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Esperanto and Chinese anarchism 1907-1920: The translation from diaspora to homeland

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The history of Esperanto in China was for long periods closely linked with anarchism. This article surveys the connection in the years up to 1920, and sets out to show which groups used which arguments to agitate for Esperanto, in order to throw light on the complexity of the relationship between language and politics in China, especially in the first half of the twentieth century.

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The history of Esperanto in early twentieth century China has been strongly – though not exclusively – linked with anarchism.¹ This article looks at the origins and early phases of China's Esperanto movement in Tokyo and Paris and at its groups of supporters and critics and their arguments for or against Esperanto, to support the claim of a strong connection between Esperanto and anarchism in China (and incidentally in all of East Asia). This relationship was less developed in, though not altogether absent from, the West, where anarchists generally showed less interest in language issues than their East Asian counterparts. This contrast points up important differences in cultural sensibilities. It must also be seen in the context of the historical setting in which anarchism was introduced to China: who developed an interest in it and why. We start by briefly summarising some basic facts about Esperanto as a language and a political movement.

Esperanto is a planned universalist language developed in the late nineteenth century by L. L. Zamenhof, a Jewish oculist, for use as a global second language. Zamenhof grew up in Poland under Russian occupation and experienced at first hand the linguistic, ethnic, national, and religious tensions among Jews, catholic Poles, orthodox Russians, and protestant Germans. He identified problems of communication as a main cause of conflict and constructed Esperanto as the remedy. He presented his work to the public in 1887. As a doctor, he wrote it under the pseudonym Doktoro Esperanto – the Hoping One. Subsequently, this name was transferred to the language.²

Zamenhof set out the structure of Esperanto in his *Fundamento de Esperanto*, published in 1905. It strove towards maximum simplicity. The grammar consisted of just sixteen rules, the spelling was “phonetic,” nouns were genderless, and verbs were regular and uninflected. The vocabulary was based primarily on Latin, English, German, French, and Russian.³ Zamenhof tested and developed the new language by translating works ranging from the Old Testament to plays by Shakespeare, Molière, and Goethe.

In the late nineteenth century, the Esperanto movement started to take off. Today, the *Universala Esperanto-Asocio*, founded in 1908, has members in over 110 countries and represents more than 100,000 Esperanto speakers, who send delegates each year to the World Esperanto Congress. More than one hundred periodicals appear in the language and more than 30,000 books have been published in it.

As it grew in influence and extent, the Esperanto movement was increasingly racked by internal conflict. Zamenhof himself tried to inject the idea of Esperanto with a quasi-religious meaning. Others saw the language as a neutral tool of communication. Officially, Esperantists set aside their differences and agreed on a vague general platform of understanding between peoples and world peace, but tensions in the movement continued.⁴

Socialists and anarchists saw Esperanto as a perfect vehicle for internationalism and world revolution. It also won strong support among internationally minded Chinese. Esperanto was imported into China by foreigners and initially had little impact. However, leading Chinese radicals outside China – primarily anarchists in France and Japan – passionately embraced the Esperanto cause and did their best to establish it in China and the diaspora.

In later years, Esperanto also won a following among Chinese communists. After the October Revolution, in the 1920s, networks of Esperantists in the Soviet Union set up a workers’ press.⁵ In 1921, at its inaugural meeting, a communist-supported but supra-party International Association of Non-Nationals (SAT: *Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda*) emphasised the use of Esperanto in class struggle and condemned the mainstream *Universala Esperanto-Asocio* as politically neutral. In 1931, the International of Proletarian Esperantists (IPE) was founded with the goal of sidelining SAT and supporting only the Comintern line. The IPE established its main support outside the Soviet Union in Germany, but it also had a flourishing branch in China.⁶ The Soviet experiment in Esperanto ended in tragedy in 1937, when its supporters were purged during Stalinist Russification, but it later revived.⁷

The Tokyo group of Chinese anarchists

Chinese anarchists in Tokyo and Paris began publishing journals, independently of one another, in the spring of 1907. The Tokyo group originated in the Society for the Study of Socialism (*Shehuizhuyi jiangxihui*), which Liu Shipai led. Liu’s Tokyo journal was called *Tianyi* (Natural justice). It was followed later by *Hengbao* (Equality), which had a somewhat different outlook. Together with his wife He Zhen, Liu called for social revolution incorporating feminism. Unlike the Paris group, which assumed that the universals of Western thinking were also valid for China, Liu and He were strongly attached to Chinese culture and believed that anarchist principles grew out of a Chinese cultural “essence” that would facilitate China’s transition to an anarchist future (Krebs 1998:29-31).

The Tokyo Chinese anarchists believed it was necessary to express oneself as simply as possible to reach the widest number of people and supported the call for an

international means of communication. Delegates at both the two big world congresses of radicalism in 1907, that of the Second International in Stuttgart and of the anarchists in Amsterdam, raised the question of Esperanto, but while the former did not consider the problem urgent, the latter responded with greater enthusiasm (Nomad 1966:86).

In Japan, the Japanese anarchist Ōsugi Sakae had learned Esperanto and was keen to pass on his knowledge, including to the Chinese anarchist Jing Meijiu, an occasional contributor to *Tianyi*. Esperanto made its first appearance in *Tianyi* – without comment or translation – in the title of a picture of the French anarchist Elisée Reclus.⁸ *Tianyi* nos. 16-19 published a picture of Zamenhof, the Esperanto anthem by Zamenhof, and an article by Liu Shipai on Esperanto.⁹ In the article, Liu argued that only an artificial language could be truly international and that a worldwide union would come about only if all goods were owned in common and there was a world language.¹⁰ Liu, whose knowledge of foreign languages probably did not extend beyond a smattering of Japanese, found Esperanto fascinating. Would it not solve the problem of communication in China, with its host of mutually incomprehensible dialects? According to Liu, Esperanto had much in common with Chinese and would therefore be easy to learn. (He had used the same argument for anarchism, to “prove” that it would not lead to cultural alienation; on the contrary, China would provide its worldwide vanguard.) Liu reckoned Esperanto could be learned in three months and if everyone agreed to adopt it, the revolutionary literature of the whole world would become available to people everywhere.

For Liu, Esperanto would be the sole foreign language. He accepted that it would be hard to abolish Chinese and he may never have intended to do so, given his attachment to Chinese tradition.¹¹ In 1908, in an article for the magazine *Guocui xuebao* (National essence), he stressed that Chinese should be preserved as a unique cultural monument, for, being “archaic,” it could provide information about the evolution of human society. Instead of following the Japanese model of romanisation, the ancient Chinese dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* should be translated into Esperanto with guides to pronunciation, to make Chinese accessible to the entire world.¹²

In 1908, the Japanese authorities closed down *Tianyi* after it published a translation of the *Communist Manifesto*. It was succeeded by *Hengbao*, which was dedicated to “anarcho-communism, anti-militarism, the general strike, reports about the people’s suffering, and links with the international revolutionary labour unions.” *Hengbao* frequently contained material in English and Esperanto and recruited participants for Ōsugi Sakae’s Esperanto courses. Its Esperanto section explained that Chinese anarchists in Japan suffered as a result of the language problem, for like most foreign revolutionaries in Japan they knew only their own language, and translating cost time and effort. Ōsugi, the driving force behind this Chinese campaign, promised that Esperanto could be learned in six months to a year.¹³

The Paris group of Chinese anarchists

The Paris group of Chinese anarchists was led by Wu Zihui, Li Shizeng, Zhang Jingjiang, and Chu Minyi, who had been recruited by French anarchists. In 1907, they launched the journal *Xin shiji* (New century). They believed in a world citizenship that would transcend conventional state and cultural frontiers and in the need for a world language. Esperanto was in vogue in Europe at the time, especially in the internationalist circles the Chinese anarchists frequented, and Paris was its stronghold. *Xin shiji* started life with an Esperanto subtitle, *La Novaj Tempoj* (new times). Its

publishers saw Esperanto as a practical medium, simply constructed and easy to learn, and as a way of subverting the linguistic hierarchies of natural speech and of promoting internationalism.

Espousing Esperantism brought the *Xin shiji* group into contact with an even wider range of radical opinion.¹⁴ Esperanto particularly attracted Chinese in Europe, where they came up daily against a variety of languages. They were aware that Chinese, particularly the script, was considered exotic in the West. Liu Shippei's interest in Esperanto was mainly practical, but *Xin shiji* saw it as a way of polemicising against the Chinese language as carrier and guarantor of Chinese tradition.

Xin shiji's first article about Esperanto described the linguistic isolation of its author, who was lodging with monoglot Europeans of different national backgrounds, and of his admiration for the sole Esperantist among them. He wrote enthusiastically about the Second World Esperanto Congress in Geneva and claimed twenty Chinese were among its 2,000 delegates.¹⁵ A further article reported on the Third World Esperanto Congress in Cambridge, where Zamenhof described Esperanto as a bridge to peaceful coexistence and proposed making it compulsory in primary schools.¹⁶

Xin shiji later went on to compare Esperanto and Chinese. Li Shizeng and Chu Minyi argued in separate articles that Chinese characters were an obstacle to communication and by definition elitist, since ordinary people lacked the money and time needed to master them. The result was illiteracy and the blocking of knowledge. A phonetic script would require the elimination of dialects, so it might be better to replace written Chinese with an international language like Esperanto.¹⁷

Xin shiji summarised its advantages:

1. In many languages, the script diverges from the actual pronunciation, but not in Esperanto.
2. The accent is always on the penultimate syllable.
3. Each word can be identified infallibly as a part of speech.
4. Multiple meanings are impossible so interpretation is unnecessary.
5. Words can be easily looked up in dictionaries.¹⁸

Xin shiji's correspondent recommended the general use of Esperanto in China. He insisted his recommendation had nothing to do with a lack of patriotism, but quite the opposite: China was culturally retarded, so extreme measures were needed. Alphabets were useful in the natural sciences, for example in mathematics. Unlike Chinese characters, they corresponded to modern needs. Did not characters obstruct the acquisition of new knowledge? Did not Chinese homophony sow confusion? Did not dialects disfigure Chinese to the point of incomprehensibility? It was enough to open a Chinese dictionary to see how unfit this script was. Even the Japanese, despite developing their own syllabary, had failed to create a rational reference system. And how simple it was to look up words in an alphabetic dictionary. If China did not want to change to English or another natural language, it should opt for Esperanto, which was in any case superior to natural languages. The "barbarian" Chinese script system should be radically eliminated.¹⁹

This thesis did not go unchallenged. A reader – perhaps Cai Yuanpei – argued that Esperanto could not be introduced into China overnight. Chinese must first be reformed. Particles could be used to signal parts of speech and characters could be simplified – to which Wu Zhihui, in an editorial comment, added that it would be best to limit the number of characters, as the Japanese had done, and that the simplifications should follow the handwritten short forms. Each Esperanto word

should have a one-to-one Chinese equivalent. The script should be written horizontally from left to right rather than vertically from right to left. Finally, Chinese sentence structures should be adapted to Western ones, since Europeans are able to think clearly while Chinese sentence structures prevent Chinese from doing so. If Chinese were thus reformed, a Chinese could learn Esperanto in three months.²⁰

The article provoked a flood of letters in support of Esperanto as the solution to the problem of the Chinese script. One reader even criticised the proposal to reform Chinese as redundant and advised everyone to learn Esperanto instead and teach it to others.²¹ Wu Zhihui suggested setting up an Esperanto society and attending Esperanto courses in Europe, as well as introducing Esperanto in Chinese primary schools (though he predicted patriots would resist). He argued it was absurd to forbid the teaching of foreign languages in Chinese schools (as was being proposed at the time) when Chinese was so obviously unfit for acquiring knowledge. Why else was it necessary to import Japanese neologisms? And why use Japanese instead of the source language? After all, the Japanese themselves favoured English and had turned their backs on Chinese. Better switch directly to Esperanto, as the most perfect language. Government prohibitions and the views of self-appointed patriots could safely be ignored – the generation of the “over 30s” was in any case finished. But hope remained for the young, who should be the main target of the campaign to spread Esperanto.²²

Xin shiji's strong defence of Esperanto provoked Zhang Binglin, editor in Tokyo of *Minbao* (People's newspaper), the organ of Sun Yat-sen's party. Zhang had even opposed plans to standardise the use of Chinese characters in the different countries of East Asia, so he would hardly accept a switch to Esperanto.²³ Liu Shipai had spoken up for Esperanto but had never called for the elimination of characters, so Zhang had not bothered to react.²⁴ However, Zhang saw the *Xin shiji* position as attack on China's national identity and polemicised against it in *Minbao* and *Guocui xuebao*. In his opinion, Esperanto was not international at all, since its vocabulary was based on Western languages. It was a language “of the whites.” Without its language and script, China would lose its cultural identity and future. China had already suffered political humiliation: now, it would be subjected to language imperialism. *Xin shiji* should be ashamed of assisting in such a project.

Zhang dismissed the complaints about Chinese as groundless. Mastering characters was a simple matter of education. Were there not more illiterates in Russia than in China? Did not the Japanese manage with characters? To claim that an alphabet demonstrates cultural superiority was ridiculous – did not the Mongols have a phonetic script? The advantage of characters was that they were not directly linked to pronunciation and could be used across dialects and historical periods. So the Chinese were in the enviable position of being able to access ancient texts. Chinese dialects were not really a problem either, since they drew on the same genetic roots and could therefore provide the basis for a standardised pronunciation. Language was something that grew naturally and should be left alone. Emotions were attached to languages, so it was wrong to dissect them pragmatically and functionally. This was why it is so difficult to translate poetry. Zhang was in any case convinced that people would reject any attempt to manipulate the language in the ways *Xin shiji* proposed.

Zhang identified two fundamental errors in the demand for the abolition of characters and the introduction into China of the Esperanto form of the Western alphabet. Such a plan might work in Europe, since European languages are closely connected, but the situation in China was quite different. Moreover, the sound structure of the Esperanto alphabet would make differentiation difficult.

Even so, Zhang strove to make a contribution to defining the sounds of Chinese and (by using archaic characters) developed his own system of phonograms, defined on the basis of the pronunciation of the Tang period (618-907 AD). This system served as the model for the phonetic alphabet (called Bopomofo) still used in Taiwan and now attributed to Wu Zihui. (This is a small irony of history, for although Wu did the final shaping, the basic scheme was Zhang's.)

Zhang had thus recognised the problem of creating a standardised pronunciation of Chinese but rejected as redundant other changes suggested by *Xin shiji*, such as the grammatical adjustment of Chinese to European languages, for example by marking plurals. Primary-school pupils could already understand texts from the Han period (206 BC-220 AD). Why cut them off from tradition? Zhang believed that *Xin shiji*'s insistence on China's backwardness was wrong and mocked its publishers for not knowing the heights of their own civilisation.²⁵

Wu Zihui did not accept Zhang's censure. He replied that language is nothing more or less than a means of communication. The confusion of languages was detrimental, and Esperanto was the way out. Nevertheless, Wu had apparently been convinced by the moderate proposals of the reader (Cai Yuanpei?) who had demanded in the first instance a "new Chinese." He therefore proposed a three-stage process: first, create a standard pronunciation of Chinese, as the Japanese had done on the basis of Tokyo dialect; second, introduce mandatory instruction in a Western language as a qualification for admission to high school and mastery of two foreign languages for admission to university (also as the Japanese had done); third, replace Western languages with Esperanto once sufficient Esperanto teachers had been trained.

Wu accused Zhang of wishing to cultivate fossilised languages, thus preventing the acquisition of new knowledge and cementing the West's superiority. It was egoistic to want to withhold from the West China's contribution to world culture or to expect Westerners to learn Chinese, for knowledge is the property of all. That Chinese was so hard to translate proved that it failed to meet the requirements of the modern age. If to translate was to betray, an international language would make translation redundant.²⁶

Gradually, the Esperanto craze in *Xin shiji* died down. Reports about the annual Esperanto world congress and calls for China to found scientific magazines in Esperanto continued to appear, but it seemed that Esperanto had become a distant goal – rather like anarchism. So a reader from Scotland who argued for the abolition of Chinese within twenty years and asked *Xin shiji* to show more commitment was told that, while he was right in principle, Chinese could be abolished only in the medium term. The editor gave as an analogy missionary work, which was impossible without learning the language of the to-be-missionised. In any case, there was no point in worrying, since evolution would ensure that the best wins out. At present, reforming Chinese was the first step.²⁷ Esperanto had therefore become less urgent. This relegation was reflected in *Xin shiji*'s masthead, which with no. 81 swapped its Esperanto subtitle *La Novaj Tempoj* for the French *Le siècle nouveau*.

In the final days of *Xin shiji*, the language debate again flared up when Zhang Binglin, writing in *Minbao*, returned to the attack with an article on *Xin shiji*'s idea of language revolution and its refutation of his earlier arguments. He accused the Paris group of being slaves of the whites and of wanting to cover up their own ignorance of Chinese culture. If a lingua franca was needed, the Asians could devise one (e.g., for use in the postal service). If the argument was about the perfectness of Esperanto, then in some fields, for instance kinship terminology, Esperanto was inferior to Chinese.

As in all European languages, the same term in Esperanto applied to several different sorts of person. As *Xin shiji* itself admitted, Esperanto would only be generally accepted after the establishment of an anarchist world society. Then, the family system would have been abolished, so kinship terms would no longer be important. Under such circumstances, Esperanto might perhaps become a world language.

In the meantime, Chinese had to be preserved. Beyond their purely practical function, characters were also aesthetic. They had been handed down and were therefore “natural.” Every language developed on the basis of a society’s experiences and was culturally specific. To introduce another language would be linguistic imperialism, as practised by the Russians in Poland. *Xin shiji* had anyway shown itself to be indifferent to the mother country’s fate. It allowed only the whites to retain their “national essence.” But China and the West had different roots, a divide that should be respected. The argument that Esperanto was practical was irreconcilable with *Xin shiji*’s claim to be scientific, for science looks for truth, not for what is practical.²⁸

Zhang’s attack appeared in *Minbao* no. 24, which the Japanese banned. *Xin shiji* therefore received it late, after Zhang had returned to Shanghai and written a letter that *Xin shiji* published. In it, he deplored Esperanto’s growing popularity in Shanghai.²⁹ He repeated the accusation that Esperanto reduced the “world” to Europe and added that Esperanto was less creative than Chinese, which can produce an immense vocabulary on the basis of 3,000 frequently used characters. Esperanto was like a translation that clings to the foreign model. Chinese, on the other hand, was self-sufficient and self-determining.

Zhang resented what he saw as the arrogance with which Chinese students in Europe looked down on those in Japan and their apparent assumption that only the West had anything to offer. In truth, the only independent cultures in the world were those of China, India, and Greece – all else was a poor imitation.

Xin shiji rejected Zhang’s criticisms. It argued that Zhang was so fixated on China and Chinese that he was incapable of seeing a millimetre beyond it. But the law of evolution was implacable. The meaningful and the practical would win out regardless of one’s wishes. People could not afford to waste precious years learning such a complicated script. Wasn’t the popularity of Esperanto in Shanghai, which Zhang deplored, proof of this? If Zhang rejected Esperanto because it was based on European languages, he simply demonstrated that his horizon was limited by race. Who in the One World was interested in whether you were “yellow” or “white”? European languages were chosen as the source of Esperanto’s vocabulary mainly because they are alphabetic, whereas “eastern languages” are graphic. Moreover, Chinese has tones, which are impractical.³⁰

To call Esperanto inferior on account of its kinship terminology was nonsense. Kinship terms were simply an expression of social reality, which manifested its unfairnesses even in language. The problem lay not in language but in the family system. Doubts were also raised about Zhang’s competence to discuss foreign languages (properly so, for even his Japanese was shaky). Anyone familiar with Western languages would know that English takes at least five years to learn and French at least seven. Esperanto, on the other hand, could be learned in a year. The Chinese script was anyway a property of the elite, of those who could afford the time to learn it – not of the Chinese people.³¹

Xin shiji stopped publishing shortly afterwards, but its final issue was dedicated to Esperanto. It quoted Tolstoy in support. Tolstoy believed that spreading Esperanto would bring humanity closer to paradise. *Xin shiji* concluded: all humanity would benefit from the abolition of the Chinese script; each of us should make a

personal commitment to Esperanto rather than wait for other countries to do so; China would win respect if it replaced the Chinese script with Esperanto; foreigners would help spread Esperanto in China; the abolition of the Chinese script would influence other East Asian countries and bring *datong*, the era of great harmony, closer.³² So *Xin shiji* remained faithful to its ideals right to the end, even though they were gradually relegated to a more distant future.

In the debate, *Xin shiji* and Wu Zhihui argued chiefly on practical grounds. In evolutionary perspective, Esperanto was a crowning point of human ability, purged of the defects of natural language. Zhang Binglin rejected this functionalist view, on the grounds that language was historical and a component of national identity. He suspected that non-linguistic intentions lay behind attempts to manipulate language. His view of language was organic, whereas Wu Zhihui's was mechanistic.

These debates, particularly those concerning Chinese, were marked by a failure to distinguish between the written and the spoken. Usually characters were the issue, but the linguistic structure of Chinese (including tonality) and the dialect problem also figured in the discussion, as did the question of the literary versus the colloquial. It was unclear whether Esperanto was meant as a lingua franca to replace English, or as a language for use in China like English in India. Probably no one imagined that people in China would converse solely in Esperanto, but the lack of clarity left room for doubt.

The discussion showed that the language problem was subordinate to the main issue, ideology. Zhang knew next to nothing about Esperanto (or any Western language), so he was vulnerable to the shafts *Xin shiji* aimed at him. On the other hand, how far members of the *Xin shiji* group mastered Esperanto is open to question. However, Esperantists were already active in China, as Zhang's letter showed; so *Xin shiji* in Paris, like *Tianyi* and *Hengbao* in Tokyo, were not lone voices. Its main initial base was in Shanghai, though it later spread to Guangzhou and Beijing.³³

That there were Chinese Esperantists in Paris is evident from the pages of *Xin shiji*. When Chinese started going home from abroad after 1911, Esperanto in China received a further lift and several Chinese anarchists joined the movement. However, the early advocates of Esperanto around *Xin shiji* or *Tianyi* and *Hengbao* played no direct role in it.

Jiang Kanghu and Shifu

Jiang Kanghu, a Jiangxi intellectual who had studied in Japan and Europe, began organising the Chinese Socialist Party in China in 1911. Jiang was an advocate of state socialism, like Sun Yat-sen (Krebs 1998:77-85). He also supported Esperanto, and introduced it to the curriculum of a school he set up in Beijing.³⁴ In 1913, many of Jiang's followers deserted him because of submission (for opportunistic reasons) to then discredited Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), the autocratic first President of the Chinese Republic. The defectors united with other former members of the party's anarchist wing.

Among those who left was the publisher of the socialist newspaper *Rendao zhoubao* (Human weekly), Xu Anzhen, who began to cooperate with the anarchist Shifu. The newspaper continued the close connection between Esperanto and socialism that Jiang Kanghu had pioneered and was one of the first periodicals in China to carry an Esperanto column. The newspaper, subtitled *Hina Socialisto* in Esperanto, appeared in Shanghai, China's Esperanto bastion at the time.³⁵

Shifu was China's best-known and most influential anarchist. Born in Guangdong in 1884, he went to Japan to study and became a revolutionary. He converted to anarchism in 1912 in China, after reading *Xin shiji*, and set up the anarchist Xin she (Heart society) in Guangzhou. Its covenant forbade eating meat, drinking alcohol, smoking, using servants, riding in rickshaws, marrying, using family names, serving as an official, serving as delegate to an assembly, joining a political party, joining the armed forces, and following a religion (Krebs 1998:8). In 1914, Shifu moved to Shanghai and set up the Society of Anarchist-Communist Comrades.³⁶

The Shifu group was strongly committed to Esperanto, which Shifu adopted after reading *Xin shiji*. He and his friends learned Esperanto at a summer course run in Guangzhou in 1912 by Xu Lunbo, who had studied in France.³⁷ Then they themselves organised further courses. Thus began a long-lasting connection between anarchism and Esperanto in China.³⁸

Several later influential leaders of Chinese anarchism joined the courses. They included Huang Zunsheng, Ou Shengbai, and Liang Bingxian. Shifu and Xu Lunbo set up an Esperanto society in Guangzhou, which became China's second Esperanto centre (after Shanghai), and joined the *Universala Esperanto-Asocio*. While the Shanghai Esperantists kept in closer touch with Jiang Kanghu's Socialist Party, in Guangzhou the main link was with anarchism.³⁹

In 1913, Shifu's group founded a commune. The project failed, but Shifu continued to try to live by his anarchist principles. The group decided to acquire a printing press and launch *Huiming lu* (Cock-crow record), with the subtitle *Pingmin zhi sheng* (Voice of the common people) and the Esperanto title *La Voĉo de l'Popolo* (subsequently amended to *La Voĉo de la Popolo*). The magazine was later renamed *Minsheng* (Voice of the people). The aim was to use the magazine to connect physical toil with the labour of the heart.⁴⁰

The first issue came out in August 1913, at a time when Yuan Shikai was persecuting supporters of the "second revolution" against his despotic rule. Its goals were defined as promoting social revolution by anarchism and propagating Esperanto. The magazine had an Esperanto section from the outset, to inform comrades in other parts of the world about China. Shifu was far more committed than the editors of *Xin shiji*, and the magazines run by He Zhen and Liu Shipai, to an exchange of views and information with non-Chinese comrades.

The magazine's eight basic maxims were communism, anti-militarism, syndicalism, a rejection of religion, a rejection of the family system, vegetarianism, the convergence of languages, and worldwide *datong*. By publishing the magazine bilingually, Shifu hoped to enable ordinary Chinese (the *pingmin*) to join a worldwide alliance in support of the "holy work" of revolution.⁴¹ Shifu demonstrated the importance of exchanges with foreign comrades by translating a letter from Havana about the political and social conditions in Latin America. He also introduced international Esperanto associations and the Esperanto magazine *Universala Unuiĝo* (Universal union), which he translated as *datong*.

Huiming lu's Esperanto section contained translations of Chinese contributions and specially written articles of potential interest to foreign comrades. Even Confucius was called to witness, with his dictum that "an inhuman government is crueller than a tiger".⁴² The Esperanto sections of later issues were designed not only for foreign comrades but also for Chinese learners. They included articles by Western authors translated into Esperanto and letters in the language.

During Yuan Shikai's crackdown on dissidents, Shifu and his group fled temporarily to Macao, where they continued to publish under the name *Minsheng*. Their main focus was on translations, which supplied information about the worldwide anarchist movement and its anarcho-communist wing. Again, Shifu was keen to demonstrate that he had contacts everywhere, by translating letters from foreign comrades and listing all the magazines and correspondence he received. The main medium for this contact was Esperanto. Among the links he established (following the second maxim of the Heart Society) was one with the League of Esperantist Teetotallers.⁴³

In February 1914, when Yuan Shikai's pressure began to reach Macao, Shifu's group had to look for a new sanctuary. They chose Shanghai, where the international settlements offered cover and there was a ready-made Esperanto movement. As the focal point of Jiang Kanghu's activities, Shanghai was home to many socialists and anarchists. After reaching Shanghai, Shifu had only a year to live. The final issue of *Minsheng* under his editorship appeared in August 1914. Shifu's last few months were the high point of his anarchist work. The composition of the group in Shanghai was essentially the same as in Guangzhou. Zheng Bi'an had left and gone to Canada, Huang Zunsheng was in Japan, and Xu Anzhen had joined the Shifu group in Macao.

Shifu's support for Esperanto was central to his anarchist commitment. Esperanto also had its advocates among anarchists in the West, but it lacked the solid basis it had in China. (The Anarchist Congress conducted its business exclusively in French, English, and German.⁴⁴) Shifu's personal interest in philology was one reason for the special role that language questions played in East Asian anarchism. Most of *Minsheng's* foreign correspondence was conducted in Esperanto.⁴⁵ In an addendum to a translation from the British anarchist journal *Freedom* of an English article on "Esperanto and Anarchism," Shifu argued against objections to Esperanto and its use by anarchists. As a language, it was neutral, yet Shifu could identify with the idealistic goals of *Esperantism*. World peace, Zamenhof's main aspiration, was also a goal of anarchism. That anarchists must sometimes commit violent actions did not invalidate it. To counterpoise Esperanto as pacific and anarchism as destructive was wrong.⁴⁶

So *Minsheng* closely followed developments in the international Esperanto movement. Its Esperanto section was run by Sheng Guocheng, a prominent Esperantist and another ex-member of Jiang Kanghu's party, who had previously done the same for *Rendao zhoubao*. Apart from Esperanto versions of articles in the Chinese section, Sheng wrote original contributions and inscriptions in Esperanto. As a result of its Esperantist policy, *Minsheng's* contacts with Japanese anarchists deepened. The Esperantist Ōsugi was in correspondence with Shifu and arranged for his trusted friend Yamaga Taiji, another anarchist and Esperantist, to help Shifu with *Minsheng*, in the magazine's most productive period (in 1914).⁴⁷ Yamaga had often been in China and spoke some Chinese. Having worked for a while in Dalian as a typesetter using Latin script, he was a useful addition to the *Minsheng* staff. His arrival was among the first instances of material international cooperation between Chinese and foreign anarchists. As an Esperantist and a technically experienced worker, Yamaga's contribution was invaluable. He left the group in the autumn of 1914, when it was on the point of financial collapse. At the time, Ōsugi needed him for his own new magazine, *Heimin shinbun* (Mukai 1974:39). However, Yamaga continued to liaise between the Japanese and Chinese anarchists.

In November 1916, *Minsheng* stopped appearing and was not revived until 1921. Zheng Peigang did his best to spread Shifu's ideas by reproducing his most

important articles in pamphlet form.⁴⁸ In 1916, he and Sheng Guocheng brought out their own Esperanto magazine, *La Ĥina Brileto/Huaxing* (China star). Later, the Cantonese anarchist and Esperantist Ou Shengbai joined. Sheng had already launched China's first Esperanto magazine, *La Mondo/Shijie* (The world), in November 1911, but it was a purely linguistic venture and folded after the first issue. *La Ĥina Brileto* was China's first durable Esperanto magazine. It carried articles about language and the war.⁴⁹ At more or less the same time, Ou Shengbai in Guangzhou published the Esperanto magazine *Internacia Popolo/Shijie yuebao* (International people/The world), in which he propagated anarchist ideas by means of Esperanto.

Xin qingnian

Around 1915, reform-minded Chinese scholars started to assert a new role for themselves as critics of Confucianism and champions of new-style values, including science and democracy. This New Culture Movement attacked the Chinese writing system and the use of classical Chinese and called for a literary revolution and the promotion of the vernacular, known as *baihua*. The educational debate and experiments in new styles of learning and living associated with the New Culture Movement made anarchism more acceptable in China, and helped it spread and diversify. The New Culture Movement culminated in 1919 in the May Fourth Movement, named after the date of strikes and demonstrations against the decision of the Peace Conference at Versailles to let Japan keep concessions in China previously controlled by Germany.

Nearly all the influential figures in China's anarchist movement at the time had been connected with Shifu. As a result of their propaganda, a new generation of Chinese anarchists grew up. Linked with anarcho-communism as Shifu understood it were Esperanto and the idea of a strategic turn to the workers, which Shifu's heirs vigorously pushed. Neither field was an anarchist monopoly, but each critically shaped the movement.

After *Minsheng* folded in 1916, the group restricted its communication to an occasional bulletin.⁵⁰ Some members temporarily become workers. Others published works in Esperanto.⁵¹ Towards the end of 1916, however, Esperanto suddenly achieved wider fame when it became a topic of intense debate in *Xin qingnian* (New youth), the influential magazine of the New Culture Movement and May Fourth.

In November 1916, a series of reader's letters and commentaries sparked off a lengthy debate about the merits and demerits of Esperanto. A letter from "T. M. Cheng" asked whether it was worthwhile to learn Esperanto, and raised arguments for and against. Chen Duxiu, editor of *Xin qingnian*, replied with a guarded yes. However, when the reader wrote again asking whether it would not make greater sense to learn French (given that Chen had praised the French for their contribution to civilisation), Chen conceded that learning Esperanto was not urgent.⁵²

The editors and principal contributors to *Xin qingnian* worked at Beijing University, led at the time by Cai Yuanpei, who had studied in France. Cai had come out in favour of Esperanto in the days of *Xin shiji* and endeavoured to learn it. It was probably Cai who had first discussed Esperanto in the context of the modernisation of Chinese, a big issue in later years. At the start of the Republic, as Minister of Education, Cai arranged for Esperanto to be taught as an option in colleges and universities. He saw its role as that of an auxiliary language in international commerce and as an ideal introduction to learning other Western languages.⁵³ His actions briefly boosted Esperanto's popularity in China. In 1913, the magazine *Dongfang zazhi*

(“The Eastern Miscellany”) gave Lu Shikai, probably China’s first Esperantist and joint founder of the Chinese Esperanto Union, the chance to comment in detail on Cai’s views.⁵⁴

As President of Beijing University, Cai again took measures to promote Esperanto by appointing Sun Guozhang, a veteran of the Chinese Esperanto movement, to teach it.⁵⁵ Sun knew about the connection between Esperanto and socialism and anarchism from his days in Shanghai, but he was on the movement’s “neutral” wing.⁵⁶

Through its anchorage at Beijing University, Esperanto was drawn back into the language debates that unfolded in *Xin qingnian* and elsewhere. One of the main participants was the linguist Qian Xuantong, who took up the Esperanto cause in a reader’s letter.⁵⁷ A pupil of Zhang Binglin who had studied in Japan at the end of the Qing Dynasty and learned some Esperanto, Qian returned to the old debate between his mentor and Wu Zhihui.⁵⁸ He considered *Xin shiji*’s call for the replacement of Chinese by Esperanto as premature, but unlike Zhang Binglin, he argued for the propagation of Esperanto as a second language in China’s schools. Also unlike Zhang Binglin, he was motivated by practical rather than aesthetic arguments. Even so, he believed that in the future One World, Esperanto would replace national languages.⁵⁹

Qian’s letter did not go unchallenged. The sociologist Tao Menghe attacked Esperanto as a form of alienation. Reiterating arguments of Zhang Binglin, he stressed the connection between language and national character. Esperanto was like a permanent translation of originals. Would the Westerners give up their languages? And if not, why should the Chinese? The future world must be one of unity in diversity, not of uniformity. According to Tao, Esperanto was as dictatorial as the Confucianism that *Xin qingnian* sought to overthrow. Moreover, it had no Asian components.

Chen Duxiu, to whom the letter was addressed, had previously signalled cautious support for Esperanto. He now praised Tao’s objections as a useful corrective to an exaggerated enthusiasm for the language, but he criticised Tao’s refusal to envisage a role for Esperanto in the future One World as nationalistic. Although Tao did not question the goal of *datong*, he had denied the need for a unitary language. For Chen Duxiu, however, this was Esperanto’s main value and attraction. Esperanto would offer a means of communication freed from the restraints of national character. What Tao deplored, Esperanto’s lack of maturity compared with natural languages, was for Chen its advantage: being artificial, it was free of baggage.⁶⁰

Qian Xuantong, who joined *Xin qingnian* in January 1918, pushed his argument against Tao even further. Language was mere symbol. What was dictatorial about an artificial lingua franca? Qian wondered whether misunderstandings might have arisen because of the Chinese rendering of the word Esperanto. The translation, literally “world language,” a Japanese borrowing, implied a wish to replace or to absorb all other languages. Tao had called for Chinese elements. For Qian, however, Chinese, with its characters and their inherent ambiguities, was unsuitable for integration. Apart from issues of transcription, for which Qian favoured romanisation, the Chinese vocabulary lacked the qualities of abstraction necessary for modern life. Western terms would have to be integrated into Chinese whether one wanted to or not, but on the basis of which Western language? Clearly, Esperanto was the best choice. Only in the classical field could Esperanto be enriched by Chinese culture – which would happen automatically if Chinese historical texts were translated into it. “World language” meant no more than lingua franca. Qian rejected other Chinese

renderings of the word “Esperanto”, for example *wanguo xinyu* (“new language of the ten thousand nations”) and phonetic mimickings such as *aisibunandu* (“loved because it is not difficult to learn”).⁶¹

Qian was drawn to Esperanto because of his dissatisfaction with Chinese, which he hoped in the long term to abolish. He did not fear the loss of China’s cultural heritage, since 99 per cent of it consisted of ossified Confucianism and Daoist magic-mongering, which *Xin qingnian* was pledged to wipe out. However, propagating Esperanto in the same way as Esperantists in Shanghai, by means of “international correspondence”, seemed to Qian narrow-minded and unimaginative.⁶²

Qian’s comments stung Sun Guozhang to reply. Writing in Beijing University’s daily newspaper, he stressed Esperanto’s neutrality and practicality and rejected Tao Menghe’s implication that “natural” languages were not human-made. He also took up Qian’s attack on the Esperantists’ flawed advocacy of their cause. Sun had no wish to replace Chinese – he wanted Esperanto as an international lingua franca. He criticised the Shanghai Esperantists for being too ideological (and for their poor teaching). For Sun, a “neutral” Esperantist, the debate should not stretch to extralinguistic issues, either cultural or sociopolitical. On this point, Sun therefore took a different position from the anarchist Esperantists.⁶³

The Chinese Esperantists had expressed no real opinion on the question of replacing Chinese, which was Qian’s goal. This perhaps explains in part why Qian gave up on Esperanto in later years. As a linguist, he did not react to Sun’s comments about the politicisation of Esperanto, although he himself had ties with the anarchist Ou Shengbai. Rather, he criticised the Esperantists for failing to make clear how much new knowledge Esperanto would make accessible. Tao Menghe, on the other hand, argued against Sun that Esperanto had gone out of fashion in the West. That people in China were still talking about it showed only that China lagged behind.⁶⁴

The *Xin qingnian* debate and Sun’s statement were also taken up by Esperantists in Shanghai. Lu Shikai, the nestor of the movement, discussed how to render the word “Esperanto” in Chinese. Arguing that content was the main thing, he proposed *aishiyu* (“the language that loves the world”). He pointed out that Esperanto was not just a language but a world view. Sun was unenthusiastic about Lu’s proposal and argued on pragmatic grounds for retaining the word *shijieyu* (world language). In any case, an accurate translation would be *xiwangzhe* (“the hoping one”).⁶⁵ From another direction, anarchist Esperantists attacked Sun for criticising ideological Esperantism. Liang Bingxian said that *datong* and the anarcho-communist society remained the eventual goal of Esperanto, just as in the days of *Xin shiji*. He criticised Sun for trying to patent Esperanto, as if there was no room for pluralism.⁶⁶

This debate remained largely internal to the Esperanto movement. *Xin qingnian* seemed to have lost interest. Hu Shi, himself an Esperanto sceptic, thought enough had been said. Chen Duxiu remained undecided and continued to call for a unitary lingua franca, but he did not tie himself to Esperanto and seemed increasingly indifferent to it.⁶⁷ However, Qian Xuanton put the topic back into the public eye.

At first, the sceptics in *Xin qingnian* seemed to have won the day.⁶⁸ However, supporters of Esperanto started to write in, so a topic previously confined mainly to the letters page found its way into the main part of the magazine, usually linked with the problem of Chinese. Wu Zhihui, who had supported Esperanto in the early years of *Xin shiji* and was himself busy planning to reform Chinese, continued to take the part of Esperanto, though more reservedly than in the past. He saw it as a distant goal and recommended simultaneously integrating other major Western languages into the

curriculum. Sooner or later, a world language would become generally accepted, in the form of an optimised or amplified Esperanto.⁶⁹

The younger anarchists were more determined. Ou Shengbai doubted whether Chinese was reformable and stressed (as a Cantonese) that making Mandarin the standard would create unfairness. Better to begin immediately with Esperanto.⁷⁰ Huang Lingshuang asked which language should be adopted as world language, to take the wind out of the sails of Esperanto's critics, and accused them of having only the haziest understanding of Esperanto and of being motivated by the nationalistic argument that Chinese had played no part in its construction. Huang brought the debate back on to linguistic grounds, by comparing Esperanto with Volapük and Idiom Neutral.⁷¹ Volapük was already out of the running in the West and Idiom Neutral had barely got going. Esperanto was evidently superior, and had the largest number of speakers.⁷²

In a further letter, Huang raised the question of Esperanto in connection with China's "new thought" movement. Critics argued that there was too little literature in Esperanto so it was not worth learning. But the same could be said of the vernacular, which Hu Shi and others were trying to promote. To prove Esperanto's worth, Huang translated an article by the Englishman Bernard Long, which had appeared in Japan and praised Esperanto as an ideal bridge between the English- and Japanese-speaking nations. It also radiated new hope for a future united world that would emerge in the postwar period. Huang pointed out the parallels between these arguments for Esperanto and China's New Culture Movement. He nominated the following models for treating China's ills: Tolstoy for literature, Ibsen for drama, Kropotkin's "mutual aid" for science, and the revolution in Russia for society.⁷³ In his view, Esperanto was at the forefront of the modern trend.

Conclusions

The Esperanto debate in *Xin qingnian* ended in February 1919, when Chinese disappointment at the outcome of the Versailles peace treaty led to a cooling of internationalist sentiment and a rising tide of political revolution that culminated in the May Fourth Movement. Now, even the discussion about Chinese gave way to social and philosophical issues. The language question had played an important role in the early stages of the New Culture Movement and in China's modernisation debates (Morosoli 1998). However, since the principal discussants wrote not from an attachment to Esperanto itself but from a wish to abolish Chinese and equip China for the future, it is not surprising that Esperanto was dropped in 1919, when other causes started to look more promising.

The commitment to Esperanto became confined for the time being to China's organised Esperantists and its anarchists, for whom Esperanto was an integral part of the social renewal they hoped to carry out. After it was imported into China from Tokyo and Paris, Esperanto had played its part as a major catalyst in the debates of the New Culture Movement of the late 1910s, in which issues of language reform and internationalism had figured prominently. In later years, starting in the 1920s, Esperanto became embedded in cultural and political bases in China itself, unlike the earlier movement, which had taken root chiefly in the anarchist diaspora. This transformation of Esperanto's position in China's cultural politics will be the subject of a separate article.

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Glossary

- 1908-nian chuangshi Shanghai shijieyu xuehui fushe shijieyu hanshou xuexiao guicheng* 1908年創始上海世界語學會附設世界語函授學校規程
- aishiyu* 愛世語
- "Aishiyu shiming" 愛世語釋名
- aisibunandu* 愛斯不難讀
- baihua* 白話
- Beijing daxue rikan* 北京大學日刊
- "Bianji xuyan" 編輯緒言
- "Bianzao Zhongguo xinyu fanli" 編造中國新語凡例
- Bingxian (= Liang Bingxian) 冰絃
- "Bo Zhongguo yong wanguo xinyu shuo" 駁中國用萬國新語說
- "Bujiu Zhongguo wenzi zhi fangfa ruo he?" 補救中國文字之方法若何
- Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培
- Chenbao fujian* 晨報副鐫
- Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀
- Chu Minyi 褚民誼
- datong* 大同
- Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌
- "Esperanto cili tongshi zongxu" Esperanto 詞例通釋總序

“*Esperanto shiming*” *ESPERANTO* 釋名
 “Feichu hanwen yi” 廢除漢文議
 Ge Maochun / Jiang Jun / Li Xingzhi 葛懋春/蔣俊/李興芝
 “*Gui Xin shij*” 規新世紀
Guocui xuebao 國粹學報
 “*Hanzi tongyihui zhi huanglou*” 漢字統一會之荒陋
hao 號
 Hatsushiba Takemi 初芝武美
 Hazama Naoki 狹間直樹
 He Zhen 何震
Heimin shinbun 平民新聞
Hengbao 衡報
 Hou Zhiping 侯志平
 Hu Shi 胡適
 Hua Nanguì 華南圭
 Huang Lingshuang 黃凌霜
 Huang Zunsheng 黃尊生
Huaxing 華星
Huiming lu 晦鳴錄
 “*Ji wanguo xinyu hui*” 記萬國新語會
 Jiang Kanghu 江亢虎
 Jing Meijiu 景梅九
Laodong 勞働
 Li Jinxi 李錦熙
 Li Shizeng 李石曾
 Liang Bingxian 梁冰弦
 Lingshuang s. Huang Lingshuang
Liu Shenshu xiansheng yishu 劉申叔先生遺書
 Liu Shipai 劉師培
 Lu Shikai 陸式楷
 “*Lun Esperanto*” 論 Esperanto
 “*Lun Zhongtu wenzi you yi yu shijie*” 論中土文字有益於世界
 Min 民
Minbao 民報
ming 名
Minsheng 民聲
Minshengshe jishilu 民聲社紀事錄
 Miyamoto Masao 宮本正男
 Mo Jipeng 莫紀彭
 Mujun 木君
 Mukai Kō 向井孝
 Ōshima Yoshio / Miyamoto Masao 大島義夫/宮本正男
 Ōsugi Sakae 大杉榮
 Ou Shengbai 區聲白
 “*Pi miu*” 闢謬
pingmin 平民
Pingmin zhi sheng 平民之聲
 Qian Xuanton 錢玄同

Qianxing 前行
 Ran 燃
 Ranliao 燃料
 Rendao zhoubao 人道週報
 Sakai Hirobumi 坂井洋史
 Shanghai Mujun 上海沐君
 Shehuizhuyi jiangxihui 社會主義講習會
 Sheng Guocheng 盛國城
 Shifu 師復
 Shijie 世界
 Shijie yuebao 世界月報
 shijieyu 世界語
 “Shijieyu wenti”世界語問題
 “Shu ‘Bo Zhongguo yong wanguo xinyu shuo hou’”書駁中國用萬國新語說後
 Shuowen jiezi 說文解字
 Sugelanjun 蘇格蘭君
 Sun Guozhang 孫國璋
 Taiyan (= Zhang Binglin) 太炎
 Tao Menghe 陶孟和
 “Taosidaojun zhi jingjiaoshi shu”陶斯道君致景教士書
 Tasogare nikki たそがれ日記
 Tianyi 天義
 wanguo xinyu 萬國新語
 “Wanguo xinyu”萬國新語
 Wu Jingheng (= Wu Zhihui) 吳敬恆
 Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉
 Wuzhengfu gongchan zhuyi she 無政府共產主義社
 Xin shiji 新世紀
 Xin qingnian 新青年
 Xin she 心社
 Xin shiji 新世紀
 Xing 醒
 “Xinyu wenti zhi zada”新語問題之雜答
 xiwangzhe 希望者
 Xu Anzhen 許安鎮
 “Xu ‘Haogu zhi chengjian’”續好古之成見
 Xu Lunbo 許論博
 “Xu Lunbo xiansheng”許論博先生
 “Xu ‘Pi miu’”續關謬
 “Xu wanguo xinyu zhi jinbu”續萬國新語之進步
 “Xu xinyu wenti zhi zada”續新語問題之雜答
 Yamaga Taiji 山鹿泰治
 Yuan Shikai 袁世凱
 Zhang Binglin 章炳麟
 Zhang Jiang (= Zhang Binglin) 章絳
 Zhang Jingjiang 張靜江
 Zheng Bi’an 鄭彼岸
 Zheng Peigang 鄭佩剛

Zhongguo wuzhengfuzhuyi he Zhongguo shehuidang 中國無政府主義和中國社會黨
 Zhou Enlai 周恩來
 Zhou Zuoren 周作人

Zusammenfassung

Esperanto und Anarchismus in China (bis 1920)

Die Geschichte des Esperanto in China war über weite Strecken eng verknüpft mit dem Anarchismus. Dieser Artikel gibt einen historischen Überblick über diese Verbindung in den Jahren bis 1920 und will zeigen, welche Gruppen sich mit welchen Argumenten für das Esperanto stark machten, um die Vielschichtigkeit des Verhältnisses zwischen Sprache und Politik im China besonders der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts zu beleuchten.

Resumo

Esperanto kaj ĉina anarkiismo 1907-1920: La transiro de diasporo al hejmlando

La historio de Esperanto en Ĉinio estis dum longaj periodoj proksime ligita al anarkiismo. Tiu ĉi artikolo donas superrigardon de tiu kunligo en la jaroj ĝis 1920 kaj celas montri, kiuj grupoj uzis kiujn argumentojn por agitati por Esperanto. Ĝi celas ĵeti lumon sur la komplikecon de la rilato inter lingvo kaj politiko en Ĉinio, precipe en la unua duono de la dudeka jarcento.

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Notes

¹ We would like to thank an anonymous reader for various suggestions that we tried to work into this final version. We would also like to thank Ed Krebs, who helped us with advice, encouragement, and materials.

² Forster 1982, ch. 2.

³ On the linguistics of Esperanto see Philippe 1991 and Blanke 1985.

⁴ On Esperanto as a movement see Forster 1982, Janton 1993 and Lins 1990.

⁵ The Spanish anarchist Angel Pestaña (1888-1937), a delegate to the Comintern's Second Congress in 1920, tabled a motion calling for congress translations to be confined to Esperanto. The motion was referred to a committee (Riddell 1991, 2:772-773).

⁶ On the history of Esperanto in China see Hou Zhiping 1985.

⁷ On this process see Lins 1990.

⁸ *Chenbao fujian* (Supplement to the Morning Newspaper), reprinted in Beijing in 1981 in 15 vols, at p. 337.

⁹ *Chenbao fujian*, p. 499.

¹⁰ “Esperanto cili tongshi zongxu” (Foreword to the rules of Esperanto, with explanations), in *Tianyi* 16-19:655-664, at p. 655.

¹¹ *Tianyi* 16-19 :655-664.

¹² “Lun Zhongtu wenzi you yi yu shijie” (The Chinese script is of use to the world). See the reprint in *Liu Shenshu xiansheng yishu* [Literary device of Mr Liu Shenshu], *tao* 5, file 46, pp. 1b-3a.

¹³ *Hengbao* 1:2.

¹⁴ An Esperanto magazine, *Internacia Socia Revuo*, was being published in Paris at the time. In 1907, anarchist Esperantists published a pamphlet (Chapelier and Marin 1907) for the Amsterdam congress.

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- ¹⁵ The claim that twenty Chinese attended cannot be verified.
- ¹⁶ Xing (=Hua Nanguì?), “Wanguo xinyu” (Esperanto), *Xin shiji* 6:3; Xing, “Ji wanguo xinyu hui” (On the Esperanto Congress), *Xin shiji* 10:2.
- ¹⁷ Min, “Xu ‘Haogu zhi chengjian’” (More on “The prejudice of love for old things”), *Xin shiji* 30:2. On the language question as a whole, see Li Jinxi 1934.
- ¹⁸ Xing (=Hua Nanguì?), “Xu wanguo xinyu zhi jinbu” (Continuation of “The progress of Esperanto”), *Xin shiji* 35:4.
- ¹⁹ Xing (=Hua Nanguì?), “Xu wanguo xinyu zhi jinbu”, *Xin shiji* 36:1-2.
- ²⁰ Qianxing, “Bianzao Zhongguo xinyu fanli” (General rules for the construction of a new Chinese), *Xin shiji* 40:3-4.
- ²¹ Ran (=Wu Zhihui), “Xinyu wenti zhi zada” (Mixed answers to the problem of a new language), *Xin shiji* 44:2-3.
- ²² Ran (=Wu Zhihui), “Xu xinyu wenti zhi zada” (Continuation of “Mixed answers to the problem of a new language”), *Xin shiji* 45:2-3.
- ²³ Zhang Binglin, “Hanzi tongyihui zhi huanglou” (The bleak vulgarity of the conference to unify characters), *Minbao* 17 (October 1907), reprinted in Taipei in 1957, at pp. 2789-2794.
- ²⁴ Zhang had a close but problematic relationship with Liu Shipèi (see Müller 2001, part 2, ch. 3).
- ²⁵ “Bo Zhongguo yong wanguo xinyu shuo” (Refutation of the theory that China should go over to Esperanto) in *Minbao* 21 (June 10, 1908), in the reprint at pp. 3341-3364 (signed by Taiyan, Zhang’s sobriquet [*hao*]), as well as two sequels in *Guocui xuebao* 41 and 42 (May 20 and June 18, 1908), in the 20-vol. Taiwan reprint, 1974, at pp. 5403-5411 and pp. 5543-5560 (signed Zhang Jiang, his actual name [*ming*]).
- ²⁶ Ranliao, “Shu ‘Bo Zhongguo yong wanguo xinyu shuo hou’” (Reaction to “Refutation of the theory that China should go over to Esperanto”), *Xin shiji* 57:11-15.
- ²⁷ Sugelanjun (A gentleman from Scotland), “Feichu hanwen yi” (On the abolition of Chinese), *Xin shiji* no. 69, pp. 10-12, and no. 71, pp. 11-15.
- ²⁸ Taiyan, “Gui *Xin shiji*” (Putting *Xin shiji* right), *Minbao* 24:41-65 (in the reprint at pp. 3787-3811).
- ²⁹ Hou Zhiping 1985:20. The Shanghai Esperanto Society was founded in 1908. See *1908-nian chuangshi Shanghai shijieyu xuehui fushe shijieyu hanshou xuexiao guicheng* (Rules of the Shanghai Esperanto Association, founded in 1908 and affiliated to the School for Esperanto Distance Learning), postscript dated 1933.
- ³⁰ Shanghai Mujun, “Pi miu” (Clearing up a mistake), *Xin shiji* 118:10-14.
- ³¹ Shanghai Mujun, “Xu ‘Pi miu’” (Continuation of “Clearing up a mistake”), *Xin shiji* 119:14-15.
- ³² Mujun (possibly the same as “Shanghai Mujun”, though written with different characters), “Taosidaojun zhi jingjiaoshi shu” (Tolstoy’s letter to a pastor), *Xin shiji* 121:12-14.
- ³³ A British man working as a consul in China is on the list of the first thousand Esperantists drawn up by Zamenhof in 1889, but it is not known whether he taught Esperanto to Chinese (Zamenhof 1889:6). Hou Zhiping 1985, p. 20, names Lu Shikai as China’s first Esperantist, who learned Esperanto from a Russian in Shanghai and then founded the first Chinese Esperanto Society.

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- ³⁴ See the archival materials in *Zhongguo wuzhengfuzhuyi he Zhongguo shehuidang* (Chinese anarchism and the Chinese Socialist Party), Jiangsu 1981:191-196. Zhou Enlai's wife is said to have learned Esperanto at this school (Hou Zhiping 1985:24).
- ³⁵ Excerpts from *Rendao zhoubao* 12 and 14-15 are reprinted in Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun, and Li Xingzhi 1991 [1984], vol. 1.
- ³⁶ Wuzhengfu gongchan zhuyi she.
- ³⁷ Huang Zunsheng, "Xu Lunbo xiansheng" (Mr Xu Lunbo), in *1932 shijieyu niankan* (Esperanto yearbook 1932), Guangzhou, 1932:26.
- ³⁸ Huang Zunsheng n. d., 47.
- ³⁹ The leading Esperantists in Shanghai, Lu Shikai and Sheng Guocheng, were party members (Huang Zunsheng n. d., 68).
- ⁴⁰ Mo Jipeng n. d., 39b.
- ⁴¹ "Bianji xuyan" (Editors' introduction), *Huiming lu* 1 (August 20, 1913):1-2.
- ⁴² W. H., "Malhumana regado pli kruela ol tigro" *Huiming lu* 1, Esperanto section, 4.
- ⁴³ *Minsheng* 3:5-6.
- ⁴⁴ *Minsheng* 17:5.
- ⁴⁵ Zheng Peigang (in his memoir in Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun & Li Xingzhi 1991 [1984], 2:945) mentions other correspondence in English and French.
- ⁴⁶ *Minsheng* 6:8-9.
- ⁴⁷ See Miyamoto 1988. For Japanese Esperantism in general, see Hatsushiba 1998. On "subversive" Esperanto in Japan, see Ōshima and Miyamoto 1974. Yamaga later wrote an autobiography, *Tasogare nikki* (Diary of the dawn), which Mukai Kō made the starting point of his life of Yamaga (Mukai 1974). See also Mukai 1973. On Yamaga's connections to Chinese anarchists in general, see Sakai 1983.
- ⁴⁸ For the reprints, see Zheng Peigang's memoirs in Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun & Li Xingzhi 1991 [1984], 2:949-950.
- ⁴⁹ *La Ĥina Brileto* ½:17-20.
- ⁵⁰ The first bulletin, dated April 1, 1917, is in the reprint *Minsheng: Minshengshe jishilu* (Bulletin of the *Minsheng* group), edited by Hazama Naoki and published in Kyoto in 1992.
- ⁵¹ Cf. Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun & Li Xingzhi 1991 [1984], 2:1072-1073.
- ⁵² Readers' letters, *Xin qingian* 2/3 (November 1916):2.
- ⁵³ *Das Esperanto, ein Kulturfaktor*, vol. 3, *Festschrift zum 8. Deutschen Esperanto-Kongress*, Stuttgart 1913:95. *Dongfang zazhi* ("The Eastern Miscellany"), 9/5 (1912):18-20; reprinted in Taipei, 1967-1980, at pp. 22338-22340.
- ⁵⁴ *Dongfang zazhi* 9/7:9-22 (pp. 22723-22736 in the reprint).
- ⁵⁵ Hou Zhiping 1985:121-124; or, in the Esperanto version, "Cai Yuanpei kaj Esperanto" (Cai Yuanpei and Esperanto), *El Popola Ĉinio* (From People's China), July 1982:10-11.

⁵⁶ Sources include Sun's contributions to *Beijing daxue rikan* (Beijing University daily), starting in November 1917 (reprinted in Beijing in 1981, in 16 vols). This newspaper published a supplement with a title in Esperanto on February 20, 1918.

⁵⁷ Readers' letters, *Xin qingnian* 3/4 (June 1917):1-6.

⁵⁸ See Qian's foreword to the "famous Esperanto works" collected by an anarchist Esperantist and reprinted in *Chenbao fujian*, May 12, 1924:1-2. For Zhou Zuoren's views on Qian, whom he had known since his Japan days, see Zhou Zuoren 1984.

⁵⁹ *Xin qingnian* 3/4 (June 1917), especially pp. 2-4.

⁶⁰ Tao's letter appeared in *Xin qingnian* 3/6 (August 1917):1-4. For Chen Duxiu's answer, see pp. 4-5.

⁶¹ The reply to Tao Menghe appeared in *Xin qingnian* 4/2 (February 1918):173-177 (pp. 201-205 in the reprint).

⁶² Cf. Qian's letter to Chen Duxiu, *Xin qingnian* 4/4 (April 1918):350-356 (pp. 407-413 in the reprint).

⁶³ *Beijing daxue rikan*, March 11, 1918:5-6, and March 12, 1918:5-6; and in *Xin qingnian* 4/4 (April 1918):357-362 (pp. 414-419 in the reprint).

⁶⁴ *Xin qingnian* 4/4 (April 1918):362-365 (pp. 419-422 in the reprint).

⁶⁵ Lu's article "Aishiyu shiming" (Explanation of Esperanto) appeared in *Beijing daxue rikan*, October 31, 1918:3-4. Sun's "Esperanto shiming" (Explanation of Esperanto) appeared in *Beijing daxue rikan*, November 11, 1918:3-4.

⁶⁶ Bingxian, "Lun Esperanto" (On Esperanto), *Laodong* (Labour) 3 (May 20, 1918), pp. 56-59 in the reprint.

⁶⁷ *Xin qingnian* 5/2 (August 1918):184-186 (pp. 204-206 in the reprint).

⁶⁸ See, for example, the letter from a disappointed Esperanto student, *Xin qingnian* 5/4 (October 1918):416-423 (pp. 460-467 in the reprint), who described Esperanto as a dead language.

⁶⁹ Wu Jingheng, "Bujiu Zhongguo wenzi zhi fangfa ruo he?" (By what means should one improve the Chinese script?), *Xin qingnian* 5/5 (October 1918):483-507 (pp. 535-559 in the reprint).

⁷⁰ See Ou's letter, *Xin qingnian* 6/1 (January 1919):75 (p. 85 in the reprint).

⁷¹ Volapük is an artificial international language, based chiefly on European materials, invented in 1879 by Johann M. Schleyer, a German priest. Idiom Neutral was devised by W. Rosenberg on the basis of Volapük and first published in 1903.

⁷² Lingshuang, "Shijieyu wenti" (The problem of a world language), *Xin qingnian* 6/2 (February 1919):196-203 (pp. 219-226 in the reprint).

⁷³ Huang's letter, *Xin qingnian* 6/2:232-236 (pp. 255-259 in the reprint).