

The Transformation of Progressive Ideologies:

Reflections on the Anarchist Movement in the Chinese Revolution, 1911-1929

“...Recognition of the anarchist presence in revolutionary discourse is a reminder of the ideological appropriation of the discourse on the social as social revolution was harnessed in the service of political goals (p.35, Dirlik, 1991).”

Looking back on the modern history of many societies, modernization hardly took place without revolutions; likewise, revolutions hardly took place without the involvement of ideology. But, whether the “elective affinity” between ideology and revolutions implies any causal links has been in question. After all, could the French Revolution happen without Enlightenment ideas? And why did the Communists, rather than other ideological revolutionaries, win the Chinese Revolution? To answer such questions requires not only a clear conception of ideology but also the mechanism of ideological dynamics in the revolutions. Marx is one of the first to conceptualize the role of “ideology” in society and class struggles since the invention of the term “ideology” during the Enlightenment, although he did not manage to develop a theory of ideology in general (Althusser, 2014). From a reductionist Marxist view, ideology is the “expressions of class or other group interests (p.35, Dirlik, 1991).” Despite a variety of controversies over the conception of ideology, this class-based notion has been widely accepted and used as a basic analytical tool in the relevant studies. In particular, with regards to the studies of revolutions, many scholars tend to conflate the role of class with the “class” ideology, based on an assertion of the consistency between class interests and the “contents” of corresponding ideology. However, although the notion is in general tenable in the analysis of modern Western societies, it is quite dysfunctional in the case of the early modern Chinese society, in which there were not only an absence of dominant classes, but also a

decoupling between the political power and social power of all the social classes. During the Chinese Revolution, when the Chinese intellectual revolutionaries imported or borrowed various class-based socialist ideas from the West to China in order to transform the society, they had confronted with great difficulties in helping the progressive ideas take root in the “backward” social soil.

On the other hand, the ideological dynamic in the Chinese Revolution has been neglected or simplified by previous scholars of the Chinese Revolution for a long time. They tended to either downplay the role of ideologies by following a Marxist tradition, or narrowly focus on the “instrumental” aspect of ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in its mobilization strategies and organizational power. Meanwhile, other ideologies such as anarchism and “Three Principles of the People” are much less noticed and analyzed in comparison. Indeed, for most of the period during the Chinese Revolution there were once multiple prevailing revolutionary ideologies coexisted in China. And no one ever completely managed to dominate the whole society or even the whole set of various revolutionary groups. In particular, anarchism stands out from other ideological currents as not only one of the earliest Western ideologies arriving and sweeping in China, but also one of the few of which followers have rich interactions with and impact on both of the CCP and Guomindang (KMT) during the Chinese Revolution.

By reflecting on the anarchist movement in the Chinese Revolution, this paper attempts to demonstrate the general logic in the transformation of the Western progressive ideologies in a non-West social environment and provide more empirical evidence for the revision potential of previous theorization on the role of ideology in social revolutions. In this process, this paper will reexamine a variety of the conceptions of ideology and its role in the revolutions by reviewing the debate between Skocpol (1985) and Sewell (1985) triggered by the seminal work *States and Social*

Revolutions (1979). Their debate was an important attempt to reflect on the conception and the role of ideology in social revolutions. In *States and Social Revolutions*, Skocpol (1979) offers a comprehensive structuralist explanation of social revolutions, in contrast with a traditional purposive image of revolutions. While, rejecting the “voluntarist” conception of “ideology” and the ignorance of the explanatory power of ideology in Skocpol’s book, Sewell contends that the role of ideology is an indispensable part of social revolutions by offering a structuralist conception of ideology and emphasizing the significance of the contents of ideology per se. In her response, although Skocpol does not fully agree with Sewell’s conception, she was convinced of recognizing the importance of studying the ideational aspect of revolutions and urged further study to “probe the patterns of interrelation among cultural idioms, political ideologies, and the politics of revolutionary transformations (p. 95, Skocpol, 1985).” Viewing *States and Social Revolutions* as a reworking of class analysis on social revolutions, Skocpol affirms that it would be the same worthwhile to rework the ideological analysis on social revolutions with viewing revolutions as “ideological inspired projects to remake social life in its entirety (p.88, *ibid*).”

The next section is a review of the debate between Skocpol and Sewell on the conception of ideology as well as Swidler’s and Tsou’s following discussion. The second section is an overview of anarchism in the early modern China, as well as the interactions of Chinese anarchists with the other mainstream revolutionary ideologies, including the Marxism of the CCP and the “Three Principles of the People” of the KMT. The third section is a discussion of the role of ideology and its relationship with other counterparts in the Chinese Revolution.

I. The Debate on Ideology

The debate on the conception and the role of ideology in social revolutions begins with the seminal work of Skocpol (1979), *States and Social Revolutions*. In the book, Skocpol offers a new, comprehensive structuralist explanation of the causes and outcomes of social revolutions. In the view of Skocpol, social revolutions should be explained from a structural perspective, with particular attention paid to international contexts and to developments at home and abroad. In particular, she proposes three major critiques of the traditional theories and form the basis of her own analysis. First, for a full understanding of social revolutions, analysts should use a non-voluntarist and structural perspective, rather than a purposive or voluntarist perspective, on how revolutions happen. Second, social revolutions should be explained using international and world-historical contexts, rather than the contexts of domestic conflicts and modernization. Third, she notes that analysts should conceive of states as administrative and coercive organizations, rather than as representations of socioeconomic forces and interests.

In his review paper of *States and Social Revolutions*, Sewell (1985) appreciates Skocpol's structural approach to explaining social revolutions, but he refutes her complete denial of ideological explanations in the process of revolution. In his view, ideology plays an important role in both the causes and the outcomes of revolutions, while the recognition of the importance of ideology does not necessarily contradict with the structural perspective. He thinks the drawback of Skocpol's account is that she rejects the "voluntarist" view of revolution on the one hand and keeps a voluntarist conception of ideology on the other. In order to make her structural explanation consistent with the conception of ideology, ideology need to be defined in structural terms as well. Hence, Sewell offers his alternative conception of ideology as "anonymous, collective, and constitutive of social order (p.84, *ibid*)" based on two revisions. First, he conceptualizes ideology

as one type of social structures characterized by anonymity, duality, and collectivity. In contrast to Skocpol's term "nonvoluntary", Sewell uses "anonymity" to recognize the role of human will in the ideological production and transformation. By "collectivity," he means that willful actions are exercised by a large number of different willful actors, rather than any single actor. And "duality" refers to the ideological structures both constraining and enabling. In this sense, ideology is subject to change, reproduction and transformation, while how ideology change, reproduce or transform depends on the possibilities and constrains offered by the preexisting ideological and other structures. Second, Sewell regards ideology as the constitutive of the social order. He contends that "all social relations are at the same time ideological relations, and all explicit ideological discourse is a form of social action (p.61, *ibid*)."

In her response to Sewell's critique, Skocpol (1985) admits the insufficiency of her inquiry of ideology by regarding it as "deliberate blueprints for change that leaves untouched many of the ways in which ideas may affect the course of revolutions (p.86, Skocpol, 1985)." However, Skocpol is not fully convinced of Sewell's use of "cultural system" in his conception of ideology. She argues that an anthropological idea of cultural system is too unrealistically totalistic to understand the complex sociopolitical orders, and such approach may falsely regard the cultural and ideological change as "complete replacement of one society-wide cultural system by another (p.90, *ibid*)". As a revision of Sewell's conception, Skocpol refers to ideology as "idea systems developed and deployed by particular groups or alliances engaged in temporally specific political conflicts or attempts to justify the use of state power (p.91, *ibid*)."

Unlike Sewell, Swidler (1986) does not have a direct dialogue with Skocpol but draws on two arguments from Skocpol's book (1979) and review article (1985) in her seminal work *Culture in Action*. The first is the distinction between ideology, tradition, and common sense, which

Swidler thinks is similar to how Skocpol (1985) distinguishes “ideology” from “cultural idioms” that compared to ideology, cultural idioms have “longer-term, more anonymous, and less partisan existence (p.91, *ibid*)”. Swidler concurs with that ideology is more “self-conscious” than traditions and common sense. Besides, it relies on more active engagement to realize its claims. Hence, she refers to ideology as “a highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action (p.279, 1986).”. Second, Swidler argues that the outcome that which ideology or cultural model could dominate the arena or go into a decline, depends on the structural constraints and historical circumstances. She suggests that, in the short run, ideology imposes strong control over social action by offering new modes of action. While, in the long run, its influence is ultimately determined by “structural opportunities for survival of competing ideologies (p.282, *ibid*). Furthermore, the established cultural capacities or resources in one historical context can be reappropriated in new social circumstances.

Based on the analysis of Chinese Revolution, Tsou (2000) contends that ideology is in a triadic relationship with its own action and a broader ideological agenda, inherited at home or borrowed from abroad. This seems to resonate with the argument of the reappropriation of established culture from Swidler (1986). By including the broader theoretical umbrella into the interaction of ideology, this approach makes a theoretical contribution on the ideological dynamic of the revolution in the third world countries and especially the post-colonial world, where most revolutionary ideologies were “imported” from abroad, and especially from the West. Compared to its counterparts in France and Russia, the Chinese Revolution was distinct for a larger role of colonial powers and the revolutionary ideologies “imported” from abroad. Paradoxically, the Chinese Revolution was realized through a long-period anti-colonial war against the West, while guided by the blueprints borrowed from the West. The former led to the collapse of the old

monarchal regime and the emergence of nationalism, and finally triggered the social revolution in China; while the latter ultimately shaped the course and the outcome of the revolution. With the collapse of the old monarchal regime and under the threat of foreign powers, the emergence of nationalist consciousness produced the idea of “the social” and the notion of society for the first time, which urged the progressives and intellectuals to address the state-society relationship. Meanwhile, inspired by the social revolutions happening in France, Japan, and Russia, more and more Chinese revolutionaries sought for a social transformation of the Chinese society from a monarchy to a nation-state, which “could claim no transcendental or transhistorical moral sanction but depended for its legitimacy on its ties to the society it claimed to represent (p.32, Dirlik, 1991).” Until the early 1920s, the most prominent revolutionary groups in China were the Communists, KMTs, and Anarchists. They either directly imported or indirectly adapted the progressive socialist ideologies from the West. In spite of their differences over the path and outcomes of the revolution, they shared a common discourse of “the social,” which is derived from socialism in Europe (ibid). In a sense, different revolutionary groups in China were participants in the same socialist movement (at least before 1927 when KMT temporarily restored the political order of China with a status change from an opposition group to a ruling party).

In sum, despite the theoretical disagreements on the conception and the role of ideology, almost all of the scholars concur with the material and flexible nature of ideological transformation. On the one hand, the revision and transformations of ideology are “material” in nature—the interaction of ideology is always in the forms of actual struggles or confrontation with its rivals or social circumstances in reality. On the other hand, the dynamic interactions of ideology demonstrate the flexibility of ideology itself in adjusting its revolutionary strategies (action) and

discourses through the self-conscious action or rational choices made by the relevant political actors.

II. The Anarchist Movement in the Chinese Revolution

The study of the history of socialism in China has focused on “the paradigm of Mao’s personal biography (p.5, *ibid*).” This CCP-centric view tends to either downplay or ignore the role of other ideological variants, especially the Anarchists. In his analysis of the Chinese Revolution, Tsou (2000) claims that “the Chinese Revolution did not just come. It was made against great odds. The CCP triumph owed much to flexible strategies and tactics (p.232, *ibid*).” By focusing on what the communists have done right to realize their ultimate success in the revolution, he implicitly equates the success of Chinese Revolution to the political victory of the CCP. Granted, the CCP is the final winner of the revolution by overcoming a variety of unfavorable conditions. Tsou ignores the other acting groups carrying different ideologies in the revolution, such as the Anarchists and KMT, which should not be reduced as merely the “losers” of the competition or the “barriers” to the success of the CCP. Among all the mainstream ideological currents in the Chinese Revolution, anarchism stands out from others as not only one of the earliest Western ideologies arriving and sweeping in China, but also having close connections with both of the CCP and the KMT. In the first two decades of the Chinese Revolution, anarchism and anarchists had rich ideological dynamics and interaction with the other ideologies and acting groups. Joining the socialist movement with the Marxism of the CCP and the Three People’s Principles of the KMT, the anarchists made great efforts moving from theory to action through a series of social experiments and practices. Dirlik (1991) suggests that

...the history of socialism in China, which may no longer be conceived simply as a progressive evolution of a correct socialism under the guidance of Mao Zedong or the

Communist party...it must be seen also as a series of suppressions: not simply as the evolution of a strategy and a set of policies that brought socialism to power, but also in the course of those very formulations a suppression of the ideals and the democratic vision that had initially motivated the revolution. (p.8, Dirlik, 1991).

In this sense, recognizing the significance of anarchism can not only contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the history of Chinese socialism, but also demonstrates the complex ideological dynamics among the different acting groups in the socialist revolutionary movement.

The Origins of Anarchism in China

Chinese revolutionaries' initial encounter with anarchism was the propagation of Russian social movement "Narodnichestvo" in China from 1902-1905. Many revolutionary journals and newspapers introduced the "Narodnik" as Russian nihilists or anarchists, and published articles on their assassination stories in Europe. Especially, in 1903 a lot of influential radical journals reported and spoke highly of the assassination of Alexander II of Russia by Narodnaya Volya. A series of those positive reports motivated the anti-Qing revolutionaries to believe assassination would be a short-cut to the revolutionary against the Qing monarchy and to organize various anti-Qing assassination groups. Hence, assassination once became the main means of anti-Qing revolutionaries until the 1911 Revolution overthrew the imperial dynasty. While the propagation of Russian nihilists or anarchist assassinations triggered a wave of assassination activities among the radicals in China, Chinese revolutionaries had not encountered with the philosophy and ideology of anarchism until the establishment of two overseas Chinese anarchist groups—the Paris and Tokyo anarchists in 1906 and 1907.

Since 1905, the Qing dynasty has attempted to make a transition to a constitutional monarchy based on a Japanese model. In spite of the ultimate failure, the constitutional reform opened more opportunities and space for political expression and activities. In this political context, from 1906 until the eve of the 1911 Revolution, Chinese anarchist thinking was gradually developed and nourished, with the formation of two factions of anarchism represented by the “New World Society” derived from the Paris anarchist group, and “Tianyi Society” derived from the Tokyo anarchist group. Both of the two groups were formed among the Chinese intellectual diaspora in France and Japan. With the direct access to European anarchist literature, they “discovered an anarchist tradition that was not to be subsumed under Russian nihilism, but had a history of its own as part of European socialism (p.78, Dirlik,1991).” They did not view anarchism as a mere weapon against despotism of Qing dynasty, but “an integral philosophy of global social transformation (p.79, *ibid*).” In general, the two groups were supportive of each other, yet with “different attitudes toward the modern West, as well as toward the problems of changing China (p.108, *ibid*)” Despite the common rejection of capitalism, the Paris anarchists advocated a futuristic anarchism and still valued the products of capitalism, science, and industry. In contrast, the Tokyo group held an anti-modernist view of anarchism with more reservations of cosmopolitanism and more appreciation of Chinese civilizations. The leader of the Tokyo group, Liu Shipei argued that “Reform is inferior to preserving the old, constitution is inferior to monarchy (Liu, 1907).” Moreover, inspired by Tolstoy’s laborism and Xu Xing’s native agrarian utopianism, the Tokyo group placed more emphasis on the question of rural society and labor.

Although anarchist thoughts had been introduced to China before 1911, the anarchist activities did not appear within China until the Revolution of 1911, as the newly established republican system allows more political freedom. And two anarchist groups were most prominent

in the anarchist movement in the early republican China—the returned Paris group and a newly formed Guangzhou group. The Paris anarchist group returned to China shortly after the revolution. With a strong interest in education, they cooperated with the authorities in China and France in organizing the “diligent-work frugal-study” program. Although the Paris anarchists had a moderate political stance, their work-study program assisted many radical Chinese intellectuals to study in France. Many of them converted to communism in Europe and later became the leaders of CCP, such as Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. Meanwhile, in Guangzhou, a native anarchist, Shifu and his followers promoted a “pure” and radical anarchism. Through a series of debate with other socialist groups in China, in particular with the Chinese Socialist Party, the Guangzhou anarchists distinguished anarchism with other variants of socialisms, and ultimately developed Chinese anarchism into a mature and systematical ideology, also known as Shifu’ism (Wang, 2013). Around the May Fourth Movement in 1919, Chinese anarchism “reached the apogee of its popularity” and “virtually monopolized the social revolutionary Left (p.286, Dirlik, 1991).”

Anarchism, Communism, and Three Principles of the People

The emphasis of the three ideologies—anarchism, communism, and Three Principles of the People, respectively correspond to three most pressing social issues/conflicts in early modern China—social backwardness, economic backwardness, and the warlords and feudal power. But they share a similar idea of the social derived from European socialism, as well as the common anti-capitalist and anti-imperial revolutionary goals. With the assistance of Comintern, the first communist political organization was established in China in 1920. In the beginning, Comintern was eager to integrate anarchists, the most prominent group on the social revolutionary Left at that time, into the Marxist political groups it established in China. From 1919 to 1922, Communists

cooperated with Anarchists in the establishment of “socialist alliances” in many major cities. “These socialist alliances were to serve as the basis in 1920 for the Marxist study societies,” which “were to provide the building blocks for the Communist Party of China (p.17, *ibid*).” Likewise, based on the common anti-feudal and anti-imperial revolutionary goals, the CCP and KMT collaborated twice on defeating the warlords and Japanese Imperial Invasion, in order to realize the unification of the country. With the first collaboration between the CCP and KMT in 1922 facilitated by Comintern, the communists and anarchists had further decoupled from each other since then. On the other hand, some doyens of Chinese anarchism, such as the founders of Paris anarchist groups, were also the founding members of KMT. After the suppression of the CCP in 1927 when the KMT conducted a brutal purge against Communists and left the KMT members, more core anarchists decided to collaborate with the KMT following these doyens, in order to recapture the labor movement from the CCP. In 1927, with the assistance of the KMT, the anarchists established their own educational institution, Labor University, for training “a new kind of labor leader in China who would be able to guide labor movements without subjection to political parties (p.24, *ibid*).”

However, the fundamental disagreement on the idea of the political and the state shaped their distinct revolutionary tactics and operational capacities, which split the Anarchists, Marxists and the KMTs, and ultimately determined the outcomes of the revolution. With regard to the KMTs, the ideology of Three Principles of the People has hardly questioned the role of state and even regarded the state as an indispensable force to realize the revolution. Furthermore, the alliance between the Anarchists and the KMT was short-lived. When the KMT unified the country and established its political power in 1928, the mass movements were becoming a new threat to its political order again. As a result, the anarchist movement and their activities in Labor University

were suppressed in 1929. After the repression, the anarchist movement gradually went into decline in China.

As a group against authorities and also rejecting to take over the authorities, the anarchists regard a classless society as not only their goals but the guiding principle of their practice and tactics. Although the communists regard the society without authorities as the ultimate goal, they believe it is essential to have a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat as the replacement of political power before the arrival of the final phase of socialism. Yet, anarchism has distinct emphasis on the individual autonomy and the priority of personal interest, which objects to the organizational discipline of the Communist party. As a result, with the disagreement on the proletarian dictatorship and hierarchical organization, the Bolshevik program of the CCP split the anarchists and communists.

III. Discussion

In his analysis of Chinese Revolution, Dirlik (1991) discerns ideology from discourse. By ideology, he means “the articulation of class or other social interests;” By discourse, he means “the articulation of a broader system of authority structured by the interaction of these more narrow interests from which ideology as an ‘integrative cultural system’ derives its form (p.37, *ibid.*)” According to his conception, discourse is both integrative and dissimulative, because the society as a whole, shares a common language of everyday life and culture on the one hand; and the common language conceals the embedded relationship of power and domination, i.e. a hidden hegemony, on the other. Meanwhile, the discourse serves as “the arena for ideological conflict whereby different social groups seek to assimilate the discourse to their own way of life and interests (p.38, *ibid.*)” In order to appropriate the discourse, Dirlik contends that, ideological

activity attempts to implement a “strategy of containment,” whereby the ideology could contain the discourse consistent with their interest groups yet exclude the discourse unfavorable to their social interests. And in the context of the revolution, the ultimate goal of each revolutionary ideology is to overthrow the hidden hegemony embedded in the established discourse through the strategic appropriation of it while competing with other ideological rivals.

In this regard, Dirlik’s discussion on the relationship of ideology with discourse seems to be another way of theorizing the interaction of ideology with its counterparts, like what other scholars have done (See Table 1). In a sense, his conception of “discourse” in a general sense is equivalent to the other scholars’ conceptions of cultural idioms, tradition and common sense, and broader theoretical agenda. However, although the other scholars also point out the ideological dynamics and the interaction of ideology with its rivals and counterparts, Dirlik moves beyond by noting a critical question of the relationship between the general goal of ideology in the competition with other rivals (that dominate the ideological or discourse symbolic arena), and the specific goal of ideology, in particular in the context of revolutions,. He asks,

“Is it not likely that a revolution that takes as its premise the hegemony of revolutionaries will result in a new structure of authority, reproducing in its very hegemony that hidden relationship between ideology and power to overthrow which was the goal of revolution in the first place, against which the only guarantee is the good will of the revolutionaries or their claim to a scientific discovery of the path to liberation? (p.39, *ibid.*)”

In other words, for every yet-to-be-dominant ideology and their carrier in the revolution, their outcomes are not only constrained by the social circumstances, but also determined by their response to two fundamental goals: First, how the ideological group can win the revolution and thus make their ideology dominate the revolutionary discourse; Second, how they could realize the own specific goals of their ideology, which distinguish them from other ideological groups.

In the Chinese Revolution, the tragic fate of the anarchist movement precisely reflected the paradox between the particular goal of anarchism per se against all hegemony and authority, and the pursuit of the hegemony and domination in the social discourse. With the premise of anarchism against power and hegemony, most anarchists held an uncompromisingly antipolitical conception of the society by “pointing to the realm of the social as the only proper object of revolutionary discourse (p.40, Dirlik, 1991).” While, the “deconstructive” premise also restricts the capacities of the “strategy of containment” of anarchism. Although some anarchist figures “sought to adjust their conception of social revolution to the exigencies of power in China, with a consequent suspension of their own revolutionary premises (p.39, *ibid*),” most anarchists still insisted on the rejection of any political engagement. They were prone to abolish the power through a bottom-up cultural revolution and to promote the anarchist ideas by “apolitical” activities, such as the education programs and work-study movement. However, such idealistic social experiments were hardly appealing to the majority of ordinary people in the plight and the society with immediate needs of rebuilding the political order and realizing the unification of the country after experiencing the chaos of decades.

Table 1. A Comparison of Conceptions of Ideology

	Ideology	Counterpart	Interaction Mechanism
Sewell (1985)	anonymous, collective, and constitutive of social order	cultural system	The formation of revolutionary ideology was transformation of their rival ideological variants, through an evolving mutual dialogue and struggle.
Skocpol (1985)	idea systems developed and deployed by particular groups or alliances engaged in temporally specific political conflicts or attempts to justify the use of state power	cultural idioms	Cultural idioms provide the resources for producing new ideological arguments
Swidler (1986)	a highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action	tradition and common sense	Active competition with other cultural frameworks; Reappropriation of established culture
Tsou (2000)/ Wuthnow (1989)	Ideology was the revisable ingredient and outcome of the movement's action sequence.	broader theoretical agenda	a triadic relationship with own action and a broader ideological agenda
Dirlik (1991)	the articulation of class or other social interests	discourse	Strategic discourse

While the question was not that paradoxical in the French Revolution and the developed countries in general, it is crucial in the context of China. Meisner wisely pointed out a distinct social basis for a modern Chinese historical phenomenon from the Western counterparts: “the relative independence of political power from social and economic power. In a situation in which no social class was dominant, in which all were weak, political power tended to be increasingly independent of social class and to dominate society in general (p.8, Meisner, 1999).” The seminal influence of the French and Russian Revolution may give people an illusion that Chinese

Revolution is a class-based revolution as well. Yet, the view can only be accepted with reservations. Meisner argues that,

“neither the history of the Guomindang nor the history of the CCP can be understood simply in terms of political parties representing the interests of particular social classes.....Both modern political parties operated in a historical situation in which politics and policies were determined not so much by social classes interest but one in which the holders of political and military power determined the fate of social classes (p.8-9, *ibid*).”

Meisner’s discussion demonstrates that the fundamental reason for the distinction in the role of revolutionary ideology between the French and Chinese Revolution lies in the relationship of the ideology with the interests of social classes or groups which it intends to represent. Unlike the revolutionary ideologies in the French Revolution based on the autonomous and substantive class support, in China, the development of all the imported progressive ideologies relies on the tough and eclectic “localization,” often at a price of the compromise of the original revolutionary goals. As a result, the CCP, the winner of the Chinese Revolution, probably compromised more than any counterpart else by transforming radically from a proletariat-centered Marxist-Leninism to a peasant-centered Maoism. While, the least compromised Chinese anarchist movement, most of whose followers insisted “revolution could not achieve its goal through methods contrary to its aspirations (p.39, Dirlik, 1991),” inevitably went into a decline.

In *States and Social Revolutions*, Skocpol distinguishes social revolutions from the other large-scale conflicts by defining social revolutions as “rapid and basic transformations of a society’s state and class structure” that occur through “class-based revolts from below” (p.4, Skocpol). In other words, it involves both the transformation of social and political structures. Granted, in the case of the Chinese Revolution, the radical transformation of state structure ended up with a new regime of party-state with strengthened state bureaucracy; and the privileges of the previous landed class have gone. But no new class emerged with independent political or social

power due to the revolution. Despite the nominal privileges of the peasants as part of the “worker–peasant alliance”, the substantive privilege in the class structure was only shifted from the old gentry class to a newly emerged bureaucratic class. While, neither the old gentry class nor the new bureaucratic class, has independent social power. Instead, they are parasitic and affiliated with the state power. The idea of “the social,” no matter in a socialist or bourgeois sense, is still remote from the reality. A civil society with autonomous power, liberated and separated from the state has not yet appeared. The tasks of the social revolution with a communist utopia are far from being realized. In this regard, “the claims of socialism rest on promise, not performance (p.506, Moore, [1967] 1993).” In this regard, although Skocpol contends that all of the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions succeeded politically and socially in the end, the success of the Chinese Revolution is closer to a sense of agrarian revolution or at best, the bourgeoisie-democratic phase of socialist revolution, than a successful socialist revolution.

According to the structuralist view of Skocpol, “revolutions are not made; they come.” Yet the Chinese Revolution came but was also made as the product of the CCP’s conspicuously purposive attempts to copy the political and social model of Soviet Union almost from the beginning to the end. Meanwhile, the mass peasantry, as the main force of the revolution, was mobilized and organized by the CCP to achieve the ultimate victory of the revolution itself, rather than for the liberation of the peasantry class itself. Thus, that Chinese Revolution serves as an exception to the rule, however, precisely show the insufficiency of Chinese Revolution in realizing its socialist goals. On the other hand, in this manner, we could better understand the role of ideology in the political outcomes of the revolution by decoupling the political victory of the CCP from the social outcomes of the Chinese Revolution. In particular, based on the reflections on the political failure of anarchist movement and the victory of the CCP in the Chinese Revolution, we

could see that it is the distinct operational capacity of ideology rather than their doctrinal impact that determines the political outcomes of the ideological movement in the revolution. Although ideological acting groups could make adaptations strategically in response to the social circumstances, to its rivals, to reflect on its own actions, the revolutionary tactics and practice are ultimately constrained by the fundamental goals and premises embedded in the ideology.

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