursorily in his lecture and did not live to continue his work; Kessler had passed away in 1881. In *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin wanted to expand the scope of Kessler's work. For Kropotkin, mutual aid meant maintenance of life and evolution. Kropotkin wanted to rebalance the understanding of struggle and its connection to evolution by stating that in most cases it should be understood as a collective struggle against adverse circumstances, not as a direct struggle among separate individuals. In this way he argued that the "struggle for life" phrase should be understood in a metaphorical sense.<sup>276</sup>

Probably the first Chinese journal dealing with Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid was the *New Century* (新世紀 Xīn Shìjì), established in Paris in June 1907. It was a journal of a Chinese student society called the World Society (世界社 Shìjiè Shè). This society was established by Li Shizeng 李石曾 (1881-1973), Wu Zhihui and Zhang Jingjiang 张静江 (1877-1950) in 1906. They opposed all types of state control and supported science and anarchism. The title for the journal was borrowed from a French anarchist journal *Les Temps Nouveau* [1895-1914]. The journal was sponsored by Zhang's trading company that he had established in 1902.<sup>277</sup> Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* was partially translated on the pages of *New Century* as a serial. According to James Reeve Pusey, it was Li who first introduced Kropotkin's works to the Chinese audience. Li also created the Chinese version for the concept of mutual aid: 互助 hùzhù.<sup>278</sup> Li Shizeng's translation of *Mutual Aid* was also later serialized on the pages of *Eastern Miscellany* (東方雜誌 Dōngfāng Zázhi). *Eastern Miscellany* was a well-known journal published in Shanghai from 1904 to 1948. Thus, Kropotkin had a wider

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<sup>274</sup> Pusey 1983, 5.

<sup>275</sup> Pusey 1983, 83.

<sup>276</sup> Kropotkin 1902, 9-11, 41-42.

<sup>277</sup> Bailey 1990, 229. Chester C. Tan called the *New Century* ideology "communistic anarchism". Tan, C. 1971, 73. For more about *New Century* group, see Kwok 1965, 33-36; Zarrow 1990, 59-81.

<sup>278</sup> Pusey 1983, 413; Bernal 1976, 201, 217; Zarrow 1990, 106.

Chinese audience than just minor student groups interested in anarchism.<sup>279</sup> Li had become interested in anarchism during his time in France. Initially, he was particularly interested in the writings of Elisee Reclus (1830-1905), who had, like Kropotkin, written about the power of mutual aid and co-operation<sup>280</sup>. The 'anarchist revolution' that Li Shizeng was supporting meant education for all, not a violent uprising against the state. Li and Wu Zhihui believed that popular education was the key to removing class divisions within societies.<sup>281</sup> The editor of the *New Century*, Wu Jingheng 吳敬恒 (1865-1953), was another author who made Kropotkin's name familiar to the Chinese audience. Charlotte Furth (1987) states of Wu that: "He preached Kropotkin's mutual aid as a scientific sociology superior to Yan Fu's Spencerian evolutionism"<sup>282</sup>.

Martin Bernal (1968) states that in 1907 there was a sudden eruption of interest in anarchism among Chinese students abroad. A Japanese journal called *Review of Revolutions* (革命評論 *Kakumei Hyōron*) portrayed Bakunin and Kropotkin as revolutionary heroes. Besides *New Century*, another popular Chinese journal at the time that has been affiliated with anarchism was the *Journal of Natural Justice* (天義報 *Tiānyì Bào*), also established in June 1907. According to Bernal, this journal, operating in Tokyo, was less influential than *New Century* but it was the first "Chinese anarchist journal" in Asia. Bernal's understanding of the birth of these journals was that they were a part of "worldwide trend" toward anarcho-syndicalism: in France there was the syndicalist movement; in the United States there was the Industrial Workers of the World; and in England there was Tom Mann and his supporters.<sup>283</sup> The interest in Kropotkin and Bakunin grew especially after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and according to Hu Changshui, after 1919 there were about 90 different groups and 70 varied publications discussing anarchism<sup>284</sup>.

Although mutual aid in this context was tightly associated with Kropotkin, "mutualism" was first introduced neither by Kropotkin, nor by Reclus. The theme was already central in the writings of Charles Fourier (1772-1837) and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). Li Shizeng was aware of this as he was interested in Proudhon's thought and wrote about Fourier's ideas in 1916-1917<sup>285</sup>. Kropotkin was, nevertheless, the author who connected mutualism with biology, geography and evolutionary theory. Thus, after Kropotkin the concept of mutual aid was not necessarily only a concept used in contexts that were seen as

<sup>279</sup> Dirlik 1989, 89. Mutual aid was also discussed in Liang Qichao's journal *Liberation and Reform*. Yuan 1999, 563.

<sup>280</sup> Bailey 1988, 443-444. Li Shizeng personally knew Paul Reclus, nephew of Elisee Reclus. Bailey 1990, 228.

<sup>281</sup> Bailey 1990, 230.

<sup>282</sup> Furth 1987, 71.

<sup>283</sup> Bernal 1968, 136-137. More about the Chinese authors around *Journal of Natural Justice* see Zarrow 1990, 31-58.

<sup>284</sup> Hu 1989, 188; Tikhvinsky 1989, 1102.

<sup>285</sup> Bailey 1990, 228-240; Proudhon 1840. Also Ramsay MacDonald, whose *The Socialist Movement* [1911] was partly translated in *Citizen*, wrote about mutual aid. MacDonald 1911.

'anarchist'. Kropotkin's writings gave the concept of mutual aid more scientific overtones.

Chow Tse-tsung (1960) explains that during the May Fourth period Kropotkin was a very popular author in Beijing, among academicians and students<sup>286</sup>. According to Arif Dirlik, Kropotkin's *Appeal to the Young* [1880], *The Conquest of Bread* [1892], *Fields, Factories and Workshops* [1912] and Kropotkin's autobiography [1899] were available in Chinese by the late 1910s.<sup>287</sup> Also Kropotkin's pamphlet *The State* [1897] had been translated in *Weekly Review* (星期評論 *Xīngqī Pínglùn*)<sup>288</sup>. Many central May Fourth movement authors had studied abroad, also in France, and thus it is not difficult to see a connection between *New Century* journal and the May Fourth Movement<sup>289</sup>. For example Cai Yuanpei<sup>290</sup>, the reform minded chancellor of Beijing University and a central May Fourth Movement figure, had studied in France between 1913 and 1916 and was associated with Li Shizeng and other *New Century* authors. Later on, Li Shizeng himself also worked at Beijing University as a professor of biology.

### 3.2 Mutual Aid in May Fourth Journals

China declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary on 14 August 1917 and thus officially joined the Allied side in the First World War. Chinese troops did not directly take part in battles but Chinese labour corps gave their contribution to the Allied cause. In France, Belgium and Britain 100 000 Chinese worked under the British control and 35 000 under the French control<sup>291</sup>. The number of Chinese workers in Russia was even higher; there were about 150 000 of them. According to Sergei Tikhvinsky (1989), most of them stayed in Russia and only 40 000 returned to China after the war.<sup>292</sup>

After the armistice, in November 1918, The Allied victory in war was celebrated on the streets of Beijing. The victory was praised also on the pages of May Fourth Movement journals. Optimism on the pages of these journals, such as *New Youth* and *Weekly Critic*, was clearly visible. Expressions like "new era" (新紀元 *xīn jìyuán*) and "new tide" (新潮 *xīncháo*) evidenced this optimism. Thus, the end of the First World War (1918) together with revolutions in Russia (1917) and Germany (1918-1919) were portrayed as a major turning point in history and

<sup>286</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 36, 96-97.

<sup>287</sup> Dirlik 1991, 131, 155.

<sup>288</sup> Dirlik 1989, 89.

<sup>289</sup> Chinese officials had been reluctant to send Chinese students to France in the early years of the 20th century. This was because France was perceived as a source of dangerous thought. Bailey 1990, 228.

<sup>290</sup> Cai himself had said that he was an anarchist "philosophically", but not "politically". Zarrow 1990, 204.

<sup>291</sup> The ones under British control were released in April 1920 when their 3-year contract came to an end. Bailey 1988, 448. About the Labour Corps in France, see also Fawcett 2000.

<sup>292</sup> Tikhvinsky 1989, 1109.

a beginning of a new period of peaceful coexistence between nations. The Kropotkinian mutual aid concept was repeatedly connected with this ‘new beginning’, as this quotation from *New Youth* exemplifies:

現在思潮，在文學上，發而為戰爭與和平托爾斯泰的小說，發而為易卜生的戲劇，在科學上發而為剋魯泡特金的互助論；在實事上發而為俄德革命。

The thought trend of today is manifested in literature in Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace* and in Ibsen's plays, in science in Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid, in practice in revolutions of Russia and Germany.<sup>293</sup>

Kropotkin's writings on mutual aid were depicted as the most important scientific theory of the time. Kropotkin had taken the place of Darwin as the author who understood and explained the true nature of evolution.

This optimism was challenged in May 1919 when the helplessness of China and Chinese diplomats in the Paris Peace Conference became evident. Japan had negotiated agreements with other Allied Nations before the end of the war, and as a result, the former German controlled areas in China were not returned to China. Japan had taken control of these areas in 1914 and remained in control after the war. The fury that was expressed in the 4 May demonstrations in 1919 did not, however, put an end to writings about the importance of mutual aid and democracy. This is to say, there is no evidence of a causal relation between the disappointment in Paris and conversion to Marxism in these journals (this question will be discussed in greater detail below, in Chapter 5.1). Although the spirit of mutual aid was not rejected, the style of writing became less optimistic. In *Weekly Critic*, Chen Duxiu argued that the Paris Peace Conference has shown that the contemporary world was still one of bandits (強盜 *qiángdào*) and power (強權 *qiángquán*), not a one of reason (公理 *gōnglǐ*)<sup>294</sup>.

Writings on mutual aid were ordinarily connected to discussions of the new trends of world thought or “the spirit of mutual aid”. However, there were also concrete activities that were described as embodiments of this spirit. The failure of these groups can be seen as one possible constituent in the rise of interest in Marxism<sup>295</sup>.

There were two main types of ‘mutual aid groups’ in China: the Work-Study Mutual-Aid program in China that was inspired by Li Shizeng's program in France. Another one was Mushanokōji Saneatsu's New Village movement in Japan. Yun Daiying had established a study society called Mutual Aid Society (互助社 *Hùzhù She*) in Wuchang already in 1917. This group, which was dedicated to the study of Kropotkin's ideas, had only four members, therefore it was not a very influential. Still, the existence of such a group shows that there was also

<sup>293</sup> Huang Lingshuang. *Esperanto and the Modern Trend of Thought*. Esperanto 與現代思潮. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 2. February 1919. HDB.

<sup>294</sup> Chen Duxiu. *A Call to All Sides of Shandong Question*. 為山東問題敬告各方面. *Weekly Critic*. No. 22. May 1919. HDB.

<sup>295</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 417-418.

interest in 'mutualism' outside Beijing and Shanghai several years before 1919.<sup>296</sup> The esteem, nevertheless, of Kropotkin and his concept of mutual aid in May Fourth journals was connected with interpretations on world trends after the end of the First World War (see below).

The Work-Study Mutual Aid program and New Village movement and their presence in the May Fourth journals are briefly introduced in the following before moving on to the writings on "the spirit of mutual aid"<sup>297</sup>.

### 3.2.1 Work-Study Mutual Aid Groups

Li Shizeng's first work-study group in France for Chinese students was set up in 1908. Li opened a tofu factory in the suburbs of Paris and recruited 30 workers from China. The purpose was to earn a living by factory work during the daytime and to study in the evenings. Li and Wu Zhihui were the teachers in this workers' school. In 1912, Li established The Association for Frugal Study (留法儉學會 *Liúfǎ Jiǎn Xuéhuì*) in France. Li's operations in France were supported by Cai Yuanpei, who was the education minister of the government in Beijing at the time. Between 1912 and 1913 about 100 Chinese students went to France. Li's project came to an end in 1913 after Yuan Shikai decided to close down the preparatory schools in China that had been set up to provide students for the program. According to Paul Bailey, Yuan had the schools closed down because he associated the program with revolutionary anarchism. The situation changed dramatically during the First World War when Chinese workers went to France to support the Allied cause. Li established a new school for the Chinese workers in 1916 and the preparatory school for Chinese students in Beijing was reopened in 1917<sup>298</sup>. Between March 1919 and December 1920 more than 1500 Chinese students went to France on Li's work-study scheme. In Beijing, University students created work-study mutual aid groups (工讀互助團 *Gōngdú Hùzhù Tuán* or 工學互助團 *Gōngxué Hùzhù Tuán*) to encourage the combination of mental and manual work.<sup>299</sup>

According to Anna Gustafsson Chen (1998), in January 1920 there were at least four work-study mutual aid groups operating in Beijing. These groups were engaged in, or planned to engage in, different types of work: printing, managing restaurants, laundry, selling books and magazines, bookbinding, etc. These work-study groups were usually short-lived, mainly due to financial difficulties. By March 1920 the first two of the Beijing groups had already

<sup>296</sup> Yun Daiying called himself an anarchist in 1917 and claimed that he had already been one for seven years. Gustafsson Chen 1998, 114-115; Hu 1989, 186-193.

<sup>297</sup> For a more detailed descriptions of these groups and their activities see Gustafsson Chen 1998, 21-38 (New Village), 39-86 (Work-Study).

<sup>298</sup> Yuan Shikai had died in June 1916.

<sup>299</sup> Among those students, who went to France during this time, there were people like Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai and Cai Hesen. In France, many of these students became acquainted with Marxism. Bailey 1988, 441, 443-445, 448-449; Bailey 1990, 233.

decided to end their operations. The third and fourth ones lasted longer but these groups also disappeared within a year.<sup>300</sup>

Besides Beijing, there were work-study mutual groups at least in Shanghai, Wuchang, Nanjing, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Yangzhou<sup>301</sup>. Cai Yuanpei was one of the supporters of these student groups. According to his article that was published in *Young China* in January 1920 the greatest cause for inequality in society was the inequality in education. Cai believed that the work-study mutual aid groups could help in solving the problem by combining earning and learning.<sup>302</sup> In the same journal Xiang Jingyu 向警予 (1895-1928)<sup>303</sup> hailed these groups as important constituents in attempts of creating “a new type of society”<sup>304</sup>.

In 1920 the work-study program in France had got into trouble due to the post-war recession. Many factories, which had previously employed Chinese students, had laid off workers. This situation placed many Chinese students in France into financial difficulties. A group of Chinese students protested against the lack of support from the Chinese officials in front the Chinese embassy in Paris in February 1921. As a result, many of them were deported back to China.<sup>305</sup>

Similarly, the groups in China had run into financial difficulties, already during the spring of 1920. These groups and their failures were discussed in the *New Youth* issue of April 1920. Hu Shi, Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1891-1949)<sup>306</sup>, Li Dazhao, Wang Guangqi and Chen Duxiu all expressed their views on these groups. Wang Guangqi defended the work-study mutual aid ideas and claimed that the problems had been due to the laziness of some participants<sup>307</sup>. Dai Jitao, on the other hand, gave an explanation of the ideological background of these groups. He wrote that the principal ideas behind these groups were independence from family and school, the ideal of co-operation and the sanctity of work. Dai's understanding was that within a capitalist system it was very difficult for these

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<sup>300</sup> Gustafsson Chen 1998, 41-44, 62; Shao 1991, 87-89.

<sup>301</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 417.

<sup>302</sup> Cai Yuanpei. *The Great Hope of Work-Study Mutual Aid Groups*. 工學互助團的大希望. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 7. January 1920. HDB.

<sup>303</sup> Xiang became the first head of the CCP's Women's Department in 1922. She was married to Cai Hesen. For a biography of Xiang, see Klein & Clark 1971, vol. 1, 317-319.

<sup>304</sup> Xiang Jingyu. *On Women's Liberation and Reform*. 女子解放與改造的商榷. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 2. August 1920. HDB.

<sup>305</sup> More about this event, see Schwarcz 1992, 104-105.

<sup>306</sup> Dai Jitao was a prominent Guomindang member and a personal secretary to Sun Yatsen between 1912 and 1925. He wrote many articles on socialism and Marxism for GMD publications *Construction* and *Weekly Review*. In the late 1920s, Dai became a stern opponent of communism. For a biography of Dai, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 3, pp. 200-205.

<sup>307</sup> Wang Guangqi. *Why It Is Not Possible to Realize Work-Study Mutual Aid Ideology? 為什麼不能實行工讀互助主義?* *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB. Also Luo Jialun, one of the central figures of the New Tide Society, took part in Wang's work-study mutual aid group.

groups to survive and to be successful.<sup>308</sup> In *Weekly Review*, Shi Cuntong 施存統 (1899-1970) added that the groups wanted get rid of the old family institution, marriage system, education system and sex segregation. They also wanted to adopt communal production<sup>309</sup>. Chen Duxiu's view in *New Youth* was that the financial problems these groups had encountered were related to their inefficient methods of production and lack of spirit. Thus, it was not only circumstances that should have been blamed for their failures.<sup>310</sup>

### 3.2.2 New Village

Another form of 'mutual aid societies' was the so called New Village societies (新しき村 *Atarashiki-mura* in Japanese, 新村 *Xīncūn* in Chinese)<sup>311</sup>. In October 1918, a Japanese novelist, philosopher, and an admirer of Tolstoy, Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路実篤 (1885-1976) had established a "New Village" commune in the mountains of Miyazaki prefecture in Kyushu. Inside the commune there was no money or private production. People in the commune worked together, the work was mainly farming. Besides agriculture, the commune also received funds from Mushanokōji's writings. Before the establishment of the first commune, Mushanokōji had established a journal *Atarashiki-mura* in June 1918 propagating his ideas on New Village life. There were local New Village branch offices in Osaka, Kyoto, Hamamatsu, Fukuoka, Kobe and Yokohama.<sup>312</sup>

Zhou Zuoren was one of the Chinese authors who were keenly interested in New Village ideas. His first article on the Japanese movement and Mushanokōji's thoughts was published in *New Youth* in March 1919. According to the article, the New Village movement was part of "a necessary trend":

新村的運動，便在提倡實行這人的生活，順了必然的潮流，建立新社會的基礎，以免將來的革命，省去一回無用的破壞損失。[...] 我想人類不能享人的生活，是大錯的。這錯誤從何而生，大約有種種緣由。簡單說，便是因為他們不明白人類應該互助生活 [...]

The New Village movement supports implementing 'humane life'<sup>313</sup>. It means moving along a necessary trend, building the basis for a new society, avoiding future

<sup>308</sup> Dai Jitao. *Work-Study Mutual Aid Groups and the Capitalist Production System*. 工讀互助團與資本家的生產制. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB. About the discussions on Mutual Aid groups in *New Youth* see also Van de Ven 1991, 42-44.

<sup>309</sup> Shi Cuntong. *Experiments and Lessons from the Work-Study Mutual Aid Groups*. "工讀互助團"底實驗和教訓. *Weekly Review*. Special Labour Issue 7. May 1920. XQP.

<sup>310</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Work-Study Mutual Aid Groups, Where Is the Reason for Failure?* 工讀互助團失敗原因在哪裏. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB.

<sup>311</sup> Here mutual aid societies means groups that were associated with the spirit of mutual aid in May Fourth journals.

<sup>312</sup> Gustafsson Chen 1998, 26-27.

<sup>313</sup> According to Saneatsu's explanation, 'humane life' (人的生活 *rén de shēnghuò*) meant that when people have fulfilled their labour duties, they have the right to free time. Thus,

revolution, making destruction and damages unnecessary. [...] I [Mushanokōji] believe that the fact that mankind cannot enjoy humane life is a great mistake. There are many reasons for this mistake. Simply put, they don't understand that human life should be based on mutual aid [...]<sup>314</sup>

Zhou went to see the commune in Japan in July 1919 and reported his experiences on the pages of *New Tide* in October. Mushanokōji made a deep impression on Zhou and Zhou wrote highly of his experiences at the commune. On his way back Zhou visited New Village branch offices in Osaka, Kyoto, Hamamatsu and Tokyo. He wrote that his experience was exceptional and that he recommended similar projects in China. According to Zhou, inside the commune there was no mutual competition, only mutual aid. His conclusion was that “a true League of Nations” could only be based on mutual aid.<sup>315</sup> Later Zhou also wrote an article on the “New Village spirit”. In this article he explained that the goal of the New Village commune was life based on justice.<sup>316</sup>

Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (1893-1984)<sup>317</sup> wrote an article on New Village for *New Tide*. Guo claimed that the New Village theme was one of the most important questions of the day and it was a part of “a new tide of socialism” (社會主義的新流 *shèhuì zhǔyì de xīn liú*)<sup>318</sup>. People who wanted to avoid a violent reform favored talking about mutual aid. According to Guo, the New Village commune meant humane life (人的生活 *rén de shēnghuó*) and life based on mutual aid (互助生活 *hùzhù shēnghuó*). This commune was realizable and it was congruent with “modern man” and the “new trend of thought”.<sup>319</sup>

Hu Shi criticized the movement for escapism; New Village people avoided struggle (奮鬥 *fèndòu*) in “the real world”. Hu wrote that individuals could not be changed in isolation from others. Therefore, attempts for reform should not take place in remote village communities.<sup>320</sup> It is noteworthy that in Hu's texts

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life in New Village –communities was not to be only work, and work only, like for some people in urban factories.

<sup>314</sup> Zhou Zuoren. *New Village in Japan*. 日本的新村. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 3. March 1919. HDB.

<sup>315</sup> Zhou Zuoren. *Notes from a Visit to the New Village in Japan*. 訪日本新村记. *New Tide*. Vol. 2. No. 1. October 1919. HDB; Gustafsson Chen 1998, 28.

<sup>316</sup> Zhou Zuoren. *New Village Spirit*. 新村的精神. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 2. January 1920. HDB.

<sup>317</sup> According to Chow, Guo became later a historian of Chinese criticism. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 56.

<sup>318</sup> There was no mutual understanding whether New Village ideas were socialists or not. Zhou Zuoren held that they were not. Zhou Zuoren. ‘New Village Spirit’.

<sup>319</sup> Guo Shaoyu. ‘A Study on New Village’. Also Yun Daiying supported the New Village movement. Li Z. 1987, 25. Mushanokōji's drama “A Youth's Dream” was translated by Lu Xun and published on the pages of *New Youth*. The play was published in four parts, between January 1920 (*New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 2) and April 1920 (*New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 5.).

<sup>320</sup> Hu Shi. *A New Life of Non-Individualism*. 非個人主義的新生活. *New Tide*. Vol. 2. No. 3. April 1920. HDB. Hu's critical opinion of the movement was also expressed in another



struggle was not something that people should avoid, unlike in the ones where mutual aid was espoused.

Li Dazhao, on the other hand, supported New Village ideas. He also gave New Village a wider meaning; New Village referred to all communes that aimed at self-sufficiency. Li wrote about communal experiments in the United States and aimed to show that New Village projects could offer realistic possibilities for a better life.<sup>321</sup>

Despite the interest in the New Village movement in Japan, the movement in China was carried out mainly on paper. According to Anna Gustafsson Chen (1998), Zhou did not make any serious effort to establish a similar commune in China, although he did establish a New Village branch office in Beijing in February 1920. The main purpose of this unit was to help people to get in to contact with Mushanokōji's commune in Japan.<sup>322</sup>

### 3.2.3 Spirit of Mutual Aid and Democracy

#### New Era of Mutual Aid

In November 1918, Li Dazhao's article "The Victory of the Common People" was published in *New Youth's* issue which was dedicated to the aftermath of the war. Li wrote that the reason for celebrations was not the victory of the Allied nations, but the victory of "a new spirit". The manifestation of this "spirit of mutual aid" (互助的精神 *hùzhù de jīngshen*) was democracy (民主主義 *mínzhǔ zhǔyì*):

“大……主義”就是專制的隱語，就是仗看自己的強力蹂躪他人欺壓他人的主義。有了這種主義，人類社會就不安甯了。大家為抵抗這種強暴勢力的橫行，乃靠著互助的精神，提倡一種平等自由的道理。這等道理，表現在政治上，叫做民主主義，恰恰與“大……主義”相反。

"Pan...ism"<sup>323</sup> is a codeword for autocracy, it is a principle of looking after one's power by weapons. It means violating others with force, by pushing around others. With this kind of principle human society is without peace. Everyone opposes this kind of chaos based on force and they rely on the spirit of mutual aid instead,

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article that was published earlier in *China Times* (時事新報 *Shìshì Xīnbào*) in January 1920. See Chow, T. 1960/1967, 190.

<sup>321</sup> Li Dazhao. *Religious New Village Movement in America*. 美利堅之宗教新村運動. First published in *Weekly Review*, January 1920. LDZ.

<sup>322</sup> Gustafsson Chen 1998, 35.

<sup>323</sup> 'Pan-ism' was Li Dazhao's own equivalent for "大……主義". He had criticized the concept of pan-Asianism already in summer 1918. For Li, this concept was only used to justify Japanese imperialism. Thus, pan-ism in Li's writings referred to imperialist ideology and to invasionism. Li Dazhao. *The Defeat of Pan...ism and the Victory of Democracy*. Pan—ism 之失敗與 Democracy 之勝利. First published in *Taipingyang*, July 1918. LDZ.

supporting a principle of equality and freedom. In the political level this principle is called democracy. It is a direct opposite to "pan...ism".<sup>324</sup>

Li named various losers and winners of the war. The winning side consisted of common people (庶民 *shùmín*), labour ideology (勞工主義 *láogōng zhǔyì*), and democracy. On the other hand, the losing side included militarism, capitalism and pan-ism. According to Li, capitalist development had caused the war. It was the workers of Germany, Russia and other countries who finally were able to see the "true ambitions of governments". Thus, it was the workers who had managed to end the war. After the war, there was "a new trend", and it was a necessity to adapt (適應 *shìyìng*) to this trend (潮流 *cháoliú*) of mutual aid.<sup>325</sup> In the *Morning News*, Li further clarified that by democracy, he did not mean English or American versions of democracy, but Russian and German versions of it<sup>326</sup>.

Li was one of the most well-known May Fourth authors, who repeatedly wrote about mutual aid as the guiding principle of evolution and future development. Maurice Meisner's understanding of Li's writings on mutual aid has been that it was Li's reinterpretation of the class struggle theory<sup>327</sup>. This view seems to undervalue the ongoing interactions in the journals Li wrote for; Li was by no means either the only one writing about mutual aid, or the first one to do that. Meisner's view seems also to imply that Li was familiar with Marxist theories at this point and that he used mutual aid to reinterpret Marxism. The first time when Li Dazhao demonstrated his learning in historical materialism was the *New Youth* special issue on Marxism that was originally to be published in May 1919 but did not come out before September of that year<sup>328</sup>. Li had written about mutual aid well before this as the above example shows us. The espousal of mutual aid was certainly not confined to Li, rather this 'mutual aid language' as widely used in these journals. For example, Cai Yuanpei espoused mutual aid in his article "The European War and Philosophy" in *New Youth*:

現在誤用託氏主義的俄人失敗了；專用尼氏主義的德人不久也失敗了，最後的勝利就在協商國。協商國所用的就是克氏的互助主義。互助主義，是進化論的一條公例。

Now the Russian people who misused Tolstoyism have lost, the German people who used Nietzscheism have also lost. At the end, it was the Allied Nations who got the

<sup>324</sup> Li Dazhao. *The Victory of the Common People*. 庶民的胜利. *New Youth*. Vol. 5. No. 5. November 1918. HDB.

<sup>325</sup> Li Dazhao. 'The Victory of the Common People'.

<sup>326</sup> Li Dazhao. *World Trends After the War - Bloody Social Revolution and Bloodless Social Revolution*. 戰後之世界潮流 - 有血的社會革命與無血的社會革命. First published in *Morning News*, February 1919. LDZ.

<sup>327</sup> Meisner 1968/1973, 14. Also Peter Zarrow has written that anarchism affected Chinese Marxism through the writings of Li Dazhao. Zarrow 1990, 27.

<sup>328</sup> Zhou Yushan is convinced that Li Dazhao had become a true Marxist by early 1919. Zhou Yushan 1999, 318-319. It is of course debatable whether or not Li's article "My Views on Marxism" proves that he had acquired an adequate level of understanding historical materialism. In any case, this article shows that Li had at least studied the matter, as Yu Lianghua has pointed out. Yu L. 1992, 384.

victory. The Allied Nations used Kropotkin's principle of mutual aid. The principle of mutual aid is a general rule in evolutionary theory.<sup>329</sup>

Cai analyzed the main philosophies behind different parties of the war. German power politics was based on Nietzsche and the idea of survival of the fittest. The main philosophy behind Russian decision making was the Tolstoyan idea of non-resistance. And finally, the Allied Nations were informed by the Kropotkinian idea of mutual aid. Cai's analysis was based only on the final stage of the war, as his interpretation on Russian philosophy was based on their disengagement from the war. However, Cai's main conclusion was that the end result of the war was a proof that mutual aid was the key element in evolution. The "new thought trend", which was replacing the struggle for survival language, was evolution based on mutual aid. Cai wrote that in evolution, there were always two sides: struggle and mutual aid. Darwin had concentrated only on the former, whereas Kropotkin had understood the real value of the latter. Kropotkin had also opposed 'statism' (國家主義 *guójiā zhǔyì*)<sup>330</sup> and militarism (軍國主義 *jūnguó zhǔyì*). The problem of older Chinese thought was that it was similar to Tolstoy's non-resistance ideas. Cai claimed that the thought of Laozi and Mencius were similar to Tolstoy's thought.<sup>331</sup>

The period after the armistice of November 1918 was a period of numerous articles dealing with the coming of a "new era"<sup>332</sup>. Numerous claims about the coming of a new era created a situation in which anything that had belonged to the society before this 'turning point', could be claimed to be outdated. In the May Fourth publications, this interpretation of the exceptional historical situation was often based on two main assertions: *first*, that there has never before been a revolution like the Russian revolution of 1917<sup>333</sup> and *second*, that there has never been a war like the First World War before.

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<sup>329</sup> Cai Yuanpei. *European War and Philosophy*. 歐戰與哲學. New Youth Vol. 5., No. 5. November 1918. HDB. This article was republished in January in *New Tide* with the title *Great War and Philosophy* 大戰與哲學.

<sup>330</sup> Translated word by word, 國家主義, is 'the doctrine of a nation'. It is often translated into English as "statism", and here I have followed this practice as Cai was referring to Kropotkin's antipathy towards state power. In some other cases, however, I have translated the term as "nationalism", when it is used as a counter-concept to 世界主義 (*shìjiè zhǔyì*), that is 'the doctrine of the world' or 'cosmopolitanism'.

<sup>331</sup> Cai Yuanpei. 'European War and Philosophy'.

<sup>332</sup> Chow has pointed out that Hu Shi similarly wrote about the coming of a new age that could not be stopped in 1915. Writings about new era were not completely a post-war phenomenon. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 28.

<sup>333</sup> According to Dirlik the first Chinese journals which published reports about the October Revolution were *Eastern Miscellany* (東方雜誌) and *Laodong* (勞動). Later *New Youth* published 37 articles related to it. Still, there was no systematic treatments available about the revolution before 1920. Dirlik 1989, 24-32, 41. Bernal has demonstrated that there were attempts to connect the Russian revolutionary tradition with China already before the downfall of the Qing dynasty by a short-lived journal *The Review of Revolution* (1906-

這個新紀元帶來新生活新文明新世界，和一九一四年以前的生活文明世界，大不相同，彷彿隔幾世紀一樣。... 這個新紀元是世界革命的新紀元，是人類覺醒的新紀元。

This new era brings new life, new civilization, new world and it will be substantially different than the civilization before the year 1914, as if several centuries were between these two times ... This new era is the new era of world revolution, a new era of the awakening of humankind.<sup>334</sup>

According to Li, ideas like “the strong prevails over the weak” (優勝劣敗 *yōushèng lièbài*) and “the weak are prey to the strong” (弱肉強食 *ruòròu qiángshí*) were outmoded and “everyone knew this”. The old conception of evolution that was based on mutual struggle was to be replaced by evolution based on mutual aid (互助 *hùzhù*). With cooperation and harmonious life together, the new era would, according to Li, mean “a new life, a new civilization and a new world”. The capitalists (資本家 *zīběnjiā*) and the aristocrats (貴族 *guìzú*) were supposed to lack the power to oppress the united workers of the world.<sup>335</sup> The criticism of Social Darwinist evolution was in this context criticism of the versions that underlined power politics. We do have, however, reasons to believe that this was not the only understanding of Darwinism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As has been pointed above (see section 2.3), the importance of adaptation was also highlighted in the Chinese writings. Darwin himself did not stress physical strength but the ability to adapt to the prevailing circumstances. This is to say, the criticism of “Darwinism” in the May Fourth context, meant actually criticism of Social Darwinist variations, the ones that stressed the use of force.

In *New Tide*, Luo Jialun presented his version of the beginning of the new era. Although Luo did not mention mutual aid, his version contained similarities with Li’s. Luo’s article “The New Tide of Today’s World” was published in the first issue of the journal, in January 1919. According to Luo, the new tide was coming from Eastern Europe. It meant a new revolution in which democracy would overthrow autocracy, the people would overthrow warlords and the workers would overthrow the capitalists. After this revolution democracy (民主主義 *mínzhǔ zhǔyì*) and socialism (社會主義 *shèhuì zhǔyì*) would complete each other. The coming of these new tides could not be stopped. The Renaissance came after the Middle Ages, the Reformation came in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was followed by the French Revolution. The beginning of a new era in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Russian Revolution of 1917. Unlike the previous new eras, this new era also affected China.<sup>336</sup> As this example demonstrates, sometimes it was

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1907). This journal also misleadingly portrayed Kropotkin and Bakunin as revolutionary heroes in Russia. Bernal 1976, 217. More about the perceptions of the October revolution in China in section 4.2.2.

<sup>334</sup> Li Dazhao. *New Era*. 新紀元. Weekly Critic. No. 3. January 1919. HDB.

<sup>335</sup> Li Dazhao. ‘New Era’.

<sup>336</sup> Luo Jialun. *The New Tide of Today’s World*. 今日之世界新潮. *New Tide*. Vol. 1. No. 1. January 1919. HDB.

socialism and democracy, not mutual aid and democracy, which were posited as the main constituents of the trends against militarism and imperialism. This setting was repeated many times in *Citizen's* articles on matters related to war and peace. For instance, Huang Rikui offered his interpretation of the future direction of "the world trend": The main trend from democracy would lead to socialism, and from there the Great Unity would be reached. In fact, Huang claimed that it was already possible to notice the transformation from democracy to socialism in this trend. Russia had been the most courageous nation, because it had already started to follow this road.<sup>337</sup>

Mutual aid as a symbol of the new era did not refer only to a demise of militarism after the war. In this context, this new era of mutual aid and democracy also meant the demise of mutual competition and capitalism. Despite the fact that Kropotkin was not the only author who had written about mutual aid, in this context mutual aid was tightly connected with Kropotkin.

#### Esteem of Kropotkin

The esteem of Kropotkin in May Fourth China was to a great extent due to his writings about mutual aid and evolution. It is possible that many of the authors in these journals who praised his name were not well versed in Kropotkin's writings about socialism or anarchism<sup>338</sup>. As already discussed in the previous section, the use of a certain kind of political vocabulary does not necessarily imply ideological commitment. This is, not all the people who wrote about Kropotkin and mutual aid were anarchists.

One of the May Fourth figures who has been often called an anarchist was Huang Lingshuang 黃凌霜<sup>339</sup>. In *New Youth*, Huang (see the quotation in section 3.2 above) wrote that mutual aid was the leading scientific theory of the time and that the Kropotkinian mutual aid was dominant in the "new trend". According to

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<sup>337</sup> Huang Rikui. *The Basis for Everlasting Peace in East Asia*. 亞東永久和平之基礎. Citizen. Vol. 1. No. 2. February 1919. HDB. For similar argumentation in *Citizen*, see also Qu Xuanying. 'Thoughts about the World War'; Chen Bae. *Sino-Japanese Relations and the Future Course of the League of Nations*. 中日新交涉與國際聯盟之前途. Citizen. Vol. 1. No. 3. March 1919. HDB. In Li Dazhao's writings mutual aid was an important part of socialism. See Li Dazhao. *More about Problems and Isms*. 再論問題與主義. Weekly Critic. No. 35. August 1919. HDB.

<sup>338</sup> There were also authors who seemed to know Kropotkin's works comprehensively. Kropotkin's criticism on state institution was not completely unknown. For instance, Kropotkin's pamphlet *The State* was translated into Chinese and published on the pages of Weekly Review. In Weekly Critic, Wang Guangqi discussed the similarities between Kropotkin's "mutual aid anarchism" (互助的無政府主義) and "state socialism" (國家社會主義) of Marx. Wang Guangqi. *Anarchist Communism and State Socialism*. 無政府共產主義與國家社會主義. Weekly Critic. No. 18. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>339</sup> In his autobiography Zhang Guotao wrote that Huang Lingshuang's anarchism influenced Zhang's thought. Chang 1971, 50.

Huang, Cai Yuanpei's and Li Dazhao's articles in *New Youth* had demonstrated this new trend. Unlike Cai's article on the war, where Kropotkin and Tolstoy were presented as representatives of different "philosophies", in Huang's letter Tolstoy's novels were portrayed as the manifestation of the new thought trend in literature and a part of the same trend as Kropotkin.<sup>340</sup>

Kropotkin and mutual aid were also discussed in other journals. In the February 1919 issue of *New Tide*, one of the editors, Fu Sinian, pointed out the esteem given to Kropotkin when he commented that after the World War the atmosphere for discussion has been better than before in China. The topics of these discussions were, according to Fu, usually about democracy, freedom of speech, the language reform in China and Kropotkin's ideas.<sup>341</sup>

Li Dazhao also wrote some articles for *New Tide*. One of them was "Federalism and World Organization" that was published in the second issue in February 1919. At this point, Li's optimistic style seemed to have reached a new level as he wrote about the coming of the Great Unity (大同 *dàtóng*). He said that the current course of evolution was moving towards world unity and that there was a mutual consensus internationally about this direction. Democracy and federalism were signs of this development. Mutual aid and equality also belonged to this 'trend'. According to Li, social structures were in the midst of a trend of change all over the world. As the topic of the article already indicated, federalism (聯治主義 *liánzhì zhǔyì*) was to play a central role in this development. *First*, the federalism should be realized at the state level, *then* at the continental level and *finally* at the world level. This would be the road for world unity.<sup>342</sup>

The idea of the great unity (大同 *dàtóng*) in the future was not an invention of the May Fourth period. The concept was originally an old Confucian concept from the *Book of Rites* (禮記 *Lǐjì*) and it referred to 'a golden age' in the past. In some versions it was thought that the great unity could be achieved again when all the foreign people were harmonized by the Confucian world order<sup>343</sup>. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this concept was used by Kang Youwei and by Sun Yatsen. In their texts the great unity was the goal of historical development. Kang stated that it was China's mission to work together with other nations to attain the great unity. Sun, on the other hand, claimed that the adoption of his political guidelines stated in his *Three Principles of the People* would lead China to this unity.<sup>344</sup> According to Charlotte Furth (1987), during the

<sup>340</sup> Huang Lingshuang. 'Esperanto and the Modern Trend of Thought'. Huang wrote about mutual aid also in anarchism-inspired journal *Evolution* (進化 *jìn huà*). See Zhu 1996, 52; Yuan 2004, 14-18.

<sup>341</sup> Fu Sinian. *Desctruction*. 破壞. *New Tide*. Vol. 1. No. 2. February 1919. HDB.

<sup>342</sup> Li Dazhao. *Federalism and World Organization*. 聯治主義與世界組織. *New Tide*. Vol. 1. No. 2. February 1919. Edward Gu has noted that federalist ideas were popular in May Fourth China. Li was not the only author writing about federalism. Gu 2001, 606-607.

<sup>343</sup> Sun, L. 2002, 6.

<sup>344</sup> Hsiao 1975; Pusey 1983, 32; Sun, L. 2002, 7. Kang Youwei's famous book *Great Unity* was completed in 1902, but it was not completely published before 1935. There was partial

late Qing period Western science was combined with Confucian-Taoist tradition and the result was a new kind of cosmology and a new faith in world-historical progress among Chinese authors. Qing-reformists, like Kang, had a shared belief in beneficial nature of the historical process that would lead progressively to world community.<sup>345</sup> Some authors, like Kondo Kuniyasu, have connected Li's ideas on the Great Unity with his Marxism<sup>346</sup>. It seems, however, that Li's interest in mutual aid and Great Unity preceded his interest in Marx. For instance in "Federalism and World Organization" there were no references to Marx, historical materialism or class struggle.<sup>347</sup>

Mutual aid was also discussed in *Citizen*. Xu Deheng, who had been one of the leaders in the May Fourth incident, wrote that unlike before, when China believed in closed doors -policies, China at the time had to react to the prevailing trends of the time. Xu underlined four main trends that should be taken into consideration. These four were democracy, national sovereignty, labour ideology and mutual aid. The greatest battle at the time was the one between warlordism (軍閥主義 *jūnfá zhūyì*) and democracy (民治主義 *mínzhì zhūyì*). According to Xu, the allied victory in the World War, the Russian Revolution and the German Revolution were signs of the strength of democracy. The source of this trend was in Eastern Europe. The national sovereignty theme of the article was inspired by Woodrow Wilson's speeches. Xu wrote that this wave was spreading to the whole world. Like Li Dazhao in *New Tide*, Xu also mentioned the idea of future world unity and saw the establishment of the League of Nations as a clear sign of this development. The emergence of labor ideology was due to the suppression of workers by the capitalists in Europe and in the United States. Xu claimed that the ultimate goal of workers was world peace and that the spread of workers government was part of "the world trend". Lastly, Xu wrote about universal brotherhood that was espoused by Kropotkin and Tolstoy. He stressed that mutual aid was a requirement for evolution. Xu presented Russia as a rising nation and Germany as a declining one due to its aggressive doctrines (攘竊主義 *rǎngqiè zhūyì*)<sup>348</sup> that were against "the new world trend".<sup>349</sup>

Confrontation between militarism and mutual aid and its relation to Sino-Japanese relations was also central in Gao Yuan's 高元 article in *New Tide* in which his target of criticism was the lack of transparency in Chinese society, in

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version available from 1913. Before Kang, the Taiping rebels (Taiping Rebellion, 1850-1864) had written about Great Unity in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bernal 1976, 17-20. More about Sun Yatsen's concept of Great Unity, see Gregor 1981.

<sup>345</sup> Furth 1987, 325-328.

<sup>346</sup> Kondo 1988, 229-231.

<sup>347</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Federalism and World Organization'.

<sup>348</sup> Word to word translation of 攘竊主義 would be "the doctrine of stealing". Xu was referring to aggressive foreign politics and offensive war.

<sup>349</sup> Xu Deheng. 'National Thought and the World Trend'. Chen Duxiu had associated Germany with power politics and invasionism already during the war. Chen Duxiu. *The Russian Revolution and the Consciousness of Chinese People*. 俄羅斯革命與我國民之覺悟. New Youth. Vol. 3. No. 2. April 1917. HDB.

politics and in diplomacy. According to Gao, the period at hand was a period of democracy and there was no place for military governments, which were always dependent upon secrecy. Transparency would always benefit the people, whereas secrecy worked against them. Gao wrote that secrecy was connected to selfish ambitions and was thus against the mutual aid thought, and that secrecy did not belong to “present day politics” (現代的政治 *xiànzài de zhèngzhì*). He criticized the Paris Peace Conference for its closed doors sessions in which the strongest powers were making decisions among themselves without consulting others. These procedures were, according to Gao, against the will of human kind which wanted mutual aid and honest life (正當的生活 *zhèngdāng de shēnghuó*).<sup>350</sup>

As these examples indicate, the spirit of mutual aid appeared as an opposite to insincerity in international politics. This insincerity was manifested in secret diplomacy, aggressive foreign politics and militarism in general. Kropotkin’s revision on Darwin’s evolutionary theory was used to give scientific support to the hope that a more peaceful and just world would be realizable.

Deep dissatisfaction with the Paris Peace conference and the following May fourth demonstrations did not put an end to the writings about mutual aid and democracy. In July, Gao Yihan’s article “Basics of Kropotkin’s Theory” was published in *Weekly Critic*. In this article Gao pointed out that Darwin himself understood both sides of evolution: competition and mutual aid, but his reasons and arguments were concentrated on the competition aspect. Kropotkin, on the other hand, had understood and also underlined the necessity of mutual aid. For him mutual aid was not based on universal love, but it was specifically a precondition for life.<sup>351</sup>

The validity of Kropotkin’s ideas on the need for mutual aid was also hailed in *Young China*. In the first issue in July, Kropotkin’s relation to Darwin was discussed by Wei Shizhen. Wei wrote that before the World War, Darwin’s thought was popular all over the world. The ideas and slogans, like “struggle for survival” (生存競爭 *shēngcún jìngzhēng*), were widely used whereas Kropotkin’s ideas failed to arouse wide interest. But the war had changed the situation as it had proved the strength of cooperation. By mutual aid, the Allied nations were able to defeat strong Germany. According to Wei, everyone had started to study Kropotkin’s ideas after the war. By mutual aid and fraternity (博愛 *bóài*) it was possible to reach the Great Unity (大同). Wei also wrote that people could no longer rely on officials and politicians. From then on, they could only rely on workers.<sup>352</sup> In the third issue (September 1919) of *Young China*, Zong Baihua criticized “empty theories” of the journal. He suggested that *Young China* should follow “the new thought trend of the world” that represented “the real scientific

<sup>350</sup> Gao Yuan. *Anti-Secretism*. 非秘密主義. New Tide. Vol. 1. No. 4. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>351</sup> Gao Yihan. *Basics of Kropotkin’s Theory*. 克魯泡特金學說的要點. *Weekly Critic*. No. 31. July 1919. HDB.

<sup>352</sup> Wei Shizhen. ‘All Sides of Human Evolution, Part 1’.



spirit". In society this new spirit meant "ideology of mutual aid" (互助主義 *hùzhù zhǔyì*), which was based on real freedom and equality, and a new social order. In written articles this should be manifested by "realism" (寫實主義 *xǐeshí zhǔyì*) and "humanism" (人道主義 *réndào zhǔyì*).<sup>353</sup>

In *Young China*, the debate on most relevant theories, ideologies and subjects of study was ongoing in the correspondence section of the journal. The Young China society was planning to translate Western works into Chinese in order to create "The Young China Series" (少年中國學會叢書 *Shàonián Zhōngguó Xuéhuì Cóngshū*) and Yun Daiying was nominated as the editor of this series. In his letter that was published in May 1920, Yun Daiying presented his suggestion of relevant topics to be included to this collection. Yun's list consisted of (in this order) Marx, Kropotkin, Russell, Tagore, Dewey, James, Darwin, Nietzsche, Proudhon, Kant, historical materialism, pragmatism, the history of ethics, biological evolution, eugenics, democracy, Bolshevism, the New Village movement, the labour question, the women question, primary education in rural areas, middle school education, anarchism, Japan, international movements and mass psychology.<sup>354</sup> Zheng Boqi 鄭伯奇 (1895-1979) replied to Yun in a letter that was published few months later. Zheng wanted to add the following items to Yun's list: Bergson, the current state of the socialist movement in different nations, religious movements, trends in literature, Tolstoy, the Pacific area, literature histories of different nations, the history of science, vernacular Chinese and Latin alphabet<sup>355</sup>. Although these lists should not be taken as lists that would represent the interests of all the members of the Young China Society, they certainly offer some indication of that period's intellectual atmosphere and how diverse their areas of interest were.

In July, Yun Daiying continued the discussion on China's future in *Young China*, by his article "How to Create Young China?". Yun wrote that the requirement for understanding "the great world trends" was that people were not committed to narrow nationalism. The creation of "Young China" required mutual aid and the division of work (分工 *fēngōng*). Yun admired Western parliamentary systems and claimed that the parliamentary systems in Europe and America were manifestations of the strength of the people. They had demonstrated that social movements can change societies. The world was moving towards democracy and this was a course that could not be changed.<sup>356</sup> In the following issue of *Young China*, Chen Qitian 陳啟天 (1893-1984) problematized the concept of "new culture" in his article "What is the Real Spirit of the New Culture?". According to Chen, the new culture meant five different transformations: *first*, a transformation from a passive man to an active man;

<sup>353</sup> Zong Baihua. 'Newsletter'.

<sup>354</sup> Yun Daiying. 'Newsletter'.

<sup>355</sup> Zheng Boqi. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 1. July 1920. HDB.

<sup>356</sup> Yun Daiying. 'How to Create Young China? (Part 1)'.

*second*, from competing man to a man who relies on mutual aid; *third*, from the centrality of family to the centrality of society; *fourth*, from militarism to cosmopolitanism (世界主義 *shìjiè zhǔyì*) and *fifth*, from aristocracy to democracy (平民主義 *píngmín zhǔyì*). The first one of these meant withdrawal from Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist traditions that had, according to Chen, caused the inertness of the Chinese society. The second transformation meant understanding the value of Kropotkin's ideas of mutual aid. Chen wrote that Darwin's theory of evolution had made people exaggerate the value of competition and had made people militant. As Kropotkin had noted, mutual aid was a more important factor in evolution than competition. This second transformation was the most important one and it had caused the transformations three, four and five.<sup>357</sup>

In this context, mutual aid was related to criticism of authorities, such as officials, political parties, politicians and warlords<sup>358</sup>. This aspect of mutual aid writings could, perhaps, be interpreted as anarchism. However, criticism of corrupt power regimes in general does not necessarily mean anarchism. Another aspect of these mutual aid writings that could be associated with anarchism was the dream of getting rid of state borders. This idea was expressed in the writings of the Great Unity that was connected with the evolution based on mutual aid.

#### Mutual Aid and Class Conflict

Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao were probably the most well-known proponents of Marxist thought in China in the early 1920s. Chen was also the founder and main editor of *New Youth*. In December 1919, Chen described the ideal society in the *New Youth* journal. It was to be sincere, progressive, active, free, equal, constructive, beautiful, virtuous, peaceful, based on mutual aid, and capable of guaranteeing joyful work. According to Chen, *New Youth* believed in the ethical progress of the whole world and that all the nations of the world should cooperate. Chen wrote that militarism and the belief in the power of money had become obsolete ways of thought. The journal believed in popular movements (民眾運動 *mínzhòng yùndòng*) instead of political parties (政黨 *zhèngdǎng*). They also believed in "real democracy" (真的民主政治 *zhēn de mínzhǔ zhèngzhì*) which meant that the people were holding the power. This course of development was, according to Chen, unavoidable.<sup>359</sup>

In Li Dazhao's writings at the time, mutual aid also took precedence over class struggle. In his article "Material Change and Ethical Change", in *New Tide* in

<sup>357</sup> Chen Qitian. *What is the Real Spirit of the New Culture? 什麼是新文化的真精神*. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 2. August 1920. HDB.

<sup>358</sup> Zarrow has noted that the May Fourth Movement despised politicians as much as they despised warlords. Zarrow 2005, 162.

<sup>359</sup> Chen Duxiu. *The Manifesto of this Journal*. 本誌宣言. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 1. December 1919. HDB.

July 1919, he introduced ideas on ethics and society by Darwin, Marx and Louis Boudin<sup>360</sup>. Li's conclusion in this article was that new ethics, which "belonged to the current time", was based on mutual aid and harmony. Li wrote that new ethics could not be based on nationalities, families, classes or religion.<sup>361</sup> In the same month Li Dazhao also wrote about mutual aid in *Weekly Critic*. In his article *Class Struggle and Mutual Aid* he states that life based on mutual aid did not only lead to evolution, but it actually could set in motion the "real history of humankind" (人類的真歷史 *rénlèi de zhēn lishǐ*). According to Li, class struggle was for Marx something that could be used to explain the past, but not the future. Li did, however, point out that there was a need for "a final class struggle" in which the class society would come to an end. This struggle would start the period of mutual aid.

現在的世界，黑暗到了極點。我們為繼續人類的歷史，當然要起一個大變化。這個大變化就是諾亞以後的大洪水，把從前階級競爭的世界洗的乾乾淨淨，洗出一個嶄新光明的互助的世界來。這最後的階級競爭，是階級社會自滅的途轍，必須經過的，必不能避免的。[...] 這最後階級競爭，是改造社會組織的手段。這互助的原理，是改造人類精神的信條。

Today's world has darkened to the extreme. When we want to continue human history, we certainly need to start a big change. This great change is like the great flood after Noah, it will wash away the world of class struggle and a new bright world of mutual aid will appear. This final class struggle is a road of wiping out the class society, it needs to be passed through, it cannot be avoided. [...] This final class struggle is a method to reform the organization of society. This theory of mutual aid is a creed to reform the spirit of humankind.<sup>362</sup>

In the article Li connected mutual aid and class struggle to each other. It is still questionable whether or not this article should be seen as a proof of Li's conversion to Marxism. There is no evidence that the class struggle in this article would have meant the rejection of parliamentary democracy as it did in some of Chen Duxiu's later writings and the work of others. Li did not write about class struggle in China. Probably, the class struggle in this article did not refer to a violent revolution. According to Zhang Guotao, Li Dazhao held the view that the time (May 1920) was not ready for socialist movement in China on the basis that the people did not know socialism well enough<sup>363</sup>. Meisner's view that Li Dazhao's writings of mutual aid should be seen as his reinterpretation of class struggle theory has not been the only one in which Li's commitment to communism and Marxism has been taken for granted. Chester Tan (1971) notes that many Chinese CCP historians have attempted to read Marxism into Li's

<sup>360</sup> Louis Boudin (1874-1952) was an American author who wrote about Marxism.

<sup>361</sup> Li Dazhao. *Material Change and Ethical Change*. 物質變動與道德變動. New Tide. Vol. 2. No. 2. December 1919. HDB.

<sup>362</sup> Li Dazhao. *Class Struggle and Mutual Aid*. 階級競爭與互助. Weekly Critic. No. 29. July 1919. HDB.

<sup>363</sup> Chang 1971, 90.

earlier writings<sup>364</sup>. Assumedly, this has been a part of the attempts to equate the May Fourth Movement with the birth of CCP.

Even though the labour question had become a topic of discussion in these journals, it did not imply adoption of class struggle language. The spirit of mutual aid was associated with attempts to realize a more equal society. This meant improving labour conditions, but it did not refer to violent struggle. The language of mutual aid and democracy did not highlight the conflict between proletarian and bourgeoisie classes. Before the autumn of 1920, there were no authors in these journals who would have claimed that Marx, class struggle, or proletarian dictatorship belonged to the 'current world trends'. The main paradigm which was used as the key framework for discussions of international relations and Chinese political situation was still the one which posits militarism and warlords as the main problem and "democracy" and "the mutual aid thought" as a solution, albeit a very abstract and vague one.

Besides connecting mutual aid with class struggle, there also appeared articles in which mutual aid was connected to Bolshevism. In June 1920, Fei Juetian 費覺天<sup>365</sup> wrote in *Citizen* about Bolshevism. In this article Fei made an important connection between mutual aid and Bolshevism. Fei wrote that the complex situation in the Pacific area was a result of imperialism and economic expansion. He explained that the economy had started to play an ever increasing role in politics and in diplomacy. Bolshevism (布爾雪維剋主義 *bù'ěrxuěwéikè zhǔyì*), on the other hand, was an ideology that aimed to change the whole economic structure that had caused the situation:

工業革命的第二種根據就是達爾文主義，說生物是常變，是物競天擇，所以那自由競爭是今日組織的一般原則。那麼強的總是勝，弱的總是敗，遂此經濟侵略份外險惡。反過來，布爾雪維剋就主張“凡最適的，就是最能互助的。”一般的組織都要以互助為根本原則。

The second foundation<sup>366</sup> for industrial revolution (工業革命 *gōngyè gé mìng*) was Darwinism and the ideas that living organisms are always changing and natural selection prevails. Therefore, free competition forms the basis for today's [economic] structure. This means that the strong always wins and the weak always loses. It makes economical invasions exceptionally sinister. Conversely, the Bolsheviks support the idea that "the ones who rely on mutual aid, are the fittest". They believe that mutual aid should be the basic idea of all structures.<sup>367</sup>

Fei criticized pan-ism (大...主義) and nationalism (國家主義 *guójiā zhǔyì*) that was based on conceptions of race. The main problem was not a matter of

<sup>364</sup> Tan, C. 1971, 110.

<sup>365</sup> According to Chow, Fei Juetian was one of the students who took part in a study group on socialism at the Beijing University. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 243.

<sup>366</sup> According to Fei, "the first foundation" was the idea of laissez-faire and the reduction of the role of state in market economy.

<sup>367</sup> Fei Juetian. The Pacific Question! (The Bolshevik Question!). 太平洋問題呵! (布爾雪維剋問題呵!). *Citizen*. Vol. 2. No. 2. June 1920. HDB.

competing nations, but a matter of competing classes.<sup>368</sup> It is noteworthy that Fei did not stress struggle and international revolution as the main characteristics of Bolshevism. In his version, Bolshevism was mainly about co-operation and mutual aid.

Although Chen Duxiu distanced himself from Kropotkin and mutual aid during the autumn of 1920, there were still authors in these journals who wrote approvingly on him. For example, Zhou Jianren's 周建人 (1888-1984)<sup>369</sup> article *Struggle for Survival and Mutual Aid* was published in October 1920 in *New Youth*. In this article Zhou wrote that phrases like the struggle for survival had been extremely popular among Chinese authors. Later on many people thought that the Darwinist thought had caused the World War, and because of this, this kind of struggle-based conception on evolution was replaced by the Kropotkinian evolution based on mutual aid. According to Zhou's analysis, the common factor of these two ways of explaining evolution was that they both underlined the ability to adapt to the prevailing circumstances. Kropotkin's vision was that the ones who co-operate are also able to adapt best. Zhou's final conclusion was that evolution required both: competition and mutual aid.<sup>370</sup>

### 3.3 Basic Concepts

As has been demonstrated above, the spirit of mutual aid and democracy was associated with the trend of socialism. Besides socialism, the spirit of mutual aid was also connected with ideals of "new life" (新生活). Work-study groups and the New Village project were attempts to realize new ways of communal life that would enable avoiding mutual competition, capitalism and imperialism<sup>371</sup>. Mutual aid, socialism and the new life all referred to a dream of a society that would be more humane, freer, and more equal than the contemporary one. This is to say, the ideals that were connected with Kropotkin's writings on evolution come close to *liberté, égalité, fraternité* of the French Revolution. In fact, already in the opening issue of *Youth*, Chen Duxiu

<sup>368</sup> Fei Juetian. 'The Pacific Question!'

<sup>369</sup> Zhou Jianren was a biologist and a brother of Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren) and Zhou Zuoren. For a biography of Zhou, see Klein & Clark 1971, vol. 1, 202-204.

<sup>370</sup> Zhou Jianren. *Struggle for Survival and Mutual Aid*. 生存競爭與互助. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 2. October 1920. HDB. In the same issue also Russell appeared as a supporter of Kropotkin. A chapter "Work and Pay" of Russell's *Proposed Road to Freedom* [1918] appeared in this issue. According to Russell, Kropotkin's ideas of work were not illusory but possible. Russell, Bertrand. (Translated by Huang Lingshuang). *Work and Pay*. 工作與報酬. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 2. November 1920. HDB.

<sup>371</sup> "New life" ideal was related also to glorification of life in the countryside. See Li Dazhao. *Mutual Aid*. 互助. First published in *Xin Shenghuo*, December 1919. LDZ; Li Dazhao. *Work-Study (Part One)*. 工读(一). First published in *Xin Shenghuo*, December 1919. LDZ.

had written in a similar manner: liberty, equality and fraternity were posited against the power of elite officials and autocracy<sup>372</sup>. The espousal of mutual aid referred to Kropotkin's writings on evolutionary theory, whereas socialism as 'a part of world trend' at this point did not seem to involve Marxism. It has been claimed above that the language of mutual aid and democracy was primarily used as a criticism of imperialism and militarism. If we look at the usages of some key concepts, such as democracy and freedom, in these writings, we see that they were often used also in criticism of Chinese traditional society. This particular language should not be equated with anarchism, anti-traditionalism or socialism, but it should be seen as a language that supported ideas related to all these isms.

In the following section we shall discuss the concepts related to the semantic field of this language in a more detailed manner. Certain concepts were connected with 'the prevailing world trends', while still other concepts were depicted as being against these trends.

### 3.3.1 Endorsement of Mutual Aid, Democracy, Freedom, Humanism, and Equality

Besides mutual aid and democracy (in its various forms), freedom, humanism and equality appeared as concepts that were repeatedly connected with the prevailing trends and used only in a positive manner. Although this language posited capitalism in a negative light, the role of the concept of socialism was ambivalent. There were also skeptical attitudes towards socialism among those who wrote about the spirit of mutual aid and spirit of democracy. Because of this, socialism should not be seen as one of the core concepts of this language, but as one of the auxiliary concepts.<sup>373</sup> If something was claimed to be against mutual aid, "the trend of democracy", freedom, equality or humanism, it was a grave accusation towards the thing in question. For instance, Chen Duxiu used the argument that Du Yaquan 杜亞泉 (1873-1933) and his viewpoints were against intellectual freedom and the republic when the latter was advocating the continuity of Chinese culture against westernization. According to Leo Ou-fan Lee (2001), the impact of these attacks against Du and the *Eastern Miscellany* were "devastating" and finally led to the resignation of Du from the editorship of the journal.<sup>374</sup> Furthermore, when Chen was defending the language reform, he linked the development of democracy with this reform in order to underline its importance<sup>375</sup>.

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<sup>372</sup> Chen Duxiu. *French People and Modern Civilization*. 法蘭西人與近世文明. Youth. Vol. 1. No. 1. September 1915. HDB. See also Yang 1993, 359. Also Zhou Yushan states that democracy in this context often referred to these ideals of the French Revolution. Zhou Yushan 1999, 315.

<sup>373</sup> Besides socialism, some authors such as Luo Jialun and Fu Sinian in *New Tide* associated social revolution with the new trends. More about social revolution in chapter 4.

<sup>374</sup> Lee 2001, 39-42.

<sup>375</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 282-283.

In their studies on Chinese political concepts Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng (2009) have analyzed the uses of the word 民主 *mínzhǔ*. In pre-19th century texts, it was used to refer to a concept that clearly differed from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century concept. In these earlier writings the word was used to mean ‘ruler of the people’ (民之主 *mín zhī zhǔ*) and it thus referred to the emperor. When W.A.P. Martin translated Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* [1836]<sup>376</sup> into Chinese in 1864 he decided to translate “democratic republic” as 民主之國 *mínzhǔ zhī guó*. This work changed the old meaning and *mínzhǔ* began, little by little, to refer to a different concept, to the people’s power instead of the ruler. For some time, *mínzhǔ* was used interchangeably with 共和 *gōnghé*, but the former became the dominant equivalent for Western “democracy” during the New Culture Movement period. *Gōnghé*, on the other hand, has in later usages referred mainly to the concept of republic.<sup>377</sup> Among late Qing reformists the word *mínzhǔ* was not a word of positive connotations as it referred to opposition to the rule of the emperor. Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848-1905), Xue Fucheng 薛福成 (1838-1894), Kang Youwei, Yan Fu, Liang Qichao all preferred to use the term 民權 *mínquán* in their discussions on democratic rights.<sup>378</sup> According to Federico Masini, the translation of democracy as *mínzhǔ* in Japan was probably adopted from the same translation by Martin. Thus, Masini calls it a “return-loan” from Japanese. *Gōnghé* on the other hand was an original loan from Japanese. The first usage of *gōnghé* as ‘republic’ in China was, according to Masini’s findings, by Zhang Binglin in 1903.<sup>379</sup>

By looking at the dictionaries of this period we cannot recover all the ‘true’ meanings of concepts of the period. Still, dictionaries can provide valuable examples of possible definitions. Findings from dictionaries indicate there was no clear dividing line between words that were used to refer to democracy and words that were used to refer to republic. *Mínzhǔ* could be used to refer to both

<sup>376</sup> *Elements of International Law* was translated into Japanese in 1868. According to Rune Svarverud, this was the first book that aimed to systematically introduce Western political systems in China. Fang Min has noted that Western systems had been discussed before this in Wei Yuan’s book *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms* (海國圖志, *Hǎiguó Túzhì*) [1844]. Svarverud 2001, 25; Fang 2004, 1. See also Masini 1993, 131-132.

<sup>377</sup> According to Jin and Liu, in New Youth 民主 replaced 共和 in 1918-1919. Jin & Liu 2009, 17-21, 278. The meaning of *gōnghé* in traditional texts was, according to Juliette Chung, “coexistent rule of ministers”. Chung 1999, 23-25. Besides *mínzhǔ* and *gōnghé*, the concept of democracy was also discussed with terms such as 人權 *rénquán*, 惟民主義 *wéimín zhǔyì*, 庶民主義 *shùmín zhǔyì*, 平民主義 *píngmín zhǔyì*. More about these versions, see Zhu 1996, 30-63.

<sup>378</sup> Svarverud 2001, 137-140.

<sup>379</sup> Masini 1993, 173, 189-190. Viviane Alleton has explained that return-loans are translations that were first used by missionaries in China, then introduced in Japan by the creators of new vocabularies and finally borrowed again by Chinese who labelled them ‘made in Japan’. Alleton 2001, 84-88.

of them. In a Chinese-English dictionary compiled by Li Yuwen 李玉汶 and published in 1921 in Shanghai, 民主主義 *mínzhǔ zhǔyì* is translated as “republicanism”, whereas 民主政治 *mínzhǔ zhèngzhì* as “democracy”. The translation for *gōnghé* is, on the other hand, “commonwealth” or “union.”<sup>380</sup> Another dictionary from 1921, edited by Yan Huiqing 顏惠慶, gives three possible meanings for the English word “democracy”: “1. A form of government in which the supreme power is directly or indirectly in the hands of the people, 民主政體, 民政, 庶建; 2. The principles of the Democratic Party in the United States, 美國民政, 政黨之宗旨; 3. The people, 庶民, 民眾, 萬民.”<sup>381</sup>

When the students were protesting against the Paris Peace Conference in the May Fourth demonstrations, the word they used to refer to democracy was not *mínzhǔ*, but rather 德謨克拉西 *démókèlāxī*<sup>382</sup>. It is possible that some of the students did not want to use *mínzhǔ* because of its older usages. *Démókèlāxī* on the other hand, did not carry the burden of traditional meanings as it was a phonetic translation of a foreign word.

Wang Guilin (1989) points out that, in May Fourth journals, democracy was not used only to refer to a certain political system. Usages of the word democracy were diverse and the meanings given to the word were often very abstract. It was often used to refer to righteousness (正義 *zhèngyì*) in general. Wang Guilin divides the usages of “democracy” in the May Fourth writings into four categories: *first*, it was used to refer to the idea that power belonged to people; *second*, it was used to refer to economic democracy that meant economic equality; *third*, it was used to mean overthrowing “the power elite”; *fourth*, it was presented as a part of the “world trends”.<sup>383</sup> Unlike Wang’s treatment, in this study the writings about world trends are seen as legitimizations of certain versions of democracy, not as a representative of a specific version of democracy. Within the language of mutual aid and democracy, it was especially the third meaning of this classification, which was strongly emphasized. Democracy was used as a kind of counter concept against warlords, aristocrats, bureaucrats and capitalists (see section 3.3.2 below).

The belief in the power and potential of democracy was continually repeated in the periodicals of the day. For instance, in *Morning News* (晨报 *Chén Bào*) in February 1919, Li Dazhao wrote that democracy was “the only authority in the modern time” (現代惟一的威權 *xiàndài wéiyī de wēiquán*). According to Li, democracy meant equal possibilities for all.<sup>384</sup> In *Weekly Critic*, Peng Yihu 彭一湖

<sup>380</sup> Li Y.W. 1921, 299.

<sup>381</sup> Yan 1921, 253.

<sup>382</sup> Masini 1993, 137.

<sup>383</sup> Wang G. 1989, 376-377, 380.

<sup>384</sup> Li Dazhao. *The Problem of Labour Education*. 劳动教育问题. First published in *Morning News*, February 1919. LDZ. The importance of democracy was also underlined in Li’s “Federalism and the World Organization” that was published in the same month in *New*



(1887-1958) explained that democracy (德謨克拉西 *démòkèlāxī*) was against aristocracy, bureaucracy, warlordism and the power of money. Peng wrote that democracy was not restricted only to politics, but it covered also economy and culture.<sup>385</sup> Also Liu Binglin 劉秉麟 (1891-1956) gave his definition in the same journal by writing that democracy (民主) meant equal possibilities for all to use their natural abilities and skills.<sup>386</sup>

One important translation from the West on democracy was John Hobson's book *Democracy after the War* [1917] that was translated into Chinese by Luo Jialun and published as a serial in *Morning News* during the spring of 1919. Although Hobson criticized capitalism, he did not support Marxism or class struggle; he wrote that socialism had overstressed the class war and that in Marxism there was a false belief in 'scientific' evolution. Hobson's version of democracy seemed to be similar to the concept of democracy within the mutual aid language: he defended equality in education. On the other hand, it was militarism and capitalism that were the main enemies of democracy.<sup>387</sup>

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese texts, democracy had been strongly identified as one of the characteristics of powerful nations. For instance, in Yan Fu's and Liang Qichao's writings democracy was something that was needed in order to enhance China's possibilities in the struggle for survival.<sup>388</sup> In the May Fourth journals the style of writing about democracy was decidedly different as democracy was tightly connected with the criticism of power politics.

In May 1919, Tan Pingshan's article "Four Aspects of Democracy" was published in *New Tide*. In this article, Tan described democracy (德謨克拉西) as "the greatest trend of today's world" (今日世界之最大主潮 *jīnrì shìjiè zhī zuìdà zhǔcháo*). In his comparatively analytical treatment of the concept, Tan acknowledged that the variety of Chinese words referring to this concept was huge and that the scope of the concept was very wide. Furthermore, the recent developments in Germany and Russia were evidence of the fact that all the nations had to adapt to this trend of democracy. This trend would wipe away

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*Tide*. As already mentioned above, Li wrote that democracy and federalism belonged to this course of evolution that would lead to the Great Unity. Li Dazhao. 'Federalism and the World Organization'.

<sup>385</sup> Peng Yihu. *Fundamental Ideas of the New Era*. 新時代之根本思想. Weekly Critic. No. 8.

February 1919. HDB. See also Zhang Weici. *Recent Political Changes in Germany*. 最近德國政治變遷. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB.

<sup>386</sup> Liu Binglin. *The Origins of the Distribution Problem*. 分配問題發端. New Tide. Vol. 1. No. 4. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>387</sup> Hobson 1917/1918, 35-51, 190. See also Zhu 1996, 250-251. According to Michael Luk, Lenin was familiar with Hobson's book *Imperialism, a Study* [1902]. However, as far as we know, there was no Chinese translation available of this book during the May Fourth period. Hobson's understanding of imperialism was that imperialism was driven by private interests, not by national interests. It was something that would lead to militarism and was a threat to freedom and equality. See Hobson 1902.

<sup>388</sup> Pusey 1983, 70, 335; Zhu 1996, 141-142.

aristocratic politics (貴族政治 *guìzú zhèngzhì*), politics led by military leaders (武人政治 *wǔrén zhèngzhì*), politics led by bureaucrats (官僚政治 *guānliáo zhèngzhì*), the militaristic nation state system (軍國民制度 *jūnguómín zhìdù*) and the capitalist system (資本家制度 *zīběnjiā zhìdù*). The trend of democracy against militarism was a typical juxtaposition within this language<sup>389</sup>. Tan wrote that democracy was not limited only to politics; it had to do with all the areas of life and there was no other principle that could have solved all the problems of life. According to Tan the four sides of democracy were political, economic, philosophical and social.<sup>390</sup>

Democracy in this context only occasionally meant discussions on elections or parliamentary systems<sup>391</sup>. The concept of democracy was employed to criticize contemporary and traditional society in various ways<sup>392</sup>. The spirit of democracy was referred to as justice (as opposed to power politics, imperialism and secret diplomacy) and to a more equal society (as opposed to capitalism, aristocracy and the power of money)<sup>393</sup>. Democracy referred to an ideal in the future. It referred to something that should be aimed at when reforms would take place. This is to say, although these authors wrote that mutual aid and democracy were key elements of the “new trends”, no one claimed that democracy was already there. Because of this, these writings on democracy did not describe rights for something but they were mainly used as possible ways of getting rid of something; they were used to criticize the current state of affairs.

Freedom (or liberty)<sup>394</sup> and equality were often linked to democracy, as necessary parts of it. Nevertheless, these concepts were also used without references to democracy. The Chinese word 自由 *zìyóu* was used to refer to western concepts of freedom and liberty. According to Tang Xiaobing this practice was of Japanese origin. Nakamura Masanao had used 自由 *jiyū* in his translation of Mill’s *On Liberty* in 1872.<sup>395</sup> According to Federico Masini, *zìyóu* was first used in the modern sense in an addendum to the Chinese-American treaty

<sup>389</sup> See for example Li Dazhao. ‘More about Problems and Isms’.

<sup>390</sup> Tan Pingshan. *Four Aspects of Democracy*. 德謨克拉西之四面觀. New Tide. Vol. 1. No. 5. May 1919. HDB.

<sup>391</sup> Luo Jialun’s article on new tides identified different conditions for democracy. These conditions included views on elections and the role of the members of parliament. Luo. ‘The New Tide’.

<sup>392</sup> According to Zhou Yangshan, the May Fourth concept of democracy was tightly connected with anti-traditionalism. That is, democracy was a concept that was used to criticize traditional society. Zhou Yangshan 1989b, 513-515.

<sup>393</sup> Edward Gu’s interpretation on the May Fourth spiritual democracy has been similar: he has called the May Fourth democracy a “populist democracy”. According to Gu, “spiritual democracy” meant liberty, equality, fraternity and humanitarianism. Gu 2001, 609.

<sup>394</sup> In Li Yuwen’s dictionary from 1921, 自由 *zìyóu* was given meanings of both liberty and freedom. Li Y.W. 1921, 513-514.

<sup>395</sup> Tang, X. 1996, 16. Juliette Chung has also written that the Japanese took *zìyóu* (*jiyū*) directly from Chinese classics. Chung 1999, 34.

that was signed in Washington in 1868. Because of this, Masini calls also *zìyóu* a return-loan.<sup>396</sup>

Freedom, including freedom of speech (言論自由 *yánlùn zìyóu*) and freedom of thought (思想自由 *sīxiǎng zìyóu*), was also often presented as an important part of “the new trends” and something that was clearly against the old and reserved Confucian society. Furthermore, one recurrent argument was that without freedom there could be neither evolution nor progress.<sup>397</sup> The concepts democracy and freedom, and the transformations, which these concepts encountered by the introduction of the class struggle language, will be discussed in a more detailed manner in 5.2.

Equality (平等 *píngděng*) was another concept that was associated with the trends of mutual aid and democracy and was used positively, fairly without exception<sup>398</sup>. In his studies on ideologies, Michael Freedon (1996) identified equality as one of the main conceptual themes in socialism. He states that “all socialisms assert the equality of human beings”. Equality is both a statement about the original condition of human beings and also a desired goal to be reattained. Equality within socialism does not refer to sameness or numerical equality, but it refers to redistribution of wealth.<sup>399</sup> A society based on Confucian ideals is founded on a hierarchical system in which every individual is supposed to respect one’s own position. This does not mean, nevertheless, that the idea of equality would have been completely missing in Chinese thought before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Wei Zhengtong (1985) states that Wang Mang’s 王莽 (45 BC – 23 AD) thoughts on 均平 *jūnpíng* made the introduction of socialist ideals in China easier to digest. Wang, a Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) official, held the idea of equal (均平) distribution of land among the people. Related to these ideas, Hu Shi called Wang Mang the first socialist of China. Wang’s dream was never properly fulfilled, but according to Wei, his ideas influenced later generations. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century China, Sun Yatsen supported the idea of equal rights for land. Sun’s *Min Bao* journal supported the nationalization of land.<sup>400</sup> Equality was also emphasized among the Taiping rebels. The Taipings supported equal rights in the distribution of land, equality of the sexes, equal rights to worship God. They wanted also to eliminate the separation between rich and poor.<sup>401</sup> In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Liu Shippei wrote extensively about equality in the *Journal of Natural*

<sup>396</sup> Masini 1993, 55, 221-222. Xiong Yuezhi also refers to this same treaty. Xiong 2001, 70-73.

<sup>397</sup> See for example Chen Duxiu. *Sins of the Conservatives*. 舊黨的罪惡. Weekly Critic. No. 11. March 1919. HDB; Chen Duxiu. ‘Law and Freedom of Speech’; Luo Jialun. *Development of Freedom of Thought in the Modern West*. 近代西洋思想自由的進化. New Tide. Vol. 2. No. 2. December 1919. HDB.

<sup>398</sup> Equality was an important concept also for Kropotkin himself. See for instance Kropotkin 1880.

<sup>399</sup> Freedon 1996/2008, 425-432.

<sup>400</sup> Wei 1985, 81-82.

<sup>401</sup> Shih 1967, 46-66.

*Justice*. Liu espoused equality of all human beings and he believed that the key was to make labour equal with others. The origins of inequality were, according to Liu, in class, labour and sex.<sup>402</sup>

The concept of equality within the language of mutual aid and democracy did not mean equal distribution of land among Chinese people. In articles, which dealt with the future of China in foreign relations, *píngděng* was used to designate the equality between different nationalities and nations. The usual argument was that without such equality there would be no lasting peace<sup>403</sup>. When Chinese society was discussed, the need for more equality was often brought up in discussions on the education system<sup>404</sup>. The idea that it is possible to realize a more equal society only with universal education had been also an idea supported by *New Century* authors a decade earlier (see Section 3.1 above). Inequality was objected to in this context. Inequality was often connected to economic inequality and class society<sup>405</sup>.

Another concept that was often associated with the spirit of mutual aid and the spirit of democracy was humanism (人道主義 *réndào zhǔyì*). Ordinarily, humanism appeared as a counter concept to militarism and war<sup>406</sup>. The period after the First World War was thus portrayed as a period of humanism. As in the writings on the spirit of democracy, humanism referred to a certain kind of attitude or spirit. This can be illustrated by examples of the usages of *réndào zhǔyì* in this context.

In Li Dazhao's writings of the war, the result of the war had among other things also been a victory of humanism over warlords<sup>407</sup>. For Li, also the October Revolution had been a sign of adaptation to the spirit of humanism<sup>408</sup>. Humanism and justice were held to be values that the Allied side had represented in war against German militarism. Humanism was thus presented as one of the requirements of maintaining peace.<sup>409</sup> Humanism was also often associated with

<sup>402</sup> Zarrow 1990, 83-96.

<sup>403</sup> See for example Chen Duxiu. 'The Consciousness and the Demands'.

<sup>404</sup> See for example Luo Jialun. 'The Emancipation of Women'; Cai Yuanpei. 'The Great Hope'.

<sup>405</sup> See for example Yang Yizeng. *Why Should Society be Reformed? 社會為甚麼要改造?* Citizen. Vol. 2. No. 1. HDB.

<sup>406</sup> Li Shizeng had written similarly about humanism during the first decade of the 20th century. For Li nationalism and militarism were against 人道 *réndào*. Zarrow 1990, 119.

<sup>407</sup> Li Dazhao. *The Victory of Bolshevism*. Bolshevism 的勝利. New Youth. Vol. 5. No. 5. November 1918. HDB. In *Young China* Li wrote that improving the spirit of Chinese youth meant spreading the spirit of humanism, mutual aid and fraternity. See Li Dazhao. *The Youth Movement of Young China*. 少年中國的少年運動. Young China. Vol. 1. No. 3. September 1919. HDB.

<sup>408</sup> Li Dazhao. *Comparison between the French and the Russian Revolutions*. 法俄革命之比較觀. First published in *Yan zhi*, July 1918. LDZ.

<sup>409</sup> See for instance Willoughby, Westel (Translated by Chen Dacai). *Allied Nations and Prussia – Confrontation in Political Ideals*. 協約國與普魯士政治理想之對抗. New Youth. Vol. 5.

the spirit of democracy and mutual aid. For instance, Gao Yuan connected humanism with mutual aid and democracy as counter forces to militarism and secret diplomacy<sup>410</sup>. In *Young China*, Zong Baihua wrote that in the new world trend mutual aid was connected to humanism, freedom and equality<sup>411</sup>. Although usually humanism referred to a peaceful spirit in international politics, in some cases, it was used in articles that dealt with reforms in the Chinese society. For instance, Luo Jialun wrote that the improvement in women's position was a sign of humanism<sup>412</sup>, whereas in another article it was stated that the old family institution in China was "inhuman" (慘無人道 *cǎnwú réndào*)<sup>413</sup>. Humanism was clearly a concept with a positive tone. No one would have been willing to say that he or she would have been against it. In some cases humanism was also connected with socialism. For example Chen Duxiu wrote that humanism, mutual aid and equality were socialist ideas that were against conservatism and invasionism<sup>414</sup>.

### 3.3.2 Criticism of Militarism, Warlordism, Nationalism, and Capitalism

The things that were usually presented as the main threats to mutual aid and democracy can be divided into four groups: 1) militarism, imperialism and "the super power thought"; 2) the power of warlords and military leaders, the power of bureaucrats and secret diplomacy; 3) nationalism and patriotism in "a narrow sense"; and 4) capitalism, aristocracy and the power of money. All these were constantly claimed to be against the prevailing "thought trends".

First, the criticism on "militarism" (軍國主義 *jūnguó zhǔyì* and 武力主義 *wùlì zhǔyì*), "imperialism" (帝國主義 *dìguó zhǔyì*)<sup>415</sup>, "invasionism" (侵略主義 *qīnlüè zhǔyì* and 侵略思想 *qīnlüè sīxiǎng*)<sup>416</sup> and "the great power thought" (強國主義,

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No. 5. November 1918. HDB; Huang Rikui. 'The Basis for Everlasting Peace'; He Siyuan. 'The True Meaning of Thinking'.

<sup>410</sup> Gao Yuan. 'Anti-Secretism'. Also Yun Daiying presented in *Young China* humanism and mutual aid as counter forces to capitalism and militarism. See Yun. 'How to Create Young China (Part 1)'.

<sup>411</sup> Zong Baihua. 'Newsletter'.

<sup>412</sup> Luo Jialun. 'The Emancipation of Women'.

<sup>413</sup> Huang Ai. *Model Home as a Key to Social Progress*. 模範家庭為社會進步的中心. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 4. October 1919. HDB.

<sup>414</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Conservatism and Invasionism*. 保守主義與侵略主義. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 2. January 1920. HDB. Humanism and socialism were also lumped together by Chen Baoyuan in *Citizen* and He Siyuan in *New Tide*. Chen. 'Sino-Japanese Relations'; He. 'The True Meaning of Thinking'.

<sup>415</sup> According to Masini, it was Yan Fu who translated imperialism as 帝國. This is one of the few translations by Yan that has not been rejected afterwards. Masini 1993, 168-169.

<sup>416</sup> Chen Duxiu connected invasionism and imperialism with conservatism. According to him, there were conservative governments in Japan, England, France and Italy that wanted to uphold imperialist policies. Chen. 'Conservatism and Invasionism'. Chen had already

qiángguó zhǔyì and 大...主義 dà ... zhǔyì) was predictably connected to the discussions on the First World War and its aftermath, especially to the Shandong question and to the Sino-Japanese relations. Militarism was usually connected to Germany and Japan and this manner of thinking was presented as parts of the “declining trends” or against the “new trends of thought”<sup>417</sup>.

The *second* group is tightly connected to the first one. The difference is that the power of the “warlords” (軍閥 jūnfá)<sup>418</sup> and “bureaucrats” (官僚 guānliáo) and “secret diplomacy” (秘密主義 mìmì zhǔyì) were concrete obstacles for democracy and mutual aid, whereas the ideas in the previous group were problems in the ‘spiritual level’ and opposites namely to “the spirit of democracy” or to “the spirit of mutual aid”. Although the criticism of the power of the warlords and bureaucrats was clearly directed against the authorities in China, names of individual warlords were rarely mentioned. *Weekly Critic* differed from more moderate journals in this sense, as it straightforwardly criticized the Duan Qirui regime in Beijing. Duan was not only an undemocratic “warlord”, but he also personified “secret diplomacy” due to his agreements with Japan, which had greatly increased Japan’s influence on China’s soil. Duan had close contacts in Japan and he was able to organize Japanese loans in exchange of financial benefits for the Japanese side.<sup>419</sup>

*Third*, although the May Fourth Movement is customarily called a nationalist or a patriotic movement<sup>420</sup> the concepts of nationalism and patriotism were in many cases given negative meanings within this political language. The image of this movement as a nationalist one has to do with the demonstrations against imperialism, and against the events at the Paris Peace Conference where the demands of the Chinese delegation seemed to have no effect. Presumably, this image has also to do with the CCP and GMD attempts to strengthen the image of “the nationalistic spirit” of this movement in later narrations that were used for their own purposes<sup>421</sup>. Some authors have noted that calling this movement nationalistic or patriotic is one-sided. For instance Michael Luk has pointed out that both tendencies existed simultaneously: nationalism and internationalism<sup>422</sup>.

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posited democracy as a counter force to invasionism in 1917. See Chen. ‘The Russian Revolution and the Consciousness of Chinese People’.

<sup>417</sup> Chen Duxiu mentioned German militarism that was against the world trends already in the first issue of the *Youth* journal. ‘French People and Modern Civilization’.

<sup>418</sup> In some cases, 軍閥 was used to refer individual warlords and in other cases to military cliques.

<sup>419</sup> Chen, Je. 1979, 305-306. More about Duan Qirui and his connections to Japan see Chang 1971, 45-47. Duan Qirui believed in the use of force in his attempts to unify China. Xu Shichang and others disagreed. More about the break-up of the Beiyang clique, and about Anfu and Zhili cliques, see Nathan 1976, 113, 128-175, 226-239.

<sup>420</sup> For instance Tikhvinsky writes about “patriotic movement”. Tikhvinsky 1989, 1100, 1107.

<sup>421</sup> See Yü 2001, 302-305.; Schwarcz 1986, 248-249.

<sup>422</sup> Luk 1990, 13. Yang Yi has written that the center of May Fourth patriotism was the concern over the survival of China. Yang 1989, 588-598.

Within the language of mutual aid and democracy “nationalism” (國家主義 *guójiā zhǔyì* or 民族主義 *mínzú zhǔyì*) and “patriotism” (愛國主義 *àiguó zhǔyì* or 愛國 *àiguó*) were by no means concepts that were used only in positive light<sup>423</sup>. An article in *New Youth* posited that although many revolutionary heroes have been nationalists, Bakunin in Russia aimed at benefiting the whole humankind in his own revolutionary activities<sup>424</sup>. This kind of cosmopolitanism or internationalism, which in some cases was also related to different ideas of world union, seemed to be behind the criticism of nationalism in connection to the spirit of mutual aid<sup>425</sup>. One of the articles in *New Youth* named the five biggest “poisons” in the contemporary world as “nationalism” (國家主義), “religious extremism” (宗教主義 *zōngjiào zhǔyì*), “familism” (家族主義 *jiāzú zhǔyì*), “capitalist system” (資本制度 *zīběn zhìdù*) and “impure thought” (汙濁思想 *wūzhuó sīxiǎng*).<sup>426</sup> This article was not an oddity in its negative depiction of nationalism. In *Young China*, Li Huang and Yun Daiying criticized “narrow nationalism” (狹隘的國家主義 *xiá'ài de guójiā zhǔyì*)<sup>427</sup>, and in *New Tide*, Li Dazhao wrote that ethics based on nationalism (國家主義的道德 *guójiā zhǔyì de dàodé*) was outmoded<sup>428</sup>. There were also arguments that not all nationalism was pernicious; in *Young China* Wang Guangqi wrote that he defended “nationalism” (民族主義) if it did not mean hostility toward other nations.<sup>429</sup>

<sup>423</sup> It seems that there was no clear dividing line between nationalism and patriotism. In Yan Huiqing’s dictionary “nationalism” was translated as 愛國. Yan 1921, 659.

<sup>424</sup> Rappoport, Angelo. (translated by Zhao Mingzhe) *The Philosophical Basis of the Russian Revolution, Part 2*. 俄國革命之哲學的基礎 (下). *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB. Besides Bakunin, also Dostojevski was told to share this goal.

<sup>425</sup> Gao Yihan criticized the nation state system dreamed of a world union in *New Youth* already before the end of the war. See Jin & Liu 2009, 412.

<sup>426</sup> Ai Zhen. *Five Poisons*. 五毒. *New Youth*. Vol. 5. No. 6. December 1918. HDB. Ai Zhen 愛真 was probably a pen name. “Ai Zhen” can be translated as “true love” and it was probably a pen-name.

<sup>427</sup> Li Huang. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 5. November 1919. HDB; Yun Daiying. ‘How to Create Young China? (Part 1)’.

<sup>428</sup> Li Dazhao. ‘Material Change and Ethical Change.’

<sup>429</sup> Wang also made a distinction between 國家主義 and 民族主義. He used the former to designate the centrality of state and can be thus translated as “statism”. Wang Guangqi. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 11. May 1921. HDB. John Dewey had made a similar distinction between desirable (solidarity towards compatriots) and undesirable (hostility towards other nations) nationalism. See Dewey, John. (Gao Yihan’s translation) *On the Development of Democracy in the United States*. 美國之民治的發展. *Weekly Critic*. No.26. June 1919. HDB.

Although these authors themselves sometimes called the student movement as a patriotic one<sup>430</sup>, “patriotism” was also a concept that was often given negative meanings. These negative meanings were related to the idea that strong patriotism could hinder the adaptation to world trends and cooperation between nations. Chen Duxiu discussed this matter in his article “Should We Be Patriotic?” in *Weekly Critic*. Chen wrote that nowadays patriotic thought (愛國思想) was not accepted by everyone anymore as it was challenged by individualists and cosmopolites. Chen’s two sided answer to the question was that yes, there was a need for patriotism when China was defending itself against aggressors, but no, it should not be used as a tool to suppress others.<sup>431</sup> Li Dazhao’s stance seemed to be sterner as he wrote in *Young China* that patriotism should be opposed. Notwithstanding this, in fact he seemed to agree with Chen, because the patriotism that he was criticizing was the one that referred to aggressive foreign politics.<sup>432</sup> Thus, as in the case of nationalism, it was the narrow patriotism that was to be opposed.

Fourth, the concepts of “capitalism” (資本主義 *zīběn zhǔyì*), “capitalist” (資本家 *zīběnjiā*), “aristocracy” (貴族主義 *guìzú zhǔyì*) “aristocrat” (貴族 *guìzú*)<sup>433</sup> had a markedly negative connotation in the May Fourth journals<sup>434</sup>. Capitalism was used to refer to deceitful engagement in trade. There was no such thing as ‘a good capitalist’; capitalism and aristocracy were constantly described as adversaries to democracy and mutual aid<sup>435</sup>.

<sup>430</sup> See for example Cai Yuanpei. Floods and Beasts; Chen Duxiu. *What is the Spirit of May Fourth Movement? 五四運動的精神是什麼?* First Published in Shi Bao, April 1920. CDX. Also Li Dazhao had called the May Fourth incident a patriot one few months after it. See Chen, Jo. 1970, 66.

<sup>431</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Should We Be Patriotic? 我們究竟應當不應當愛國.* Weekly Critic. No. 25. June 1919. HDB. See also Chen Duxiu. ‘A Call to All Sides of Shandong Question’. Lin Yü-sheng has showed that Chen had his reservations concerning patriotism already before New Youth was established in 1915. See Lin, Y. 1979, 60.

<sup>432</sup> Li Dazhao. ‘The Youth Movement of Young China’.

<sup>433</sup> In general, 貴族 referred to a privileged minority. It could be used to refer to a form of government, “aristocracy”, or to a group of people, “aristocrats”. Another possible translation is “nobility”.

<sup>434</sup> Li Yu-ning has pointed out that the connection between capitalism and imperialism had already been brought up in 1904 by Liang Qichao. Li, Y.N. 1971, 10-11. This does not, however, imply that capitalism would have been concept used merely in a negative sense in that context. During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many Chinese authors admired the power of the foreign nations. Militarism and imperialism were seen for their merits. Later on, when imperialism was opposed, this connection between capitalism and imperialism was used as one central accusation of capitalism.

<sup>435</sup> Obviously, ‘capitalist’ was also given negative meanings after the adoption of the class struggle language. For example in New Youth in November 1920, Chen Duxiu wrote that a capitalist was someone who did not care about the lives of the workingmen. A capitalist was only trying to maximize his own wealth. Chen Duxiu. *Labour’s Knowledge, Where does It Come from? 勞動者底知識從哪裏來?* New Youth. No. 8. Vol. 3. November 1920. HDB.



“Capitalist” in Kropotkin’s writings also carried a negative meaning. For instance, in his *An Appeal to the Young* Kropotkin wrote about “capitalist robbery”<sup>436</sup>. For Kropotkin capitalism represented an extremely unjust way of organizing society. In the May Fourth journals the concept was used similarly. Although in this study we have focused on the period after the First World War, other studies have indicated that in some journals capitalism was already posited in a negative light before this period. For example, Sergei Tikhvinsky (1989) has shown that capitalism and bureaucracy were also connected with power politics in Sun Yatsen’s *Minguo Ribao* (民國日報) in May 1918<sup>437</sup>. Actually, capitalism was criticized in Chinese reform minded journals already a decade earlier. In 1905-1906 *Min Bao* published a series of articles on socialism. One of the Western authors whose thoughts on capitalism were presented in these articles was Richard T. Ely (1854-1943). According to Dirlik (2005), Ely saw contemporary capitalism as monopoly capitalism<sup>438</sup>. This meant that capitalism was a system that would create a society in which there would be a rich elite and no middle class. This version of capitalism seems to correspond with the one that was claimed to be against the spirit of mutual aid and democracy.

Even if it is possible to find examples in which many of these concepts were given negative meaning before the May Fourth period, it does not mean that this was always the case in this context. For instance, if we look at dictionary definitions of the period, “capitalist” is not given meanings that would refer to robbery or oligarchy. In Yan Huiqing’s dictionary from 1921, a capitalist (資本家) is simply defined as “a man who has capital”. Also many other concepts lack the negative meanings given in the May Fourth journals. For example, imperialism (帝國主義) is not connected with military interventions, but is given a meaning “the spirit of empire”.<sup>439</sup> These dictionary examples show us that there was nothing inevitable or obvious in the negative and positive connotations that were given to words in this political language. This is what Pocock meant when he said that political languages are biased ways of language use. In political languages central concepts are given specific meanings in order to support a version of the outside world that would correspond to the preferences of the people who actively employ this language.

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<sup>436</sup> Kropotkin 1880.

<sup>437</sup> Tikhvinsky 1989, 1110-1111. According to Hu Changshui, Yun Daiying criticized capitalism already in 1914. Hu 1989, 192-193.

<sup>438</sup> Dirlik 2005, 30-32.

<sup>439</sup> Yan 1921, 133, 510.

## 4 CLASS STRUGGLE LANGUAGE

After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the CCP decided in 1978 that China should focus more on economic development instead of class struggle and constant revolution. This meant the beginning of the policy of “reform and opening up” (改革开放 *gǎigé kāifàng*) with the leadership of Deng Xiaoping<sup>440</sup>. Class struggle had been a concept that played a key role in party doctrines and party propaganda ever since the party was established in 1921. In the eighth CCP assembly in 1962, Mao Zedong demanded that class struggle should never be forgotten. Such demands were intensified in party publications, especially after 1966, and the class struggle rhetoric reached its climax in the tumultuous period of Cultural Revolution.<sup>441</sup> In her study on Cultural Revolution rhetoric Lu Xing (2004) shows that struggle (斗争 *dòuzhēng*) was the most popular word in CCP terminology. Besides class struggle (阶级斗争 *jiējí dòuzhēng*), there was considerable writing and discussion, for instance, about thought struggle (思想斗争 *sīxiǎng dòuzhēng*).<sup>442</sup> The aim of this chapter is to analyze the process in which the class struggle language was first adopted during the May Fourth period. Here this process is approached by analyzing the ‘syntax’ and the ‘semantic field’ around the class struggle paradigm in this particular context.

According to Michael McGee (1980), specific uses of concepts are used to direct discussions in certain directions. Different political languages employ different slogans and different vocabularies. These linguistic patterns are important because they have the capacity to control power and to influence the shape and character of each individual’s understanding of the reality.<sup>443</sup> Seen

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<sup>440</sup> According to Jack Qiu, Deng played a dominant role in the change of CCP’s political discourse. Pragmatic rhetoric of economic development replaced the slogans of class struggle. Qiu 2001, 249. About the factional struggles within CCP before Deng’s rise to power, see Benton 1977.

<sup>441</sup> Lu 2004, 61.

<sup>442</sup> Lu 2004, 48.

<sup>443</sup> McGee 1980, 4-5.

from this perspective, the relevance of the step from one political language to another, from the language of mutual aid and democracy to the class struggle language, was in the different versions of reality these languages were used to support. These languages provided different versions of what, for instance, was possible, desirable, dangerous or urgent.

Michael Freeden (2003), on the other hand, writes that people use “maps” to locate and to interpret the events we are observing. Ideologies are devices that help map the political and social world for us. Because there are different ideologies, there are also competing interpretations of what the facts might mean.<sup>444</sup> Collective agreements on the prevailing circumstances and their implications in different situations are reached with the aid of communication. Language use is thus a key element in collective action. Ideologies, and political languages that are used to defend ideological standpoints, help us to make sense of the world by producing simplified versions of the complex webs of possible meanings around us. These versions are always simplifications because it would be impossible to take into account all possible constituents, and all possible perspectives, in concrete problem situations. This is to say, political languages are never neutral; they are biased and they offer biased versions of the world around us.

In the following, the question of whether or not these particular authors, were Marxists or whether they ‘only’ used language that was related to Marxist theories, is not easy to answer. It seems that relatively often the conclusion that someone was a Marxist because she used such language or such vocabulary is too hasty and thus one should not equate the language use and the ideological commitment. There are many possible languages that can be used to defend Marxist ideas. Of course, there are different versions of Marxism: classical Marxism, orthodox Marxism, various revisionist versions, Marxist-Leninism and others. Even in cases where there was no ideological commitment involved, the speech acts in which someone writes about class struggle direct the debates into certain directions. Thus, the possibility of insincerity, or the lack of orthodoxy, does not render these linguistic acts meaningless.

The ‘syntax’ of this language of class struggle in this context can be summed up in five main assertions: 1) world trends are moving towards revolution; 2) class struggle, social revolution and proletarian dictatorship are necessary parts of economic development; 3) capitalist democracy and capitalist freedom are not real; real democracy, real freedom and equality can only be attained through class struggle; 4) China should take Soviet Russia as its model; 5) Marxism is the only scientific version of socialism; Marx’s version of evolution in society is as valid as Darwin’s about evolution in nature.

The structure of this chapter is: *first*, the origins before the May Fourth period of socialist and Marxist thought in China are briefly discussed; *second*, the introduction of the class struggle language in the May Fourth journals is discussed; *third*, the key concepts and their characteristics of this new language

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<sup>444</sup> Freeden 2003, 2-3.

are analyzed; and *fourth*, the transition from mutual aid to class struggle is discussed.

#### 4.1 Origins and Sources

Originally it was missionaries who introduced socialism to China. One of the best known early journals, which dealt with socialism, was Young John Allen's and Timothy Richard's journal *The Review of the Times* (萬國公報 *Wānguó Gōngbào*) [1868-1907].<sup>445</sup> Among other themes, the journal published articles on anarchism, nihilism, May Day, and the labour movement. The first time Marx was mentioned in the journal was in 1899 in a translation of Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution* [1894]. In this article socialism was translated as 安民學 *ānmínxué*<sup>446</sup>, a name that referred to people's (民 *mín*) safety (安 *ān*). This was not, however, the first article in which socialism was discussed in the journal. For instance, in the previous year 1898, socialism was discussed in a letter from a congregational minister J. Bruce Wallace. Wallace did not write about Marx, but he criticized private enterprises for causing the "social problem". Social problem in this context referred to inequality in society. Wallace supported the nationalization of land, railway, shipping, gas and banks and demanded a general education system.<sup>447</sup> According to Li Yu-ning (1971), the first Chinese reference to socialism was in 1895 by Yan Fu. Yan wrote that the economic inequality had led to the rise of socialist parties in the West. The name Yan Fu used to denote socialist parties was "parties for the equalization of the rich and the poor" (均貧富之黨 *jūn pínfù zhī dǎng*).<sup>448</sup> This fact indicates that the criticism of unequal society was understood to be the essence of socialism already in the first discussions on socialism in China. The ideal of equality was also repeatedly stressed in later May Fourth writings on 'socialist trends'.

*The Review of the Times* was not only a journal of the men of God: it was read regularly by notable reform minded Chinese scholars. For example, Kang Youwei, who had read their journal since 1883, wrote that he owed his conversion to reform mainly to writings of Allen and Richard. Another famous reform-minded author of the period, Liang Qichao, knew Timothy Richard personally. One important translation that aroused interest in socialism in China in the late 19th century was Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward* [1887]. This novel was translated as a serial in *The Review of the Times* between December

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<sup>445</sup> Originally, when the journal was established in Shanghai in 1868, it held a name *Church News* (教會新報 *Jiāohuì Xīnbào*).

<sup>446</sup> Bernal 1976, 37, 231.

<sup>447</sup> According to Bernal, Wallace's views on socialism were close to contemporary Fabian socialism. Bernal 1976, 34-39, 90.

<sup>448</sup> Li, Y.N. 1971, 3-4.

1891 and May 1892. In 1896 Liang Qichao hailed this translation as the one of the most important books about the West in Chinese.<sup>449</sup>

As a great part of the knowledge of the West during this period of time came to China from Japan, it is necessary to consider the developments there. According to Martin Bernal (1976), the first Japanese author to write about socialism was Katō Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 (1836-1916) in the 1870s. The version Kato used to refer to Western ideas of socialism was 社會主義 *shakai shugi*, ‘the doctrine of society’. This version became a standard name for socialism in all East Asian languages, including Chinese (社會主義 *shèhuì zhǔyì*). Similarly, the concept of communism came to China from Japan. The name that became standard for communism, 共產主義 (*kyōsan shugi* in Japanese, *gòngchǎn zhǔyì* in Chinese), was first used in Japan in the early 1890s. In China, *gòngchǎn zhǔyì* was used for the first time in 1903.<sup>450</sup> The number of translations and articles on European socialism began to grow in Japan in the 1880s. In Japan, like in China, the introduction of socialist thought was related to missionary work. Reverend Dwight Whitney Learned was already giving lectures in Japan about socialism in the early 1880s. Albert Schäffle’s *Die Quintessenz des Sozialismus* [1874]<sup>451</sup>, Richard Ely’s *French and German Socialism in Modern Times* [1883], William Graham’s *Socialism New and Old* [1890], William Harbutt Dawson’s books *Bismarck and State Socialism* [1890] and *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* [1891], William D.P. Bliss’s *A Handbook of Socialism* [1895], and Thomas Kirkup’s *An Inquiry into Socialism* [1907] were popular sources for studying socialism. *French and German Socialism in Modern Times* and *A Handbook of Socialism* were available in Japanese. These translated books did not advocate class struggle as the core of socialism, but “unselfishness” and “love”. According to Richard Ely (1883), the most extreme version of socialism was social democracy in Germany; their bible was Marx’s *Capital*, they supported violent revolution and their movement was international.<sup>452</sup>

There were also Japanese authors interested in theories of class struggle: journalist Kōtoku Shūsui 幸徳秋水 (1871-1911) wrote about it already in 1903. *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* was first translated into Japanese by Kōtoku and his associate Sakai Toshihiko 堺利彦 (1871-1933)<sup>453</sup> in 1904, and published in their journal *Commoners Newspaper* (平民新聞 *Heimin Shimbun*). Kōtoku earned himself a reputation as a radical author and he got into serious trouble; the journal was closed down in 1907 and Kōtoku was executed in 1911. Translations were not the only sources available; there appeared also books on socialism by Japanese

<sup>449</sup> Bernal 1976, 9, 23-25, 31, 90.

<sup>450</sup> Bernal 1976, 74-75; Lippert 1979, 112-135; Li, Y.N. 1971, 13-15.

<sup>451</sup> Japanese authors referred to the English translation of Schäffle’s book. Crump 1983/2011, 58.

<sup>452</sup> Li, Y.N. 1971, 13-15; Crump 1983/2011, 56-60; Ely 1883.

<sup>453</sup> According to Gail Lee Bernstein, Sakai Toshihiko and Kawakami Hajime were the most important authors in introducing socialism in Japan during the first decade of the 20th century. Bernstein G. 1976, 103.

authors during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many Chinese scholars also read these books. According to Li Yu-ning (1971), the most important ones were Fukui Junzō's 福井準造 *Modern Socialism* (近世社會主義 *Kinsei Shakai Shugi*) [appeared in Japanese in 1899 while the Chinese version appeared in 1903], Murai Tomoyoshi's 村井知至 (1861-1944) *Socialism* (社會主義 *Shakai Shugi*) [1899/1903] and Shimada Saburo's 島田三郎 (1852-1923) *A General Critique of Socialism* (社會主義概評 *Shakai Shugi Gaihyō*) [1901/1903].<sup>454</sup>

We should not forget that there was a short-lived Socialist Party of China (中國社會黨 *Zhōngguó Shèhuìdǎng*) that was established by Jiang Kanghu 江亢虎 (1883-1954) in 1911. Jiang's socialism did not mean Marxism. He supported public ownership, free education and social welfare, vocational representation and direct democracy. The party was dissolved in 1913 by the order of Yuan Shikai. After that Jiang moved to the United States.<sup>455</sup>

Liang Qichao, the most active introducer of Western works into Chinese before the May Fourth period, read widely Japanese sources<sup>456</sup>. These sources were visibly in the vocabulary Liang was using to translate Western concepts into Chinese. According to Li Yu-ning (1971), innumerable Japanese words entered the Chinese language through Liang's translations. Eventually, many of the Japanese versions of Western concepts came to displace the versions created by the missionaries. For instance, translations of 'ism' (主義 *zhǔyì*) (for instance in socialism, liberalism, Marxism or anarchism), society (社會 *shèhuì*), socialism (社會主義) and capitalist (資本家 *zīběnjiā*) were of Japanese origin. Although Liang is hardly remembered as a socialist, or Marxist, he also wrote about these themes. Liang wrote about the class conflict between capitalists and workers as early as 1899. His first reference to Marx and historical materialism was in 1902.<sup>457</sup>

<sup>454</sup> Besides the three, Li also mentions Nishikawa Kōjirō's 西川光二郎 (1876-1940) book *The Socialist Party*, translated into Chinese in 1903. Li, Y.N. 1971, 13-15. Li did not provide original titles for these books and in this case I have been unable to find any title from Nishikawa's works that would correspond to "Socialist Party". Nishikawa was one of the founding members of the short-lived (it took only few hours before it was outlawed) Socialist Party in 1901. Because of this, it seems possible that this information (that there was such a book by Nishikawa) has been based on a misunderstanding. Another possibility is that the book by Nishikawa, translated into Chinese, originally held a different title and Socialist Party was the name only of the Chinese version.

<sup>455</sup> Tan, C. 1971, 66-72.

<sup>456</sup> Besides Liang Qichao and Yan Fu, also Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924) should be mentioned as an important translator of Western books into Chinese. Interestingly, Lin himself did not know any foreign language and had to collaborate with others in his translation activities. These activities were focused on fiction. He translated more than 100 literary texts of Western origin. Amelung, Kurtz & Lackner 2001, 9.

<sup>457</sup> Bernal 1976, 90-93; Li, Y.N. 1971, 7-12; Tan, C. 1971, 66. More about loan words from Japanese to Chinese, see Masini 1993, 110-111.

## 4.2 Class Struggle in May Fourth Journals

There is no agreement on when exactly the first study group on Marxism was established in Beijing University. Arif Dirlik (1989) has claimed that Li Dazhao had already established the first one already in 1918, although Zhang Guotao (1971) has written that Li had only planned setting up such a group earlier but the group was not established before 1920<sup>458</sup>. Besides Dirlik, Maurice Meisner (1968) suggests that it was “probably” founded in late 1918<sup>459</sup>. Although it is questionable whether any such group existed in 1918, there seems to be agreement that there was a group set up by Li either during the spring or summer of 1920 named Study Society on Marxist Theories (馬克思學說研究會 *Mǎkèsī Xuéshuō Yánjiūhuì*)<sup>460</sup>. It was a secret study group that did not become public until late 1921. In Shanghai, Chen Duxiu established a group called Study Society on Marxism (馬克思主義研究會 *Mǎkèsī Zhǔyì Yánjiūshè*) in May 1920<sup>461</sup>. This latter group became the core of the Chinese Communist Party that was officially established in July 1921. During 1920 similar study groups were also established in Changsha, Wuhan, Jinan, Guangzhou, Tokyo and Paris.<sup>462</sup>

*New Youth* played an important role in disseminating new revolutionary vocabulary that was used in the texts studied in study groups. During the summer of 1920, the journal moved from Beijing back to Shanghai where Chen had established it five years ago. At this point, Hu Shi and some other authors, who disagreed with Chen’s ideas on the relevance of class struggle, decided to leave the journal. When *New Youth* restarted its publication work in September 1920, the journal started a new “Russian Studies” (俄羅斯研究 *Éluósī Yánjiū*) section. Articles in this section were reports on Soviet government, industry, education, science, economy, labour union, agriculture, art and other themes related to Soviet Russian society and its transformations after the October Revolution. The labour question had already been highlighted in *New Youth* in May 1920 issue (vol. 7. no. 6.). In this special issue, all the articles dealt with the labour question. The issue included labour movement reports from abroad and reports on labour conditions in China. These reports gave a clear message about the importance of this question. This message was also supported by statistical evidence. For instance, Gao Yihan demonstrated that the number of strikes in

<sup>458</sup> Dirlik 1989, 44; Chang, K. 1971, 94.

<sup>459</sup> Meisner 1968/1973, 72.

<sup>460</sup> According to Dirlik, this group was established in March 1920, whereas Zhang claims it was during the summer. Like Dirlik, Van de Ven claims it was during the spring. Dirlik 1989, 201; Chang, K. 1971, 94; Van de Ven 1991, 82. This group originally had a little over ten members.

<sup>461</sup> The group in Shanghai consisted of Chen Duxiu, Dai Jitao, Shi Cuntong, Zhang Dongsun, Chen Wangdao, Shen Xuanlong, Li Hanjun, Li Da, Yu Xiusong and Shao Lizhi. Van de Ven 1991, 59-64.

<sup>462</sup> Dirlik 1989, 44, 61, 149, 202-203; Chow, T. 1960/1967, 248. The group in Japan does not mean the Communist Party of Japan, established in 1922, but a study group organized by Chinese students. More about the group in Paris, see Schwarcz 1992, 54-114.

Japan had risen dramatically between 1915 and 1920<sup>463</sup>. Setting up the “Russian studies” section in the following issue indicated that the people in charge of the journal wanted to concentrate on Soviet Russian examples in their discussions on labour issues.

*Weekly Critic*, which had been closed down in the summer of 1919, had also published articles on Soviet Russia. It was, nevertheless, the change of policy in *New Youth* that made a stronger contribution in attempts to position Russia as a model nation for China’s development in the May Fourth reform discourse<sup>464</sup>. The journal had become the most well-known New Culture Movement journal in China. Between the autumn of 1920 and the spring of 1921 *New Youth* published more than one hundred articles related to Marxism<sup>465</sup>. In 1920 there also appeared new journals that was dedicated to labour issues, socialism Marxism and Soviet Russia. *Labour Circles* (勞動界 *Láodòng Jiè*)<sup>466</sup> was established in August 1920 and *Communist* (共產黨 *Gòngchǎndǎng*)<sup>467</sup> in November 1920. Both of these journals were organized by Chen’s Study Society on Marxism in Shanghai. *Labour Circles* was a weekly journal and published 24 issues between August 1920 and January 1921. *Communist* was a short-lived monthly journal. It published six issues, from November 1920 to July 1921.<sup>468</sup>

On a general level, the reconfiguration of the political agenda in *New Youth* meant moving the discussions from conflicts between nation states to conflicts between socio-economic classes. On a more detailed level, it meant replacing the question of militarism and imperialism with the labour question and class struggle. Political languages are flexible and they do overlap each other. This is also true in this case: the labour question was a question that could be discussed within the mutual aid framework; and it certainly was. Still, the emphasis on this question was more direct within the class struggle language. In other words, the labour question was not brought up using the class struggle language. It was already there before this new solution (class struggle) was introduced<sup>469</sup>.

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<sup>463</sup> Gao Yihan. *Labour Organization and Labour Movement in Today’s Japan*. 日本近代勞動組織及運動. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 6. May 1920. HDB.

<sup>464</sup> *Weekly Critic* was a minor publication compared to *New Youth*; both in terms of circulation and life span.

<sup>465</sup> Dirlik 1989, 205.

<sup>466</sup> In the opening issue of the journal Li Hanjun wrote that the purpose of *Labour Circles* was to make Chinese workers aware of their unjustified position. According to Li, the living conditions of the Chinese workers were worse than anywhere else. Thus, *Labour Circles* was not directed towards academicians or intellectuals, but to workers. Li Hanjun. *Why to Print this Journal? 為什麼要印這個報?* *Labour Circles*. No. 1. August 1920. LDJ.

<sup>467</sup> Direct translation of the Chinese name would be “Communist Party”. *Communist* was, however, the English name the journal used. More about the *Communist*, its origins and the language it used see Stanley 1981. On the criticism of anarchism in the journal, see Liu X.H. 1987, 170-174.

<sup>468</sup> Dirlik 1989, 205, 235.

<sup>469</sup> For instance in *New Tide* and in *Morning News* Tan Pingshan and Li Dazhao respectively had already underlined the importance of labour issues and the labour



However, within the language of class struggle, it was made the most important of all political questions.

#### 4.2.1 Class Struggle Thematic Introduced

Previous research has shown that there was a short period in Chinese history when Chinese authors had discussed Marxist theories before the May Fourth period. This period was in 1905-1906 and these articles were mainly published in *Min Bao* journal. Martin Bernal (1976) calls this period “the highest point of interest in orthodox Marxist socialism among Chinese intellectuals before the 1920s”.<sup>470</sup> However, as Arif Dirlik (1978) writes, it is questionable whether these discussions had anything to do with “orthodox Marxist socialism”. According to Dirlik’s observations there were no references to historical materialism within these debates. Dirlik holds that if historical materialism entered Chinese historical vocabulary before 1918, it failed to make a significant impact. These *Min Bao* articles were mainly about the history of socialist movements. Their version of socialism was based on the writings by Richard Ely, William D.P. Bliss and Thomas Kirkup. Anarchism and democracy were posited in a positive light in the journal, whereas communism in a negative light.<sup>471</sup>

The period of interest in socialist theories within *Min Bao* lasted as long as Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 (1879-1936)<sup>472</sup> and Zhang Ji 張繼 (1882-1947) worked as the main editors of the journal. During their editorship, especially Zhu Zhixin 朱執信 (1885-1920) wrote actively about Marx and he called himself a Marxist. Zhu, together with some other *Min Bao* authors, such as Hu Hanmin, also engaged in a debate with Liang Qichao on the applicability of socialism in China. Liang was skeptical about the prospects of socialism and wrote that any kind of revolution would be a crime against China. According to Bernal, both sides, in this debate between Liang Qichao and the *Min Bao* authors, relied heavily on a Japanese translation of Ely’s *Outline of Economics* [1893]. During the era of the following editor, Zhang Binglin, only one article on socialism was published.<sup>473</sup> Both sides

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question during the spring of 1919. Tan Pingshan. *Solution for the Labour Question*. 勞動問題之解決. New Tide. Vol. 1. No. 4. April 1919. HDB. This article was Tan’s translation of an article published in a Japanese journal 太陽. According to the article, the labour question was studied in every country around the world. Li Dazhao. *The Direction of Today’s Youth Movement*. 現代青年活動的方向. First published in Morning News, March 1919. LDZ.

<sup>470</sup> Bernal 1976, 107.

<sup>471</sup> Dirlik 1978, 19-21; Dirlik 2005, 30-32. The first time Marx introduced his idea that the development of production forces determines the changes in intellectual life was in the preface of *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859]. This preface was not available in Chinese before 1920. Dirlik 1978, 22-23; Marx 1859.

<sup>472</sup> Later, Hu Hanmin edited the GMD journal *Construction*. Hu was a close associate of Sun Yatsen. He became a member of the Central Executive Committee of the GMD in 1924. For a biography of Hu, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, pp. 159-166.

<sup>473</sup> Bernal 1976, 107, 114, 126, 134-141; Ely 1893.

in this debate generally agreed that there was no “social problem” (社會問題 *shèhuì wèntí*) in China that referred to inequalities within industrial societies. In these discussions Zhu was the only author who demanded “social revolution” (社會革命 *shèhuì géming*).<sup>474</sup> Besides *Min Bao*, *The Journal of Natural Justice* paid attention to Marx and Engels during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The journal published translations of the first chapter of the Marx’s and Engels’ *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Engels’ *Introduction to Communist Manifesto* and parts of Engels’ *The Origin of the Family*<sup>475</sup>.

Japan was the central source of Marxist and socialist literature both prior to and during the May Fourth period. The most important Japanese author in this respect was the economist Kawakami Hajime 河上肇 (1879-1946). Several of his works were translated into Chinese during the May Fourth period. His article *Marx’s Materialist Conception of History*, which was originally translated in the Chinese publication *Morning News* (晨報 *Chén Bào*) in May 1919, was an important source for Chinese scholars interested in Marxism.<sup>476</sup> Besides Japan, another important source for these ideas was France. Returning students and expatriates from France made Chinese readership familiar with European socialism. Students abroad also sent articles to May Fourth journals.<sup>477</sup>

The class struggle language differed from the language of mutual aid and democracy not only in its level of doctrinality but also in its level of applicability. This is to say that the problem – solution scheme (labour question – class struggle) it reproduced required more precise focus than the more flexible and abstract

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<sup>474</sup> Dirlik 2005, 30-32.

<sup>475</sup> Bernal 1968, 137.

<sup>476</sup> According to Dirlik, Kawakami’s version of Marx was influenced by Engels and Kautsky. Dirlik 1989, 98, 110. Yu Lianghua writes that Kawakami was the most important foreign author on historical materialism during the May Fourth period in China. Yu L. 1992, 384. Kautsky was also popular among GMD authors Hu Hanmin and Dai Jitao. Dai Jitao’s translation of Kautsky’s *The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx* appeared in GMD journal *Construction* as a serial in 1919-1920. Kautsky’s version of class struggle differed from Lenin’s as he did not denounce parliamentary systems. Kautsky believed that class struggle could be fought with participation in parliamentary politics. Kautsky 1892/1910, 184-188.

<sup>477</sup> Li Ji wrote in *New Youth* that Chinese socialism had two main sources: Japan and France. According to Li, these ideas began to spread to China around the turn of the century. Li Ji. *Socialism and China*. 社會主義與中國. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 6. April 1921. HDB. Related to historical materialism and class struggle, there were translations (most of them partial ones) available of the following works before the official establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in July 1921: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* [originally published in 1848 / translated partly in 1908, complete translation in 1920]; Friedrich Engels: *Utopian and Scientific* [1880/1912]; Karl Marx: *Wage-Labour and Capital* [1847/1919]; Karl Kautsky: *The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx* [1887/1919-1920]; Karl Marx: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859/1920, only the preface was available in Chinese]; Karl Kautsky: *The Class Struggle* [1909/1920]; Karl Kautsky: *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* [1909/1920]; V. I. Lenin: *The State and Revolution* [1917/1920-1921]; J.A. Hobson: *Democracy after the War* [1917/1920]; Thomas Kirkup: *History of Socialism* [1892/1920-1921]. Dirlik 1978, 22-23; Dirlik 1989, 201; Bernal 1976, 220; Luk 1990, 24-28.

problem – solution scheme (militarism & imperialism – mutual aid & democracy) of the language of mutual aid and democracy. It has already been pointed out (see section 2.4 above) that there were authors in the May Fourth journals who did not accept the idea that they should study and discuss ‘overall theories’ or isms, which could solve all the problems of China. In practice, the ones who defended the importance of studying isms were mainly interested in different versions of socialism. Socialism, in a general sense, had already become a widely discussed theme in Chinese reform journals before the establishment of the study groups on Marxism in 1920. Writings on socialism were not restricted only to *New Youth*, *Young China*, *Weekly Critic*, *Citizen* and *New Tide*. For instance, Liang Qichao’s journal *Liberation and Reform* published various articles on socialism. Socialism was also discussed in *Eastern Miscellany* and in GMD publications *Guomin Ribao*, *Weekly Review* and *Construction*.<sup>478</sup> The more coherent and institutionalized ideologies were in question, the more important the question of ‘overall solutions’ became. This is to say that the criticism on the writings of isms was directed at writings about doctrinal isms, the ‘overall solutions’ they offered and their applicability in China. In this sense, Marxism with historical materialism and the theory of class struggle were sets of ideas that aroused suspicions, probably more than other isms. This disagreement between isms (ideologies, theoretical discussions) and more concrete problems was a disagreement over the agenda of these journals.<sup>479</sup>

In *New Youth* Hu Shi tried to question the relevance of Marxist theories, such as the theory of surplus value:

凡社會上成為問題的問題，一定是與許多人有密切關係的。這許多人雖然不能提出什麼新解決，但是他們平時對於這個問題自然不能不注意。若有人能把這個問題的各方面都細細分析出來，加上評判研究，提出不滿意的所在，提出新鮮的救濟方法，自然容易引起

<sup>478</sup> Luo Jialun commented *Liberation and Reform*’s articles on socialism in *New Tide*. See Luo Jialun. *Liberation and Reform*. 解放與改造. *New Tide*. Vol. 2 No. 2. December 1919. HDB. *Eastern Miscellany* published a series of articles on socialism between September and November in 1919. These articles were mainly criticizing Marxism. Stanley 1981, 60-61.

<sup>479</sup> The most well-known part of this debate between specific solutions and general solutions was the one between Hu Shi and Li Dazhao on the pages of *Weekly Critic*. Maurice Meisner has provided a summary of this debate. See Meisner 1968/1973, 105-114. The three main challenges posed by Hu Shi were that first, these theories were theories about certain times and certain places and not applicable to China; second, these theories could be used by politicians to mislead people in order to profit themselves; and third, discussions on these isms were not consistent with ‘the May Fourth scientific spirit’. On the opposing side, the main response to these arguments was that without isms there is a lack of clear direction for development. Thus, without commitment to isms, there could be no progress. See Hu Shi. *More Research on Problems, Less Discussion of "Isms"*. 多研究些問題，少談些“主義”. *Weekly Critic*. No. 31. July 1919. HDB; Lan Gongwu. *Problems and Isms*. 問題與主義. *Weekly Critic*. No. 33. August 1919. HDB; Li Dazhao. ‘More about Problems and Isms’; Hu Shi. *Third Time about Problems and Isms*. 三論問題與主義. *Weekly Critic*. No. 36. August 1919. HDB; Hu Shi. *Fourth Time about Problems and Isms*. 四論問題與主義. *Weekly Critic*. No. 37. August 1919. HDB.

許多人的注意。起初自然有許多人反對。但是反對便是注意的證據，便是興趣的表示。試看近日報紙上登的馬克思的贏餘價值論，可以反對的嗎？可以討論的嗎？沒有人討論，沒有人反對，便是不能引起人注意的證據。

All problems that become problems in society are necessarily connected to many people. Although these people cannot offer new solutions, they usually cannot avoid paying attention to these problems. If there was a person who could analyze carefully all sides of the problem in question, could do research, could point out the key problem points and could come up with a new method to fix them, naturally this would arouse many people's interest. It would naturally arouse also lots of objections. This resistance would precisely prove that people have paid attention to it, it would be an expression of interest. If we look at (conversely) the writings in journals about the Marxist theory of the surplus value, can they be opposed? Can they be discussed? There is no discussion, no one is opposing; it proves that these discussions fail to arouse people's interest.<sup>480</sup>

Hu's attitude towards different theories seemed to have two sides: on the one hand, discussion was good and it was not harmful even if there were opposing sides and no consensus; on the other hand, discussion could have been useless if the themes were not relevant enough. Obviously, the more detailed and complex these theories were, the more difficult it was to defend their relevancy to a wider readership. This is to say, for those who were interested in Marxist theories it was more difficult to arouse interest, for example, in writings of the theory of surplus value than it was to arouse interest in problems related to the inequality of socio-economic classes.

Among the authors who contributed to *New Youth* there was no unanimity about the importance and relevance of Marxism. There were people who were interested in Marxism and there were others whose attitude was much more suspicious. Despite these disagreements, the journal decided in 1919 to dedicate one issue on Marx and his theories. Originally, this special issue was to be published in May 1919, but in the end it did not come out until September. In this issue Gu Mengyu 顧孟餘 (1888-1972)<sup>481</sup>, Huang Lingshuang<sup>482</sup>, Chen Qixiu 陳啟修 (1886-1960)<sup>483</sup> and Li Dazhao<sup>484</sup> wrote about Marxist theories. Li was the main editor of this special issue<sup>485</sup>. The issue also included biographical presentations

<sup>480</sup> Hu Shi. 'The Meaning of the New Trend of Thought'.

<sup>481</sup> Gu Mengyu. *Marxist Theory*. 馬克思學說. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB. Gu was a professor of economics at the Beijing University. He joined the GMD in 1924. For a biography of Gu, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, pp. 252-255.

<sup>482</sup> Huang Lingshuang. *Critique of Marxist Theory*. 馬克思學說批評. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB.

<sup>483</sup> Chen Qixiu. *Marxist Historical Materialism and the Question of Chastity*. 馬克思的唯物史觀與貞操問題. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB.

<sup>484</sup> Li Dazhao. *My Views on Marxism, Part 1*. 我的馬克思主義觀 (上). *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB. The second part of the essay was published in the following issue in November.

<sup>485</sup> Yang 1993, 367.

of Marx<sup>486</sup>, a translation of Kawakami Hajime's article of Marxist historical materialism<sup>487</sup>, and a partial translation of Angelo Rappoport's article on the philosophical background of the Russian Revolutions<sup>488</sup>. These presentations on Marxism were not entirely positive in tone and they included various critical remarks (more about these articles in section 5.1 below). For example, Huang Lingshuang pointed out that there were no clear signs of the imminent collapse of the capitalist system, which Marx had assumed, despite the system's advanced stage of development<sup>489</sup>. In May 1920 *New Youth* published another special issue. This issue was dedicated to international labour organizations. Besides articles on foreign labour organizations (United States, Japan, England, Russia), the issue included various reports on labour conditions in China (Hong Kong, Nanjing, Tangshan, Shanxi, Jiangsu, Changsha, Wuhu, Wuxi, Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin).

If the role of Chen Duxiu was important in introducing the class struggle language to the Chinese readership, he was also a central figure in underlining the importance of the labour question and supporting the organization of labour unions in China. These acts started well before the his direct espousal of class struggle in China. For example, Chen, writing for *Morning News* in December 1919, said that the labour question should also be given enough attention in China and he was hoping for strong labour unions in China<sup>490</sup>. Chen's articles on labour affairs, and on the need to establish labour unions in China, were especially numerous in *Labour Circles*<sup>491</sup>. *Labour Circles* and *The Communist* were apparently established to familiarize the Chinese readership with the importance of the labour question and to offer a solution (especially true of *The Communist*) to this urgent question, that is, the class struggle.

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<sup>486</sup> Liu Binglin. *Bibliography of Marx*. 馬克思傳略. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB; Kawakami Hajime. (translated by Chen Puxian) *Marx's Career of Struggle*. 馬克思奮鬥的生涯. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB.

<sup>487</sup> Kawakami Hajime. (translated by Chen Puxian) Marxist Historical Materialism. 馬克思的唯物史觀. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May/September 1919. HDB. Kawakami's article was previously published in *Morning News*. For a list of texts on historical materialism during the May Fourth period see Yu L. 1992, 383-384.

<sup>488</sup>Rappoport, Angelo. 'Philosophical Basis of the Russian Revolution, Part 2'. The first part of this text had been published in the previous issue in April 1919. The original article had been published in July 1917 in *Edinburgh Review*.

<sup>489</sup> Huang Lingshuang. 'Critique of Marxist Theory'.

<sup>490</sup> Chen Duxiu. *To the Labour Circles in Beijing*. 告北京勞動界. CDX. First Published in *Morning News*, December 1919. HDB.

<sup>491</sup> See for example Chen Duxiu. *The Real Labour Organization*. 真的工人團體. First Published in *Labour Circles*, August 1920. CDX; Chen Duxiu. *The Questions of Two Workers*. 兩個工人的疑問. First Published in *Labour Circles*, August 1920. CDX; Chen Duxiu. *The Meaning of the Current Chinese Labour Movement*. 此時中國勞動運動底意思. First Published in *Labour Circles*, September 1920. CDX.

In his interpretation on Mao Zedong's rhetoric during the Cultural Revolution Huang Shaorong (2001) uses a name "attention-switching". According to Huang, acts of directing and redirecting public attention to Mao's "great strategic plan" played an important role in the Cultural Revolution activities. For all attention-switchings, one must provide believable justifications and rational so that the broad masses could follow desired directions.<sup>492</sup> Authors, such as Chen, who wished to promote the class struggle paradigm in the May Fourth context, had to provide similar rationale for their attention-switching. It was far from self-evident that the class struggle theories were relevant for early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. Neither was it self-evident that the "labour question" (勞動問題 *láodòng wèntí*) was the most important of all questions to be settled. Even among those people who had acknowledged the importance of labour issues, class struggle, and proletarian dictatorship, was not the only possible solution. There were other solutions and other versions of socialism that had been created in order to improve the living conditions of the working population. This was acknowledged also by Zhang Weici who wrote about the labour question for *New Youth*. According to Zhang, the labour question had become the most urgent question of all questions all over the world, but there had been different approaches to it in different places. These different approaches were due to the different "special circumstances". In Germany there was socialism, in Spain they had anarchism and in Russia there was bolshevism.<sup>493</sup>

The value and importance of labour had been stressed in the May Fourth journals well before anyone advocated class struggle. "Labour is sacred" (勞工神聖 *láogōng shénshèng*) was a popular slogan during this period of time<sup>494</sup>. For instance Li Da wrote that workers were the friends of humankind and that they represented "the spirit of the time"<sup>495</sup>. Even if there was no direct continuum from the labour question to the theories of class struggle, the latter still required the former. That is, in order to highlight Marxist theories, the labour question had to be a question that was given enough emphasis. Chinese historians have stressed the effects of labour's emergence as a topic in the summer of 1919.

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<sup>492</sup> Huang, S. 2001, 220-221.

<sup>493</sup> Zhang Weici. *The Organization of the American Labour Movement*. 美國勞動運動及組織. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 6. May 1920. HDB. Interest in Marxism did not necessarily imply support for class struggle. Neither did interest in anarchism necessarily imply rejection of class struggle. According to Liu Xinghua, Chinese anarchist students in France accepted the idea of class struggle after 1922. Liu X.H. 1987, 181-186.

<sup>494</sup> See for example Cai Yuanpei. *Labour Is Sacred*. 勞工神聖. *New Youth*. Vol. 5. No. 5. November 1918. HDB; Chen Duxiu. *Sacred Labour and Strike*. 勞工神聖與罷工. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB. Edward Gu writes that after 1920 the expression "common people" became more and more associated with the working people. Gu 2001, 600, 616.

<sup>495</sup> Li Da 李達. *An Ode to Holy Labour*. 勞動神聖頌. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB.

However, in 1919, writings on problems of youth and family still far exceeded those on labour. Labour was not yet portrayed as the social problem it would become by the mid-1920s.<sup>496</sup> For example, in *Young China* Tian Han 田漢 (1898-1968)<sup>497</sup> regretted that people were not properly aware of the labour question in China in the spring of 1920<sup>498</sup>. On a more concrete level, the question of whether the labour issue would require class conflict was related to the question whether Chinese labour should organize itself. For instance, in summer 1919 Dai Jitao, in *Weekly Review*, wrote that labour unions were not relevant for China and that instead of class conflict China needed mutual aid and social democracy (社會民主主義 *shèhuì mínzhǔ zhǔyì*)<sup>499</sup>. On the other hand, even if one supported the idea that labour should be organized, it did not mean that the person would have been an advocate of class struggle. For example, Cai Yuanpei connected labour unions with the spirit of mutual aid and not with class struggle<sup>500</sup>.

Besides the labour question, there was another question, or problem (問題 *wèntí*), that was often brought up in the May Fourth journals, namely “social problem” (社會問題 *shèhuì wèntí*)<sup>501</sup>. This question was wider in scope than the labour question, but it still usually referred to the inequalities within society. The connection between “the labour question” and class struggle was closer than the one between the “social problem” and class struggle. This was because “the labour question” was often associated with production and socio-economic classes that were defined by their relations to production forces and to concepts

<sup>496</sup> Dirlik 1989, 67.

<sup>497</sup> Tian Han was a playwright who became known for his work in the modern theater movement in China. For a biography of Tian, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 3, pp. 266-267.

<sup>498</sup> Tian Han. A Poet and the Labour Question (Part 2). 詩人與勞動問題 (續). *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 8. HDB. This concern seemed to be related, at least in some cases, to the idea of following world trends. That is, the labour question was important because it was debated elsewhere in the world. For instance, Zheng Boqi wrote in *Young China* that there was a lot of discussion about the labour question and class struggle in Japan in summer 1920. See Zheng Boqi. ‘Newsletter’ (2).

<sup>499</sup> Dai Jitao’s “mutual aid” in this article was not a something that was against capitalism, it referred to a wider consensus within society between workers and employers. Dai Jitao. *The Problem of Labour Education*. 工人教育問題. *Weekly Review*. No. 3. June 1919. XQP. In the following year Dai wrote that workers should unite and strive for a new society that would be based on freedom, equality and mutual aid. Dai Jitao. *How should Workers Strive? 勞動者應該如何努力?* *Labour Circles*. No. 10. October 1920. LDJ.

<sup>500</sup> Cai Yuanpei. ‘The Great Hope’.

<sup>501</sup> Arif Dirlik writes that this question came to the center of attention by the mid-1920s. This question was, however, already discussed before 1920 in May Fourth publications. Bernal points out that this question was under discussion in the first decade of the 20th century. According to Bernal, Christian socialists in Japan in the 1860s, who played down the relevance of class conflict, also wrote about the “social problem”. See Dirlik 1978, 37; Bernal 1976, 72; Bernal 1968, 98. Besides the “labour question” and the “social problem” another question that should be mentioned here is the education question. According to Cai Yuanpei, it was this particular question that was the most important in China and also internationally. Cai Yuanpei. ‘The Great Hope’.

such as economic democracy (see section 5.4 below)<sup>502</sup>. Because of this, those authors who wanted to avoid social revolution and class struggle might have preferred to write about the social problem instead of the labour question. Li Da connected the two in *Labour Circles* by explaining that the labour question actually meant the same as the social problem, but only in a more narrow sense. The social problem referred to problems in social structure, whereas the labour question referred to problems of the working people that were related to the development of production forces. Li's solution for both of these problems was socialism.<sup>503</sup>

There were also early references to class struggle in other May Fourth journals. In November 1919, *Citizen* published a translation of the first chapter ("Bourgeois and Proletarians") of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*<sup>504</sup>. A short summary of the *Manifesto* also appeared in *Weekly Critic*<sup>505</sup>. In *Young China*, Tian Han examined points of resemblance and affinities between developments in society and poetry. In this article he also brought up class struggle theory. Tian wrote that the popular expression "social problem" (社會問題 *shèhuì wèntí*) referred to the conflict between the rich and the poor. The purpose of the revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to solve this problem. "Class struggle" (階級鬥爭 *jiējí dòuzhēng*), on the other hand, was the name that the socialists (社會主義者 *shèhuì zhǔyì zhě*) used for this battle. All history, since the times of ancient Greece and Rome had been history of the class struggle.<sup>506</sup> In *Young China*, Huang Chanhua 黃讖華 (1885-1977) explained that class struggle was "a method of the proletariat to reform the society"<sup>507</sup>, whereas in the same journal Fei Juetian wrote that the conflicts in the international arena were no longer conflicts between nations, but conflicts between classes.<sup>508</sup>

<sup>502</sup> This is not to claim that 'classes' always implied connections with production forces. In many cases classes referred only to standard of living, not to the production process.

<sup>503</sup> Li Da. *Worker and Socialism*. 勞動者與社會主義. *Labour Circles*. No. 16. November 1920. LDJ. In *Weekly Review* Dai Jitao wrote that labour question did not refer only to poor working conditions, but also to issues related to the organization of production. Dai Jitao. *New Trend in the Labour Question*. 勞動問題的新趨向. *Weekly Review*. No. 16. September 1919. XQP.

<sup>504</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich (translated by Li Zezhang). *Manifesto of the Communist Party by Marx and Engels*. 馬克斯和昂格斯共產黨宣言. *Citizen*. Vol. 2. No. 1. November 1919. HDB.

<sup>505</sup> Cheng Shewo. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 共產黨的宣言. *Weekly Critic*. No. 16. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>506</sup> Tian Han. *A Poet and the Labor Question*. 詩人與勞動問題. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 8. February 1920. HDB. When Tian discussed class struggle, he referred to Toyohiko Kagawa's text *The History of the Class Struggle* (階級鬥爭史).

<sup>507</sup> Huang Chanhua. *The Historical Course of Society and its Improvement*. 社會之歷程及改進. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 5. November 1919. HDB.

<sup>508</sup> Fei Juetian. "The Pacific Question!"



To defend the relevancy of analyzing society from a perspective that concentrated on socio-economic classes one had to claim *first* that there were class divisions, which would also be applicable to class struggle theories, and *second* that the existence of these classes was destructive for China's development<sup>509</sup>.

Despite the fact that Shanghai dominated East Asian trading and banking by 1900, industrialization in China did not take place on a significant level before the First World War. John Chang (1969) indicates that in 1912 there were about 21 000 factories (any workshop employing more than seven workers) in China of which only 363 were mechanized. During the war it was especially industries related to consumer goods, coal and ferrous metals (iron ore, pig ore, steel) that grew remarkably.<sup>510</sup> According to Peter Zarrow (2005), for contemporaries in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century China 'circles' was more common way of perceiving society than 'classes'. This meant circles of officials, merchants, students, gentry-merchants, the military, educators, journalists, workers and police. Industrial growth during the war was mainly due to the increased Western demand for raw materials. Even if industrialization had begun, China was still largely an agricultural nation. Foreign capital dominated the modern sector in China. This meant the business of shipping, banking, textiles and mining. The number of workers in the modern sector at the end of the 1910s was about 1.5 million, less than 0.5% of the overall population.<sup>511</sup> Working conditions in factories were difficult and wages were low. A 12-hour working day was common and there were no rest days. With low wages it was difficult to get along: between 1918 and 1920 the price of rice rose 90 percent, but wages only went up 50 percent. Some of the workers had also organized unions. By 1920, there were 200 000 factory workers and 185 000 workers in the mining and railroad industries that belonged to a union.<sup>512</sup>

Even if the process of industrialization in China had just begun, the idea of class society was not totally unknown. The understanding that there were classes in Chinese society had been there well before anyone wrote that there was a need for class struggle in China. In the May Fourth context socio-economic classes were commonly referred to with a term 階級 *jiējí*. In traditional usages *jiējí* referred to different categories of officials<sup>513</sup>. In the anarchist writings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the class division was defined through relations to state; it meant a division between the rulers and the ruled. Before 1917, the concept of class (階級) referred mainly to the distinction between superiors and inferiors.<sup>514</sup> This meaning of class differs from the Marxist theories in which classes are defined by

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<sup>509</sup> For instance Zhou Binglin wrote in *Citizen* that there were no class divisions in China that could have been compared to those of the West. Zhou Binglin. 'How Should Socialism Function in China?'

<sup>510</sup> Chang, J. 1969, 4-5, 71, 78.

<sup>511</sup> Zarrow 2005, 115-118.

<sup>512</sup> Whiting 1954, 61-64.

<sup>513</sup> Lippert 1979, 162-166.

<sup>514</sup> Stanley 1981, 18.

their relation to the production process; there are the ones who produce and there are the ones who own the factors of production, the capital<sup>515</sup>.

The conception of a society with unequal classes did not necessarily mean class struggle and Marxism. In fact, the dream of a classless society was central already in Kang Youwei's writings in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His *Great Unity* was a society without classes.<sup>516</sup> In the May Fourth journals, the problem of the unequal classes in China was discussed before 1920. For instance, in *Weekly Critic* Li Dazhao dreamt about world without classes:

我們現在要求的，是個解放自由的我，和一個人人相愛的世界。介在我與世界中間的家國，階級，族界，都是進化的阻障，生活的煩累，應該逐漸廢除。

What we are asking for now, is liberation and freedom of the self and a world where individuals love each other. Families, nations, classes, races between the self and the world are all hindrances of evolution. They create problems for life and should be gradually abolished.<sup>517</sup>

Within the debate on problems and isms, Li also made a comment on the applicability of socialism into China:

在清朝時，我們可用民主主義作工具去推翻愛新覺羅家的皇統。在今日我們也可以用他作工具，去推翻那軍閥的勢力。在別的資本主義盛行的國家，他們可以用社會主義作工具去打倒資本階級。在我們這不事生產的官僚強盜橫行的國家，我們也可以用他作工具去驅除這一般不勞而生的官僚強盜。

During the Qing dynasty, we were able to use democracy as a tool to overthrow the emperor of the Aisin Gioro family. Today, we can also use it as a tool to overthrow the power of warlords. In capitalist countries they can use socialism to overthrow the capitalist class. In our chaotic nation of non-productive bureaucrats and bandits, we can also use it as a tool to drive away these non-working and non-productive bureaucrats and bandits.<sup>518</sup>

According to Li, they could use democracy and socialism to drive out the warlords and bureaucrats from China. Li made a differentiation between China and the "capitalist countries" and thus indicated that there was no capitalist class in China. Still, the warlords and bureaucrats holding the power could be compared to the capitalist classes in capitalist nations and thus socialism was not useless and irrelevant for the Chinese people.<sup>519</sup> As we can see, Li did not

<sup>515</sup> See for example Marx & Engels 1848.

<sup>516</sup> Li, Y.N. 1971, 4-5, 10-11.

<sup>517</sup> Li Dazhao. *The Self and the World*. 我與世界. *Weekly Critic*. No. 29. July 1919. HDB.

<sup>518</sup> Li Dazhao. *More about Problems and Isms*. 再論問題與主義. *Weekly Critic*. No. 35. August 1919. HDB.

<sup>519</sup> Li Dazhao. 'More about Problems and Isms'. Aisin Gioro was the name of the Qing dynasty ruling family. In September 1919 Li offered his ideas of how to develop China in Young China. At this time his point of view seemed to become more radical, as he wrote that they should make the youth movement into a movement that would erode the "intellectual class" (智識階級) and would join the "labour organization" (勞工團體). Despite this sharp formulation, it seems that Li's purpose in this article was merely to

define classes by their relations to production. The class division Li was writing about was the one between the rulers (warlords) and the ruled.

In the 1908 partial translation of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* that was published in *Journal of Natural Justice*, the bourgeoisie and proletarians were respectively translated as 'gentry' (紳士 *shēnshì*) and 'common people' (平民 *píngmín*)<sup>520</sup>. These designations for Marxist class concepts were not, however, in use anymore in the May Fourth journals. When *Weekly Critic* and *Citizen* published their versions of the *Manifesto*, bourgeoisie and proletarians were given names that referred to the ownership of capital. In the *Weekly Critic's* summary, the bourgeoisie was translated as 'the middle ownership class' (中產階級 *zhōngchǎn jiējí*) whereas in the *Citizen* the version that was used was 'the class of the people who own' (有產者階級 *yǒuchǎnzhě jiējí*)<sup>521</sup>. In both articles, the proletariat was translated as 'the class that does not own' (無產階級 *wúchǎn jiējí*). In these May Fourth translations, Marxist class concept were associated with a Chinese character 產 *chǎn* that referred to property and production, thus giving these concepts Chinese names that had meanings related to economy. In Li Yuwen's dictionary from 1921 *chǎn* was given four different meanings: to produce, product, property and to bring up children<sup>522</sup>. In the May Fourth context production was referred as 生產 *shēngchǎn*. According to Lippert, this practice was adopted from Japan. Nakamura Masanao had used this version in his translation on Mill's *On Liberty* in 1872<sup>523</sup>. Also Chen Duxiu wrote about class conflict in *Weekly Critic* in spring 1919. In an article published in April, Chen referred to the conflict between the proletariat (無產階級) and bourgeoisie (有產

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encourage the Young China society to be more involved in labour organizations and not to restrict its activities on a mere scholarly level as some of the members had hoped. This interpretation (that he did not actually want to concretely destroy intellectuals) of Li's statement would be consistent with some of his other writings of 'intellectuals'; at least in *Xin Shenghuo* Li praised "the victory of the intellectual class" after the May Fourth Movement. Probably this 'victory' referred to the inability of warlords and officials to control and suppress intellectual life. Li Dazhao. 'The Youth Movement of Young China'; Li Dazhao. *The Victory of the Intellectual Class*. 知識階級的勝利. First published in *Xin Shenghuo*, January 1920. LDZ. See also Kondo 1988, 222.

<sup>520</sup> Zarrow 1990, 102-103. In the translation of *Manifesto* by Kotoku Shushui and Sakai Toshihiko, proletarian class was translated also as 平民階級 *píngmín jiējí*. Lippert 1979, 307.

<sup>521</sup> According to Lippert, the version 有產者階級 *yǒuchǎnzhě jiējí* was taken from Kawakami Hajime's texts. After 1920, the most common version has been 資產階級 *zīchǎn jiējí*. Lippert 1979, 333-340. 資產階級 *zīchǎn jiējí* appeared also in *Weekly Critic*. At least Peng Yihu used it in May 1919. Peng Yihu. *The Crime of the Chinese Scholar-Official Class*. 中國士大夫階級的罪惡. *Weekly Critic*. No. 20. May 1919. HDB.

<sup>522</sup> Li Y.W. 1921, 367-368.

<sup>523</sup> Lippert 1979, 171-183.

階級) in the West. This conflict, nevertheless, did not, according to Chen, exist in China.<sup>524</sup>

The usage of class concepts in the journals of the period was a mix of classes in terms of power (rulers and ruled; superiors and inferiors) and classes in terms of economy (rich and poor; owners of the means of production and the ones who only work and do not own). This is to say, the class concepts were not necessarily 'Marxist' even in cases where Marx and class struggle were mentioned. Proletarian (無產階級) was used interchangeably with labour class (勞動階級 *láodòng jiējí*)<sup>525</sup>, bourgeoisie (有產者階級, 有產階級 or 中產階級) was used interchangeably with capitalist class (資本階級 *zīběn jiējí* or 資產階級 *zīchǎn jiējí*)<sup>526</sup>. Surely, class divisions within societies were not an invention of Marx, nor were these divisions associated only with Marx in this particular context. For example, Bakunin's ideas of bourgeoisie and proletariat were introduced in *New Youth*<sup>527</sup>.

Deviations from the Marxist concept of class could of course be seen as resulting from a lack of proper understanding of Marxism. However, these deviations should rather be seen as attempts to adapt Marxist theories to the particular Chinese context. Stronger faithfulness to orthodox Marxism would have meant a loss in relevancy of these theories to the readership of these journals. The assumption that these authors possessed a desire to aim at orthodoxy, when they were applying this new revolutionary vocabulary to China, is an assumption that suggests that these authors were only able to passively respond to new learning they received from abroad. It is, however, clear that they were well aware of the differences between contemporary China and the societies Marx and Engels described. Thus, their heresy should not be seen only as a failure to understand but also as an ability to revise these theories. They had to come up with new modifications in order to apply this revolutionary language to China. Chen Duxiu, for instance, defended the relevancy of class theories by writing that there had been clear socio-economic classes in China for a long time. According to Chen, during the feudal system there were also two classes against

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<sup>524</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Cry of the Poor*. 貧民的哭聲. Weekly Critic. No. 19. April 1919. HDB. The same names for classes were used also, for instance, in Hu Hanmin's article on historical materialism in *Construction*. Hu Hanmin. *Criticism of the Criticism of Historical Materialism*. 唯物史觀批評之批評. Construction. Vol. 1. No. 5. December 1919. JS.

<sup>525</sup> Workers in this context were usually referred as 勞動 *láodòng*. This term was of Japanese origin. According to Lippert, *láodòng* was first used in this sense in Japan in the 1880s. *Láodòng* was, nevertheless, replaced later by 工人 *gōngrén*. Lippert 1979, 183-187, 241-246.

<sup>526</sup> In his translations Yan Fu referred to capital as 母本 *mǔběn* (translation of Spencer's *Study On Sociology*) and 母財 *mǔcái* (translation of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*). The origins of referring to the concept of capital with 資本 *zīběn* are in the 1890s Japan. In China, Liang Qichao first used this version in 1899. Lippert 1979, 145-150.

<sup>527</sup> Rappoport. "The Philosophical Basis, Part 2".

each other: the one of elite and landowners against the one of serfs. Contemporary China belonged to the capitalist period in which the capitalists and the government together suppressed the labour class. Chen also claimed that this situation was not only China's peculiarity, but that a similar confrontation existed all over the world.<sup>528</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Class Struggle and China

The relevance of class struggle in China was partly related to the meanings given to the events in Russia. This is to say, Chen Duxiu and others defended the relevance of class struggle by referring to the Bolshevik example. As it has been pointed above, it is problematic to claim that the October revolution 'caused' Chinese authors to become Marxist as there were conflicting versions about the meaning of this revolution.

The first reports in China on the October Revolution were incoherent and based on sources that could not be confirmed. In November 1917 *Mínguó Ribào* (民國日報) in Shanghai reported that the Kerensky Government had been abolished in Russia and the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, had taken power. Other publications such as *Ribao* (日報), *Shenbao* (申報) and *Morning Bell* (晨鐘報 *Chénzhōng Bào*) reacted quickly to the event. A journal called *Labour* (勞動 *Láodòng*), which published articles on anarchism, called the event a "social revolution" that brought equality to the people, whereas Kang Youwei wrote that these events corresponded with his ideas of the Great Unity. There were also negative responses and the actual course of events was unclear. In September 1918, the Beiyang government signed an agreement with Japan according to which China was to support Japan's policies towards Russia. Related to this agreement, Japan demanded actions from the Beiyang government against the spread of "Russian extremism" to China. The Beiyang government tried to prevent the spread of information and ideas from Russia. Chinese officials were afraid that Chinese returning from Russia would spread dangerous ideas in China.<sup>529</sup>

The first time when the October revolution and the Bolshevik government were connected with Marx in *New Youth* was one year after the revolution, in November 1918, by Li Dazhao:

對於德國軍國主義勝利，不是聯合國的勝利，更不是我國徒事內爭託名參戰的軍人和那投機取巧賣弄弄俏的政客的勝利，是人道主義的勝利，是平和思想的勝利，是公理的勝利，是自由的勝利，是民主的勝利，是社會主義的勝利，是 Bolshevism 的勝利，是赤旗的勝利，是世界勞工階級的勝利，是二十世紀新潮流的勝利。[...] 他們的主義，就是革命的社會主義；他們的黨，就是革命的社會黨；他們是奉德國社會主義經濟學

<sup>528</sup> Chen Duxiu. *What is Reasonable Human Life?* 如何才是正當的人生. First Published in Guangdong Qunbao, January 1921. CDX.

<sup>529</sup> Tikhvinsky 1989, 1100-1102, 1109-1110. According to Chi Hsi-sheng, Duan Qirui, de facto leader of the Beiyang government, negotiated at least six different loans from Japan between March 1918 and October 1918. Duan also signed a Sino-Japanese mutual defence pact in May 1918. Chi 1976, 27.

家馬客斯為宗主的；他們的目的，在把現在為社會主義的障礙的國家界限打破，把資本家獨佔利益的生產制度打破[...] 他們的戰爭，是階級戰爭，是合世界無產庶民對於世界資本家的戰爭。

The victory against German militarism is not a victory of the Allied Nations. It is especially not a victory of those warlords who wanted to participate in the war because of reasons related to their domestic struggles, or those politicians who wanted it because of their opportunistic reasons. It is a victory of humanism, it is a victory of peaceful thought, it is a victory of reason, it is a victory of freedom, it is a victory of democracy, it is a victory of socialism, it is a victory of Bolshevism, it is a victory of red flag, it is a victory of the labour class, it is the victory of the new trend of the 20th century [...] Their [Bolsheviks] ideology is revolutionary socialism, their party is revolutionary socialist party, they believe in German socialist economist Marx, their goal is to break the national boundaries that obstruct socialism and to break the production system that benefits only the capitalists. [...] Their war is class war in which world proletariat is united against the world capitalist.<sup>530</sup>

In terms of taking Soviet Russia as a model for China, Li's article included an argument that was later used by many: the October Revolution was important because their struggle, the class struggle, was international in character. Bolshevism and Marxism were both connected with the "new trend of the 20th century" (二十世紀新潮流 *èrshíshìjì xīn cháoliú*). Li's article did not, however, include all the characteristics of the later class struggle language in *New Youth*: In this article Li did not write about proletarian dictatorship or about historical materialism. Neither did he reject parliamentary politics or German style social democracy. This article in *New Youth* was not the first one where Li Dazhao presented the idea that the October Revolution was international in nature. He had already done this a couple of months before in an article on the French and Russian revolutions<sup>531</sup>. Peng Yihu also discussed the international character of the October Revolution in *Weekly Critic* in May 1919. According to Peng, the history of European revolutions was divided into two categories: bourgeois revolutions against the power of nobility and proletarian revolutions against the power of the bourgeoisie. The current period of time was a period of revolutions belonging to the latter type that Peng called "a social revolution" (社會革命 *shèhuì gé mìng*). Peng argued that these revolutions were international and it was inevitable that they would come to China. Peng's view was, however, that China needed first "a political revolution" (政治的革命 *zhèngzhì de gé mìng*) of the first type.<sup>532</sup>

According to Arif Dirlik (1978) and Herman Mast (1971), the first attempt to apply historical materialism to China was Dai Jitao's article in *Construction* in September 1919<sup>533</sup>. In the article Dai explained the unstable political situation

<sup>530</sup> Li Dazhao. 'The Victory of Bolshevism'.

<sup>531</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Comparison between the French and the Russian Revolutions'. The same view appeared also in *Weekly Critic*. See Wang Guangqi. *Weekly Critic. International Revolution. 國際的革命*. No. 10. February 1919. HDB.

<sup>532</sup> Peng Yihu. 'The Crime of the Chinese Scholar-Official Class'.

<sup>533</sup> Mast 1971, 239; Dirlik 1978, 25. Dirlik has written that Dai Jitao was the most important promoter of Marxism in the May Fourth period. Besides Dai Jitao, Dirlik has also underlined the importance of Lin Yungai's writings in *Weekly Review*. According to Dirlik,

(superstructure) in China through problems in Chinese industry (base). The problem of the Chinese manufacturing industry was, according to Dai, that their products were unable to compete with the more advanced foreign products that were imported to China. Dai did not write directly about class struggle in China. However, he mentioned the bourgeoisie (有產階級) and proletarian class (無產階級) and he wrote that there was a possibility of future revolution where the rich and the poor would change places with each other.<sup>534</sup> For Dai, historical materialism was a valid tool for analyzing contemporary societies, not only historical ones. According to Chow, in fact many of the GMD leaders accepted historical materialism, but most of them rejected the idea of class struggle<sup>535</sup>.

In the September 1920 issue of *New Youth* Chen Duxiu started to defend the idea that class struggle was a necessity in China:

從事實上說起來，第一我們要明白世界各國裏面最不平最痛苦的事，不是別的，就是少數遊惰的消費的資產階級，利用國家、政治、法律等機關，把多數極苦的生產的勞動階級壓在資本勢力底下，當做牛馬機器還不如[...] 若是不主張用強力，不主張階級戰爭，天天不要國家，政治，法律，天天空想自由組織的社會出現；那班資產階級仍舊天天站在國家地位，天天利用政治，法律；如此夢想自由，便再過一萬年，那被壓迫的勞動階級也沒有翻身的機會[...] 此時俄羅斯若以克魯巴特金的自由組織代替了列寧的勞動專政，馬上不但資產階級要恢復勢力，連帝政復興也必不免[...] 我敢說：若不經過階級戰爭，若不經過勞動階級佔領權力階級地位底時代，德謨克拉西必然永遠是資產階級底專有物，也就是資產階級永遠把持政權抵制勞動階級底利器。

If we look at the facts, the first thing we need to understand is the most uneven and the most painful thing in every country in the world. It is nothing else but the lazy and consuming capitalist class of the minority. It takes advantage of the state, politics, law and other institutions. It keeps the suffering and manufacturing labour class under the power of capital and treats them as if they were no better than pack animals or machines. [...] If one does not support the use of force, does not support class struggle, but continuously opposes the state, politics, and law, continuously dreams about a society of free unions, then the capitalist class will control the state all the time and will take advantage of politics and law. If one dreams about freedom in this fashion, it will take another 10 000 years and the oppressed labour class would not have an opportunity to free itself. [...] If this time in Russia they would have relied on Kropotkin's free unions instead of Lenin's proletarian dictatorship, not only the capitalist class would have immediately been able to restore its power, but also the imperial system would have inevitably been reinstated. [...] I dare to say: If we do not go through a class struggle, if we do not go through a period where the working class holds the power, democracy will inevitably and forever be exclusively a thing of the capitalist class. This means that the capitalist class will forever use special political power as a weapon to resist the working class.<sup>536</sup>

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Lin's understanding of historical materialism was the most sophisticated during this period. Dirlik 1989, 112, 161. Later also Li Dazhao applied historical materialism to China in *New Youth*. According to Li, Confucian thought was dying out because of changes in economy. Li Dazhao. *An Economic Explanation of the Causes of the Changes in Chinese Modern Thought*. 由經濟上解釋中國近代思想變動的原因. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 2. January 1920. HDB.

<sup>534</sup> Dai Jitao. *An Analysis on the Origins of Chinese Chaos from the Economic Perspective*. 從經濟上觀察中國的亂源. *Construction*. Vol. 1. No. 2. September 1919. JS.

<sup>535</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 247.

<sup>536</sup> Chen Duxiu. *On Politics*. 談政治. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 1. September 1920. HDB.

This particular article was the first one in *New Youth* in which the need for class struggle in China was directly demanded. Chen positioned the labour question and the dominance of the capitalist class as the main problem to be solved in contemporary China. Chen distanced himself from Kropotkin by stating that if the revolution in Russia had been based on Kropotkinian free unions the capitalists would have been able to regain the power. For Chen, Lenin and his revolutionary government was a necessity of carrying out the change. According to him, in some situations authority was more important than freedom.<sup>537</sup> Chen's "On Politics" meant a clear change in the language of *New Youth* in discussions on China's future development. Besides Chen, many younger authors, such as Zhou Fohai 周佛海 (1897-1948)<sup>538</sup>, Li Da 李达 (1890-1966)<sup>539</sup>, Li Ji 李季 (1892-1967) and Cai Hesen 蔡和森 (1895-1931)<sup>540</sup> started to promote class struggle in *New Youth*.

These authors tried to convince the readership about the relevancy of class struggle paradigm in China. This was certainly not a simple task. Chen Duxiu's claim that class struggle was needed in order to abolish the special privileges of the capitalist class implied that there actually was such a class in China, or at least a class that could be compared to it. Chen's writings also implied that there was a proletarian class that could lead this struggle.

One of the most well-known authors to publicly oppose Chen Duxiu's position on socialism, class struggle and proletarian dictatorship in China was Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀 (1886-1973)<sup>541</sup> who wrote for Liang Qichao's *Liberation and Reform*. Zhang supported Russell's view that it should be the state that leads Chinese industrialization, not the proletarian class. Zhang participated in Chen's study group on Marxism in Shanghai in 1920. Zhang did, nevertheless, quickly turn against Marxism and socialism. In December 1920 *New Youth* published a summary, compiled by Chen Duxiu, of the debate between Zhang Dongsun and supporters of socialism. Zhang wrote that Chinese capitalism was the only possible way to develop Chinese industry and that the idea of a proletarian dictatorship in China was not relevant because there was no proletarian class. According to Zhang, the reason for the poverty of the Chinese people was not

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<sup>537</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'On Politics'.

<sup>538</sup> Zhou was one of the founding members of the CCP. He withdrew from the party in 1924 and became an important GMD member known for his theoretical writings. For a biography of Zhou, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 1, pp. 405-409.

<sup>539</sup> Like Zhou Fohai, Li Da was one of the founding members of the CCP. He became known as a leading spokesman of Marxist ideology. Later, he became the president of Wuhan University. For a biography of Li, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 2, pp. 328-329.

<sup>540</sup> Cai Hesen led a group of work-study students in France that protested in front of the Chinese embassy in Paris in February 1921. The students were protesting the lack of support from the embassy in their difficult financial situation. Vera Schwarcz writes that although Cai was given a lot of attention in the Maoist historiography, it was Zhang Shenfu who was the key person in establishing CCP branch in France. Schwarcz 1992, 100-107. Cai was a close friend and associate of Mao Zedong. For a biography of Cai, see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 3, pp. 283-286.

<sup>541</sup> Zhang was a philosopher and a teacher of Western philosophy. He became the chief editor of China Times in 1923 and a professor of philosophy at Yanjing University in 1930. For a biography of Zhang see Boorman & Howard 1967, vol. 1, 129-133.



capitalism itself but the dominance of foreign capital in China. Chen Duxiu denied all these claims. Chen replied that capitalists were not necessary for the development of industry because the existence of capital did not require capitalists or a capitalist system. Chen also questioned Zhang's concept of proletarian. According to Chen, it was clear that there was a proletarian class in China; it was all those people who had produced the food they were eating, the clothes they were wearing, the houses they lived in and boats they used for sailing.<sup>542</sup>

The existence of proletarian class in China was an issue that Zhou Fohai also discussed. Zhou posited that although there had been a significant amount of scholarship on socialism during the past year (the article was published in December 1920), the connection of these writings to China had been missing. The discussions had been only theoretical and the particular Chinese circumstances had not been taken into account. Zhou wanted to ask whether or not China was developed enough to apply socialism. Zhou's obvious answer was that yes it was, and actually, it was important to move to socialism before capitalism was fully developed. If they let capitalism develop further, it would be much more difficult to change the course afterwards:

我們是否硬要等到這些弊病，隨著資本主義流到中國來，並且等他根深蒂固了之後，才來謀救治呢？[...] 就是硬要等到勞動者陷於悲慘的壞遇，才來救濟他；資本家作出來大惡來，才來謀推翻他嗎？[...] 等到資本制度根深蒂固的時候，你就來想推翻他，恐怕也沒有這樣容易了。那時非經長期的爭鬥，受極大的犧牲，決不能推翻地盤已固的資本制度。試看歐洲的勞動運動，已幾十年了；各大國除俄國及灰色改造的德國外，他們是否已推翻資本制度？我們看一看他們怎樣艱難，怎樣爭鬥，怎樣犧牲，就越覺得中國於資本制度未穩固的先，是更要實行社會主義的必要了。

Should we wait for this malady, to let capitalism flow into China, to wait until it is deep-rooted and only then try to cure it? Should we wait until the workers have fallen into miserable circumstances and then try to save them? [...] Should we wait until the capitalists have become a great evil, and only then try to overthrow them? [...] To wait until capitalist system is deep-rooted before trying to overthrow it - I'm afraid it won't be that easy. At that point, it would be impossible to overthrow the capitalist system that is on a solid foundation without a long period of struggle and without great sacrifices. Just look at the European labour movements of the past decades: besides Russia and reformed Germany, have they been able to overthrow the capitalist system in major countries? When we look at their difficulties, their struggle, their sacrifices, we will feel that before the capitalist system has become stable in China, it is necessary to realize socialism.<sup>543</sup>

For Zhou, socialism meant class struggle. According to Zhou, the problem of the French revolution of 1848 was that it came too late after the 1789 revolution; capitalist forces had already become too powerful. Conversely, the revolution had been successful in Russia, because they did not wait for capitalism to develop too far. Zhou also defended the relevancy of socialism in China by

<sup>542</sup> Chen Duxiu. *About Socialism*. 關於社會主義的討論. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB. For a more detailed description of this debate, see Luk 1990, 44-46.

<sup>543</sup> Zhou Fohai. *To Realize Socialism and to Develop Industry*. 實行社會主義與發展實業. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 5. January 1921. HDB.

writing that of course there was a proletarian class (勞動階級 *láodòng jiējí*) in China and that socialism would truly improve their living conditions.<sup>544</sup> The claim that China should not wait too long for the development of industry and capitalism before socialism could be applied appeared also in Li Dazhao's writings. Li argued that the development of industry within current society would only benefit those who held the power. For Li, it was desirable that industry was developed with the help of socialism.<sup>545</sup>

Li Ji also dealt with the question of the adaptability of class theories to China in April 1921. According to Li's version, there were actually a lot of capitalists in China. They were not powerful capitalists as in the West, but there were many small-scale capitalists in China, such as landowners. Although the profits they made were more modest than the ones of "the big capitalists", in principle they belonged to the same category.<sup>546</sup>

Li Da, the main editor of the *Communist* journal, gave his version of 'true Marxism' in *New Youth* in January 1921. In his article he set forth seven main assertions that together formed Marxism: 1) all societies are dependent on production relations; 2) there are regularities in the development of productive forces; 3) all human history is history of the class struggle; 4) capitalism inevitably develops towards imperialism; 5) in the proletarian revolution the capitalist power is overthrown and proletarian dictatorship is established; 6) all productive means are transferred to joint ownership; 7) when the proletariat holds the power, all class divisions become extinct. In the same article Li also gave a shorter definition: Marxism was revolutionary, it was international and it defended the proletarian dictatorship. The scientific nature of Marxism<sup>547</sup>, on the other hand, was based on five theories: 1) historical materialism; 2) a theory of capital accumulation; 3) a theory of the collapse of capitalism; 4) a theory of surplus value and 5) a theory of class struggle. Li wanted to underline that the version of Marxism that was offered by the German Social Democrats was an example of the decay of Marxism. Thus, Chinese should by no means take them as a model. This decay culminated in two changes of direction within the party. *First*, they moved towards nationalism (國家主義 *guójiā zhǔyì*) and supported Germany in the First World War. *Second*, they began to support parliamentary politics (議會政策 *yìhuì zhèngcè*) and to oppose direct class struggle. Li argued that if labour accepts capitalist wars it simultaneously accepts capitalism. Thus, Marxist socialism had become nearly nonexistent within the German Social Democratic Party during the war. Li explained that it was Lenin, not the Germans who made Marx significant in that historical moment. The class

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<sup>544</sup> Zhou Fohai. 'To Realize Socialism and to Develop Industry'.

<sup>545</sup> Li Dazhao. *Socialism in China and Observations on the Methods of Realization*. 中國的社會主義及其實行方法的考察. First published in *Xin Zhina*, January 1921. LDZ.

<sup>546</sup> Li Ji. 'Socialism and China'.

<sup>547</sup> Marx himself did not use the expression of "scientific socialism". It was Engels who created the image of Marx as a father of "scientific socialism". Carver 2001/2008, 38.

struggle was a necessary requirement of subverting the capitalist system.<sup>548</sup> What was important in Li Da's definition of Marxism was that Li dissociated Marx from German social democrats and parliamentary politics. At the same time Li also connected true Marxism with Soviet Russia. Zhou Fohai also made the same connection in *Communist*<sup>549</sup>.

The 1919 *New Youth* special issue on Marxism differed from these later writings by Chen Duxiu, Zhou Fohai and others in that the articles in the special issue did not make any connection between "true Marxism" and Soviet Russia. This is, this combination could be employed in China as a model that had both a concrete example in the October revolution and a conceptual framework that was to be used in discussions on China's future development.

### 4.3 Basic Concepts

The relevance of Marxism and the need of social revolution and class struggle were repeatedly connected to the idea that China should follow Soviet Russia in its road for development. Therefore, in this process of reframing the May Fourth reform discourse it was important that Soviet Russia and Comintern were given a strong emphasis in the writings on "world trends". In other words, besides the claims that Marx and class struggle represented newest thought trends (more about this in section 5.1 below), this reframing was delivered by supporting a model (Soviet Russia) that would include all these constituents of the new framework (Marx, class struggle, proletarian dictatorship).

#### 4.3.1 Endorsement of Class Struggle, Social Revolution and Proletarian Dictatorship

##### Social Revolution

Although the Chinese term 革命 *gémìng* was not an invention of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, nevertheless its usage went through significant transformations within this period of time. *Gémìng* became used energetically by nearly all leaders in Chinese politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to legitimize certain policies and to denounce others. According to Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng, there is no other country where revolutionary language would have gained as much importance as in China<sup>550</sup>. Within the May Fourth journals this term was used to refer to a

<sup>548</sup> Li Da. 'Marx Restored'. Chen Duxiu had already denounced social democracy and parliamentary participation in his On Politics. Chen did not write about true Marxism, but he wrote that social democracy weakened the power of the proletariat. Chen Duxiu. 'On Politics.'

<sup>549</sup> Zhou Fohai. *Commemorating the Third Anniversary of the Establishment of the Russian Communist Government*. 俄國共產政府成立三週年紀念. *Communist*. No. 1. November 1920. GCD.

<sup>550</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 365.

new kind of concept of revolution when it was used together with the class struggle language.

Revolutionary vocabulary entered Chinese language in the first decade of the 20th century. One of the most important publications in elaborating revolutionary themes was Zou Rong's 鄒容 (1885-1905) book *Revolutionary Army* (革命軍 *Gémìng Jūn*), published in 1903. For Zou, revolution was needed in order to free China from Manchu-rule and foreign imperialism.<sup>551</sup> In the traditional usage, *gémìng* had primarily referred to a change, often violent, from one dynasty to another or to a change of the ruling family. Hence, *gémìng* meant a change in the mandate of Heaven (天命 *tiānmìng*). As dynasties could survive centuries, this particular usage of *gémìng* did not refer to an event that took place often. In the latter half of the 19th century, when the concept of revolution arrived in China via foreign books, Chinese authors had to decide how to translate it. The idea of using *gémìng* to translate "revolution" in translations of Western books was of Japanese origin. The first translation of that kind is, according Jin and Liu, from 1866 by translator and political theorist Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 (1835-1901) in his book *Things Western* (西洋事情 *Seiyō Jijō*) [1866].<sup>552</sup>

*Gémìng* began to be disentangled from traditional usages (change of dynasty) in the texts written by Chinese authors in the 1890s. For instance, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao occasionally used *gémìng* when they wrote about the Meiji Restoration (1868) in Japan<sup>553</sup>. Findings from May Fourth period dictionaries indicate that there was no clear distinction between the concepts of revolution and reform during this period of time<sup>554</sup>.

According to Jin and Liu (2009), the modern usages of *gémìng* became prevalent after the Hundred Days Reform (1898) in China. Usually the term appeared in references to the French Revolution.<sup>555</sup> For example, in an article from 1902 Liang Qichao used *gémìng* when he referred to the French Revolution. In this same text, Liang translated industrial revolution as 產業之革命 *chǎnyè zhī gémìng*.<sup>556</sup> After the turn of the century, *gémìng* was given a new meaning; it did not refer only to the act of overthrowing the ruling dynasty but the term also began to be used to refer to the establishment of a republic (共和 *gōnghé*)<sup>557</sup>. The

<sup>551</sup> Zou 1903.

<sup>552</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 367-369; Masini 1993, 172-173; Chung 1999, 23-25; Fukuzawa 1866.

<sup>553</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 370.

<sup>554</sup> Li Y.W. 1921, 240-241, 603.

<sup>555</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 370-373.

<sup>556</sup> Lippert 1979, 142-144. In contemporary Chinese industrial revolution is usually either as 產業革命 *chǎnyè gémìng* or as 工業革命 *gōngyè gémìng*. At least the latter appeared also during the May Fourth period. See for example Lin Yungai. *Thought Trends of Modern Socialism*. 近代社會主義之思潮. Construction. Vol. 2. No. 3. April 1920. JS.

<sup>557</sup> At this time there was no clear distinction between western concepts of 'democracy' and 'republic'. The Chinese term 共和 was used to refer to both concepts, see section 3.3.1 above.

modern usage of *gémìng* included one central element that the traditional one did not: the idea of progress. Revolution did not refer only to the change of dynasty, but it referred to a change of the whole governing system, which was connected to the ideas of progress and evolution. Although Chinese revolutionaries started to use *gémìng* to refer to the Western concepts of revolution, there was still something in *gémìng* that disentangled it from the Western counterparts; *gémìng* had strong ethical connotations. Besides referring to the change of dynasty or to the change of the emperor, the traditional concept of *gémìng* also referred to 天道 *tiāndào*, or 'heavenly law'. This means that *gémìng* referred also to divine or superhuman spheres; outside forces could 'order' *gémìng* to take place. Within the Confucian context, *tiāndào* was connected to the stability of society and to the ability to uphold Confucian moral norms and hierarchical system connected to it (倫常 *lúncháng*). In order to disentangle *gémìng* from Confucian moral norms, the anti-Qing revolutionaries had to give the ethical side of *gémìng* a new content. This new ethicality was connected to the idea of a more equal society. As a result, in the modern usage of *gémìng* it did not refer only to the act of replacing the Qing Empire with a republic, it also referred to the idea of replacing hierarchical society with a more equal (平等 *píngděng*) one.<sup>558</sup>

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century China *gémìng* did not necessarily refer to a violent uprising in which the ruling regimes would have been forced to withdraw. Before the May Fourth period *gémìng* was also used to refer to peaceful reform based on setting up a universal and more equal education system. Being a 'revolutionary' during the May Fourth period did not necessarily have anything to do with class struggle.<sup>559</sup> In order to understand the concept of revolution within the class struggle language, we need to understand what kinds of names were given to different revolutions in this period. Within this context, one important distinction was often underlined: in China the revolution of 1911 had been a "political revolution" (政治革命 *zhèngzhì gémìng*) or a "racial revolution" (種族革命 *zhǒngzú gémìng*). The first name referred to the end of the imperial political system, whereas the latter name referred to the struggle of the Han Chinese against their Manchu rulers. The October Revolution in Russia in 1917, on the other hand, was called a "social revolution" (社會革命 *shèhuì gémìng*)<sup>560</sup>.

<sup>558</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 370-373, 376-377.

<sup>559</sup> In 1915, in the first *New Youth* issue, Chen Duxiu already referred to social revolution as a revolution that would put an end to capitalist suppression. He did not, however, connect social revolution with class struggle. See Chen Duxiu. 'French People and Modern Civilization'.

<sup>560</sup> See for instance Li Dazhao. 'Comparison between the French and the Russian Revolutions'; Gao Yihan. *Against the System of Rulers and Masters*. 非君師主義. New Youth. Vol. 5. No. 6. December 1918. HDB; Luo Jialun. 'The New Tide of Today's World'; Fu Sinian. *Social Revolution – Russian Style Revolution*. 社會革命:俄國式的革命. New Tide. Vol. 1. No. 1. January 1919. HDB; Chen Duxiu. *Russian Revolution of the 20th Century*. 二十世紀俄羅斯革命. Weekly Critic. No. 18. April 1919. HDB.

Another commonly raised view was that the revolution of 1911 was incomplete, and it had failed to achieve either democracy or stability<sup>561</sup>. According to Edward Gu (2001), before the New Culture Movement period “social revolution” had two different meanings: in Sun Yatsen’s and Jiang Kanghu’s usage, social revolution meant a revolution from the top, whereas in anarchist writings it referred to a revolution from below. In addition to the revolution of 1911, the French Revolution of 1789 was also often referred to as a political one in comparison to the October Revolution. After 1921 the October Revolution has been usually called a class revolution (階級革命 *jiējí gé mìng*) instead of social one.<sup>562</sup> The concept of social revolution could be used to encapsulate many of the ideals that had been used repeatedly in the writings on mutual aid: equality, democracy, freedom and humanity. Social revolution was a central concept in the new culture movement thought; it represented a counter force to old thought<sup>563</sup>. The political revolution of 1911 had managed to realize only titular improvements, whereas social revolution referred to more thorough improvements. As in the case of concepts such as democracy and freedom, social revolution also represented something that seemed to arouse wide support in this context.

The distinction between social and political revolutions was not a peculiarity of this particular context. According to Wang Yuanyi (2004), social revolution has been a central concept in the anarchist tradition, whereas political revolution has been a concept that had been opposed by many anarchists. For instance, the clash in the First International (1864-1876) between Proudhon and Marx was related to Proudhon’s opposition to ideas of political revolution and class struggle.<sup>564</sup> In the May Fourth context, however, social revolution was connected with class struggle. The concept of social revolution was the one that was also used in the *Communist* journal that was dedicated to commend Soviet Russia and Lenin.<sup>565</sup>

The language of class struggle was a revolutionary language, meaning that it presented the outside world in a way that portrayed a future revolution as a necessity. Within the language of mutual aid and democracy there was no clear alignment in this respect. On the one hand, the spirit of mutual aid and

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<sup>561</sup> See for instance Gao Yuan. *Democratic Politics and Moralism*. 民主政治與倫常主義. New Tide. Vol. 2. No. 2. December 1919. HDB.; Chen Duxiu. *Homeworks for the Chinese Revolutionary Party*. 中国革命党应该补习的功课. First Published in Weekly Review, January 1920. CDX.

<sup>562</sup> Gu 2001, 610-615. Dai Jitao’s version of the social revolution was close to Sun Yatsen’s version (revolution from above), as Dai underlined the role of intellectuals. Dai Jitao. *Letter to Chen Jingcun (Chen Jiongming) on Revolution*. 致陳競存論革命之信. Construction. Vol. 2. No. 1. February 1920. JS. Social Revolution was also discussed in the debate between Liang Qichao’s New Citizen Journal and Min Bao (see 4.1 above). Li, Y.N. 1971, 2.

<sup>563</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘The Manifesto of this Journal’.

<sup>564</sup> Wang Y. 2004, 405, 412-413.

<sup>565</sup> Stanley 1981, 106-112.

democracy was connected with “the age of revolutions”<sup>566</sup>, but on the other hand the spirit of mutual aid and especially the New Village ideology connected to it was portrayed as a way to avoid violent revolution<sup>567</sup>. If we look at the writings in which the spirit of mutual aid was connected with the new age of revolutions, the writings on revolution differ from the ones within the class struggle language: there was no direct demand for revolution in China. This is to say, revolution was not a word of negative references (such as violence, chaos, bloodshed), but references to it were more abstract expressions of the hope of a better future (“this is the time of revolutions”) than within the revolutionary oriented class struggle language in which *gémìng* was used in a more concrete manner (“we need a Russian style social revolution here in China”). If we take the demands for revolution as an indicator of the level of radicalism, there are reasons to call Li Dazhao a radical author. This is because his enthusiasm for revolution was evident much earlier than in the case of most of the other May Fourth authors. Already in early 1919 Li wrote about a trend of social revolution and Bolshevism that would spread to the whole world<sup>568</sup>.

This more radical demand for revolution was intimately connected to the idea of taking Soviet Russia as a model. Already before there were direct pleas for revolution in China, there were songs of praise for the October revolution as the one that had started a new age<sup>569</sup>. The usages of *gémìng* within the class struggle language can be summed up as: 1) the meaning of “social revolution” was said to be the abolishment of the modes of production that divided the society into separate groups of rich and poor<sup>570</sup>; 2) the October Revolution was set as a model for China<sup>571</sup>; 3) the necessity of *gémìng* in China was directly

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<sup>566</sup> See for instance Luo Jialun. ‘The New Tide of Today’s World’; Li Dazhao. ‘New Era’. Kropotkin himself did also write about the need for social revolution in *The State*. In *Appeal to the Young* revolution appeared as something that would inevitably come. Kropotkin 1880; Kropotkin 1897.

<sup>567</sup> See for instance Zhou Zuoren. ‘New Village in Japan’; Guo Shaoyu. ‘A Study on New Village’.

<sup>568</sup> Li Dazhao. ‘World Trends After the War’. In some of his later writings Li explained that the attitude to social revolution differentiates socialists from liberalists. The former group believed that in order to improve society, social revolution was necessary, whereas the latter group believed that it was political freedom that was needed. See Li Dazhao. *Past, Present and Future of the Russian Revolution*. 俄羅斯革命的過去，現在及將來. First published in Juewu, March 1921. LDZ. Fu Sinian also wrote about the spread of social revolution from Russia to Central Europe. Fu’s views seem not to have any connection to ideas such as class struggle or proletarian dictatorship. Fu Sinian. ‘Social Revolution’.

<sup>569</sup> See for instance Peng Yihu. ‘Fundamental Ideas of the New Era’; Li Dazhao. ‘New Era’.

<sup>570</sup> See for instance Chen Duxiu. *Revolution and Rebellion*. 革命與作亂. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB; Li Da. ‘Worker and Socialism’; Tian Han. ‘A Poet and the Labor Question’.

<sup>571</sup> See for instance Chen Duxiu. *Nation, Politics, Law*. 國家、政治、法律. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 3. November 1920. HDB; Li Da. *About Socialism and Liang Rengong (Liang Qichao)*. 討論社會主義并質梁任公. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 1. May 1921. HDB.

underlined<sup>572</sup>; 4) it was claimed that this tendency was pressing all over the world<sup>573</sup>; and 5) it was claimed that without such revolution there would not be neither progress nor evolution<sup>574</sup>.

### Class struggle

The concept of class struggle (階級鬥爭 *jiējí dòuzhēng*<sup>575</sup>, 階級戰爭 *jiējí zhànzhēng*, or 階級競爭 *jiējí jìngzhēng*) was connected to the concept of social revolution. Both of these concepts referred to the abolishment of institutions that upheld and perpetuated inequality in society. Both of these concepts also referred to the Soviet Russian example within this particular context. Nevertheless, these two concepts were not used interchangeably. Class struggle was a method to realize social revolution. This is to say, social revolution was not a new concept, but within the class struggle language its usage was different. Social revolution was a concept that could also be used without claims about adequate development stage of socio-economical classes. For instance, in April 1919 Chen Duxiu wrote that although Chinese classes were not developed due to the underdevelopment of Chinese industry, the actions of warlords (Chen mentioned Zhang Zuolin 張作霖 (1875-1928) and Ni Sichong 倪嗣衝 (1868-1924)) brought the social revolution closer<sup>576</sup>. The concept of class struggle was related to the theories of Marx and this concept implied debates on the production forces and whether there were such classes in China that could be applied to Marxist theories.

Unlike 'revolution', 'class struggle' was a concept in the May Fourth discourse that had been nearly non-existent within the revolutionary period of the Xinhai revolution of 1911<sup>577</sup>. Thus, *gémìng* belonged to the reform vocabulary of the period whereas *jiējí dòuzhēng* was something new – both the word and the

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<sup>572</sup> Liu Renqing. *Newsletter* 會員通訊. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 9. March 1921; Zhang Shenfu. *Communist Parties in England and France - the Reform in China*. 英法共產黨 - 中國改造. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 3. July 1921. HDB.

<sup>573</sup> Huang Zhongsu. *The Situation of the Labour Movement in England*. 英國勞動運動之實況. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 10. April 1921. HDB; Zhou Fohai. 'Commemorating the Third Anniversary'.

<sup>574</sup> Li Dazhao. *The Self and the World*. 我與世界. Weekly Critic. No. 29. July 1919. HDB; Zhou Fohai. *Two Roads of Capitalist and Socialist System - Evolution and Revolution*. 從資本主義組織到社會主義組織的兩條路 - 進化與革命. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 2. June 1921. HDB.

<sup>575</sup> According to Lippert, 階級鬥爭 *jiējí dòuzhēng* was adopted from the Kotoku & Sakai's Japanese translation of the Manifesto from 1904. In Chinese, Song Jiaoren first used the term in 1906. Lippert 1979, 166-171.

<sup>576</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Ni Sichong and Zhang Zuolin, Thank You Very Much*. 多謝倪嗣衝張作霖. Weekly Critic. No. 18. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>577</sup> See sections 4.1 and 4.2.1 above.



concept had not received much attention before these discussions in the May Fourth period. It also seems that such vocabulary was unknown to many during this period. For instance in Li Yuwen's dictionary from 1921 the word class, *jiējí*, does not appear at all<sup>578</sup>.

Despite the fact that before 1920 there seemed to be no authors in China who would have directly advocated class struggle in China, one can find earlier references to this idea. For example in December 1918 Li Dazhao wrote in *New Youth* that class struggle (階級戰爭 *jiējí zhànzhēng*) was the war of Bolsheviks in Russia and it meant a battle against capitalism<sup>579</sup>. Still, the step from introducing this new concept to arguing that China really needed was a major step. In many writings in which this new concept was brought up, it was not initially presented in a positive light; especially in 1919 it usually referred to an idea that was not needed in China<sup>580</sup>. It was also something that was in direct contrast with "the spirit of mutual aid"<sup>581</sup>.

Besides the relation to specific types of socio-economic classes, there was another area that distinguished the usages of the concept of class struggle from the one of social revolution: the concept of class struggle was more frequently connected to criticism of parliamentary politics than the concept of social revolution. For instance, in the opening issue of the *Communist* in November 1920, Chen Duxiu directly stated that China should not listen to the supporters of parliamentarism (議會派 *yìhuì pài*), but China should use the method of class struggle (階級戰爭) and this was because representative politics (代議政治 *dàiyì zhèngzhì*) had nothing to do with the interests of the labour class.<sup>582</sup> In January 1921, Li Da also connected the support of parliamentarism with the unfortunate "decay of Marxism" in Germany<sup>583</sup>. This version of class struggle, which was posited against parliamentary democracy, was similar to Lenin's version in *State and Revolution* (Государство и революция) [1917]. The first chapter of the book was translated into Chinese in *Communist* in May 1921<sup>584</sup>. In this context class struggle

<sup>578</sup> Li Y.W. 1921.

<sup>579</sup> Li Dazhao. 'The Victory of Bolshevism'.

<sup>580</sup> For instance Chen Duxiu wrote that China did not need class struggle as late as December 1919: Chen Duxiu. *Establishing the Foundations of Democracy*. 實行民治的基礎. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 1. December 1919. HDB.

<sup>581</sup> See for example Li Dazhao. 'My Views on Marxism, Part 1'.

<sup>582</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Short Introduction*. 短言. First Published in *Communist*, November 1920. CDX.

<sup>583</sup> Li Da. 'Marx Restored'.

<sup>584</sup> Michael Luk holds that the class struggle concept in these writings was taken from *State and Revolution*. According to Dirlik, there was no Chinese translation available of this book before late 1920. Luk 1990, 42-43; Dirlik 1989, 33. It is unclear what was the translation of "late 1920" Dirlik was referring to. It is true that the *Communist* journal was established in late 1920 but the translation of *State and Revolution* in it did not appear until the fourth issue in May 1921. Only the first chapter was translated in this journal. See Lenin, V.I. (translated by "P Sheng"). *State and Revolution*. 國家與革命. *Communist*. No. 4. May 1921. GCD.

did not refer to the Kautskyian concept of class struggle that meant struggle through parliamentary systems<sup>585</sup>.

### Proletarian Dictatorship

Another new concept that played a key role in the new class struggle language was the one of 'proletarian dictatorship' (勞動專政 *láodòng zhuānzhèng*, 勞動專制 *láodòng zhuānzhì* or 無產階級獨裁 *wúchǎn jiējí dúcái*)<sup>586</sup>. In the first congress of the CCP in July 1921 the party concluded that the CCP's basic principle was to be the realization of the proletarian dictatorship<sup>587</sup>. If it was not easy to introduce and adopt the concept of class struggle in this context (applicability of class theory into China, incongruity with the spirit of mutual aid), it was no less simple with the concept of proletarian dictatorship. Before anything, the challenge was connected to the word 專制 *zhuānzhì* that was associated with the old rule and suppression of people, something that was against 'the spirit of democracy' so often cherished within the May Fourth journals. *Zhuānzhì* was used, for example, to refer to the old autocratic powers in Europe which revolutionaries such as Bakunin and Marx were fighting against<sup>588</sup>. It was also used to refer to the old power in China that, for instance, suppressed women,<sup>589</sup> and it was also used to refer to power regimes based on religious authorities<sup>590</sup>. In brief, it had been a word that was used to refer to things that were seen as the very enemies of the New Culture and May Fourth Movements.<sup>591</sup>

At first glance, it might appear strange that some people wanted to give positive meanings to a word that had been used only in a negative sense in this context. It has been noted above that the worldview connected to class struggle language was more cynical than the one that was produced by the language of

<sup>585</sup> As already mentioned, Kautsky's *The Class Struggle* had also been translated into Chinese in 1920.

<sup>586</sup> In Li Yuwen's dictionary 獨裁政治 *dúcái zhèngzhì* was given the meaning "autocracy". In Yan Huiqing's dictionary autocracy was given two different translations: 專制 *zhuānzhì* and 獨裁 *dúcái*. *Zhuānzhì* was also connected with "dictatorship". Thus, it seems that same words were used to refer to autocracy and dictatorship. There was no clear dividing line between the two. "Proletariat", on the other hand, was said to mean "the lowest labouring class" in Yan's dictionary. In the May Fourth context it was used in a wider sense, it referred to workers in general. Li Y.W. 1921, 351; Yan 1921, 61, 257, 774.

<sup>587</sup> Chang, K. 1971, 145.

<sup>588</sup> Rappoport, Angelo. 'The Philosophical Basis, Part 2'.

<sup>589</sup> Ming Hui. *Women's Suffrage*. 婦女選舉權. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 3. February 1920. HDB.

<sup>590</sup> Wang Xinggong. *Explanation on the Ideology of Struggle*. 奮鬥主義之一個解釋. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB.

<sup>591</sup> Lippert has shown that 專制 and 獨裁 were associated with autocracy and despotism not only in Chinese but also in Japanese dictionaries of the early 20th century. Lippert 1979, 351-355.

mutual aid and democracy. Related to this difference, there was also a difference in attitude towards power and authority. Wei Zhengtong (1985) says that it was typical for writings on democracy in the May Fourth period that authors advocated different modes of local autonomy and opposed political parties<sup>592</sup>. This setting was turned upside down in the class struggle language in which revolutionary change was claimed to be impossible without reverence to authorities in charge of the revolution. In other words, the need to use such words as *zhuānzhì* was not only a matter of attempts to follow orthodox vocabulary; there was a need to give different meanings to words because the ideas that this language was supporting differed from what had been there before.

This change, from a negative *zhuānzhì* concept to one that was something desirable was carried out by redefining the limits of possible and impossible. The main argument for applying this new concept, proletarian dictatorship, was the same as in the case of social revolution and class struggle: it was presented as the only way of getting rid of class divisions and factionalism.<sup>593</sup> In addition, proletarian dictatorship was connected to the process of putting socialist ideas into 'actual use'<sup>594</sup>. This also was a concept that was used to refer to the revolutionary government in Soviet Russia<sup>595</sup>. The ones who opposed the idea could be termed utopians, people who were not properly aware of realities of the current society and were good-for-nothing people who were unwilling and incapable to act in order to carry out the change.

One Marxist argument to defend the idea of the proletarian dictatorship has been that the existing system was already a dictatorship, a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie<sup>596</sup>. This argument also appeared in *New Youth*. This is to say, in order to reframe the debate and to weaken the attacks against the idea of proletarian dictatorship the word dictatorship could be used to refer to something else. For instance, in August 1921 Cai Hesen wrote that democracy was a name that often referred to "the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" (中產階級專政 *zhōngchǎn jiējí*

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<sup>592</sup> Wei 1985, 76-77.

<sup>593</sup> See for instance Chen Duxiu. *A Critique of Socialism*. 社會主義批評. *New Youth*. Vol. 9. No. 3. July 1921. HDB.

<sup>594</sup> See for instance Yamakawa Hitoshi. *From Scientific Socialism to Socialism in Action*. 從科學的社會主義到行動的社會主義. *New Youth*. Vol. 9. No. 1. May 1921. HDB. In this article Yamakawa strongly equated "socialism in action" (行動的社會主義) with proletarian dictatorship (無產階級獨裁). Also Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution* that one was not true Marxist if one did not recognize the necessity of proletarian dictatorship. Lenin 1917 (See chapter 2. "The Experience of 1848-51"). Li Da wrote similarly on 'true Marxism' (see above).

<sup>595</sup> For instance, Li Da. 'Marx Restored'. Li Da acknowledged that the idea of proletarian dictatorship was heavily criticized in the West. He did not conclude from this, however, that proletarian dictatorship would have against the prevailing trends. Li Da. 'Marxist Socialism'.

<sup>596</sup> Marx 1850. This argument also appeared in *Communist*. See Zhou Fohai. 'Commemorating the Third Anniversary'.

*zhuānzhì*)<sup>597</sup>. By these kinds of speech acts it was possible to confuse the situation in which democracy was always something desirable and dictatorship something unwanted. On the other hand, sometimes proletarian dictatorship was referred to as “enlightened dictatorship” (開明專制 *kāimíng zhuānzhì*)<sup>598</sup> or it was said to be a method to achieve “democracy of the common people” (普通的民主主義 *pǔtōng de mínhǔ zhǔyì*)<sup>599</sup> so as to connect the idea with something that would arouse positive connotations. In fact, similar ideas had been presented in China before. In 1906 Liang Qichao had written that the Chinese people did not possess a character that would be suitable for a democratic system. Because of this, there was need for an “enlightened dictatorship” (開明專制).<sup>600</sup> This example shows us that despite the fact that many authors had praised the power of democracy in the May Fourth context, disbelief in the prospects of democracy was not invented solely by those who sought to propagate class struggle and proletarian dictatorship.

In *New Youth*, proletarian dictatorship aroused discussion in the correspondence section of the journal. Two months after the publication of “On Politics”, Chen Duxiu defended his stance against criticism from Zheng Xianzong 鄭賢宗 and Ke Qingshi 柯慶施 (1902-1965)<sup>601</sup>. Zheng wrote that yes, there was a genuine need for revolution, but, proletarian dictatorship was not needed for it. Zheng did not accept the argument that a dictatorship was needed in order to prevent the attempts of the capitalists to take power back. According to Zheng, they would not have power to do that after the revolution because their property would have been taken away from them during the revolution.<sup>602</sup> Ke wrote similarly that after the revolution there was no need for a strong state power as the society could be based on free economic unions. Ke saw such strong power structures as threats to freedom (自由 *zìyóu*).<sup>603</sup> Chen replied to Zheng that this disagreement reflected precisely the difference between “utopians” (空想的 *kōngxiǎng de*) and “scientific socialists” (科學的 *kēxué de*). Anarchism was not a method that could prevent conflicts between people. Chen wrote that the proletarian dictatorship was needed because the power of capitalists could not be

<sup>597</sup> Cai Hesen. *Marxism and the Chinese Proletariat*. 馬克思學說與中國無產階級. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 4. August 1921. HDB.

<sup>598</sup> See for example Chen Duxiu. *Chinese Style Anarchism*. 中國式的無政府主義. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 1. May 1921. HDB; Zhang Shenfu. ‘Communist Parties in England and France’.

<sup>599</sup> Zhou Fohai. ‘Commemorating the Third Anniversary’.

<sup>600</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 264-265.

<sup>601</sup> Ke Qingshi joined the CCP in 1922 and was one of the leaders of the party in the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>602</sup> Zheng Xianzong. *Nation, Politics, Law*. 國家、政治、法律. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 3. November 1920. HDB.

<sup>603</sup> Ke Qingshi. *Proletarian Dictatorship*. 勞動專政. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 3. November 1920. HDB.

cancelled immediately and it would take several years to do that. For Ke, Chen replied that it made no sense to oppose proletarian dictatorship with the concepts of freedom and democracy as there was no real freedom and real democracy without these measures (social revolution, class struggle, proletarian dictatorship).<sup>604</sup>

Friedrich Engels wrote about utopian socialism in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* [1880] that had been translated into Chinese in 1912. In this text, Engels named Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen as the “three great utopians”. Being utopian in this book meant excessive belief in reason and the inability to acknowledge the laws and premises of the materialist conception of history.<sup>605</sup> Chen’s version differed from this, as the main feature of being utopian reflected reluctance to rely on power and authority in the process in which society was to be transformed. All those, who did not accept the ‘necessities’ of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, could be called ‘utopians’.

#### 4.3.2 Criticism of Anarchism and Evolutionary Socialism

One of the main themes that the language of mutual aid and democracy and the language of class struggle had in common was their critical attitude towards capitalism. This criticism was not, however, based on similar premises. Within the language of mutual aid and democracy, capitalism was criticized because it was connected to the main threats, militarism and imperialism. The structure of the class struggle language was different: it emphasized the labour question and the class conflict between the proletarian class and the bourgeoisie class that controlled the capital. Capitalism within this latter language thus was a given a more central role due to the theoretical framework that was related to this language. In other words, the criticism of capitalism within the language of mutual aid and democracy was not based on such a detailed theoretical system, but it was a mixture of different critical approaches towards capitalism.

A certain degree of dogmatism has often been related to those who have used Marxist ideas<sup>606</sup>. This is to say, for many, the dividing line between Marxist and other criticisms of capitalism has been an important one to underline. Even though the language of mutual aid and democracy was related to the interest in anarchism it certainly would be misleading to brand all of its adapters “anarchists”. Actually, it seems that the concept of anarchism (無政府主義

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<sup>604</sup> Chen. ‘Nation, Politics, Law’; Chen Duxiu. Proletarian Dictatorship. 勞動專政. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 3. November 1920. HDB. Zhou Fohai held that proletarian dictatorship was the only method to defeat capitalism. Zhou Fohai. *Why do we support Communism? 我們為什麼主張共產主義?* Communist. No. 4. May 1921. GCD. In his later writings Chen opposed Stalin’s version of proletarian dictatorship and defended the version that was offered by Lenin in his State and Revolution. Chen abandoned the whole concept in his final years in the early 1940s. Tang B. 1989, 982-983; Zhang X. 1979/1989, 509-512.

<sup>605</sup> Engels 1880.

<sup>606</sup> See Kluver 1996, 33, 124, 136.

wúzhèngfǔ zhǔyì) was not a one that would have appeared together with the writings about “prevailing world trends” and the “spirit of mutual aid” and “spirit of democracy”. The attitude towards the concept of anarchism was manifold. On the one hand it was widely acknowledged that Kropotkin was an anarchist as was Proudhon and Bakunin. But on the other hand, the idea of evolution based on mutual aid and praise of Kropotkin were discussed outside ‘the scope of anarchism’. That is, Kropotkin’s praise was connected to his writings about evolutionary theory (mutual aid and cooperation are needed in evolution) and not to those ideas that were more directly associated with anarchism (rejection of state power, support of small production units based on freely constructed unions etc.). Bertrand Russell stated in *New Youth* that Kropotkin should not be equated with anarchism as many of his ideas were equally supported by non-anarchists.<sup>607</sup> Sometimes the connection between “the spirit of mutual aid” and anarchism was clearly spelled out; for instance in April 1919 Wang Guangqi wrote about Kropotkin’s “mutual aid anarchism” (互助的無政府主義 *hùzhù wúzhèngfǔ zhǔyì*) in *Weekly Critic*<sup>608</sup>. Sometimes this spirit was discussed without any such connection; for example in November 1918 Cai Yuanpei wrote about the Allied (Entente) Powers in war who realized the spirit of mutual aid. Clearly, he was not claiming that these nations were anarchists.<sup>609</sup>

Hu Changshui (1989) has studied the utopian thought of the May Fourth period. In Hu’s study the borderline between utopian and scientific thought was taken for granted, though. He does not problematize the dividing line between the two.<sup>610</sup> In the May Fourth context there was, however, no agreement on definitions of what was utopian and what was scientific. As in the case of writings about ‘world trends’, people had competing views on what was utopian thought and what ideas were based on a more realistic and scientific base. In the class struggle language version of possible and impossible, Marxism was the only scientific socialism whereas competing schools were named utopian. Despite the fact that many authors adopted this version, it does not mean that the naming of such categories would have been neutral or that this version would have been somehow self-evident. The acts of naming these categories were a matter of contingent propositions. Thus, the distinction between utopian and scientific was contested as were the concepts of world trend, socialism or democracy.<sup>611</sup>

<sup>607</sup> Bertrand Russell was perhaps the most well-known author who defended Kropotkin and the feasibility of his ideas at this point in *New Youth*. In October 1920 a chapter “Work and Pay” of his book *Proposed Roads to Freedom* [1918] was published in the journal. See Russell, Bertrand. ‘Work and Pay’; Russell 1918. According to Zhang Shenfu, it was Liang Qichao who made Russell come to China in the first place. Liang organized the financial side and invited him. See Schwarcz 1992, 127-137.

<sup>608</sup> See Wang Guangqi. ‘Anarchist Communism and State Socialism’.

<sup>609</sup> Cai Yuanpei. ‘European War and Philosophy’.

<sup>610</sup> Hu 1989.

<sup>611</sup> Later Maoism was similarly depicted as a scientific way of conceiving society. Yu Ying-shih has written that the so called scientific socialism in China turned out to be more utopian than the ones that were called utopian socialism. In the early 1980s, the CCP itself blamed Maoism for its utopian and unscientific nature after Mao’s time. Foreign scholars had called Mao “utopian” already from the days of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961). Yü, Y. 1993, 134; Meisner 1982, ix-x.

Anarchism (無政府主義) within the class struggle language was clearly given a bad name: especially in the writings of Chen Duxiu it was connected with something that would be worthless daydreaming or ‘empty thought’ (空想 *kōngxiǎng*). This stance was especially strong in *New Youth* after the autumn of 1920. The direct criticism of anarchism in the May Fourth journals was not, however, turned directly against Kropotkin. Although it is evident that, especially in *New Youth*, the celebration of Kropotkin became a celebration of Marx and Lenin there seemed to be no direct confrontation between the two sides. There were exceptions of course. For instance, in September 1920 Chen Duxiu put Kropotkin and Marx against each other. Chen referred to Kropotkin’s pamphlet *The State* [1897] (國家論 *Guójiā Lùn*) and wrote that if the revolutionaries in Russia would have based their actions on Kropotkin’s ideas of free unions, their endeavours would have failed. Lenin’s proletarian dictatorship (勞動專政 *láodòng zhuānzhèng*) was necessary in order to carry out the transformation. According to Chen, the problem with Kropotkin’s ideas was the false and unrealistic hopes of freedom (自由 *zìyóu*). Sometimes it was more efficient to rely on principles of power (強權主義 *qiángquán zhǔyì*) instead of principles based on freedom (自由主義 *zìyóu zhǔyì*).<sup>612</sup> In Chen’s writings some of the ideals that the ‘anarchists’ were advocating were the reason why “enlightened dictatorship” was needed in the first place. Besides the unrealistic hopes of freedom (more about the concept of freedom and its relation to the language of class struggle in section 5.4. below), Chen also connected anarchism with indolence (懶惰 *lǎnduò*), nihilism (虛無思想 *wūxú sīxiǎng*) and Taoist ideas of non-interference and claimed that these kinds of mental structures have caused the decay of the Chinese race and poisoned the Chinese youth.<sup>613</sup> For Chen, anarchism was daydreaming and he wrote that these ideas could not make any contribution to politics and the economy. As a result, anarchism was not a possible future road for China.<sup>614</sup>

Utopianism was not an accusation that appeared only in Chen Duxiu’s attacks against anarchism. It also appeared in criticism of other non-Marxist schools of socialism and individualism<sup>615</sup>. The juxtaposition between Marxism as scientific (科學的 *kēxué de*) socialism and other schools of socialism as utopian (烏托邦 *wūtuōbāng*, also 空想 *kōngxiǎng* was used similarly as a counter concept to ‘scientific’) was not of course a Chinese invention. In Western literature utopianism usually referred to authors such as Charles Fourier and Robert Owen. This setting was evident in various writings on Marxist teachings and it appeared

<sup>612</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘On Politics’. This was the idea that Ke Qingshi criticized in his letter, see above.

<sup>613</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘Chinese Style Anarchism’.

<sup>614</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘A Critique of Socialism’.

<sup>615</sup> See for instance Chen Duxiu. *Nihilist Individualism and Laissez-Faire Theory*. 虛無的個人主義及任自然主義. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB.

in many Western works on socialism that were translated into Chinese. In *Weekly Critic*, an excerpt from August Bebel's book on Fourier, *Charles Fourier: Sein Leben und Seine Theorien* [1888], was translated with a title "The Difference between Modern and Utopian Socialism" (近代社會主義與烏托邦社會主義的區別). This distinction between utopian and scientific stages of the socialist movement also appeared in Ramsay MacDonald's *The Socialist Movement* [1911] that was partly translated in *Citizen*.<sup>616</sup> The idea that Marxism had taken socialism to a more 'scientific level' was generally agreed on, both in the West and in China. However, it was another thing to claim that any other school of socialism could not be 'scientific'.

This was also related to the criticism of social democracy<sup>617</sup>. Chen Duxiu opposed the German Social Democrats who were against the ideas of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. Their ideas of defending public interest, instead of concentrating on the proletarian class, were also fantasy (空想). Both Chen and Li Da claimed that these social democrats had failed to understand 'the fact' that the current democratic system was only supporting the capitalist privileges. This type of support for a parliamentary system that was called "evolutionary socialism" was according to Chen a sign of the decay the party had encountered after the death of August Bebel in 1913.<sup>618</sup> Chen's clear stance was that China should not try to use these types of organs related to the capitalist system<sup>619</sup>. In *Communist*, Zhou Fohai wrote that due to the opposition to proletarian dictatorship, the reform in Germany has been only a halfway reform. Without proletarian dictatorship, socialism was not realizable.<sup>620</sup>

#### 4.4 From Mutual Aid to Class Struggle

We have now discussed the structures of the language of mutual aid and democracy and the class struggle language in the May Fourth period China.

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<sup>616</sup> See Bebel, August (anonymous translator). *The Difference between Modern and Utopian Socialism*. 近代社會主義與烏托邦社會主義的區別. *Weekly Critic*. No. 15. May 1919. HDB; ML 生. *The Socialist Method*. 社會主義方法. *Citizen*. Vol. 2. No. 3. October 1920. HDB; MacDonald 1911. In Gao Yihan's version, before "scientific communism" (科學的共產主義) there was "ethical communism" (道德的共產主義). See Gao Yihan. *Changes in the History of Communism*. 共產主義歷史上的變遷. *New Youth*. Vol. 9. No. 2. June 1921. HDB.

<sup>617</sup> Song Jiaoren had criticized social democracy in China already in 1911. According to Song, true socialism was anarchism, not social democracy or communism. Bernal 1968, 136.

<sup>618</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'On Politics'; Li Da. 'Marx Restored'. Also Zhou Fohai criticized evolutionary socialism. For Zhou, revolution was a precondition for evolution. Zhou Fohai. 'Two Roads of Capitalist and Socialist System'.

<sup>619</sup> Chen Duxiu. *My Views on the Current Political Situation*. 對於時局的我見. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 1. September 1920. HDB.

<sup>620</sup> Zhou Fohai. 'Commemorating the Third Anniversary'.



Before moving on to more detailed discussions of certain concepts, it is worthwhile to briefly sum up our findings.

As the emergence of the class struggle language in the May Fourth context is called in this study a radicalization, the obvious question that follows is: more radical in what sense? It is true that the language of mutual aid and democracy was influenced by anarchist ideas. Nevertheless, language of mutual aid and democracy was a language of harmony and peace. Before the class struggle language was introduced, social revolution rarely, if ever, referred to violent struggle or to direct action, instead social revolution referred to a gradual change by constant reforms. Even in the older *New Century* journal that was dedicated to promoting anarchist ideas, the meaning of 'anarchist revolution' was the adoption of universal education system (see 3.1 above). Mutual aid projects, especially New Village, were seen as ways to avoid violent revolution, not to prepare people for it (see 3.2.2 above). Kropotkin himself also wrote about the working class and the capitalist class<sup>621</sup>, but he did not, for instance, write about proletarian dictatorship. Moreover, in the language of mutual aid and democracy Kropotkin was not espoused as an authority that was demanding revolution, but as an authority who denied the validity of Social Darwinist versions of evolutionary theory. The radicalization in this study refers to the adoption of a language that was used to make demands for confrontation, revolution and direct action. This more radical stance towards the current state of affairs was also manifested in the rejection of all reform methods based on co-operation with the 'enemies'. In more concrete terms, in this context it meant the rejection of social democracy and a vision of a proper parliamentary system that would replace the warlord government in China.<sup>622</sup> This did not only mean the rejection of parliamentary democracy in the future, it also meant a condemnation of the contemporary socialist parties that wished to participate in parliamentary affairs.

This type of 'radical' socialism was based on hostility between the proletariat and the capitalists. All kinds of attempts for co-operation were claimed to be impossible<sup>623</sup>. This was one of the main reasons why Hu Shi and others did not accept class struggle. In *Weekly Critic* Hu Shi wrote that the theory of class struggle was a theory that actively created animosities and denied possibilities for mutual aid and co-operation<sup>624</sup>. Although inequality between socio-economic classes had been acknowledged before, this issue did not become the main issue before the introduction of the class struggle language.

Conflicts between ideological standpoints involve conflicting representations of the world<sup>625</sup>. The class struggle language provided a more

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<sup>621</sup> See for example Kropotkin 1880. See also Miller 1976, 248.

<sup>622</sup> The parliament in Beijing was controlled by warlord factions, Duan Qirui's faction evidently being the most powerful one. Duan's Anfu clique won 342 seats out of 470 in the 1918 election. According to Andrew Nathan, these elections were controlled by warlords and provincial delegations represented local warlords. Nathan 1976, 59-74, 101-103.

<sup>623</sup> Similarly for Lenin, the choice was to be made between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat. There was no middle way. Lenin, V.I. 1919.

<sup>624</sup> Hu Shi. 'Fourth Time about Problems and Isms'.

<sup>625</sup> Hodge & Kress 1988, 3-4.

pessimistic version of the world than the mutual aid and democracy language. According to the class struggle version, moderate efforts of reform would always be futile. This language produced a new framing of the limits of the possible and impossible. It was a rigorous framing; all improvements of living conditions in China were claimed to be impossible without a class struggle. For instance, “real democracy” and “real freedom” would be outside the scope of possible without class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. Competing ideas of change were named “utopian” or “capitalist”, thus placing them inside the sphere of impossible and unreal. It was not the class struggle language that gave capitalism a bad name in the May Fourth journals; it had already been associated before with imperialism, war and deceitfulness (see section 3.3.2 above). Within the language of mutual aid and democracy ‘capitalism’ and ‘capitalist’ referred primarily to foreign powers. When Chen Duxiu and others started to write about class struggle in China they also introduced a new ‘main problem’: the labour question. According to this setting the problem was that the bourgeoisie class, who controlled the capital and held power, oppressed the proletarian class that represented the majority of the population. It was far from self-evident that this new phrasing of ‘a main question’ was accepted. In fact, the relevance of it was questioned by many. Authors such as Zhou Fohai in fact admitted that there was no proper capitalism in China. However, socialism and class struggle were still relevant in China because the version of the world these authors started to promote was based on assumptions of the inevitability of economic development: socialism and class struggle were needed because capitalism was ‘on its way’ and international capitalism already controlled China. According to these authors, there was no need to wait for further development of industry and capitalism; they could take a short-cut to a socialist system.

## 5 RADICALIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT

In previous research the summer of 1920 has been identified as the time when the radicalization of the May Fourth Movement took place<sup>626</sup>. In his autobiography, Zhang Guotao (1971), one of the leaders of the early days of the CCP, writes about the spring and summer of 1920 that “most of the schoolmates close to me seemed to have undergone a marked ideological change”<sup>627</sup>. According to Benjamin Schwartz (1951), Chen Duxiu had adopted Marxism-Leninism by September 1920<sup>628</sup>. One probable constituent for more radical tones in writing in *New Youth* was Comintern connection with Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu. Comintern sent its agent Grigory Voitinsky<sup>629</sup> to China in March 1920 in order to forge links with potential Chinese companions. Voitinsky became Li Dazhao’s and Chen Duxiu’s first direct contact with Comintern. Voitinsky first arrived in Beijing, where he met Li, who then arranged a meeting with Chen in Shanghai. The contact person between Voitinsky and Li was Sergey Polevoy, a professor of Russian language at Beijing University. Arif Dirlik (1989), who stresses the importance of the Comintern operations in the establishment of the CCP, states that Voitinsky’s arrival in China ended the May Fourth period and “initiated a new phase” in Chinese history. According to Dirlik, Comintern did not create the situation, but it redirected the Chinese intelligentsia that was looking for new directions in spring 1920. Similarly, Chester Tan (1971) claims that Voitinsky converted Chen Duxiu to communism.<sup>630</sup>

It is probable that Voitinsky and Comintern had at least some effect on Chen’s ideology. To what extent it makes sense to claim that Voitinsky

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<sup>626</sup> Schwartz 1951/1967; Dirlik 1989.

<sup>627</sup> Chang, K. 1971, 92.

<sup>628</sup> Schwartz 1951/1967, 23.

<sup>629</sup> Voitinsky (1893-1956) was succeeded by Henk Sneevliet (1883-1942) during the summer of 1921 as Comintern’s main representative in China. Sneevliet, who also used the name Maring, took part in the first CCP congress in July 1921. More about Voitinsky’s arrival in Beijing and the unofficial establishment of the CCP in 1920 see Chang, K. 1971, 93-94, 99-116.

<sup>630</sup> Dirlik 1989, 192-195; Tan, C. 1971, 304. Voitinsky was not, however, the first connection between Soviet Russia and China. According to Chow, Sun Yatsen had contacts with Soviet Russia since 1918. See Chow, T. 1960/1967, 245.

“converted” Chen is a question that is a very difficult to answer. Here, the aim is not to evaluate the weight of Voitinsky’s influence on Chen and Li, but to analyze the process in which a rather small group of authors attempted to explain the relevance and significance of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship to a wider May Fourth audience. These authors used particular versions of central concepts, such as world trends, in order to support their revolutionary agenda. Voitinsky and Comintern did not radicalize the May Fourth Movement. At most, they managed to convince a few individuals about the significance of class struggle, Marxism and Leninism and offered their support.

Around the same time as the arrival of Voitinsky, in spring of 1920, the so called Karakhan Declaration reached Beijing and the reception of this declaration seemingly had some effect on perceptions on the Bolshevik government in the May Fourth journals. The main content of this declaration was the cancellation of all ‘unequal treaties’ signed between the Russian Empire and China. The Bolshevik Government thus formally gave up all demands for special privileges inside the Chinese territory. As in the case of the October Revolution, the Karakhan declaration should not be seen as an event that ‘caused’ the May Fourth Movement’s turn towards Bolshevism. This declaration did, however, make it easier to portray Soviet Russia as a virtuous companion and a potential model nation for the future development of China. The declaration was useful for those who wanted to support the composition in which the righteous proletariat was fighting against the dishonest capitalist.

Besides the October Revolution, Voitinsky’s excursion in China, and the arrival of the Karakhan Declaration, scholars have also identified other constituents in the May Fourth Movement radicalization. The appeal of ‘radicalism’ has been also connected with criticism of the old Chinese society. In his study of the May Fourth Movement, Lin Yu-sheng has called this criticism “radical antitraditionalism” and “totalistic antitraditionalism”. Lin sees similarities between the May Fourth Movement and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976; in both cases a change was believed to require a radical rejection of the prevailing traditions of the past. According to Lin, a totalistic attitude towards old culture called for a totalistic acceptance of a foreign ideology and was central in Chen Duxiu’s acceptance of Marxism.<sup>631</sup> Liu Xiaogan (1994) has similarly connected the criticism of tradition during the New Culture and May Fourth periods with the criticism of the Chinese past during later decades. This attitude has, according to Liu, led to a strong belief in models of development that have always aimed at rigid breakaways from the past.<sup>632</sup> This type of attempt to distance the May Fourth China from its decadent past was associated with the desire to follow the ‘prevailing thought trends’. China could not stand still; it had to ‘move with the trends’. Bolshevism and Marxism were not the only set of ideas that were said to represent the world trends, but the acts of giving ‘world trend’ these meanings were acts of far-reaching consequences in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>631</sup> Lin, Y. 1979, 4, 155.

<sup>632</sup> Liu X.G. 1994, 125, 134.

Chinese reform discourses. These writings combined class struggle with democracy and science, class struggle with criticism of Chinese tradition, and class struggle with the Darwinist ideas of adaptation and survival. The idea of revolutionary Marxism as a prevailing world trend also had substantial influence on other concepts that were discussed in this context. Hence, the concept of world trend was important because its definition set parameters for other key concepts, such as democracy, freedom, and individual. World trend is a concept that potentially has implications to a wider intellectual atmosphere. For instance, if in some context it is free market liberalism that is widely understood to be the prevalent 'world trend' to be followed, writings on liberty probably differ from those that are written in a context filled with discussions on strongest socialist trends.

On the face of it, the class struggle language had many similarities to the language of mutual aid and democracy. When Chen Duxiu and others started to propagate the importance of the class struggle paradigm they still wrote about democracy and freedom. However, the words began to refer to different kinds of concepts than before; they were connected to the need and necessity for revolution. In this particular context the need to give new meanings to words, or to redescribe concepts, arose from the fact that the existing version of 'the reality' did not fully support the new idea that China should follow Soviet Russia's example and 'Bolshevist ideas' such as the proletarian dictatorship. That is, seen through the language of mutual aid and democracy the Bolshevist example of development did not appear as a purely desirable direction. Mutual aid, cooperation, and integration were ideas and motifs that were in contrast with revolutionary struggle, confrontation and use of force. These conceptual transformations are further discussed in section 5.2. Before that, we will focus on changes in writings about the world trends (section 5.1).

## 5.1 Changes in World Trends

The significance of the writings about world trends lies in their uses in legitimizations of certain ways of perceiving the world. This is to say, different authors had different preferences in choosing different frameworks that were used in discussions about the future of Chinese society and Chinese foreign relations. Repeatedly, these authors defended the relevancy of their own perspective by claiming that these ideas were supported by the 'prevailing trends'. This is not to argue that these writings about trends were the only relevant arguments for justifying the relevancy of Marxist theories in 1919-1921. There were also other justifications, many of which were also outside China, such as the one that orthodox Marxism meant scientific socialism and it was thus a more valid tool to analyze societies than any other. Above (see section 2.3) it was shown that in the May Fourth context, the concept of world trend was given a central position in discussions on the future developmental course of China. Thus, it becomes clear that competing versions on world trends is an

issue that should not be overlooked when we aim to understand the process in which certain Chinese authors started to defend the relevancy of the class struggle paradigm in China. Even though the May Fourth Movement could be a somewhat special case in this respect, it is certainly not a unique phenomenon in political debates that some perspectives in analyzing a problem situation or making concrete decisions are justified by claims about their suitability to 'needs' of that particular moment.

The espousal of science was closely connected to writings about the world trends to be followed. Huang Zhizheng (1989) comments that in the May Fourth espousal of 'scientific spirit', there was no unanimity about the scope of 'science'; for some authors it primarily meant natural science. According to Huang, the desire to look for support for theories on society from natural science goes back to Yan Fu's translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in 1898. In the May Fourth context, the stress on natural science was also related to students returning from abroad. In the summer 1914, Chinese students at Cornell University had established a science society that started to publish a journal called *Science* (科學 *Kēxué*) in 1915. The society and the editorial office of the journal moved to China in 1918. Their version of 'scientific spirit' meant, first and foremost, natural science.<sup>633</sup> Chen Duxiu criticized the view that new world trends and scientific spirit should be understood only within the sphere of natural science. According to Chen, Marx's theories could also be discussed scientifically<sup>634</sup>.

In his study on the origins of Bolshevism in China, Michael Luk (1990) argues that Chen Duxiu, Li Da and others started the Chinese communist movement with a strong international orientation; they promoted proletarian internationalism<sup>635</sup>. It is true that Chen and others wanted to connect the CCP with the international movement. The argument that China belonged to the worldwide proletarian class appeared around this time. However, if we look at the wider intellectual context in which these writings appeared, it becomes evident that this international orientation itself was nothing new. Chinese intellectuals tried to connect their ideas with international thought trends in order to make them appear more appealing, ever since the idea that China should learn from the West was widely shared by them.

As many May Fourth authors had studied in Japan, and had plenty of contacts there, these discussions were connected to Japan. 'Western thought trends' were also discussed in Japan and it seems that the understanding and adaption to these trends received much attention both in China and in Japan<sup>636</sup>.

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<sup>633</sup> The most central members of the group were Hu Mingfu (1891-1927), Zhao Yuanren (1892-1982), Zhou Ren (1892-1973), Bing Zhi (1886-1965), Zhang Yuanshan (1892-1987), Guo Tanxian (1886-1929), Jin Bangzheng (1886-1946), Yang Xingfo (1893-1933) and Ren Hongjuan (1886-1961). Huang Z. 1989, 472-477.

<sup>634</sup> Chen Duxiu. *To All Comrades of the New Culture Movement*. 告新文化运动的诸同志. First Published in *Dagong Bao*, January 1920. CDX.

<sup>635</sup> Luk 1990, 177.

<sup>636</sup> According to Chow, there were several journals dealing with "new thought tides" in early 20th century Japan. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 55.

Kōtoku Shūsui was a Japanese journalist active in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kōtoku wrote in 1904 that Fourier's plans for reform had been "unscientific" and "unnatural", whereas the writings of Marx represented "scientific socialism". He had also called anarchism a "virus" and "poison". Kōtoku publicly criticized the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), which earned him a five-month sentence in prison from February to July in 1905. Soon after his release, in November 1905, he travelled to the United States and created contacts with members of the Socialist Party of America. After his return, in June 1906, Kōtoku started to promote anarchism instead of Marxism. Kōtoku's conversion was related to correspondence with Albert Johnson<sup>637</sup>, who had been interested in anarchism. It was Johnson who familiarized Kōtoku with Kropotkin's thought. Kōtoku did not only translate Kropotkin's works into Japanese, but he was also able to establish a personal connection with Kropotkin after Johnson had given him Kropotkin's address in Britain. Kōtoku created an image of himself as an author who profoundly understood the world trends and had direct contacts to them when he said that he had joined the Socialist Party of America and published a letter from Kropotkin in *Light* journal (光 *Hikari*). According to Bernal (1976), by 1908 Kōtoku had become the leading figure in the Japanese socialist movement. In this context, Marxism did not appear as "scientific socialism" but as an outmoded set of theories. Kropotkin, on the other hand, was acclaimed as "scientific" and "modern".<sup>638</sup>

Also Kropotkin himself had questioned the predominant style of writing about "scientific socialism". In his pamphlet *The State* [1897], he wrote:

"Historians and economists in the pay of the state teach us, of course, that the village commune having become an outdated form of land possession - which hampered progress in agriculture - had to disappear under 'the action of natural economic forces'. The politicians and the bourgeois economists are still saying the same thing now; and there are even some revolutionaries and socialists who claim to be scientific socialists who repeat this stock fable learned at school. [...] Well, never has such an odious lie been uttered in the name of science. A calculated lie since history abounds with documents to prove for those who want to know [...] this is what those gentlemen call in 'scientific' language the natural death of communal ownership 'under the influence of economic laws'. One might as well call the massacre of a hundred thousand soldiers on the battlefield natural death!"<sup>639</sup>

For Kropotkin, the existence of the state institution was not a scientific necessity, neither was the so called scientific socialism based on science.<sup>640</sup>

Bernal (1976) explains that following Kōtoku, many Chinese students in Japan became interested in anarchism in 1907. Numerous articles on anarchism

<sup>637</sup> Bernal describes Johnson as "an elderly Californian anarchist". Crump questions this as Johnson was a member of an anti-anarchist Socialist Labour Party. Bernal 1968, 125; Crump 1983/2011, 351.

<sup>638</sup> Bernal 1976, 209-213, Crump 1983/2011, 182-185. Kōtoku Shūsui's book *Imperialism, the Specter of the 20th Century* (二十世紀之怪物帝國主義) on imperialism had been translated into Chinese in 1902. Li, Y.N. 1971, 14.

<sup>639</sup> Kropotkin 1897.

<sup>640</sup> Kropotkin 1897.

were published in *Min Bao* after the summer of 1906.<sup>641</sup> New journals came out in 1907, *New Century* and *Journal of Natural Justice*, and published articles on anarchism and included references to Kōtoku<sup>642</sup>. Between 1907 and 1919, Marx was hardly mentioned in Chinese journals. Bernal believes that Kōtoku's influence lessened the attraction of social democracy in the eyes of Chinese intellectuals.<sup>643</sup>

As the example of Kōtoku Shusui shows us, it was not a matter of some 'outside necessities' that caused the change of direction of the debates. There are always multiple conceptions about the 'outside world' and what kind of ideas fit to 'the prevalent circumstances' or to 'current thought trends' as there are always different understandings about these circumstances. Often, the most significant factor in changing widespread standpoints is not to be found in certain events outside written discourse. Conversely, these changes often happen by persuasion, deliberation, literary actions: by using words. Within the May Fourth context, the writings in journals played a key role as there was no better and more powerful media in which to create mass support for some set of ideas would have been possible.

Claims that Marx represented the strongest world trends and that his writings were on a more solid scientific base than those of his rivals did not appear for the first time during the May Fourth period. These ideas had already appeared in Fukui Junzo's book on socialism that was published in Chinese in 1903<sup>644</sup>. It seems, nonetheless, that it took more than a decade before there were influential authors who were willing to revitalize these claims in 1919-1921. Obviously, the October revolution in 1917 probably made the claims about Marxism as the prevailing world trend more convincing than before, but there is no evidence on indisputable causal connection between this event and spread of Marxist argumentation in the May Fourth journals. Some wrote, for instance, that the October revolution was a part of the trend of democracy<sup>645</sup>. Thus, the excitement in relation to this event did not necessarily imply espousal of class struggle, Bolshevism or Marxism.

As it was discussed above (see section 1.3), it has been common in Western research literature to look for 'outside impacts' that 'caused' certain developments in Chinese political thought. This style has also been common in descriptions on the radicalization of the May Fourth Movement. For instance, Jerome Chen (1987) highlights the "double impact" of the disappointments in the Paris Peace Conference and the October Revolution<sup>646</sup>. In the recent research literature there have been approaches that have sought to explicate the

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<sup>641</sup> Bernal 1976, 201.

<sup>642</sup> Zarrow 1990, 154.

<sup>643</sup> Bernal 1976, 225; Bernal 1968, 141.

<sup>644</sup> Li, Y.N. 1971, 13-14.

<sup>645</sup> See for example Xu Deheng, 'National Thought and the World Trend'; Luo Jialun, 'The New Tide of Today's World'. In some interpretations, the October Revolution was also associated with anarcho-communism. See Luk 1990, 19. October Revolution was connected with the 'victory of democracy' also in Japan. Bernstein G. 1976, 98.

<sup>646</sup> Chen, Je. 1987, 506.



contingencies of that particular period of time<sup>647</sup>. Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng (2009) have studied references to various historical events in *New Youth*. Their findings show that there were not many references to the October Revolution between 1917 and 1919 in this journal. It was not until 1920 that these references became more common. The peak in these references was reached after 1922 when the journal was already a CCP publication. Based on these findings, Jin and Liu have written that it is questionable to claim that the October Revolution ‘directed’ the May Fourth Movement towards Marxism. The same also applies to the events of the Paris Peace Conference: the conference itself did not cause anything and the disappointment in international diplomacy was nothing exceptional in China. If we look at the encounters between China and the European imperial powers in the latter half of the 19th century, we can see that the Paris Peace Conference was by no means an exception. It was not the first time when the viewpoints of the Chinese side were given little or no attention. Jin and Liu conclude that the attitude towards power politics had become more critical than before. The frames that were used to perceive this event had changed, but the event itself was not that exceptional.<sup>648</sup> This is to say, we should pay attention to the conceptual frameworks that were used to perceive these events, because it is these frameworks that create the meanings of events. Surely, it would have much more difficult, or almost impossible, to create narrations of ‘Bolshevist world trends’ that would lead to a ‘necessary’ class struggle in China without the October Revolution<sup>649</sup>. However, this particular event did not create the demand for class struggle in China by definition. The meanings that are attached to extradiscursive ‘concrete events’ when they enter the linguistic level depend on the standpoints of the authors who write about them<sup>650</sup>. Different standpoints involve different conceptual frameworks and narrative structures that construct meanings that can be in conflict with each other. The setting, according to which the October Revolution would cause a similar course of events in China, was created with specific uses of words and concepts. The concept of world trend was associated with Bolshevism and revolutionary Marxism.

### 5.1.1 Karakhan Declaration and a New Age

As claimed above, the introduction of class struggle language within the May Fourth context was connected to the idea of taking Soviet Russia as a model nation for China. It has also been claimed that the link between Soviet Russia and class struggle language was neither self-evident nor automatic: Objects in

<sup>647</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1, for instance Rana Mitter writes that there was “nothing inevitable” in the political developments of the May Fourth period. Mitter 2004, 103-104.

<sup>648</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 404-406, 411, 418.

<sup>649</sup> Actually, the oncoming ‘arrival of socialism’ was a theme that had been discussed in China already before the October Revolution. This idea appeared in the writings of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and Sun Yatsen. Socialism for these authors did not, however, mean Marxism or class struggle. Luk 1990, 14.

<sup>650</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have used an example of earthquake in their discussion on extradiscursive elements: earthquakes exist without language use, but the meanings given to them are depended on the “discursive fields” in which they appear. Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, 108.

the outside world do not carry particular linguistic elements within themselves. People do not receive the names of objects in 'the outside world' from the objects, but people name them. The use of language is not a matter of behaviour; it is a matter of action<sup>651</sup>. Naturally, there are conventions of what kind of names to use for particular objects. Without any such conventions, communication between individuals would become impossible. According to John Searle (1969), speaking a language is performing speech acts and these acts are made possible and facilitated with certain rules for the use of linguistic elements. All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts.<sup>652</sup> Even though it seems clear that there are rules and conventions, it does not mean that the rules and conventions would be immutable. This is especially evident in speech acts of naming more or less abstract things in our social environment. Two language users might talk about same object, or about same event, by using very different types of vocabularies. Events, such as the the arrival of Karakhan declaration in China, did not popularize particular ways of language use. But, particular events can be used to justify ideologies, argumentative structures and certain use of concepts related to these standpoints.

The Karakhan declaration was originally announced by the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) in July 1919<sup>653</sup>. It was signed by Lev Karakhan, a representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the Bolshevik Government in Moscow. The declaration was also published in Russian newspapers *Izvestia* and *Pravda* in August 1919. Strangely, the news of the declaration did not reach Beijing until March 1920, about eight months after the original announcement. Chow Tse-tsung (1960) suggests that the delay might be attributed to Western and Chinese anti-Soviet efforts. It is noteworthy that in 1920 there were about 200 000 Russian immigrants in China. Many of them had left Russia after the October Revolution and held strong anti-Bolshevik sentiments. The delay also seems to indicate that there were no direct and functioning contacts between the Bolshevik government and Chinese intelligentsia before the spring of 1920.<sup>654</sup>

China at the time was a nation that was far from sovereign. Foreign powers had their own 'spheres of influences', leased territories, treaty ports, concessions and settlements inside Chinese territory. In Beijing, there was the Legation Quarter from which foreign powers guided their operations in China. They had also their own law courts and post offices in China. Foreign powers held a great number of special privileges in respect to commerce and industry, railroads and mines, loans and currency. The maritime customs and the salt tax were completely administered and controlled by foreigners. In many strategic places in

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<sup>651</sup> Laclau and Mouffe have used the term "articulatory practice" in their description of discourse creation and extradiscursive elements. According to them, articulatory practice means any practice of establishing a relation between elements and every social practice includes articulatory aspects. For more, see Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, 105-139.

<sup>652</sup> Searle 1969, 16.

<sup>653</sup> Whiting 1954, 30.

<sup>654</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 209-214. Sovnarkom announced another Karakhan Declaration in September 1920. English versions of both the July 1919 and September 1920 declarations are available in Whiting 1954, 269-275 (appendixes B & C).

China, bodies of foreign troops and warships were stationed, all under foreign command.<sup>655</sup> The Chinese Eastern Railway had been used by the Russian Empire as a vehicle for penetration and colonization in North Manchuria<sup>656</sup>. In a situation like this it is not surprising that the Karakhan declaration, which promised to give up all similar Russian special privileges in China, was met in many Chinese publications with positive enthusiasm.

A Chinese translation of the Karakhan Declaration was published in *New Youth* in May 1920 with a collection of responses from different Chinese societies (student unions, labour unions, trade unions etc.) and a summary of commentaries on this declaration from other Chinese publications. The declaration itself was brief and it listed different treaties signed between the Russian Empire and China that the Bolshevik Government wished to cancel. Class struggle, either domestic or international, was not mentioned in the declaration. The collection of announcements and reports on the declaration in *New Youth* comprised a total of fifteen announcements from various societies and ten journal commentaries.<sup>657</sup> When we look at the language that was used to describe the Soviet Russian standpoint, we can see that the declaration was portrayed as a sign that the Bolsheviks had started “a new age”. The declaration was explained as an act of mutual aid, freedom, equality and fraternity:

[...] 希望今後中俄兩國人民在自由，平等，互助的正義方面，以美滿的友誼戮力於芟除國際的壓迫，以及國家的種族的階級的差別，俾造成一個真正平等，自由，博愛的新局面。

[...] hoping that in the future the peoples from China and Russia could, from the point of view of freedom, equality, mutual aid and justice, work together in friendship in order to get rid of international suppression and differences between nations, races and classes. So that we could build a new situation of real equality, freedom and fraternity.

Student Union of China<sup>658</sup>

... 為世界外交史上樹立了未曾有的模仿；並且覺得在這公道正義互助的新世界下面，也有同等的責任，應該努力奮鬥，使國際的壓迫，國內的專制階級，都從此消滅；更使博愛自由平等的精神 ...

[...] it [the declaration] set up an unseen model for the diplomats in the world. In this new world of justice, righteousness and mutual aid, there are equal responsibilities. We should fight against international suppression, domestic autocracy and classes. These all should be eliminated and to create a spirit of fraternity, liberty and equality [...]

Federation of Street Unions of Shanghai<sup>659</sup>

<sup>655</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 209-214.

<sup>656</sup> Whiting 1954, 26-28.

<sup>657</sup> Anonymous. *About the Declaration from the Russian Workers' Government*. 對於俄羅斯勞農政府通告的輿論. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 6. May 1920. HDB; For more about Karakhan declaration see North 1953/1963, 45-52; Luk 1990, 194-196.

<sup>658</sup> Anonymous. 'About the Declaration from the Russian Workers' Government'.

俄國此次拋棄從前帝國政府所掠奪的種種特權土地，不但表示純潔高尚之道德；而且實現人道正義之主張，開歷史之紀元，立和平之基礎；凡是人類，孰不同情。中國人民深願結合俄國及全世界人民，以與政治家軍事家資本家以及其他以掠奪為業之強盜奮鬥。一方面廢除國家種族階級等差別，以絕滅掠奪根株；一方建設自由平等互助的世界，以增進人類幸福。

Now Russia has abandoned all previous stolen territorial privileges of the Imperial Government. They do not only express pure and noble virtue, but they also stand for realizing humanity and righteousness. They start a new age in history and they lay the basis for peace. Among those who belong to humankind, who would not sympathize? China will deeply unite with Russia and with other nations in the world in order to fight against politicians, generals, capitalists and others who are engaged in stealing by force. On the one hand, [the aim is] to get rid of differences like the ones between races and classes and to eliminate the roots of such things. On the other hand, [the aim is] to build a world that is free, equal and based on mutual aid and to increase the happiness of humankind.

Student Union of Hangzhou<sup>660</sup>

As these examples show us, the Karakhan declaration was in these announcements strongly connected with the spirit of mutual aid. In the fifteen society announcements class struggle was not mentioned in any of them. Besides mutual aid, it was equality, freedom and humanity that were connected with the declaration.<sup>661</sup>

International class struggle was, nevertheless, connected with this declaration in Shen Zhongjiu's 沈仲九<sup>662</sup> article in *Weekly Review* that was republished in the *New Youth* collection. Shen also wrote about a new age, but the meaning of this age was not the spirit of mutual aid:

現在的時代，是階級戰爭的時代；在這個時代當中，我以為應該合各國勞動階級的力量，和各國的資本階級戰爭，才能打破資本階級。所以勞動階級當中，決不當再分什麼種界國界。俄國此番的通告，是希望中國人民和俄國人民，共同為自由而戰，正是這個意思。我們既然贊同他的通告，應該協同各國的勞動階級，為自由而奮鬥。

This current period of time is a period of class struggle. During this time, I believe, proletarian classes in every country should combine their power and fight against the capitalist class in every country. Only then could the capitalist class be destroyed. Thus, among the proletarian class it would be inappropriate to make divisions based on races or nations. This declaration from Russia is a sign of hope that the people of China and Russia could together fight for freedom - this is the meaning. We should support this declaration, should ally with the proletarian classes in every nations for the struggle for freedom.<sup>663</sup>

<sup>659</sup> Anonymous. 'About the Declaration from the Russian Workers' Government'.

<sup>660</sup> Anonymous. 'About the Declaration from the Russian Workers' Government'.

<sup>661</sup> Anonymous. 'About the Declaration from the Russian Workers' Government'.

<sup>662</sup> According to Chow, Shen was a teacher in Zhejiang province First Normal School in Hangzhou who had been interested in anarchism. Chow, T. 1960/1967, 306.

<sup>663</sup> Shen Zhongjiu. Why Should We Approve the Declaration from the Russian Government of Workers and Peasants? 為什麼要讚同俄國勞農政府的通告? *Weekly Review*. No. 45. April 1920. HDB. The article was republished, without the name of the author and the title of the original article, in *New Youth* collection of the response on the Karakhan declaration.

In Shen's version, the declaration was construed as a sign that China should join the international class struggle in which the proletarian class was to attain freedom through the struggle against the capitalist class. Thus, we can see that the same declaration could be interpreted and given different meanings by using different conceptual frameworks. It seems clear that the overall attitude towards the declaration was positive, and it made it easier to portray the Bolshevik Government as a virtuous companion for China. Still, the Karakhan declaration did not carry the message of international class struggle within it. The original declaration did not mention it, neither did most of the immediate comments on it in China. The connection between the declaration and the need for China's participation in class struggle, either domestic or international, was made through speech acts, like the one by Shen Zhongjiu.

The view that the Bolshevik government was aiming at worldwide revolution had been presented in these journals before the arrival of the Karakhan declaration. It was expressed for instance in Zhou Binglin's 周炳琳 (1892-1963) article on Bolshevism that was published in *Citizen* in December 1919.<sup>664</sup> Actually, the idea that events in Russia had worldwide implications had been expressed in China well before. After the 1905 revolution in Russia, which failed to put an end to the power of the Tsar, *Min Bao* had published articles in which it was claimed that Russia could be a model for revolution in China<sup>665</sup>. It would still be far-fetched to claim that it was the Russian revolution of 1905 that 'caused' the revolution in China in 1911. Yet, these *Min Bao* writings indicate that the calls for transformation in China were supported with narrations related to events abroad already before the May Fourth period. Similarly in spring of 1917, Li Dazhao had already said that Russia represented the trends of democracy and socialism<sup>666</sup>. These writings indicate that Russia had played the lead in such narratives before the October Revolution.

At the time of arrival of the declaration the government in Beijing was still paying indemnity to the Russian Legation in Beijing related to the Boxer rebellion of 1899-1901. This legation was a remnant of the Russian empire and it operated outside the influence of the Bolshevik Government. The Legation used the indemnity funds to support the anti-Bolshevist troops led by Alexander Kolchak, Grigory Semenov and others. Obviously, this Russian Legation was not willing to give up any treaties that had been signed between the Russian Empire and China.<sup>667</sup>

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Anonymous. 'About the Declaration from the Russian Workers' Government'. Although Shen wrote about class struggle, he did not mention proletarian dictatorship as did Chen Duxiu and others after New Youth started to support class struggle.

<sup>664</sup> Zhou Binglin. *Study on Bolshevism*. 鮑爾錫維克主義底研究. *Citizen*. Vol. 2. No. 1. December 1919. HDB. Zhou's article was based on Henry C. Emery's article. See 5.2.1 below.

<sup>665</sup> Tikhvinsky 1989, 1100-1102.

<sup>666</sup> Li Dazhao. *Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in Politics*. 政治之离心力与向心力. First published in *Jiayin*, April 1917. LDZ.

<sup>667</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 209-214.

The official response of the Beijing Government to the declaration was highly distrustful and the declaration was claimed to be a forgery. In June 1920, the Beijing government sent a message to all provincial governors that they could not accept the declaration on the basis that it was not authentic. Public opinion seemed to be unable to accept the standpoint of the Beijing Government. The Chinese press and various societies had responded to the declaration with gratitude. Under public pressure the Beijing Government gave up in September 1920 and sent its delegation to Moscow for negotiations. The result of these negotiations was that China cancelled her recognition of the old Russian Legation in Beijing.<sup>668</sup>

### 5.1.2 Worldwide Socialist Trends

同時最近幾年中世界各文明國中社會主義運動的進行也蓬蓬勃勃，一日千里，迥非從前比了。就現今世界的趨勢看起來，各文明國在這五六十年之內，次第變為社會主義化的國家，決非難事...

At the same time, during the last decades, socialist movements within civilized nations have made vigorous and rapid progress. It has been nothing like before. According to the current world trends, all the civilized nations are transforming, within 50 or 60 years, into socialist-oriented nations. There is no doubt about that [...]

<sup>669</sup>

The conception that there were 'socialist world trends' that would also affect China existed before the CCP was officially established in July 1921. The above quotation from Li Ji is one example of such writings in May fourth journals<sup>670</sup>. Li Dazhao wrote about socialism and world trends in a similar style<sup>671</sup>:

中國國內的勞資階級間雖未發生重大問題，中國人民在世界經濟上的地位，已立在這勞工運動日盛一日的風潮中，想行保護資本家的制度，無論理所不可，抑且勢所不能。再看中國在國際上地位，人家已經由自由競爭，發達到必須地位[...]在這重勢力之下，要想存立，適應這共同生活，恐非取兼程並力社會共營的組織，不能有成。

Although the issue between the labour and capitalist classes in China has not developed into a major problem, the position of Chinese people in the world economy belongs to the wave of the labour movement and it becomes stronger every day. Defending the capitalist system is not possible and it is impossible to resist this force. When we look at the international position of China, people are already engaged in free competition. To attain a position in the socialist camp is a necessity [...]. If we want to survive under these forces and to adapt to the prevalent life, it will not be possible without travelling with double speed towards organizations of the socialist camp.<sup>672</sup>

<sup>668</sup> Chow, T. 1960/1967, 209-214.

<sup>669</sup> Li Ji. 'Socialism and China'.

<sup>670</sup> See also Luo Jialun. 'The New Tide of Today's World'; Huang Rikui. 'The Basis for Everlasting Peace in East Asia' or Qu Xuanying. 'Thoughts about the World War'. Similar writings appeared also in Guomindang journals. See for instance Lin Yungai. 'Thought Trends of Modern Socialism'.

<sup>671</sup> Li Dazhao. *Chinese Socialism and Worldwide Capitalism*. 中國的社會主義與世界的資本主義. First published in Pinglun zhi Pinglun, March 1921. LDZ. As already pointed out, Li had written about bolshevist trends already in early 1919, see section 4.4.1 above.

<sup>672</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Chinese Socialism and Worldwide Capitalism'.

In a very general sense “socialist trends” referred to the dissemination of political writings that were looking for a remedy for the inequality between the workers, or people of limited means in general, and those who were well-off. There were different solutions how to alleviate the suffering of the masses. That is, different trends of socialism and anarchism were discussed in this context. Private ownership was often criticized and named as one of the main roots of the problem of socio-political inequality in the May Fourth context. Public ownership and different versions of communism were thus often associated with the concept of socialism. In Li Yuwen’s dictionary (1921) 社會主義 *shèhuì zhǔyì* was connected with both; socialism and communism<sup>673</sup>. Yan Huiqing’s dictionary (1921) gave socialism seven different meanings:

**Socialism.** (so’-shal-ism) n. Communism, 均富主義, 共產論, 社會主義, 合眾主義, 社會齊一論, 社會改造論 (與個人爭競主義成一反比列).

**Socialism.** communism; an ideology of equalizing wealth; a theory of communal ownership<sup>674</sup>; an ideology of society<sup>675</sup>; an ideology of masses; a theory of equal society; a reform theory (one that was established to oppose individual competition).<sup>676</sup>

These dictionary examples show us that socialism was not necessarily associated with labour force in China. Actually, none of the seven different meanings for socialism in Yan’s dictionary referred directly to the working population. Socialism was perceived as an ideology that sought to improve the living conditions of all ordinary people, regardless of their working status. Related to this, socio economical classes were often seen simply in terms of wealth (the poor and the rich), not in terms of one’s relation to production forces (the proletarian and the capitalist).

It would be biased to claim that the May Fourth Movement was necessarily a part of a ‘socialist trend’ or that all the authors writing for these journals were interested in socialism. In fact, some authors explicitly questioned the significance of the writings on ‘socialist trends’. As pointed out above (see section 2.3 above), Zong Baihua held that the concept ‘socialist trend’ was only a limited and subjective interpretation of world trends (個人主觀的新思潮 *gèrén zhǔguān de xīn sīcháo*). According to Zong, the new world trend meant “true spirit of natural science” (真正的自然科學的精神 *zhēnzhèng de zìránkēxué jīngshén*) and not writings about empty theories (空論 *kōnglùn*).<sup>677</sup> Despite this kind of critical remark, signifiers “socialism”, “socialist movement” and “socialist trends” were

<sup>673</sup> Li Y.W. 1921, 34.

<sup>674</sup> In the Communist it was stated that communism specifically referred to communal ownership. P Sheng. *What does Communism Mean?* 共產主義是什麼意思. No. 2. December 1920. GCD.

<sup>675</sup> *Shèhuì zhǔyì*, the most common translation of ‘socialism’.

<sup>676</sup> Yan 1921, 932.

<sup>677</sup> Zong Baihua. ‘Newsletter’.

used mainly in a positive manner in this context. It was not, however, clear what the signifieds were to which these signifiers were used to refer to. Different schools of socialism were discussed in this context<sup>678</sup>: guild socialism, syndicalism, state socialism, social democracy, Bolshevism, Marxism and at some point also Leninism<sup>679</sup>. Especially before 1920, the Kropotkinian mutual aid concept was tightly associated with ‘new world trends’ and also with ‘socialist trends’.

“Socialist world trends” was a concept that was applied in various discussions: Tian Han wrote that the trend of naturalism in poetry corresponded with the trend of socialism and He Siyuan connected socialist trend with pragmatism of William James<sup>680</sup>. Occasionally, the one-sidedness of the ‘socialist world trend’ perspective raised problems: if the socialist trends really were the most powerful trends in the world, how was it possible that the socialist side was sometimes on the losing side in popular elections? In *Young China*, this question was raised after the French legislative elections of 1919. A center-right and anti-Bolshevist coalition, the National Bloc (*Bloc Républicain National*), won the elections. In the correspondence section of the journal it was asked why French thought was “moving towards old”<sup>681</sup>.

In *Young China*, Huang Chanhua commented on the class struggle (階級戰爭 *jiējí zhànzhēng*) in Russia. According to Huang, the impact of Lenin and the struggle of the proletarian class in Russia would spread to the whole world. Huang himself did not endorse the idea of the proletarian class suppressing others and he explained his own dream to be a classless society. Although the goal of reforming the societies in the West and in the East could be the same, the Chinese should take their own circumstances into consideration when they felt the need to adapt to these world trends.<sup>682</sup> Thus, in Huang’s view, adaptation to world trends was not necessarily a matter of simply following other nations, such as Soviet Russia. Class struggle was just one possible method of reform.

The question of which theories on society were scientific and in accordance with scientific spirit, and which were not, was naturally a question that was tightly connected with the introduction of Marxist theories in China. Arif Dirlik (1989) gives an explanation on the rise of Marxism in China that underlines the scientific nature of Marxism: it introduced to the May Fourth vision of revolution

<sup>678</sup> There was no clear alignment whether or not anarchist theories were counted into socialist theories. Kropotkin himself associated his writings with socialism, but for instance Russell, made a separation between anarchism and socialism. See Kropotkin 1880; Russell, Bertrand. ‘Work and Pay’.

<sup>679</sup> Li Dazhao wrote in *Weekly Critic* that Li himself and Chen Duxiu have been willing to defend “the trend of Bolshevism”. Li Dazhao. ‘More about Problems and Isms’.

<sup>680</sup> Tian Han. ‘A Poet and the Labor Question’; Tian Han. ‘A Poet and the Labor Question, Part 2’; He Siyuan. ‘The True Meaning of Thinking’. Tian’s comparisons between socialism and naturalism were based on Kuriyagawa Hakuson’s 厨川白村 (1880-1923) writings.

<sup>681</sup> Zheng Boqi. *Newsletter*. 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 11. May 1920. HDB. The letter was directed to Li Huang who lived in France at the time. It is unclear whether or not Li ever directly replied to this question. Li did, however, write several articles about France for the journal, for instance on French sociology and education system.

<sup>682</sup> Huang Chanhua. ‘Historical Course of Society and its Improvement’.



a scientific support for rejection of the past<sup>683</sup>. The validity, however, of this 'science' was not approved by everyone as will be shown below.

### 5.1.3 Outmoded and Unqualified Marxism<sup>684</sup>

The first article in which Chen Duxiu claimed that class struggle and proletarian dictatorship were necessities in China, was his "On Politics" published in September 1920<sup>685</sup>. To claim such a 'necessity' was not an easy thing to do in this context. There were at least three weighty challenges related to the relevance of the class struggle paradigm in May Fourth period China: the theory of class struggle; the issue of world trends; and the issue of scientific validity. Class struggle theories are theories about competing classes that are defined by their relation to production mechanisms in industrial societies. If one wanted to defend the relevance of class struggle in this context, one had to justify how exactly this perspective could be applied to a society where the level of industrialization was very modest<sup>686</sup>. One also had to defend the relevancy of Marxism against the writings in which it was claimed that Marxism was outmoded and that Marx's class struggle theory was a theory only about the past. That is, one had to explain how these theories were connected to the prevailing world trends China was supposed to follow. Then one had to offer some kind of explanation on how exactly revolutionary Marxism was more 'scientific' than other versions of socialism, such as social democracy.<sup>687</sup>

The view that Marx's theory of class struggle was only supposed to explain the past, but not the present, or the future, was repeated in May Fourth journals on several occasions. For example, Li Dazhao held this view in *New Youth's* special issue on Marxism. In this article Li strongly underlined that the theory of class struggle was a theory only about past history:

馬氏社會主義的理論，可大別為三部：一為關於過去的理論，就是他的歷史論，也稱社會組織進化論；二為關於現在的理論，就是他的經濟論，也稱資本主義的經濟論；三為

<sup>683</sup> Dirlik 1989, 115-116.

<sup>684</sup> Arif Dirlik contends that the role of Marxism has been exaggerated in the Western scholarship on the origins of the Chinese Communist Party. This is because these authors did not possess proper understanding of Marxism. Thus, these explanations should not be "ideology-based". Dirlik 1989, 256-257. Although I use the name Marxism here, it does not involve any assumptions on the level of understanding specific versions of theoretical constellations. On the contrary, I am interested in usages of the word "Marxism" in these journals and on the question of what types of features were attached to the concept. Thus, the question on the level of orthodoxy is not a pertinent one.

<sup>685</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'On Politics'. As was shown in section 5.1.1, Shen Zhongjiu suggested China's participation in international class struggle in an article published in *Weekly Review* in April 1920 and republished in *New Youth* in May 1920. It was not, however, not until the September issue that saw a clear change of policy in *New Youth*.

<sup>686</sup> For Marx and Engels, only industrialization could produce the proletarian majority that a socialist revolution required. Lenin did not, however, believe in this. Gregor 1995, 26-28.

<sup>687</sup> Another challenge that should be mentioned here was a fear of Bolshevism and revolutionary activities in China. Many people were afraid in China, that these would further worsen the unstable situation of China. This fear was not directly connected to the Marxist frameworks, but they were connected to the writings about socialist world trends. This theme is discussed further below, see section 5.2.1. About the fear of Bolshevism, see also Chow, T. 1960/1967, 208-209.

關於將來的理論，就是他的政策論，也稱社會主義運動論，就是社會民主主義。[...] 馬氏並非承認這階級競爭是與人類歷史相終始的，他只把他的階級競爭說應用於人類歷史的前史，不是適用於過去、現在、未來的全部。與其說他的階級競爭說是他的唯物史觀的要素，不如說是對於過去歷史的一個應用。

The theory of Marxist socialism can be divided into three parts: The first part is a theory about the past, his theory of history. It is also called the evolutionary theory of the structure of society. The second part is a theory about present, his theory of economy. It is also called the theory of capitalist economy. The third part is a theory about future, his theory of politics. It is also called the theory of socialist movement that is social democracy. [...] Marx did not claim that the class struggle would be a matter of the whole human history, from beginning to end. He only said that it can be used to explain the past; not past, present and future as a whole. Saying that the class struggle theory is an important part of his historical materialism is not as good [adequate] as saying that it is used for explaining the past history.<sup>688</sup>

The view that the theory of class struggle was only about the past was also raised by Li in *Weekly Critic*:

但是 Marx 明明的說：“所有從來的歷史，都是階級競爭的歷史。又說：“資本家的生產關係，是社會的生產方法採敵對形態者的最後。”又說：“人類歷史的前史，以今日的社會組織終。”可見他並不是承認人類的全歷史，通過去未來都是階級競爭的歷史。他的階級競爭說，不過是把他的經濟史觀應用於人類歷史的前史一段，不是適用於人類歷史的全體。他是確信人類真歷史的第一頁當與互助的經濟組織同時肇啟。他是確信繼人類歷史的前史，應該開一個真歷史的新紀元。

But Marx clearly said: “The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles.” He also said: “Capitalist mode of production is the last form of hostile production methods.” He also said: “The past history of humankind comes to an end in the current structure of society.” Here we can see that he did not claim that the whole history of humankind, from past to future, would be history of the class struggle. He uses his theory of class struggle only to give an economical explanation of the past history of the humankind, he does not use it to explain it as a whole. He was convinced that the first page of the real history of humankind would start off with the economical organizations that are based on mutual aid. He was convinced that the future history of the humankind would start a new era of real history.<sup>689</sup>

If class struggle something that was relevant only in explanations on past events, and not the current society, then it was obviously difficult to make the claim that class struggle belongs to current world trends.<sup>690</sup>

Similar views can also be found in Western sources that were read in China during this time. In his work *The Economic Interpretation of History* [1902] Edwin R.A. Seligman states: “Socialism is a theory of what ought to be; historical materialism is a theory of what has been”<sup>691</sup>. Li was familiar with Seligman’s work and he also referred to it. According to Dirlík (1978), Li’s version of historical materialism, like Kawakami Hajime’s version in Japan, was almost

<sup>688</sup> Li referred to Marx’s *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859] and to writings of Kawakami Hajime. Li Dazhao. ‘My Views on Marxism, Part 1’.

<sup>689</sup> Li referred to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Li Dazhao. ‘Class Struggle and Mutual Aid’.

<sup>690</sup> In *New Youth*, also Gu Mengyu held similar views. Gu Mengyu. ‘Marxist Theory’.

<sup>691</sup> Seligman 1902/1949, 108. Seligman did not support socialism and he tried to distance historical materialism away from socialism.

entirely from Seligman<sup>692</sup>. Seligman was not the only Marx-critical Western author whose works were read by these Chinese authors. For example, in James Ramsey MacDonald's *The Socialist Movement* [1911] the sensibility of class struggle was seriously questioned. MacDonald explained that the materialist conception of history was a one-sided and inadequate conception. MacDonald depicted the theory of class struggle as an outmoded theory; he said that it was "inheritance from the imperfect views of early socialists". MacDonald can be called an evolutionary socialist as he stated "watchword of socialism is evolution, not revolution". Thus, all the revolutionary versions, especially those promoting revolutionary class struggle, were not proper versions of socialism for him.<sup>693</sup>

The relevance of applying the class struggle framework in discussions of current and future societies were not the only aspects of Marxist theories that were questioned in these journals. Gu Mengyu and Tao Menghe criticized the sensibility of the setting in which two main socio-economic classes were in confrontation against each other as this was a misleading simplification of the complex structures of industrial societies. Gu claimed that many aspects of Marxist theories had been criticized also by influential socialists, such as Eduard Bernstein. This was a clear indication that Marx was not an unquestioned authority among European socialists.<sup>694</sup> Tao Menghe argued that Marx's writings about the development of capitalist society did not correspond to the developments in Europe and in the United States. The labour question had become the most important issue in these places, but there were other more conciliatory approaches that could be used to solve these issues; class struggle was not the only possible approach.<sup>695</sup> *Citizen* also published articles, where the validity of Marxist theories was called into question. In a summary of Paschal Larkin's book *Marxian Socialism* [1917] historical materialism was criticized. According to the article, developments in the superstructure could not always be reduced to the economic base. Thus, Larkin argued, historical materialism could only offer a half-truth. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that was published in

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<sup>692</sup> Dirlik 1978, 32. According to Gail Lee Bernstein, Kawakami translated Seligman's book *The Economic Interpretation of History* [1902] into Japanese. This translation introduced economic determinism to Japan. Kawakami was also interested in Brooks Adams' book *Theory of Social Revolution* [1903] in which Adams wrote about a wave of future revolutions. Bernstein G. 1976, 39-41, 88.

<sup>693</sup> MacDonald 1911, 144-147, 150. Parts of this work were translated in *Citizen* and also in Liang Qichao's journal *Liberation and Reform* (解放與改造). See ML 生. 'The Socialist Method'. Eduard Bernstein wrote similarly about evolutionary socialism and held that Marxism was outmoded. See Bernstein E. 1899.

<sup>694</sup> Gu Mengyu. 'Marxist Theory'; Tao Menghe. *Labour Question in Europe and in the United States*. 歐美勞動問題. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 2. January 1920. HDB. Zhang Dongsun also criticized the meaningfulness of dividing Chinese society into classes. See Chen Duxiu. 'About Socialism'.

<sup>695</sup> Tao Menghe. 'Labour Question in Europe and in the United States'.

London in 1848 was not to be seen as a set of claims about that particular place and period of time and nor as a set of ideas that held universal applicability.<sup>696</sup>

One central author who portrayed Marxism in a negative light was Bertrand Russell, who lectured in China from October 1920 onwards. Many of his writings and lectures were translated in the May Fourth journals. In one of his lectures, Russell connected Marxism with religions. According to Russell, Marxism was often defended in a religious style that avoided critical scientific evaluations.<sup>697</sup> For the advocates of Marxism this was probably inconvenient as religious beliefs and superstitions had been criticized for many years as being against the 'May Fourth scientific spirit'. Dora Black, Russell's wife who had also visited Soviet Russia, wrote that Marxism in Russia had religious implications that seemed to threaten the freedom of thought<sup>698</sup>.

As these examples show us, the attempts to associate revolutionary Marxism with the 'prevailing world trends' were not simple. This was also related to the fact that many authors had clearly pointed out that theories related to the class struggle paradigm were often criticized in the West.

#### 5.1.4 Marx, Lenin and Class Struggle Supported by Trends<sup>699</sup>

During 1919, and especially after that year, there were more authors who wrote about class struggle. Dai Jitao's article (see section 4.3.2 above) in *Construction* which analysed contemporary China was probably the first sustained attempt to apply historical materialism. Interpretations of world trends encountered a change after 1919. The trends were reinterpreted in a way that made them more suitable to the class struggle framework. Although Li Dazhao had already written about the trends of Bolshevism in early 1919, it was mainly other themes, such as Kropotkin, mutual aid and democracy, which were said to

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<sup>696</sup> Larkin, W. Paschal (translated by Chang Naide). *Marxist Historical Materialism*. 馬克思歷史的唯物主義. Citizen. Vol. 2. No. 2. June 1920. HDB. Zong Baihua also criticized explanations where intellectual life was explained through materialism in *Young China*. Zong Baihua. The Mistake of Materialist Explanations of Spirit. 說唯物派解釋精神現象之謬誤. Young China. Vol. 1. No. 3. September 1919. HDB.

<sup>697</sup> Russell, Bertrand (translated by Zhang Tingqian). *Russell's Lecture*. 羅素先生的講演. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 8. February 1921. HDB.

<sup>698</sup> Black, Dora (translated by Shen Yanbing). *Open Letter to the editorial of Liberator*. 一封公開的信給(自由人)月刊記者. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 6. April 1921. HDB. *Liberator* was an American publication that published articles on socialism and communism. The magazine had criticized Russell's views on Soviet Russia.

<sup>699</sup> Karl Kautsky's version of class struggle, which meant a more moderate struggle – struggle through legal political participation, was also supported by some authors, especially in GMD journals *Construction* and *Weekly Review*. In *New Youth* Kautsky was, however, heavily criticized. Dai Jitao translated Kautsky's *The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx* [1887] on the pages of *Construction* in 1920. In this book Kautsky defended the relevance of Marxist theories. See Kautsky 1887/1903. More about Kautsky and China, see Luk 1990, 24-27, 42-43.

represent the world trends. Li's early enthusiasm about Bolshevism did not seem to imply acclaim for class struggle. On the other hand, there seemed to be authors, such as Dai Jitao, who were interested in class struggle theory and historical materialism but did not want to take Bolshevism or Soviet Russia as models for China<sup>700</sup>. Thus, Bolshevism did not necessarily imply class struggle; and correspondingly, class struggle did not necessarily imply Bolshevism.

Despite the fact that Li Dazhao was not convinced about class struggle's relevance in China in 1919, he did praise Marx's name and connected it with world trends:

五月一日是工人的祝典日。五月五日為馬克思的誕生日。去年的五月五日，又正是他誕生日百年的誕生日，也是世界的勞工共和國的誕生日。我們應該紀念這個五月，紀念這個一八一八年五月五日誕生的人物，紀念這一八九〇年五月一日創行的典禮，更紀念這一九一八年生誕的世界新潮。

The first of May is a celebration day for labour. The fifth of May is the birthday of Marx. Last year [1918], this day also was his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. It also was a birthday for the republic of world labour. We should commemorate the birthday of this person who was born on the fifth of May in 1818, commemorate the first of May that has been celebrated since 1890, and commemorate this new world trend born in 1918.<sup>701</sup>

The rise of labour movement was a central part in Li's version of world trends. According to Li, celebrating May Day was a necessary part of reacting to the prevailing world trends.

In 1919, one of the *New Youth* authors, Tao Menghe, was travelling in Europe. Based on his experiences, he sent *New Youth* his own interpretation of the current tendencies in Western societies. According to Tao, the spirit of mutual aid during the war among the Allies had been only temporary. Tao connected the organization of labour to the ideas of Marx on class struggle. According to this article, even if the labour movements in France, England and United States had been contaminated by individualism, even they understood that the current society had to be changed. If the system was only able to defend the old powers, then the revolution would inevitably come.<sup>702</sup>

The popularity of evolutionary theory in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century China was discussed above (see section 2.2.1 above). Darwin's evolutionary theory had become a symbol of modern science. One argument that was used to defend Marxist theories was that historical materialism was as

<sup>700</sup> See for instance Dai Jitao. *Dealing with the Bolshevist Method*. 對付'布爾色維克'的方法. Weekly Review. No. 3. June 1919. XQP. Another GMD author, Hu Hanmin, knew Marx's writings on historical materialism comprehensively. In one of his articles in *Construction* Hu went through Marx's writings on the topic, text by text, and showed that he was well aware of Western discussions on historical materialism by referring to various commentaries. Hu Hanmin. 'Criticism of the Criticism of Historical Materialism'.

<sup>701</sup> Li Dazhao. *Random Thoughts about May Day*. "五一節" (May Day) 雜感. First published in Morning News, May 1919. LDZ.

<sup>702</sup> Tao Menghe. *Impressions from European Tour*. 游歐之感想. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 1. December 1919. HDB.

valuable a scientific theory as Darwin's evolutionary theory. Only the focus was held to be different: Marx was explaining the development of societies, whereas Darwin had written about nature<sup>703</sup>. This argument had its origin in Marx himself who compared Darwin's achievements to his own research work<sup>704</sup>. Engels wrote similarly: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history..."<sup>705</sup>.

In the May Fourth context, arguments in which historical materialism and class struggle were connected with evolutionary theory and evolution became more common from 1920 onwards.<sup>706</sup> The value and importance of Marx was placed on his ability to provide an overall explanation on the development of society. Cai Hesen, one of the early proponents of class struggle in China, wrote that class struggle meant a combination of evolution and revolution. Cai defended the relevance of class struggle by claiming that actually the majority of China's population belonged to the proletarian class. Thus, the worldwide proletarian struggle against capitalism was also relevant in China.<sup>707</sup> For Li Da, the "socialist world trends" were tightly connected to Marx and his theories about classes. Li presented these trends as the ones that China should follow:

據現時趨勢觀察起來，歐美日本的社會改造運動，已顯然向着社會主義進行，中國要想追蹤歐美和日本，勢不得不於此時開始準備實行社會主義 [...] 世界的趨勢，是必須要實現社會主義，資本主義是必須滅亡的。

According to observations on the current trends of the reform movements in Europe, America and Japan, it is obvious that they are all moving towards socialism. If China wants to follow Europe, America and Japan it can only start to prepare realizing socialism right now. [...] World trends mean realizing socialism, whereas capitalism is inevitably going towards decay.<sup>708</sup>

Li's article was an attempt to tackle Liang Qichao's arguments in *Reform*<sup>709</sup>. Liang held the view that there were no classes in China that could be applied to class struggle theories, because the level of industrialization was still very low. Instead of class struggle, China needed to develop domestic capitalism. Li responded by connecting Chinese workers with international proletariat and wrote that capitalism and socialism did not follow national borders. Thus, Liang's views on domestic and foreign capitalism were irrelevant. Li also claimed that although industrialization had not been as fast in China as in Europe, the United States or Japan, nevertheless China had also entered the

<sup>703</sup> See for example Yamakawa Hitoshi. 'From Scientific Socialism to Socialism in Action'.

<sup>704</sup> See for instance Chapters 14 and 15 in *The Capital*. Marx 1867.

<sup>705</sup> Engels 1883.

<sup>706</sup> On the other hand, those who did not accept historical materialism could be criticized for the lack of explanation of evolution. At least the CCP organ *Shaonian* 少年 (established in 1923) in Paris criticized anarchism with this type of argumentation. Liu X.H. 1987, 181-186.

<sup>707</sup> Cai Hesen. 'Marxism and the Chinese Proletariat'. Cai's letter was written already in February. The idea that China belonged to a world proletariat had been expressed before by Li Dazhao and Li Da. Li Dazhao. 'An Economic Explanation of the Causes of the Changes in Chinese Modern Thought'; Li Da. 'About Socialism and Liang Rengong'.

<sup>708</sup> Li Da. 'About Socialism and Liang Rengong'.

<sup>709</sup> The name of this journal was originally *Liberation and Reform*. More about Liang's Research Clique, see Nathan 1976, 239-244.

period of industrial revolution.<sup>710</sup> Li Dazhao offered a similar explanation through historical materialism: it was the international development in production forces that caused changes in thought in China<sup>711</sup>. This was an explanation that connected China with the 'outside world' in a manner that helped to project 'necessities' in China with the help of a certain type of interpretations on developments abroad. Thus, it did not really matter that the level of industrialization in China was a very modest one. The idea that China could 'leap over' the capitalist stage of development was not only presented in China. In the second Comintern congress in July and August 1920, Karl Radek suggested that Asian people could be spared from the suffering of capitalism. According to Radek, the capitalist stage was not inevitable for every country.<sup>712</sup>

In the version of world trends that was offered by the *Communist* journal, following world trends meant primarily following Comintern. This line of writing was evident from the first issue onwards. The journal discussed the crisis of socialism in Germany and in the United States. In practice, the 'crisis' meant that they did not follow the Comintern.<sup>713</sup> In the fourth issue, Zhou Fohai wrote about a great trend (大潮流 *dà cháoliú*) of communism that was to be followed. A proletarian dictatorship was at the core of this trend.<sup>714</sup> A similar style of writing about world trends also appeared in *New Youth*:

馬克思學說出世以後，從前的空想社會主義，變而為科學的社會主義；於是社會主義就為馬克思主義所代表，一說社會主義，就曉得這是馬克思主義了 [...] 第三國際，已經可以代表各國社會黨的進步派；都是贊成勞動專政，採用勞農制度的，這也可稱各國社會運動最新的趨勢。

After Marxism came to the world, socialism moved from utopian socialism to scientific socialism. Marxism started to represent socialism. When one mentioned socialism, one realized it meant Marxism. [...] In the Third International, the progressive parts of all the socialist parties of different nations were already represented. They all supported the dictatorship of the proletariat, the adoption of a system of labour and peasants. This can be called the newest trend in the socialist movement of all nations.<sup>715</sup>

This quotation includes three different arguments that Li used to defend his views. *First*, he claimed that proper socialism can only mean Marxism. *Second*, he claimed that progressive socialists supported proletarian dictatorship. *Third*, he argued that this version of socialism was the 'newest world trend'. Thus, the version of socialism that was supported by the newest trends and progressives

<sup>710</sup> Li Da. 'About Socialism and Liang Rengong'. Some authors, such as Li Fengting, also claimed that despite the lack of industrial development in China the class struggle was still relevant as it could take place between the rulers and the ruled. See Luk 1990, 25.

<sup>711</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Chinese Socialism and Worldwide Capitalism'.

<sup>712</sup> Whiting 1954, 46-52.

<sup>713</sup> Anonymous. *World News*. 世界消息. Communist. No. 1. November 1920. GCD.

<sup>714</sup> Zhou Fohai. 'Why do We Support Communism?'

<sup>715</sup> Li Da. *Marxist Socialism*. 馬克思派社會主義. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 2. June 1921. HDB.

Li Da was probably referring to the second congress of the Communist International held in Petrograd and Moscow between July and August in 1920.

was a radical version in a sense that it meant total rejection of parliamentary democracy and cooperation with 'enemies'. 'Being with the trend' and 'being progressive' started to mean support for class struggle and proletarian dictatorship.<sup>716</sup>

In conclusion, in these early debates about the relevance and validity of the Marxist concepts of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, the advocates of this perspective supported these ideas with writings about world trends. The version of the world was the one that was inevitably moving towards socialism and Marxism. Thus, China should naturally follow others if it wanted to become one of the advanced nations. Moreover, 'following socialist trends' began to mean 'following Comintern'.

## 5.2 Conceptual Redescriptions and Key Concepts

Concepts previously discussed in this study were in relation to certain political languages (see sections 3.3 and 4.4). In this final part we will concentrate on conceptual struggles and attempts of conceptual decontestation related to the radicalization of the May Fourth Movement. It is important to keep in mind that within different political languages words are given different meanings. Their concepts are not necessarily identical even though the words that are used to refer to them might be the same. In some cases, the usages of words in different political languages might differ from each other to an extent that it becomes questionable whether it is a matter of different versions of the same concept or a matter of different concepts altogether. Usually, as in the case of various versions of 'democracy', one is able to find some common basic ground, for instance references to people's power, so that it still makes sense to talk about different versions of the 'same concept' even if these versions greatly differ from each other.

By the decontestation of concepts, Freedon (1996) refers to ideological attempts to establish 'correct' usages to words. An ideology imposes a particular conception of human nature, a particular conception of social structure, of justice, of liberty, of authority, etc.<sup>717</sup> Formulations of "real democracy" and "real freedom" used by the proponents of the class struggle paradigm seemingly were such attempts. Real democracy and real freedom referred to the idea of the necessity of revolutionary class struggle. Standpoints that did not recognize this 'necessity' were implicitly named 'unreal'. These conceptual redescriptions were thus related to introducing a new version of 'reality' that was supposed to dictate thought and action in this particular context. According to this version, only the

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<sup>716</sup> For instance Yamakawa Hitoshi also wrote that progressive elements of revolutionary intelligentsia did not cooperate with the capitalist. Yamakawa Hitoshi (translated by Zhou Fohai). *Socialist State and Labour Union*. 社會主義國家與勞動組合. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 2. June 1921. HDB.

<sup>717</sup> Freedon 1996/2008, 76-77.



ones who accepted the inevitable nature of class struggle and future revolution could possess a 'realistic' understanding of the prevailing circumstances.

This 'real - unreal' dichotomy is not the only relevant definer in struggles related to the situations in which authors and orators aim at defining the limits of 'possible'. These acts of defining are, of course, impossible without using words; shared understandings of the limits of 'possible' are created by speech acts. There are countless numbers of such evaluative dichotomies that are relevant in this respect; for instance 'good - bad', 'virtuous - immoral', 'sensible - insensible', 'timely - untimely', or 'reasonable - unreasonable' to name a few. The introduction of the class struggle paradigm in the May Fourth period required numerous revaluations of such definers. Before anything, it was the revolutionary struggle that was to be posited in a way so that it would appear as necessary, virtuous, sensible and timely.

Authors who were willing to apply and popularize the class struggle paradigm in this context, were not eager to portray themselves as 'extremists' or 'radicals', but as rational and competent intellectuals. Obviously, what was radical or extreme and what was not was a matter of perspective. Different types of ideas could be named radical. The word 'radical' also had something in common with the writings about the world trends of thought: there is no common criterion that could be used to determine whether or not something was 'supported by world trends' or whether or not something was 'radical'. In this particular context, there was disagreement on what kind of ideas belonged to world trends and there were also different versions on what was radical and what was not. This question is discussed in the following before we move on to transformations of the important key concepts<sup>718</sup> of democracy, freedom and individual.

### 5.2.1 Radicalism and Bolshevism

In May Fourth period China, a term that was used to refer to radicals and extremists was 過激 *guòjī* or 極端 *jíduān*<sup>719</sup>. These terms held negative connotations; they referred to ideas that were dangerous and unwanted. For those authors, who wanted to advocate the Soviet Russian model for China's development, there was a problem related to these naming practices: Soviet Russia and Bolshevism were tightly associated with "radicalism" (過激主義

<sup>718</sup> Following Ifversen, 'key concept' refers here to concepts that have "become so important that they play a key role in situations characterized by change and contestation". Ifversen 2011, 73-76.

<sup>719</sup> Li Da. 'Marxist Socialism'; Li Da. 'Marx Restored'; Tian Han. 'A Poet and the Labor Question'. Watkins (translated by Xie Zhichu). *Radical Communism in the United States. 美國急進的共產主義*. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 7. January 1921. HDB.

guòjī zhǔyì or 極端主義 jíduān zhǔyì)<sup>720</sup>. Guòjī zhǔyì was even used as a translation of Bolshevism. Radicalism was not only used to refer to Bolshevism and Soviet Russia, but also to Marxism and Communism<sup>721</sup>.

Chen Duxiu had been taken into custody after the May Fourth demonstrations in June 1919. In August, while Chen was still in custody, Li Dazhao published an article in *Weekly Critic* explaining that the accusations of radicalism to *New Youth* were connected to Li's article *The Victory of Bolshevism* that had been published in it in November 1918. Li argued that his earlier article had caused many problems for the journal. It was not only officials, but also other contributors to the journal who had been unhappy with Li's article<sup>722</sup>. Li felt that his article led to the accusations of Chen's radicalism and arrest. According to Li, originally it was Japanese capitalists and militarists who decided to name Bolshevism as guòjī zhǔyì.<sup>723</sup> Chen was released in September. After his release, he moved from Beijing to more liberal Shanghai.

Apparently, for those who wanted to maintain the status quo, it was convenient to name all ideas promoting change 'radical' or 'extreme'. One of Li Dazhao's articles in *Weekly Critic* posited that it is those people who themselves are in a state of inertia who want to name all progress "radical" (過激)<sup>724</sup>. This was not only a view of those who were interested in Bolshevism, but other reform minded authors also acknowledged that governing officials were quite keen to brand all reform thought 'radical'. For instance, Hu Shi stated that officials in Beijing had recently been worried of the spread of radicalism (過激主義), without defining what was meant by it. Hu acknowledged that he himself had also been accused of being a radical.<sup>725</sup> According to Wang Runhua (1978), conservative circles (especially *Critical Review*) that opposed Hu's language reform were willing to blame him for radicalism<sup>726</sup>. In August 1919, Hu wrote that radicalism was one of the abstract 'isms' he opposed:

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<sup>720</sup> In Yan Huiqing's dictionary 过激 guòjī was connected with radicalism, whereas 極端 jíduān with extremism. Yan 1921, 367, 799. It seems, nevertheless, that there was no clear dividing line between the words that were used to refer to radical and to extreme.

<sup>721</sup> Zhou Fohai. 'Why do We Support Communism?'. Tikhvinsky shows that in 1917 *Minguo Ribao* journal referred to 'Russian radical intellectuals' as 極端主義分子 jíduān zhǔyì fēnzǐ. Tikhvinsky 1989, 1104.

<sup>722</sup> Li wrote that especially Tao Menghe had been dissatisfied.

<sup>723</sup> Li Dazhao. 'More about Problems and Isms'. Radicalism was also associated with communism. Li Dazhao wrote that many publications were closed down because of their alleged communistic agenda. Li Dazhao. *Advocating Communism*. 鼓吹共產主義. First published in *Xin Shenghuo*, November 1919. LDZ.

<sup>724</sup> Li Dazhao. *Radical? Inactive? 過激乎?過惰乎?* *Weekly Critic*. No. 6. January 1919. HDB.

<sup>725</sup> Hu Shi. 'More Research on Problems, Less Discussion of Isms'.

<sup>726</sup> Wang R. 1978, 231-240.

現在世界各國有一班“把耳朵當眼睛”的妄人，耳朵裏聽見一個“布爾札維主義”的名詞，或只是記得一個“過激主義”的名詞，全不懂得這一個抽象名詞所代表的是什麼具體的主張，便大起恐慌，便出告示捉拿“過激黨”，便硬把“過激黨”三個字套在某人某人的頭上。這種妄人，腦筋裏的主義，便是我所攻擊的“抽象名詞”的主義。我所說的“主義的危險”，便是指這種危險。

Nowadays in every country in the world there are ignorant people who “take their ears as their eyes” [believe what they hear without questioning]. When they hear the name “Bolshevism” they might just remember the name “radicalism” without any slightest understanding of what these abstract ideas are concretely representing. This causes panic, and leads to appearance of wanted posters for the arrests of “radicals”. This name “radical” can simply be placed over someone’s head. These kinds of abstract ‘isms’ used by ignorant people are the ones that I oppose as abstract names. And this is what I mean by the danger of ‘isms’.<sup>727</sup>

Although Hu was not a sympathizer of the Bolsheviks, he held the view that the label of radical was used lightly, without further justifications. ‘The fear of radicalism’ was also ridiculed by Zhang Shenfu in *New Youth*. Zhang stated that it was impossible to define what radical thought (過激思想 *guòjī sīxiǎng*) was as it was impossible to draw the line between dangerous thought (危險思想 *wēixiǎn sīxiǎng*) and thought that was not dangerous. For Zhang, the fear of the spread of radical thought came from the well-offs; they were afraid that the workers would start to think independently. What they called dangerous, was the threat to *status quo*. Thus, according to Zhang, all thought was dangerous in this sense and the expression “dangerous thought” was senseless.<sup>728</sup>

Bolshevism was not the only ‘ism’ that was coupled with radicalism. Liu Binglin said in *New Youth* that the liberal (or laissez-faire) school (放任派 *fànrèn pài*) of economics tended to name all issues related to the labour movement radicalism.<sup>729</sup> Still, the division between a radical labour movement and a more moderate one actually appeared in some of the other articles of the period. For instance, in Zhang Weici’s report, published in May 1920, on the American labour movement, he wrote that the supporters of “fierce doctrines” (激烈的主義 *jīliè de zhǔyì*) did not have enough backing to become influential in the American labour organizations. Powerful labour leaders, such as Samuel Gompers, opposed “fierce policies” (激烈的政策 *jīliè de zhèngcè*) and ideas such as class struggle.<sup>730</sup> Some authors, like Dai Jitao in June 1919 argued that there was no

<sup>727</sup> Hu Shi. ‘Third Time about Problems and Isms’.

<sup>728</sup> Zhang Shenfu. “Dangerous Thought”. “危險思想”. *New Youth*. Vol. 6. No. 5. May 1919. Those who wished to question the connection between radicalism and Bolshevism often claimed that people were afraid of Bolshevism even though they did not know much about it. Thus, it was a matter of unawareness. See for example, Li Dazhao. *The Leading Line of the Bolsheviks*. 過激派的引線. *Weekly Critic*. No. 11. March 1919. HDB; Dai Jitao. ‘Dealing with the Bolshevik Method’.

<sup>729</sup> Liu Binglin. *What Is the Labour Question? 勞動問題是些什麼?* *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 6. May 1920. HDB.

<sup>730</sup> Zhang Weici. ‘The Organization of the American Labour Movement’.

need for class conflict in China and that the Chinese should rely on mutual aid instead<sup>731</sup>. Similarly, Cai Yuanpei espoused the idea that people should rely on mutual aid instead of “unstable and exaggerated approaches” (浮動與誇張的態度 *fúdòng yù kuāzhāng de tàidu*)<sup>732</sup>. By these approaches, he was most likely referring to ideas such as class struggle and violent revolution.

What was Bolshevism and how should people react to it were questions that were asked also elsewhere. Chinese authors of the May Fourth period also followed foreign discussions on the topic. Zhou Binglin translated Henry C. Emery's article on Bolshevism in *Citizen* in December 1919. Zhou explained that he had read many articles on Bolshevism, but most of them concentrated simply on underlining the importance of resistance to this ideology without any deeper reasoning. In Zhou's mind, Emery's article, which was originally published in *Yale Review* earlier in 1919, offered valuable insight. According to Emery's account, Bolshevism was “extreme Marxism”:

這策略是極端的馬克思社會主義—討論了兩代成書幾千本的理論、姑且臆斷一般有智識的讀者都曉得他的大綱—底結晶。他的基本觀念是社會底、改造改造底手段是土地不得、私有一切生產的工具 ( means ) 不得私有、除國家對於為公而盡的生產勞務給予報酬外、沒有所得 ( income )、所以沒有地代、沒有利潤、沒有利息—也沒有一個私人付給別個私人的實銀。鮑爾錫維克派底策略新奇的地方在於他們不預期隨經濟的變遷這種改造將來終久要實現、而想用強力把他立刻做成功、不但想做、而且實地去做。[...] 鮑爾錫維克派推倒民選議會、不肯讓國民大會過問他們的統治問題。這足以致信仰民主政治和普通選舉的美人底怒。然而要曉得他們厭惡吾們所謂“德謨克拉西”，不承認普通選舉是解決階級糾紛底適當方法、是否得大多數人底歡心、他們不問。[...] 在鮑爾錫維克統治之下、沒有自由的選舉、不許有一張反對鮑爾錫維克政府底票。理由很明白。自鮑爾錫維克派看上去、戰爭狀況已存在、全世界底無產者階級已出來為握權的運動...

The economic program [of the Bolsheviks] is the extreme form of Marxian socialism a theory that has been discussed for two generations in thousands of volumes, so that we must assume it to be clear in outline for all intelligent readers. Its fundamental conception is, of course, a reorganization of society on such a basis that there shall be no private or individual property in land or any of the means of production, and no other form of income than that paid by the state for productive services rendered to the state. Therefore there will be no rent, no profits, and no interest and also no wages in the sense of wages paid by one private individual to another. What is new and startling about the program of the Bolsheviks is that they do not predict this system as something to be brought about in a distant future by economic evolution, but that they propose to bring it about at once by force. And they not only propose to do it, they are actually trying it out. [...] The Bolsheviks suppressed the Constituent Assembly and refused to refer the problem of their rule to a popular referendum. This irritates good Americans who believe in democracy and universal suffrage. But the Bolsheviks abhor what we call democracy, and do not accept universal suffrage as the proper method of settling class disputes. The question whether they are favored by a "majority" is unimportant to them. [...] There is no free election, no possibility of an anti-Bolshevik ticket. The reason is quite clear. To the Bolshevik a state of war exists. The proletarian class is out to take the power by force throughout the world.<sup>733</sup>

<sup>731</sup> Dai Jitao. 'The Problem of Labour Education'.

<sup>732</sup> Cai Yuanpei. 'The Great Hope'.

<sup>733</sup> Zhou Binglin. 'Study on Bolshevism'. The English version is taken from Emery's original article. Emery 1919.

Zhou's article shows us that the Chinese readership was aware of the concerns of Bolshevism abroad. Thus, defensive accounts of Bolshevism should not be understood only as signs of unawareness. Chinese authors held contradictory views on the desirability of the Bolshevik example. They were controlled neither by one-sided Bolshevik, nor by one-sided anti-Bolshevik propaganda. Whether Bolshevism was to appear as a concept of positive or negative charge was a matter of action, not passive behavior.

Li Dazhao was perhaps the first author who used the name "Bolshevism" in a positive manner in this context. In his well-known essay on "the victory of Bolshevism" he connected Bolshevism with concepts such as democracy (民主主義), freedom (自由), pacifism (平和思想 *píng hé sī xiǎng*) and evolution (進化)<sup>734</sup>. Already before this, Li had written admiringly about the October Revolution and claimed that it should be seen as an adaptation to the world trends of humanity and freedom. However, in this article from July 1918, Li did not yet praise Bolshevism.<sup>735</sup> If we look at the other contemporary (late 1918 - early 1920) examples about Bolshevism above, Li's writings appear as a breakaway that did not, however, change the image that Bolshevism was not commonly seen as peaceful, but as radical and dangerous. Like Zhou, Li also referred to foreign commentaries on Bolshevism in his article. Li referred to Frederic Harrison's article in *Forthrightly Review*, and to Harold Williams' article in *Times*, when he discussed the level of commitment of the Bolsheviks for their cause<sup>736</sup>.

As the example of Li Dazhao shows, Bolshevism was not always depicted as an enemy to democracy: Occasionally it was depicted as an ideology that supported democracy. In this context, democracy was often used to refer to 'the spirit of democracy' or 'economical democracy'. This is to say, Li did not claim that the Bolsheviks supported a Western parliamentary system. Their rejection of parliamentarism was mentioned in the Zhang Binglin's article on Bolshevism. This fact was reiterated in the *Communist* that started its publication activities in late 1920. In the first issue in November 1920, Zhou Fohai wrote that unlike the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks did not support parliamentary democracy.<sup>737</sup>

One important foreign commentary on Bolshevik rule was William Bullitt's report on Bolsheviks that was translated into Chinese in February 1920 in *Weekly Review*<sup>738</sup>. Bullitt, an American diplomat, had visited Soviet Russia before the Paris Peace Conference and he supported the establishment of relations between the United States and the Bolshevik government. In his report, Bullitt downplayed the seriousness of the so called Red Terror in Russia. According to him, the number of victims of the "Red Terror" in Russia after the October Revolution had been much lower than for example the number of victims of the

<sup>734</sup> Li Dazhao. 'The Victory of Bolshevism'. See also Li Dazhao. 'World Trends After the War'.

<sup>735</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Comparison between the French and the Russian Revolutions'.

<sup>736</sup> Li Dazhao. 'The Victory of Bolshevism'.

<sup>737</sup> Zhou Fohai. 'Commemorating the Third Anniversary'.

<sup>738</sup> Bullitt, William (translated by Dai Jitao). *Russia under the Government of Workers and Peasants*. 勞農政府治下的俄國. *Weekly Review*. No. 39. February 1920.

“White Terror” in Finland in the aftermath of the Finnish Civil War of 1918.<sup>739</sup> For example Zhou Fohai referred to this report when he defended the Bolshevik government in *Communist*<sup>740</sup>. As we can see, there was no single version of the ‘world trends’ that would have caused a certain kind of response from the Chinese intelligentsia to the rise of Bolshevism. Western sources could be used in commentaries in order to denounce or to respect the Bolshevik movement.<sup>741</sup>

In *Weekly Review* Dai Jitao argued that it was only in Japan and in China where Bolshevik party was called a radical party (過激黨 *guòjī dǎng*) and Bolshevism was called radicalism (過激主義). According to Dai, the party was a Marxist party that aimed to fight against inequality in Russia.<sup>742</sup> Similar attempts to disentangle the concepts of radicalism and Bolshevism also appeared in the writings of Chen Duxiu who worked hard to change the negative image of Bolshevism. About one year after Li’s article on Bolshevism, and few months after Chen’s release in September 1919, Chen’s comments on radicalism and Bolshevism appeared in *New Youth*. Remember that neither Chen himself, nor anyone else in *New Youth* was writing about the necessity of class struggle in China at this point. That is, the defense of Bolshevism did not appear simultaneously with the defense of the need for class struggle and proletarian dictatorship in China. Chen wrote that there was no considerable conflict between the capitalists and labour in China and his own ideas on developing democracy in China were certainly not radical (過激)<sup>743</sup>. Chen explained that the origin of Bolshevism was in the Russian Social Democratic Party that had been divided into two. The name “Bolshevik” referred to the majority (多數派 *duōshù pài*) and the name “Menshevik” referred to the minority (少數派 *shǎoshù pài*) after the split. The common style of connecting radicalism and Bolshevism was, according to Chen, of biased origin:

日本人硬叫 Bolsheviki 作過激派,和各國的政府資本家痛恨他,都是說他擾亂世界和平; Bolsheviki 是不是擾亂世界和平;暫且不去論他;痛恨 Bolsheviki 的各強國,天天在那裏侵略弱小國的土地利權,是不是擾亂世界和平 [...] 擾亂世界和平,自然是极大的罪惡; Bolsheviki 是不是擾亂世界和平,全靠事實證明,用不著我們,用不著我們辨護或攻擊;我們冷眼旁觀的,恐怕正是反對 Bolsheviki 的先生們出來擾亂世界和平!

Japanese have resolutely called Bolsheviks radicals. Together with governments and capitalists of other countries they bitterly hate them. They all say that they (Bolsheviks) are disturbing world peace. Do Bolsheviks actually disturb the world peace? We do not discuss about it right now. Those great powers who hate the Bolsheviks are invading the soil and rights of weak and small countries every day. Is this disturbing the world peace? [...] Disturbing the world peace naturally is an

<sup>739</sup> Bullitt 1919.

<sup>740</sup> Zhou Fohai. ‘Commemorating the Third Anniversary’.

<sup>741</sup> Besides Li, for instance Gao Yihan gave Bolshevism a meaning in *New Youth* that was not disapproving. In his article on labour movement Bolshevism was a method of giving political power to workingmen. Gao Yihan. ‘Labour Organization and Labour Movement’.

<sup>742</sup> Although Dai wanted to make a separation between radicalism and Bolshevism, he did not support the idea of following the Bolshevik example. Dai Jitao. ‘Dealing with the Bolshevik Method’.

<sup>743</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘Establishing the Foundations of Democracy’.

enormous crime. Do Bolsheviks actually disturb the world peace? If we completely rely on facts, we don't need to defend or make accusations. From a detached point of view, I am afraid that it is precisely those gentlemen, who oppose Bolsheviks, who also are disturbing the world peace!<sup>744</sup>

People such as Chen would have preferred using a name “majority party” (多數派) for Bolsheviks. It certainly would have helped them to get rid of the label of radicalism. The names ‘majority party’ and ‘minority party’ were probably not Chen’s own creations. These names had already been used in *Eastern Miscellany* in April 1918<sup>745</sup>. In *New Youth*, there also were others who used these names. For instance, the name ‘majority party’ was used in a translation of Angelo Rappoport’s text on Russia<sup>746</sup>. Li Da also used this version when he wrote about Marxism<sup>747</sup>. Nevertheless, this name seemed to be much less customary than the transcriptions that followed the sound of the original word, such as 布爾雪維克 *bùěrxuěwéikè*. This type of version, based on sound imitation, prevailed in later usages. In the late 1920s, the name of the CCP’s official party publication was 布爾塞維克 *Bùěrsāiwéikè*. In contemporary Chinese the accustomed version is 布尔什维克 *Bùěershíwéikè* (布爾什維克 in traditional characters). Names based on sound imitation for foreign concepts have usually disappeared from Chinese and other names have replaced them. This has happened for instance to 德謨克拉西 *démókèlāxī* (democracy). Zdenka Hermanova-Novotna, who studied loanwords in Chinese, states that borrowing of words by imitation of the sounds is rather difficult in Chinese and it produces words that have no future<sup>748</sup>. In this sense, “Bolshevism” has been an exception.

In *Citizen*, Fei Juetian defended Bolshevism in a similar style to Chen. Fei wrote about the “problem of Bolshevism” and said that Bolshevism was not a problem for him and by this expression he was merely referring to a common style of writing about Bolshevism. Fei argued that actually Bolshevism was a

<sup>744</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Radicals and World Peace*. 過激派與世界和平. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 1. December 1919. HDB.

<sup>745</sup> Stanley 1981, 26-27.

<sup>746</sup> Rappoport, Angelo. ‘The Philosophical Basis of the Russian Revolution, Part 2’.

<sup>747</sup> Li Da. ‘Marxist Socialism’. Also Li Dazhao used *duōshù pài* and 布爾色維克 *bùěrsèwéikè* in an article on Russian Revolution in 1921. Li Dazhao. ‘Past, Present and Future of the Russian Revolution’. Another version on Bolshevism that occasionally appeared in these journals was 勞農主義 *láonóng zhǔyì* that could be translated into English as a ‘doctrine of workers and peasants’. This version can be seen as an attempt to translate the concept, not the foreign name (Bolshevism) that was commonly used. In other words, this version referred directly to the groups of people whose living standards this particular ideology was assumedly trying to improve. It seems that this version was rarely used in early writings on Bolshevism in journals such as *New Youth* or *Weekly Critic*. *Láonóng zhǔyì* was used, for example, by Zhang Dongsun in a debate on socialism between Chen Duxiu and Zhang. Chen Duxiu. ‘About Socialism’.

<sup>748</sup> Referencend in Alleton 2001, 18.

problem only for warlords (軍閥 *jūnfá*) and tycoons (財閥 *cáifá*) as Bolshevism wanted to put an end to imperialism (帝國主義 *dìguó zhǔyì*) and economic invasions (經濟侵略 *jīngjì qīnlüè*).<sup>749</sup> In his “On Politics”, Chen stated that Bolshevism was opposed, not only in China, but also internationally, because “the capitalists” wanted to keep people passive and “outside of politics”<sup>750</sup>. Guo Shaoyu also questioned the reliability of all the negative information they had on Bolshevism. He wrote that there had been rumors that some artists had been killed by the Bolsheviks, but that they should not take the news for granted because most of the news they had on Bolshevism came from Western Europe where Bolshevism was opposed.<sup>751</sup>

Before going to China, Bertrand Russell visited Soviet Russia and he criticized the Bolsheviks in the May Fourth journals. This criticism was not accepted by all, especially in *New Youth* there were objections. Yuan Zhenying 袁振英 (1894-1979) questioned Russell’s fears on the spread of Bolshevism and his view that China might not be able to defend itself against Bolshevism. Yuan commented that the Chinese might actually want to co-operate with the Bolsheviks and adopt their system. Thus, this was not a matter of ‘defending’ oneself.<sup>752</sup> Yuan also translated an article from an American weekly magazine called *Soviet Russia*<sup>753</sup> in which Russell’s competence to evaluate Russian society was called into question<sup>754</sup>.

These examples should not be taken as evidence on the popularity of Bolshevism in China before the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party. If anything, these examples point out that some of these authors tried to get rid of the negative connotations related to the names Bolshevism and Bolsheviks. The main argument, which was used in these attempts to distance Bolshevism from radicalism and extremism, was that this stamp had been deliberately placed by the elite and that there was no factual basis for this connection. If there were negative views on Bolshevism abroad, it was a matter of ‘imperialist propaganda’. Similar arguments were used in the debates on democracy, freedom and individuality.

<sup>749</sup> Fei Juetian. ‘The Pacific Question!’.

<sup>750</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘On Politics’.

<sup>751</sup> Guo Shaoyu. *From the Development of Art to an Attempt of Reform*. 從藝術發展上企圖社會的改造. *New Tide*. Vol. 2. No. 4. May 1920. HDB.

<sup>752</sup> Yuan Zhenying. *Criticism on Russell’s Views on Soviet Russia*. 批評羅素論蘇維埃俄羅斯. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB.

<sup>753</sup> *Soviet Russia* was published in New York from 1919 to 1922 first by Russian Soviet Government Bureau (until 1920) and then by Friends of Soviet Russia.

<sup>754</sup> B.J (Translated by Yuan Zhenying). *Russell, Disappointed Visitor*. 羅素一個失望的遊客. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 4. December 1920. HDB.



### 5.2.2 Democracy and Real Democracy

In his studies on the May Fourth concept of democracy Zhu Zhimin (1996) shows that the nature of discussions on democracy changed after the First World War. ‘Sub-concepts’, such as general election (普通选举 *pǔtōng xuǎnjǔ*), national assembly (國民大會 *guómín dàhuì*), direct civil rights (直接民權 *zhíjiē mínquán*), autonomy (自治 *zìzhì*) and separation of powers (分權 *fēnquán*) entered the discussions. These concepts were not, however, directly connected to the writings that aimed to popularize the new revolutionary agenda. More relevant from the perspective of radicalization is Zhu’s notion that before the May Fourth period, democracy referred mainly to political institutions. Spiritual and social democracy entered the debates only after the war.<sup>755</sup> These two spheres of democracy were in the centre when Chen Duxiu and others aimed at popularizing a new revolutionary version of the ‘necessities’ China was facing. Because of this, this study mainly concentrates on the meanings given to the ‘spirit of democracy’.

The May Fourth Movement was able to make the concept of democracy well known in China. It was, nevertheless, unable to properly entrench democratic culture.<sup>756</sup> According to Zhou Yangshang (1989), it was not only the CCP versions of democracy that maintained distance from Western versions. The version of democracy that differed from Western liberal traditions were also used by ‘liberal’ May Fourth authors, such as Hu Shi. Elitism was always a part of the Chinese ‘liberal’ version: these authors posited themselves as the vanguard of the people and only this vanguard would understand the nature of ‘good government’. According to Zhou, this type of elitism has always been characteristic of Chinese versions of democracy, whereas legality, which is central in the Western democratic tradition, has been given a secondary role.<sup>757</sup> In the following, we will discuss how different features of the concept of democracy are differentiated from each other in this context and how the ideal of democracy was connected to the revolutionary struggle in the class struggle language.

Democracy had been a central part of the mutual aid framework as many authors described the new era of mutual aid to be also an era of democracy. Democracy was customarily associated with “the spirit of democracy” that resembled righteousness in a very general and abstract manner (see section 3.3.1 above). Democracy was hailed as the “only authority in modern time” and it was given all-powerful characteristics. Despite the fact that the concept of democracy was often used in a very abstract manner, there were also more concrete characteristics attached to the concept within this period of time. For instance, Gao Yihan described the background of Western democracy in his article on the

<sup>755</sup> Zhu 1996, 100-125, 137-139.

<sup>756</sup> Zhang K. & Luo F. 1989, 366.

<sup>757</sup> Zhou Yangshang 1989a, 449-453.

history of social contracts<sup>758</sup>. Li Dazhao also wrote about the history of democracy<sup>759</sup>. According to Jin and Liu (2009), before the New Culture Movement period democracy (民主 *mínzhǔ* or 共和 *gōnghé*) was associated with leaders elected by the people, with people's participation in politics, with the representative system and with the idea that limits of governments' power were defined in a constitution<sup>760</sup>. Parliamentary systems had often been presented in a positive light<sup>761</sup>. The criticism of 'Western democratic systems' within the class struggle language was concentrated on the third one of these characteristics of democracy. That is, these critical writings were directed towards the representative systems of the West and to their alleged inefficiency in improving the living conditions of the working population. This accusation was also connected to attempts to defend the idea of proletarian dictatorship.

The criticism of representative democracy can be better comprehended when we take into consideration the pluralization of the concept of democracy. By pluralization is meant a separation of different features of the concepts from each other<sup>762</sup>. More specifically, the criticism of 'capitalist democracy' was related to the underlining of economic and social democracy that referred to a more equal arrangement of socio-economic relationships within societies. This is to say, democracy became more and more associated with the concept of equality<sup>763</sup>. In order to understand this process, and the meaning of social and economic democracy in this particular context, we need to look at the concrete examples on how various aspects of democracy were differentiated in these journals.

Findings from dictionaries of the period indicate that there was no clear dividing line between words that were used to refer to democracy and words that were used to refer to republic; 民主 *mínzhǔ* could be used to refer to both of them. In Li Yuwen's dictionary 民主主義 *mínzhǔ zhǔyì* was translated as "republicanism" whereas 民主政治 *mínzhǔ zhèngzhì* as "democracy". The translation for 共和 *gōnghé* was, on the other hand, "commonwealth" or "union."<sup>764</sup> Yan Huiqing's dictionary gave three possible meanings for the English word "democracy": "1. A form of government in which the supreme power is directly or indirectly in the hands of the people, 民主政體, 民政, 庶建; 2. The principles of the Democratic Party in the United States, 美國民政, 政黨之宗旨;

<sup>758</sup> Gao Yihan. *Social Contract and the Foundation of the State*. 民約與邦本. Youth. Vol. 1. No. 3. November 1915. HDB.

<sup>759</sup> Li Dazhao. *Violence and Politics*. 暴力與政治. First published in Pacific Ocean, October 1917. LDZ.

<sup>760</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 282.

<sup>761</sup> Fang 2004, 1-24.

<sup>762</sup> I have borrowed the idea of pluralization from Anna Friberg. See Friberg 2012, 31-34.

<sup>763</sup> Zhu Zhimin has noted that authors who did not accept the relevance of the class struggle paradigm in China, such as Hu Shi and Zhang Dongsun, also wrote about equality, but for them, individuality was more important. Zhu 1996, 245-246.

<sup>764</sup> Li Y.W. 1921, 299.

3. The people, 庶民, 民眾, 萬民.”<sup>765</sup> When we compare the writings on democracy in the May Fourth journals to the definitions in Yan Huiqing’s dictionary, it seems that the second (the principles of the Democratic Party in the United States) and the third meaning (people) of democracy were nearly, if not completely, non-existent. The first and the most common meaning (form of government) did, of course, appear. There were also explicit attempts to define democracy on the pages of May Fourth journals. In *Weekly Critic*, Peng Yihu wrote that democracy was a basic idea of the current time. It did not mean only political democracy (政治的得莫克拉西 *zhèngzhì de démóklāxī*). Besides it, there were also social (社會的 *shèhuì de*) democracy, economic (經濟的 *jīngjì de*) democracy and cultural (文化的 *wénhuà de*) democracy. For Peng, democracy was tightly connected to an equal society and economic democracy meant replacing the capitalist production system with more equal economical arrangements.<sup>766</sup>

Another illustrative example of separating different features of democracy is Tan Pingshan’s *Four Aspects of Democracy* that was published in *New Tide* in May 1919. According to Tan, democracy had four sides: political, economic, philosophical and social. He wrote that the centre of political democracy was France, the centre of economical democracy was England (Tan referred to improvements in labour conditions), the centre of philosophical democracy was the United States (he referred to “Wilsonian humanism”) and the centre of social democracy, after the collapse of militarism, was in Russia and in Germany. These four sides of democracy were all connected to each other. Furthermore, he cited Marx and Engels and underlined the close connection between economic and social democracy.<sup>767</sup> Tan did not advocate class struggle in this article, but for him, like for many other contemporary authors of this period, socialism was closely connected with the so called trend (潮流 *cháoliú*) of democracy. This connection between social and economic democracy was oftentimes pointed out. For instance, in *Young China* Li Huang underlined that it did not make any sense to study political power of the people without taking into consideration their role in the economic sphere<sup>768</sup>.

In the following month, in June 1919, Gao Yihan’s translation on John Dewey’s lecture *On the Development of Democracy in the United States* was published in *Weekly Critic*. According to this article, Dewey divided democracy into four parts: political democracy (政治的民主主義 *zhèngzhì de mínhì zhǔyì*), democracy of civil rights (民權的民主主義 *mínquán de mínhì zhǔyì*), democracy of society (社會的民主主義 *shèhuì de mínhì zhǔyì*) and democracy of livelihood

<sup>765</sup> Yan 1921, 253.

<sup>766</sup> Peng Yihu. ‘Fundamental Ideas of the New Era’.

<sup>767</sup> Tan Pingshan. ‘Four Aspects of Democracy’.

<sup>768</sup> Li Huang. ‘Newsletter (1)’. Li Huang opposed the idea that *Young China* should support socialism. Zhang Y., Yin, Hong & Wang Y. 1979, 284-285, 350-351. Chen Duxiu wrote similarly that economic democracy was the most important aspect of democracy. Chen Duxiu. ‘Establishing the Foundations of Democracy’.

(生計的民治主義 *shēngjì de mínzhì zhǔyì*). Political democracy contained two principles: 1) public opinion was expressed through a representative system, and 2) limits of power were defined in the constitution. The democracy of civil rights meant freedom of speech, freedom of belief, freedom of publication and freedom of residence. Democracy of society referred to equality between different groups of people. It meant that there were no unequal class divisions. Democracy of livelihood, finally, meant that the possibilities for livelihood were equal for everyone.<sup>769</sup> If we compare these three (by Peng, Tan and Dewey) ways of dividing democracy into different types, we can see that despite some differences, the differentiation of social and economic democracy from political one was a feature that all these examples had in common.<sup>770</sup> By giving different emphasis to different aspects of democracy it was possible to rebalance the meaning of the concept. In this particular context, authors repeatedly underlined the importance of economic and social aspects of democracy. In this process, in which democracy became more strongly associated with socio-economic equality, other aspects of democracy were given secondary roles. This is to say, philosophical, cultural or political democracy were features that were less emphasised; they would become meaningful issues only if the primary problems of realizing social and economic democracy could be solved. It seems that the languages of mutual aid and class struggle also differed from each other in this respect. That is, within the mutual aid writings it was mainly the philosophical democracy (the spirit of democracy) that was referred to. The economic and social aspects of democracy were more strongly underlined within writings on class struggle. The central role of the economy was also related to historical materialism according to which economy and production were believed to be in the fountainhead of all social and political transformations.

In his study on the concept of democracy during the May Fourth period, Zhou Yangshang (1989) states that although the socialist versions of democracy were not the only ones during this period, these versions have been the most important in later Chinese politics<sup>771</sup>. This means that democracy has been strongly associated with attempts to create a society with more socio-economic equality. These attempts were in turn associated with socialism<sup>772</sup>. Democracy in China has often referred to this ideal, not to institutional arrangements such as free elections, a parliament or a multiparty system. In terms of the classifications

<sup>769</sup> Dewey, John. 'On the Development of Democracy in the United States'. Contemporary Chinese were familiar with some of Dewey's books. At least *How We Think* [1910] and *Reconstruction of Philosophy* [1919] were not totally unknown. Schwarcz 1986, 71, 120.

<sup>770</sup> Dewey's democracy of livelihood seems to be what Tan meant by "economical democracy". The clearest difference between the two was that Dewey's version did not include "philosophical democracy" whereas Tan's version did not include democracy of civil rights. In Peng's version the distinctive feature was "cultural democracy".

<sup>771</sup> Zhou Yangshan 1989a, 455.

<sup>772</sup> For instance Chen Duxiu connected economic democracy with socialism. See Chen Duxiu. *Why Do We Want to Write in Vernacular Chinese?* 我們為什麼要做白話文? First Published in *Morning News*, February 1920. CDX.

above, the stress on social and economic democracy has simultaneously meant devaluation of 'political democracy'.

In the early demands for class struggle in China 'the necessity' of class struggle was often connected with the argument that without economic democracy there was no "real democracy" and that the only method to attain it was through class struggle. However, the perception that "real democracy" was not possible in a class society already existed in these journals already before there were authors demanding a class struggle. This is to say, the acknowledgement of unequal class divisions in society did not directly lead to demands for class struggle and proletarian dictatorship as there obviously were other possible and more moderate routes to reduce the inequality between classes. One example, in which "real democracy" (真正的德謨克拉西 *zhēnzhèng de démóklāxī*) was connected eradicating the class divisions in society was an article by Yang Yizeng 楊亦曾 in *Citizen* in November 1919:

我們應該要創造一種新組織，謀全世界人民公共的利益。不論男女，不論屬於何種，何族，何教，何國，都應受均等的益，均等的保護，均等的進化。這種新組織是合於大同主義；是要跳出家庭，國家，宗教，政治的範圍以外，別圖全世界人民的福利。這種組織是無階級的制度，是歸於真正的德謨克拉西，是有真正平等自由博愛的精神。要想達到這種新組織的目的，非改造今日的社會不可。

We should create a new system, one that would benefit all the people in the world. No matter if one was male or female, no matter to which family one belonged, or race, or religion, or nation - all should have equal benefits, equal protection and equal evolution. This new system would be like the Great Unity (大同). It would mean stepping out of the sphere of families, nations, religions and politics. It would mean a plan seeking for the welfare of all the people in the world. This system would be a system without classes, it would mean a return to a real democracy that has a spirit of real equality, liberty and fraternity. If we want to achieve this goal of a new system, it is not possible without reforming the society of today.<sup>773</sup>

The main target of Yang's criticism was private ownership. Yang claimed that the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity required the abolition of private ownership and it also required a settlement of the conflict between the capitalist and the proletariat. According to Yang, "real democracy" was not possible in a class society. However, Yang wrote neither about class struggle nor about social revolution. The word he used to refer to this transformation was reform (改造 *gǎizào*).<sup>774</sup> This example shows us clearly that real democracy was connected to a creation of a more equal society already before anyone supported the idea of class struggle in this context. The step from the critique of unequal society to advocating class struggle was a major one and for instance Chen Duxiu still rejected the necessity of it in December 1919 by stating that *New Youth* wanted "integration in society" (社會制度的結合生活 *shèhuì zhìdù de jiéhé shēnghuó*) and not class struggle (階級爭鬥 *jiējí zhēngdòu*)<sup>775</sup>.

<sup>773</sup> Yang Yizeng. 'Why Should Society be Reformed?'

<sup>774</sup> Yang Yizeng. 'Why Should Society be Reformed?'

<sup>775</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'Establishing the Foundations of Democracy'.

In their studies on word frequencies in *New Youth*, Jin and Liu (2009) have shown that between January 1920 and April 1920 there was a peak in the appearance of words that were used to refer to the concept of democracy (especially 民主 *mínzhǔ* and 德謨克拉西 *démókèlāxī*). Within this period of time, democracy became more closely connected with the idea of equality, although it was not the only meaning that was given to democracy. Jin and Liu also point out that after 1920 in *New Youth*, democracy was given increasingly negative meanings than before. Starting from the eighth volume<sup>776</sup>, negative usages of democracy were more frequent than the positive ones.<sup>777</sup>

One obvious question that arises from these references to “real democracy” is what kind of democracy was criticized by this new formulation. That is, what actually was ‘unreal democracy’? This distinction between real and unreal democracy was related to two different things. The *first* type of democracy that was unreal was the democracy in China after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912. Different areas in China were ruled by different warlords. The Beiyang government in Beijing was a warlord government; it was responsible for its actions to armies and not to the Chinese people. For instance, Li Huang used “real democracy” in this type on criticism on the then contemporary state of affairs in China<sup>778</sup>. An article by Zhou Changxian 周長憲 in *Citizen* is another example of this kind of usage of “real democracy”. Zhou wrote that even if the banner of the republic was raised, the society or politics themselves were unchanged. The spirit of real democracy was still somewhere in the distant future.<sup>779</sup> The *second* type of unreal democracy was the so called capitalist democracy. This version was connected to the criticism of capitalism in general and to the idea that governments and parliaments were solely in the hands of the well-off. For instance, Chen Duxiu wrote that democracy has been a name, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for a system that secures the benefits of the ruling class. First, the governing class was the nobility. Later, it became the

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<sup>776</sup> The first issue of volume eight appeared in September 1920. That was the issue in which Chen Duxiu started to advocate class struggle and proletarian dictatorship.

<sup>777</sup> Jin & Liu 2009, 285-287.

<sup>778</sup> Li Huang. *Newsletter* (2). 會員通訊. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 6. December 1920. HDB. Real democracy was occasionally given different meanings: In the first issue of *Young China* Tian Han wrote that the United States represented real democracy (真正的民主主義). In his older writings Chen Duxiu associated real democracy with the power of people. Tian Han. *Poet of the Common People: Commemorating the One Hundredth Anniversary of Whitman's Birthday*. 平民詩人惠特曼的百年祭. *Young China*. Vol. 1. No. 1. July 1919. HDB; Chen. ‘The Manifesto of this Journal’.

<sup>779</sup> Zhou Changxian. *Social Reform Movement*. 社會根本改造運動. *Citizen*. Vol. 2. No. 4. May 1921. HDB.

bourgeoisie.<sup>780</sup> The support for class struggle and social revolution were reinforced with criticism of the second type of unreal democracy<sup>781</sup>.

As the above example of *Citizen* shows, *New Youth* was not the only May Fourth journal in which “real democracy” was connected with the realization of a more equal society. Similar examples can also be found in *New Tide*. In an article published in February 1920, Tan Pingshan wrote that the foothold of democracy was the idea of equality (平等的思想 *píngděng de sīxiǎng*). In the modern time, democracy meant the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalists for achieving freedom and equality.<sup>782</sup> Tao Menghe similarly associated modern democracy with the efforts of the working population to enhance their standards of living. According to Tao, people should understand that modern democracy means a democracy of workers in industry. This meant the idea that the actual producers would have their say in how the production processes were organized. In Tao’s writings, “the movement for industrial democracy” (工業的民主主義的運動 *gōngyè de mínzhì zhǔyì de yùndòng*) became more or less a synonym for the labour movement.<sup>783</sup>

The espousal of class struggle was connected to criticism of representative democracies. Thus, criticism of capitalist democracy also meant criticism of contemporary representative systems. In *Young China*, Xiang Jingyu wrote that the representative system (代議制 *dàiyì zhì*) was a product of the bourgeois revolution that became a tool to restrict the power of the proletariat<sup>784</sup>. As Jin and Liu’s findings on the number of negative references to democracy indicate, representative democracy, Western democracy and capitalist democracy were criticized particularly often in *New Youth*. Besides Chen Duxiu and other Chinese authors, also Bertrand Russell appeared in the journal as an opponent to contemporary representative systems. According to Russell, the capitalists were in an advantaged position in elections because they controlled the media and educational institutions. Because of this, elections did not truly express the will of the majority as often was claimed.<sup>785</sup> Although Russell criticized Western parliamentary systems, Russell also criticized the Bolshevik government in Soviet

<sup>780</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘To the Labour Circles in Beijing’.

<sup>781</sup> Luo Jialun translated the declaration of Comintern’s first congress (March 1919) in *Morning News* in August 1919. In this declaration it was told that Comintern wanted to replace “capitalist democracy” with “workers democracy”. Zhu 1996, 60.

<sup>782</sup> Tan Pingshan. *The Spirit of Modern Democracy*. 現代民主主義的精神. *New Tide*. Vol. 2. No. 3. February 1920. HDB.

<sup>783</sup> Tao. ‘Labour Question in Europe and in the United States’; Tao Menghe. ‘Impressions from European Tour’. Also in Li Dazhao’s writings in 1921-1922 democracy became increasingly associated with the labour movement. See Gu 2001, 619.

<sup>784</sup> Xiang Jingyu. ‘On Women’s Liberation and Reform’.

<sup>785</sup> Russell, Bertrand. (translated by Zhang Shenfu). *Democracy and Revolution (Part 1)*. 民主與革命. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 2. October 1920. This translation of Russell’s article first appeared in *The Liberator* (No. 26-27) in May – June 1920. See also Yuan Zhenying. ‘Criticism of Russell’s Views on Soviet Russia’.

Russia for the lack of democracy. Thus, his criticism of the representative systems was not connected to ideas such as proletarian dictatorship as was the case with Chen Duxiu and others.

After 1920, Zhang Weici was one of the few authors in *New Youth* who posited representative democracy and elections in a positive light. He wrote that general elections were a prerequisite for democracy and that democracy required co-operation between different classes.<sup>786</sup> By November 1920, Chen Duxiu had already hardened his critique towards 'Western ideas' of democracy and parliamentary system. This was visible in his reply to the question about proletarian dictatorship by Ke Qingshi in *New Youth*. Chen wrote that many people have criticized the idea of proletarian dictatorship by underlining the necessity of freedom and democracy. Chen wanted to ask these people two questions: *First*, was there anything democratic in the misery and lack of freedom of the majority of the population in China? *Second*, was it undemocratic if the majority gained freedom by revolution?<sup>787</sup> In the opening issue of the *Communist*, Chen wrote that China needed class struggle, not representative democracy. Parliaments (議會 *yìhuì*) were, according to Chen, tools to mislead the workers.<sup>788</sup> Li Da was another severe critic of parliamentary democracy and representative system in *New Youth*. Li questioned "the parliamentary road" in attempts to improve the labour conditions by claiming that the results in Europe and in America have been much less impressive than the ones in Soviet Russia. His conclusion was that real results cannot be achieved with cooperation with the capitalists. Thus, based on his observations on Western experiences, the parliamentary road should be rejected. Parliamentarism was only a tool of capitalist politics and workers should oppose all modes of bourgeoisie democracy.<sup>789</sup>

Although many authors had been interested in Western parliamentary systems, democracy was also often used to mean something else than that already before anyone wrote about class struggle in these journals. For instance, capitalism was posited as an enemy to the spirit of democracy. Within the class struggle language, democracy was claimed to be possible only through class struggle and revolution that would wipe away the inequalities of the contemporary society. In this respect, the demands for "real democracy" can be seen as a more radical version of 'people's power' – attainment of it would imply revolutionary struggle in which the Chinese people, as a dynamic agent, would transform the society. This type of radical version of democracy, in which "real" or "new" democracy would not be possible without revolution, were also ever-

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<sup>786</sup> Zhang Weici. *City Commission Government and Council Manager Government in the United States*. 美國委員式的和經理式的城市政府. Vol. 7. No. 3. February 1920. HDB; Zhang Weici. 'Recent Political Changes in Germany'.

<sup>787</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'Proletarian Dictatorship'.

<sup>788</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'Short Introduction'. In the same issue (*Communist*, no. 1) Zhou Fohai claimed that proletarian dictatorship meant real democracy. Zhou Fohai. 'Commemorating the Third Anniversary'.

<sup>789</sup> Li Da. 'About Socialism and Liang Rengong'; Li Da. 'Marxist Socialism'.



present in later CCP writings. In the *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* [1964] it was the concept of "ultra-democracy" (極端民主 *jíduān mínzhǔ*) that was used to refer to Western parliamentary systems. For Mao, ultra-democracy was a threat to revolution.<sup>790</sup>

### 5.2.3 Freedom and Real Freedom

The introduction of revolutionary class struggle language involved changes in styles of writing about freedom (自由 *zìyóu*). The change of agenda meant a change in focus in respect to questions such as whose freedom was underlined and how this freedom was to be attained?

Wei Zhengtong (1985) explains that in the early days of *New Youth*, the group whose freedom was given the most attention was the Chinese youth. Freedom in these early *New Youth* writings was tightly associated with the independence of youth from the oppressive old society.<sup>791</sup> In the writings on mutual aid and democracy, freedom was commonly raised as one of the counter concepts to autocracy, imperialism and militarism (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 above). It was presented as primarily a matter of groups of people whose freedom was in question and individual liberties were given a secondary role. Li Dazhao explained that socialism meant freedom for farmers and workers, that is, freedom for the majority<sup>792</sup>. According to Wu Kunru (1974), group freedom is connected to the idea of equality of all people. Wu points out that *zìyóu* in China has always had a strong connection to the West. The freedom of China has usually meant freedom from Western imperialism.<sup>793</sup>

Another concept that was related to freedom was liberation (解放 *jiěfàng*). Freedom was the goal that was to be attained through the process of liberation. According to a study by Wolfgang Lippert (1979) on the origins of Marxist vocabulary in Japan and in China, *jiěfàng*, or *kaihō* in Japanese, was one of the terms that was first introduced in Japan before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lippert found the term from a Japanese-English dictionary from 1888 in which the English equivalent was "to emancipate, emancipation".<sup>794</sup> Obviously, *jiěfàng* was not used only in texts on Marxism and class struggle. For instance, Li Dazhao already wrote about *jiěfàng* in 1917, well before the introduction of the class struggle language in China. In this particular article *jiěfàng* meant the triumph of democracy and socialism against despotism and capitalism.<sup>795</sup> In February 1919, Li called the current period "a period of liberation" (解放的時代

<sup>790</sup> Mao 1964.

<sup>791</sup> Wei 1985, 77-79.

<sup>792</sup> This explanation was given in a course at Beijing University in summer 1920. Referenced in Gu 2001, 618. Kropotkin had also associated liberty and freedom with equality. In his *Appeal to the Young* he associated true liberty and real equality with "work with all, work for all – the full enjoyment of the fruits of their labor". Kropotkin 1880.

<sup>793</sup> Wu 1974, 14-19.

<sup>794</sup> Lippert 1979, 214-217.

<sup>795</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in Politics'.

*jiěfàng de shídài*). People were seeking liberation from the state, peripheries from centres, colonies from mother countries, the weak from the strong, farmers from landowners, workers (工人 *gōngrén*) from capitalists (資本家 *ziběnjiā*), women from men and children from their parents.<sup>796</sup> As we can see, Li connected *jiěfàng* with the labour movement well before Voitinsky's 1920 arrival in China or the change of policy in *New Youth*. In January 1920, Chen Duxiu also wrote that the current period was the period of liberation (解放的時代) and that freedom meant liberation from autocracy, slavery, capitalism, male dominance, old thought and old religion<sup>797</sup>. After the establishment of the CCP, *jiěfàng* became a central piece of party vocabulary and the party has always presented itself as the liberator of Chinese people from foreign imperialism. As it is well known, the armed forces of the People's Republic of China are called People's Liberation Army (中國人民解放軍 *Zhōngguó Rénmín Jiěfàngjūn*). Zhou Yangshan (1989) states that the meaning of *jiěfàng* in China has been to replace one power regime with another by using the people's power. Thus, the people's power has had only instrumental value. *Jiěfàng* has not referred to establishment of a democratic system.<sup>798</sup> This need to 'liberate' the Chinese people has been used by the CCP to justify the need for its own existence. As in the case of "real democracy", liberation was also connected with ideas of a more equal and just society.

This also was the case with "real freedom". It became more directly a counter concept to inequality, especially when it meant inequality in capitalism and in a socio-economic sense. Chen Duxiu was not the only author who used "real freedom" in this sense. For example, Tan Pingshan explained that "real freedom" (真正的自由 *zhēnzhèng de zìyóu*) meant equality. Freedom for Tan meant that there would be no oppressive or oppressed classes in society<sup>799</sup>. Fei Juetian wrote that freedom and equality could not be separated from each other as they were two sides of the same thing<sup>800</sup>.

Different attitudes towards freedom were related to different attitudes towards the necessity of revolution. In 1921, Li Dazhao explained the difference between Russian liberals and Russian socialists:

我們再考察他們革命黨的歷史，大概分三種勢力：一自由主義；二社會主義；三無政府主義。其初各黨與各黨的主義，色彩不分明，其共同目的，總是相同的。自由主義者和社會主義者，最不相同的手段，在自由主義者主張先得政治的自由，再謀社會的改造；社會主義者主張，立時即起社會革命。

<sup>796</sup> Li Dazhao. 'Federalism and World Organization'.

<sup>797</sup> Chen Duxiu. *Liberation*. 解放. *New Youth*. Vol. 7. No. 2. January 1920. HDB. According to Tang Baolin, *jiěfàng* to a great extent replaced *zìyóu* in Chen's writings since 1920. Tang B. 1989, 967.

<sup>798</sup> Zhou Yangshan 1989b, 514.

<sup>799</sup> Tan Pingshan. 'The Spirit of Modern Democracy'. According to Edward Gu, Tan did not accept the idea of proletarian dictatorship. Gu 2001, 613-614. The idea that real freedom requires the abolishment of the class society also appeared, for instance, in Yang Yizeng's article on reform. Yang Yizeng. 'Why Should Society be Reformed?'

<sup>800</sup> Fei Juetian. 'The Pacific Question!'

When we examine the revolutionary history [in Russia], the forces can be roughly divided into three: liberals, socialists and anarchists. In the beginning, when the character of each party and ideology was not clear, their goals were always similar. In terms of methods, liberals and socialists differed from each other the most. Liberals supported the idea that there should be first political freedom and then the society could be reformed. The socialists supported immediate social revolution.<sup>801</sup>

For Li and Chen revolution had become a necessity. Liberation of Chinese workers was to be realized through class struggle and social revolution. Individual liberties had become goals of secondary importance.

Chen Duxiu distanced himself from Kropotkin by stating that if the revolution in Russia had been based on Kropotkinian free unions, the capitalists would have been able to take the power back. For Chen, Lenin and his revolutionary government were necessities in carrying out the change. Chen also wrote that in some situations power (強權 *qiángquán*) was more important than freedom.<sup>802</sup> This version of freedom was clearly not “real freedom” as it referred to something that was of secondary importance. There seemed to be two different concepts of freedom used simultaneously. *First*, there was the “real freedom” that could become realizable only if the current socio-economic arrangements were abolished and replaced with more equal and righteous ones. *Second*, there was the freedom that was used as a counter concept to authority and restrictive power. This second freedom was used especially in defenses of freedom of speech and freedom of thought<sup>803</sup>. Chen Duxiu’s usage of words in “On Politics” (September 1920) differed from his earlier writings on freedom and clearly implied that the latter version of freedom was only of secondary importance, which was a standpoint that aroused criticism among the readership of the *New Youth*<sup>804</sup>. The difference between these two versions of freedom was related to different attitudes towards power and authority. Authors, such as Zhou Zuoren, who had been excited about Mushanokoji Saneatsu’s New Village movement, praised the spirit of freedom in these communities<sup>805</sup>. Freedom from authority was an important part of the so called new life (新生活 *xīn shēnghuó*) ideal that was associated not only with the new village ideas, but also with the work study experiments. Power, 強權 *qiángquán*, was used to refer to many things that the May Fourth journals had opposed. As was the case with dictatorship (see Section 4.3.1 above), *qiángquán* was also often used to refer to the repressive power regimes in China, tyranny and militarism<sup>806</sup>. When Chen tried to change this

<sup>801</sup> Li Dazhao. ‘Past, Present and Future of the Russian Revolution’.

<sup>802</sup> Chen Duxiu. ‘On Politics’. Although in this article Chen wrote about 強權 *qiángquán* there were also other terms that were commonly used in discussions on the need of power. Power was commonly referred also by 強力 *qiánglì* and 權力 *quánlì*. For more about *quánlì* see Lippert 1979, 211-214.

<sup>803</sup> For instance in *Young China* Chen Qitian wrote that freedom of thought was one of the most important parts of the new culture movement spirit. Chen Qitian. ‘What is the Real Spirit of the New Culture?’.

<sup>804</sup> See for example Ke Qingshi. ‘Proletarian Dictatorship’.

<sup>805</sup> Zhou Zuoren. ‘Notes from a Visit to the New Village in Japan’.

<sup>806</sup> See Stanley 1981, 80.

image he argued that power in itself was not a bad thing. It could be also used for virtuous purposes.<sup>807</sup>

In the debate on anarchism between Chen and Ou Shengbai the question of freedom and the use of force took a central position. Ou, who tried to defend anarchism against Chen's attacks, underlined the importance of freedom. Chen claimed that labour organizations could not act effectively without power and authority, whereas Ou did not believe in use of power (強力 *qiánglì*).<sup>808</sup> Chen Duxiu began to term all methods for reform that did not acknowledge the 'necessity' of the use of force as utopian and unrealistic. Utopianism in these writings did not refer to unrealistic goals of a more equal society, but to methods that were used to attain them. The version of the prevailing circumstances that Chen and other early CCP activists propagated was a world of constant struggle. Only class struggle and proletarian dictatorship were 'realistic' options, everything else was claimed to be daydreaming.<sup>809</sup>

#### 5.2.4 Individual and Individualism

Erica Fox Brindley (2010) claims that Chinese culture has often been characterized as a culture of obligation rather than individual freedom and that relatively few scholars have actually studied the notion of individualism in China. Fox Brindley states that it is a misconception that the individual was insignificant in early Chinese history and intellectual cultures. Discussions on the relevance of individualism in China have not been restricted only to traditional China. For instance, the modern Chinese state has resisted paying attention to allegations of "universal human rights" violations by responding that such rights are bound up in culturally specific views on individualism that are incompatible with traditional "Asian values". Fox Brindley holds that individualism has been "a powerful ideal throughout Chinese history, and thus should be regarded as a crucial element of Asian values."<sup>810</sup> As we shall see, the attitude towards individualism during the May Fourth period was similarly manifold.

After the Chinese Communist Party had taken the power in China in 1949, it executed campaigns against individualism<sup>811</sup>. The campaign in the 1950s was not the first time in Chinese history when people tried to give the concept of individualism negative meanings. This concept was in the middle of controversies already during the May Fourth period. During this period of time, a lot of attention was paid to individualism as many authors saw the individualistic spirit as one of the key issues in reforming Chinese society.

<sup>807</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'On Politics'.

<sup>808</sup> Chen Duxiu & Ou Shengbai. *Discussing Anarchism*. 討論無政府主義. New Youth. Vol. 9. No. 4. August 1921. HDB. The anarchist disbelief in power was also criticized in Communist. Zhou Fohai. 'Why do We Support Communism?'

<sup>809</sup> Chen, for instance, ridiculed the French syndicalists who had opposed class struggle by asking: where was their freedom? See Chen Duxiu. 'On Politics'.

<sup>810</sup> Fox Brindley 2010, ix, xi, 132.

<sup>811</sup> Li Z. 1987, 36.

Different versions of freedom and liberty, which were discussed in the previous section, had a close connection with different attitudes towards individualism. The so called capitalist freedom was a concept of negative connotations. It referred to freedom of individuals in privileged positions in society. The so called real freedom, on the other hand, was connected to the idea of changing the society in order to ‘liberate’ all the ‘common people’. In the early days of the New Culture Movement many held the view that reform must begin on the individual level<sup>812</sup>. This position was turned upside down in the class struggle language according to which genuine reform could only be achieved by changing first the structures of society that set the parameters for individual lives. Thus, the meanings given to the concepts of individual and individualism were connected to conflicting views on how ‘genuine change’ was to be achieved.

One main counter-argument against socialist ideas of arranging the society has always been the claim that socialist arrangements, especially a strong state, seriously undermine the initiative capabilities of individuals. That is, the narrowing of individual leeway is claimed to end up distracting people from creating innovations and progress. Because of this, the individual and individualism tend to become central themes in debates between people who support strong public guidance and people who oppose it. On the side of those who support the idea that a society (governments, unions etc.) should take a greater role in improving the current state of affairs, people can point to negative phenomena that are seen to be related to ‘excessive individualism’, such as the distress of those who have been unable to win out in a world of free competition and individualism. Both of these stands, the defensive and the dismissive, towards the individual and individualism, appeared in May Fourth writings. Findings from dictionaries of the period seem to suggest that although the need for individualist spirit had been underlined by New Culture Movement authors, the concept was actually often associated with selfishness. ‘Individuality’ and ‘private’ were given many negative meanings. In Yan Huiqing’s dictionary from 1921, the first meaning given to the English word individualism was indeed selfishness (利己 *lìjǐ*, 私利主義 *sīlì zhǔyì*)<sup>813</sup>. Related to the connection between individualism and selfishness, also ‘private’ (私 *sī*), in comparison to ‘public’ (公 *gōng*), was given many negative meanings. In Li Yuwen’s dictionary 公私 *gōngsī* was given meanings “public and private” as well as “justice and selfishness”. Li’s dictionary gave the character 私 *sī* the following meanings: 1) private, personal, individual, selfish; 2) secret, mystery; 3) adultery, fornication; 4) favour, benefit; 5) passion, desire; 6) contraband, illicit; 7) family.<sup>814</sup> Based on these observations it seems that it was not necessarily a very difficult task to connect individualism with negative phenomena in social life. This connection was made in *New Youth* before the official establishment of the CCP.

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<sup>812</sup> Liu L. 1995, 87-88.

<sup>813</sup> Yan 1921, 525.

<sup>814</sup> Li Y.W. 1921, 50, 425-426.

Obviously, the introduction of the class struggle language involved aggression towards the concept of individualism (個人主義 *gèrén zhǔyì*) as it represented something very opposite to ideas like the proletarian dictatorship. In the May Fourth context the debate on individualism was related to different versions of socialism and anarchism. Ideas of individualism and freedom were associated with New Village ideals of “new life”. Mushanokoji and others opposed strong state power. In conceptual terms, freedom and individual decision making were much closer to the core in Mushanokoji’s and Kropotkin’s writings than in the writings of Marx or Lenin<sup>815</sup>. However, many of the authors who were interested in anarchism supported communal versions of it (such as Kropotkin and Bakunin), rather than versions that stressed individuality (such as Stirner). The spirit of mutual aid was claimed to be in contrast with individuality<sup>816</sup>. In the debate on anarchism between Ou Shengbai and Chen Duxiu both sides distanced themselves from individualism (*gèrén zhǔyì*). Chen Duxiu’s stance in the debate on anarchism was that freedom and individualism made the labour movement ineffective and impotent. Ou denied that he was a supporter of individual anarchism; he explained that he was supporting anarcho-communism. Ou held the standpoint that individual liberties should be restricted if they harmed the common good. Ou also referred to Bakunin and argued that individual poverty was not real freedom. Ou used *gèrén zhǔyì* itself in a very negative sense: he wrote that if a capitalist robs the wealth of the labourer in order to benefit himself, this can be called *gèrén zhǔyì*.<sup>817</sup> Chen Duxiu and others posited that individualism was an obstacle for a powerful labour movement. For example, Tao Menghe criticized the inability to improve the production system in Europe and wrote that the people of France, the United States and England had been “poisoned” by individualism<sup>818</sup>. Zhang Weici also explained the relative weakness of the American labour movement by the strong tradition of individualism in the United States<sup>819</sup>.

In the early days of *Youth*, Chen Duxiu vigorously defended “the spirit of individualism”<sup>820</sup>. According to Li Zehou (1987), the contrast between Western individualism and Chinese collectivism was repeatedly pointed out in Chen’s writings after 1916<sup>821</sup>. In these writings, the lack of individual spirit in China was portrayed as an unfortunate issue and as one of the reasons connected with the

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<sup>815</sup> “Anarchism” did not necessarily refer to sets of ideas that espoused freedom and individualism. This fact was also acknowledged in May Fourth journals. For example, Tian Han wrote in *Young China* that there were different versions of anarchism, some of them stressed individualism and some of them collectivism. Tian Han. ‘A Poet and the Labor Question (Part 2).’

<sup>816</sup> See for example Tian Han. ‘A Poet and the Labor Question (Part 2).’

<sup>817</sup> Chen Duxiu & Ou Shengbai. ‘Discussing Anarchism’.

<sup>818</sup> Tao Menghe. ‘Impressions from European Tour’.

<sup>819</sup> Zhang Weici. ‘The Organization of the American Labour Movement’.

<sup>820</sup> Chen Duxiu. *The Fundamental Difference between the Thought of Eastern and Western Peoples*. 東西民族根本思想之差異. Youth. Vol. 1. No. 4. December 1915. HDB. See also Chen Duxiu.

*The True Meaning of Life*. 人生真義. New Youth. Vol. 4. No. 2. February 1918. HDB.

<sup>821</sup> Li Z. 1987, 17.

difficulties in developing the Chinese society. This was also a concern of Hu Shi who saw the suppression of the individual as a distinctive feature of the Chinese tradition<sup>822</sup>. Suppression of the individual often appeared in criticism of the traditional Chinese family institution<sup>823</sup>. It was also seen as one of the main sins of militarism<sup>824</sup>.

Within the mutual aid and democracy language, socialism was not directly depicted as a threat to individualism. Conversely, it was in some cases explicitly underlined that there was no conflict between the two. For instance, in *New Tide* Luo Jialun stated that socialism would not threaten individualism, it would support it instead<sup>825</sup>. There was, however, no mutual agreement on this matter as there were different versions of socialism in play. The attitude towards individualism can be seen as an indication of the type of socialism the author in question was advocating. The ones who did not see any conflict between individualism and socialism probably had more moderate versions of socialism in mind than the ones who saw a contradiction between the two and were willing to denigrate 'excessive individualism' because of the mismatch. Besides Luo Jialun, at least Zhou Jianren wrote that individualism was a requirement of socialism as the spirit of struggle, which was needed in reforms, was always based on individuals<sup>826</sup>. Yun Daiying similarly held the view that individualism was an important part of socialism<sup>827</sup>. This union between individualism and socialism also appeared in some of the articles on foreign authors whose ideas were discussed in these journals. For instance, when Rappoport introduced Russian revolutionary thought he pointed out that in Pyotr Lavrov's ideas socialism and individualism were combined<sup>828</sup>. Russell was also called an adherent of individualism<sup>829</sup>.

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<sup>822</sup> Lin, Y. 1979, 96.

<sup>823</sup> See for instance Chen Duxiu. *What Is the New Culture Movement? 新文化運動是什麼?* New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB; Xiang Jingyu. 'On Women's Liberation and Reform'.

<sup>824</sup> See Zhou Zuoren. 'New Village Spirit'.

<sup>825</sup> Luo Jialun. 'The New Tide of Today's World'.

<sup>826</sup> Zhou Jianren. *Darwinism. 達爾文主義*. New Youth. Vol. 8. No. 5. January 1921. HDB. Russell also appeared in this context as a thinker who supported the idea that both, public guidance and individualism, were necessary. See Gao Yihan. *Russell's Social Philosophy. 羅素的社會哲學*. New Youth. Vol. 7. No. 5. April 1920. HDB.

<sup>827</sup> In Yun's case the view that socialism and individualism support each other should not be taken as an indication of moderate view on socialism as he also connected individualism with class revolution that aims to improve the conditions of one particular class. Yun Daiying. *On Socialism. 論社會主義*. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 5. November 1920. HDB.

<sup>828</sup> Rappoport, Angelo (translated by Zhao Mingzhe). *The Philosophical Basis of the Russian Revolution, Part 1. 俄國革命之哲學的基礎 (上)*. New Youth. Vol. 6. No. 4. April 1919. HDB.

<sup>829</sup> Unna, Sarah (translated by Li Guojun). *Russell Then and Now. 羅素之當初和現在*. Young China. Vol. 2. No. 1. July 1920. HDB.

There were, however, many who saw individualism and socialism as belonging to contradictory trends. In *New Tide*, He Siyuan wrote that the trend of individualism would be replaced by the trend of socialism<sup>830</sup>. This kind of 'change in world trends' was also presented by Li Dazhao in *New Youth*<sup>831</sup>. This 'change' was related to the conception that it had had in the previous century (the 19<sup>th</sup> century) that was the decade of individualism<sup>832</sup>. In some cases individualism was also presented as contradictory to the ideas of mutual aid. In *Young China* Xiang Jingyu argued that mutual aid and socialism were replacing individualism and free competition<sup>833</sup>. Li also connected individualism with capitalism that, in this context, meant giving individualism a bad name<sup>834</sup>. This connection was similarly underlined by Fei Juetian<sup>835</sup>.

In *Young China*, Li Dazhao commented on the relation between the individual and society. According to the article, all theories on society should have a solution for solving this issue. The relation between the individual and the society was first and foremost an issue between freedom (自由) and order (秩序 *zhìxù*) and an issue between individualism and socialism. According to Li, it was possible to find a middle way between these ideals. "Real individualism" was something that also took order into consideration whereas the common good and "real socialism" was something that also took care of individual liberties. "Real freedom", on the other hand, meant upholding different possibilities.<sup>836</sup>

Even among those authors who gave negative meanings (part of capitalism, part of 18<sup>th</sup> century thought, against mutual aid and socialism) to individualism, the idea that individualism and freedom represented a counter force against Chinese tradition and the old family institution did not disappear. Thus, in this kind of article, individualism was always given positive meanings. This was also true with the writings of Li Dazhao.<sup>837</sup>

Individualism in this context, like freedom, was given different meanings by different emphasis on the features that could be connected to this concept. In negative versions of the concept, it was the 'benefiting oneself (and not others)' feature that was emphasized. Thus, the negative version of the concept came close to the idea what we usually call egoism or selfishness. The positive version of the concept, on the other hand, emphasized the feature of 'fulfilling oneself' and in this sense individualism could be connected to creativity and

<sup>830</sup> He Siyuan. 'The True Meaning of Thinking'.

<sup>831</sup> Li Dazhao. 'My Views on Marxism, Part. 1'.

<sup>832</sup> See for example Gao Yihan. 'Spencer's Political Philosophy'; Tian Han. 'A Poet and the Labour Question'; Russell, Bertrand (translated by He Siyuan). *Bolshevism*. 佈爾塞維克主義. *New Tide*. Vol. 3. No. 2. March 1922. HDB.

<sup>833</sup> Xiang Jingyu. 'On Women's Liberation and Reform'.

<sup>834</sup> Li Dazhao. 'My Views on Marxism, Part. 1'.

<sup>835</sup> Fei Juetian. 'The Pacific Question!'.

<sup>836</sup> Li Dazhao. *Freedom and Order*. 自由與秩序. *Young China*. Vol. 2. No. 7. January 1921. HDB.

<sup>837</sup> Li Dazhao. 'The Self and the World'; Li Dazhao. 'An Economic Explanation of the Causes of the Changes in Chinese Modern Thought'.



development. In *New Tide*, Hu Shi explained that according to Dewey there were two types of individualism: true individualism and untrue individualism. The untrue individualism meant egoism, whereas the true one meant independent thought and courage to follow one's own convictions. Hu added to these a third version of individualism: attempts to improve society by oneself, somewhere outside society. This third version was part of Hu's critique against the new life ideals associated with the New Village movement. In Hu's mind this kind of individualism was not proper individualism because these communities were avoiding "the real world". Because of this, Hu called it "non-individualism" (非個人主義 *fēi gèrén zhǔyì*).<sup>838</sup> The version of individualism Hu wanted to support was the one where the natural capabilities of individuals were used also to benefit the rest of the society.

Even though Hu Shi did not appreciate the freedom and individualism of the New Village communities, these ideas had become the point of contention between those who supported class struggle and the Soviet Russian example and those who were more willing to follow other forms of anti-capitalism with less forcible measures, such as Russell's ideas on guild socialism or the new life ideals of the work study groups or the new village communities. It had become clear that Marx, whose ideas had received wide attention, did not esteem individualism<sup>839</sup>. In 1920 Chen Duxiu started to rouse critical views against individualism. After the change of policy in *New Youth*, Chen criticized individualism by stating that individuals could not change the capitalist society into something better. Like Hu Shi, Chen associated New Village ideas as a mode of individualism in which a group of people attempt to improve society from the outside. Obviously, also this type of individualism was unable to 'liberate' the society.<sup>840</sup> Chen was also able to connect the esteem of the individual with the values of 'old society' when he addressed the Chinese education system. According to Chen, the old education system concentrated on developing individual scholars, whereas the new education should be based on ideas of supporting the whole society. Chen called the old education, which had been a privilege of the few, an individualistic education system (個人主義教育 *gèrén zhǔyì jiàoyù*).<sup>841</sup> Chen also argued that narrow individualism in China prevented a sense of community from developing<sup>842</sup>.

As these examples show us, the criticism of individualism in this context involved various arguments in which individualism was depicted as ethically questionable. Individualism in many of the articles of the day was associated with selfishness and disregard for others. Individualism also encountered

<sup>838</sup> Hu Shi. 'A New Life of Non-Individualism'.

<sup>839</sup> Kawakami Hajime. 'Marxist Historical Materialism'.

<sup>840</sup> Chen Duxiu. 'Nihilist Individualism and Laissez-Faire Theory'.

<sup>841</sup> Chen Duxiu. *What Is New Education?* 新教育是什麼. *New Youth*. Vol. 8. No. 6. April 1921. HDB.

<sup>842</sup> Chen Duxiu. *What I Say Is Really Nothing out of Ordinary*. 卑之無甚高論. *New Youth*. Vol. 9. No. 3. July 1921. HDB.

changes in its relation to reform. The lack of individual spirit was seen by many as one of the main problems in China's attempts to reform. In the above writings on the organization of the labour movement, individualism appeared as a way of thought that made the labour movement ineffective and it became thus an obstacle to change. These conflicting views on individualism were related to the changing views on the role on individuals in attempts to transform the society.

### 5.3 Radicalization: Summarizing Remarks

It has been argued in this study that competing interpretations of the 'outside world' should be placed in the focus when one aims at understanding developments in political thought in a specific context. It has also been argued that in the May Fourth context, the concept of 'world trend' was a central one in this respect. With the help of this concept a version of the 'outside world' was created in which China belonged to a worldwide proletarian class that was struggling against international capitalism. The trends that China was to follow were revolutionary trends of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. 'World trend' was not the only concept that was given a meaning that would support the idea of following the Soviet Russian example in development. 'Real democracy' and 'real freedom' became ideals that could be realized only through class struggle. Individualism, on the other hand, was associated with selfishness. It was a concept that was associated with active attempts to improve Chinese society and culture, but within the class struggle language individualism started to refer to a concept of negative connotations. 'Selfish individualism' became an enemy to ideas that called for party discipline.

Narrowing the sphere of 'possible', so that class struggle and proletarian dictatorship would appear as only realistic course of development, was executed with a varying set of arguments: capitalism was said to be immoral and against the prevailing trends as was monarchy; Western parliamentary democracy was presented as an arrangement that was used only to secure the privileges of the existing elite, social democracy that supported participation in parliamentary politics was explained as decadent socialism and against the newest trends; sets of ideas (such as syndicalism, guild socialism etc.) that supported organizing labour without strong central authority were held to be worthless daydreaming.

Chen Duxiu organized the first unofficial party cell in Shanghai in August 1920. Similar cells were established also in Beijing, Wuhan, Changsha, Jinan, Guangzhou, Tokyo and Paris before the first congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Besides journals, the group in Shanghai started to organized worker union activities: the first union organized by the Shanghai cell, and set up in November 1920, had about 370 members. The Shanghai cell also organized a socialist youth corps in Shanghai. Some of the members of the youth corps moved to Moscow to study revolutionary theory during the autumn of 1921.<sup>843</sup>

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<sup>843</sup> Zhang H., Wang Y.X. & Gao D. 1991, 137-140.

When the first congress convened on July 23, 1921, in Shanghai, there were 13 Chinese participants that represented a little over 50 party members. The majority of these members had participated in study groups on Marxism that were established during 1920 and 1921. These groups became the basis of the individual party units of the CCP. The 13 participants in the first congress included people who had been actively contributing to May Fourth journals. Li Da and Zhou Fohai wrote articles for *New Youth*. Zhang Guotao had been active both in the Young China Association that published *Young China* and in Students for Saving the Nation that published the *Citizen* journal. Liu Renqing also wrote for *Young China*. In the congress, Li Da and Li Hanjun represented Shanghai, Zhang Guotao and Liu Renqing represented Beijing, Dong Biwu 董必武 (1886-1975) and Chen Tanqiu 陳潭秋 (1896-1943) represented Wuhan, Mao Zedong and He Shuheng 何叔衡 (1876-1935) represented Changsha, Wang Jinmei 王盡美 (1898-1925) and Deng Enming 鄧恩銘 (1901-1931) represented Jinan, Cheng Gongbo 陳公博 (1892-1946) represented Guangzhou and Zhou Fohai represented Chinese members in Japan. Bao Huiseng 包惠僧 (1894-1979) from Wuhan also participated in the congress because he happened to be in Shanghai at the time of the event.<sup>844</sup> Comintern representatives Henk Sneevliet ("Maring") and Wladimir Abramowitsch Neumann ("Nikolski") were present, but Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao did not attend<sup>845</sup>. Apparently, Li was busy with his workload at the Beijing University. Chen, on the other hand, had moved to Guangzhou in November 1920 and was working there as an education officer. He returned to Shanghai in August 1921.<sup>846</sup>

The congress, which was chaired by Zhang Guotao, made decisions on the goals the party wished to attain. The party was to establish a proletarian nation, remove class divisions, realize a proletarian revolution, overthrow the capitalist system, organize the labour force, spread communism, and to support class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. The first congress also decided to nominate Chen Duxiu as Secretary General. Chen was also chosen to the three-person Central Bureau together with Zhang Guotao and Li Da.<sup>847</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> Van de Ven 1991, 85-86.

<sup>845</sup> Dirlik 1989, 248; Van de Ven 1991, 99.

<sup>846</sup> Zhonggong Zhongyang 1989, 6-10; Van de Ven 1991, 80-90, 99; Dirlik 1989, 248.

<sup>847</sup> Zhonggong Zhongyang 1989, 6-10; Van de Ven 1991, 80-90.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the May Fourth Movement radicalization by focusing on how competing interpretations on China's international environment were applied before the official establishment of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in July 1921. These competing interpretations have been analyzed through different versions of the concept of world trend. World trends brought to light competing ideological standpoints and different depictions of the prevailing circumstances within the May Fourth Movement.

This approach has been helpful in a related attempt to move beyond established approaches in studies of Chinese intellectual history that are seen problematic. *First*, the study has tried to establish distance from the impact – response model according to which changes in Chinese thought and society took place mainly as a response to foreign (usually Western) impacts. Following this model, increased interest in revolutionary Marxism within this period has been explained by the 'double impact' of the Paris Peace Conference and the October Revolution in Russia. The current study does not try to deny the relevance of these events as such. Obviously, the October Revolution could be seen as an event, which demonstrated that a proletarian revolution was not a mere fantasy. The course of events in Russia made it much easier to make claims about the revolutionary road as a possible option. It is equally true that the events in the Paris Peace Conference, where Japan was favoured at China's expense, made it easier to portray some of the Western governments as deceitful enemies, and their parliamentary institutions as means to mislead their people. The current study has aimed at indicating, however, that the process was more complicated than the impact---response model seems to imply. Positive depictions of the Bolshevik government and its actions did not necessarily imply support for class struggle. The October Revolution and the Karakhan Declaration were also discussed with references to the spirit of democracy and to the spirit of mutual aid, not necessarily in terms of class struggle. This is to say, the arrival of the class struggle language was not a matter of passive response to certain events. Even if there were events that made it easier to defend the relevance of the class struggle framework, it does not mean that it was the only possible way of

interpreting these events, nor that the events themselves carried certain styles of writing about them.

*Second*, the study has aimed to challenge narrations of the rise of the CCP that are premised on the basis of epiphenomenality and inevitability. By presenting and discussing contingencies in the May Fourth debates, the study has aimed to illustrate that it is questionable to claim that certain developments in political thought took place only as a result of certain material realities. It is questionable, because there were contradictory views on these 'realities'. Therefore, we should pay attention to the language and concepts through which different views on the prevailing circumstances were argued and legitimized. In other words, a scholar studying the developments of political thought in a certain context should not only ask what were the 'realities' that caused the developments one wishes to understand. One should also ask how this certain line of thought was justified by using particular projections of 'reality'. The rise of the CCP was not a result of some inevitable historical forces, but a result of active struggle in which specific uses of words and concepts played a key role.

During the May Fourth period, there were many people who were convinced that China should follow Western ideas, but there was no agreement on how to do this and which were the most suitable ideas to follow. The belief in science was related to the popularity of Darwin and evolutionary theory that was believed to offer tools for scientific explanations in all areas of life. Both of these issues, the belief in the omnipotence of science and popularity of evolutionary theory, were interconnected with the writings on world trends: people wrote that China had to adapt to world thought trends in order to survive, in order to civilize China and in order to create progress. This 'need to follow world trends' was used to justify all kinds of thought and ideas: opposition to contemporary power holders, rejection of Confucianism, rejection of traditional family norms, support for the independence of youth, emancipation of women, need to study socialism and Marxism, need to organize Chinese workers, adoption of class struggle theories to China, rejection of representative democracy, support for proletarian dictatorship, and other themes. In the May Fourth context, it was widely believed that China should be developed by adaptation to international development trends; it was thought to be impossible to develop independently by creating a completely unique course of development.

However, observing history and commenting on methods of studying history has not been the only motive behind this study. The intention has also been to stress the importance of the role of language and concepts in politics in a broader sense. More specifically, this study has aimed to draw attention to the ways of speaking and writing about time and abstract entities such as 'current trends'. The May Fourth Movement could be seen as a special case in its emphasis given to comprehension of world trends. This emphasis was related to the above-mentioned desire to learn from the West and to the Darwinian setting where the ones who are able to adapt to the prevailing circumstances would survive and prosper. One should not, however, think that this theme would hold relevance only in this specific context. 'What are the most important

developments in the international operational environment?', 'How should we understand these developments?', and 'How should we react to them?' are questions that have been asked, are asked, and will also be asked in future political debates, and not only in China. Depictions of current trends are interrelated to talking about time and timeliness of policies and ideas. It is a commonplace in politics that competing factions try to present their own policies as the ones that are progressive, timely and in accordance with the strongest contemporary trends. It is equally a commonplace that competing political actors also wish to discredit the opposing side by making claims of its regressive policies, outmoded ideology, and ideas that do not take international trends into consideration. The current study holds that there is no neutral way of representing 'world trends of thought', their specific content, or their direction. It is always a matter of selection.

The scope of the study is narrow in terms of its time span. Nevertheless, it deals with themes that have had longlasting implications in Chinese political thought: this study has explored the conceptual context in which the class struggle paradigm was introduced in China. The relevance of the class struggle thematic in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China was tied to the question of how the prevailing circumstances, and necessities and possibilities within them, were projected in this context. The version of these circumstances that was used to construct arguments on the necessity of class struggle, was the one in which China had to follow international trends of revolutionary Marxism. Other possible courses of development were presented as damaging to China's attempts to progress and prosper. Instead of looking for traces of textbook versions of ideologies, the study has approached these writings by searching for paradigms that were followed in these journals. The purpose was to sketch the argumentation structures within which key concepts such as world trend, democracy and socialism were used. The main threats that were constantly underlined in this context before the introduction of class struggle, between late 1918 and early 1920, were militarism and imperialism. The abstract solution that was offered was a combination of mutual aid and democracy. This 'paradigm' involved certain basic arguments and specific meanings of concepts. The core of this 'political language' was the claim that mutual aid was the key in evolution, not mutual struggle. Kropotkin was portrayed as a scientific authority who had taken Darwinian evolutionary theory to a higher level. Although the May Fourth Movement is often called a nationalist or a patriotic university movement, the findings of this study show that nationalism and patriotism were in fact often criticized and they were claimed to be against the trends of mutual aid and democracy. The study also shows that capitalism was a concept of negative connotations already before anyone supported class struggle in this context. Thus, it was not Marxism that somehow politicized the movement and took it from a sphere of neutrality to an ideological sphere.

Belief in the omnipotence of science was characteristic to the May Fourth period intellectuals. Often, strong belief in the power of science was tied to the excitement of progress and a belief in evolutionary theory. The First World War,

or the European War as it was often called in the May Fourth Movement journals, seemingly changed common views about Social Darwinist thought in China. Criticism of Social Darwinism did not, however, imply total rejection of the Darwinian evolutionary frame: adaptation to the prevailing circumstances was still thought to be essential. Adaptation to world thought trends involved discussions around numerous isms, such as socialism, nationalism and capitalism. Meanings given to world trends affected the styles of using new concepts. Whether a particular ism was depicted in a positive light or not was closely connected to the question of whether it was in accordance with the newest world trends. Writings on world trends were used to construct images of the intellectual atmosphere of the 'outside world'. These images were used to make claims what was possible and impossible in China. In other words, they were used to support specific versions of the circumstances within which China was to be developed.

As it was shown above (see section 5.1.3), it was by no means an easy and simple task to promote class struggle in May Fourth China. Many people questioned the relevance of the class struggle paradigm in the Chinese case. Marx himself was depicted as an outmoded author. Another problem was the applicability of class struggle theories. It was, after all, a matter of applying theories of the development of capitalism into a context where little such development had taken place. The solution for this problem was the idea of international class struggle: it was explained that the great majority of Chinese people belonged to a proletarian class that was struggling against international capitalism.

Speech acts in which the concept of 'world trend' was associated with Comintern versions of revolutionary class struggle did not appear immediately after the October revolution in 1917, nor after the disappointment in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It was not until the autumn of 1920 that prevailing trends were connected with the 'necessity' of proletarian revolution. In the May Fourth context, the early proponents of Marxism did not write about class revolution, but about social revolution. The concept of social revolution was used to encapsulate many central ideals of the period: equality, democracy, freedom and humanity. Hence, it could function as a link between the mutual aid and class struggle languages. Before the introduction of the class struggle language, social revolution did usually not refer to violent revolution or to direct action, but to a set of reforms in which a more equal and just society would be created.

Before 'world trends', 'socialism', and 'labour movement' were associated with Marx, Lenin, and class struggle, they were associated with Kropotkin, mutual aid, and democracy. The mutual aid version of the 'outside world' stressed the importance of co-operation among friends (common people, workers), whereas the class struggle version underlined the importance of active struggle against the enemies (the bourgeoisie class, capitalism). Both languages that were used to support these views underlined the importance of socio-economic equality, but they differed from each other in their versions of democracy, freedom and individuality. Unlike in the mutual aid language,

within the class struggle language all these things became subordinated to the 'necessity' of revolution. Class struggle language was a language of juxtapositions. Versions of socialism that did not support the 'necessity' of revolution were called unrealistic and utopian as opposed to 'scientific socialism' that referred to revolutionary Marxism. Certainly, in retrospect one could say that many policies executed in the name of this 'science' turned out to be more or less utopian themselves.

The concept of democracy within the 'language of mutual aid and democracy' did not primarily refer to parliamentary institutions. Democracy was commonly used in a more abstract sense, as "spirit of democracy", which referred to an ideal of a more just and a more equal society. This more equal society meant equality in a socio-economic sense and equality in education. Democracy appeared as a concept that was used to criticize the contemporary state of affairs. Confucian norms, militarism, capitalism and the power of the official elite were posited as being against the spirit of democracy. According to a common view in the May Fourth context, the revolution of 1911 had been unsuccessful in setting up "real democracy" in China and that the revolution had brought only titular improvements. After the revolution, China was called 'a republic', but in practice China was a disintegrated country and ruled by various warlords. With the class struggle language, another version of "real democracy" appeared: This version was a counter concept to Western parliamentary democracies that were explained as 'unreal democracies' in the sense that they were used by the existing elites to secure their own privileges. According to this class struggle language, social revolution and real democracy could not be realized by parliamentary means.

The depictions of the 'language of mutual aid and democracy' and the 'class struggle language' in this study should be seen as kind of 'ideal types'. In most cases the authors used these languages only partially; they referred to only some of the 'basic claims' and used only some of the concepts. Despite such partialities, such ideal types of languages can still help us to understand what kind of argumentation structures were related to the conceptual developments in this context. The authors in question did not necessarily aim at orthodoxy in their versions of foreign theories and ideologies. Thus, attempts to explain these conceptual developments by looking merely at the foreign sources they referred to can be misleading.

One should, at the same time, be careful in drawing too broad conclusions on Chinese political thought in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century based on the findings of this study. The 'political languages' presented in this study should not by any means be seen as the only ones used by Chinese intellectuals during this period. The research material used in this study is, after all, relatively modest in scope. Although many of the authors appearing in this study were undoubtedly influential and notable in later developments in Chinese political thought, this study is still a study of the writings of a rather small group of people.

The question 'what is scientific?' has been dealt here from the point of view of a political struggle between competing paradigms. The issue of science and



politics was related to the juxtaposition between scientific and utopian ways of thought. This study has aimed to show that the relation between the two was not clear and self-evident: there were conflicting versions of them and it was not self-evident that 'scientific socialism' would finally prevail over 'utopian socialism'. Although the view that Marxism was scientific while anarchism was utopian had been presented in many of the foreign books that the Chinese authors studied, the scientific validity of Marxism was not undeniable. The concept of 'scientific socialism' was also questioned in the West<sup>848</sup>. Hence, it was possible to claim with references to foreign authors, that the whole concept was misleading, not valid, and against the newest world trends.

Attempts to portray ones ideas and policies as scientific ones are attempts to narrow down the scope of 'possible' so that only one type of action would appear realizable. Value judgments cannot, however, be measured and judged in a neutral manner<sup>849</sup>. Because of this, claims of neutrality and objectivity of policies, ideas or ideologies that are called scientific, should always be treated with suspicions. Such claims should be seen simply as attempts at justification. If in a given communal decision making situation there seems to be only one possible course of action, it should be seen as a sign of the end of a political struggle: a plurality of possibilities has disappeared from view, and one version of the circumstances and necessities within them has been legitimized and accepted.

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<sup>848</sup> See for example Bernstein E. 1899.

<sup>849</sup> See for example Nardin 2012, 183-186.

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