

# Lu Jianbo 卢剑波 (1904 - 1991)



A short biography of Chinese anarchist veteran Lu Jianbo

Lu Jianbo was for many years one of the most active anarchists in China, speaking for class struggle, effective organisation, and against compromise with the nationalist Guomindang. Like his more well known comrade [Ba Jin](#), he hailed from Sichuan in southern China. In fact Ba Jin described him as “a young man full of energy” “endowed with great fortitude” “shows great talent” “is a revolutionary ready to devote himself to his ideal”.

Lu Jianbo was born in 1904 near Luzhou. He was radicalised by the May 4th Movement that commenced in 1919. He joined an anarchist group in Chongqing. Lu founded an anarchist paper, Helian(Black Billows). Later he helped set up the Minfeng she (People’s Vanguard Society) in Nanjing in 1923 along with his wife Deng Tianyu and Mao Yibo (1901-1996).Both Lu and Deng were keen Esperantists, Lu having discovered it for himself in 1920.

Their paper Minfeng advocated class struggle anarchism, revolution carried out by the masses of both town and country, and effective organisation. In 1925 Lu and the Minfeng Society relocated to Shanghai and there their Society founded two others, the Society for the Study of Syndicalism (Gongtuan zhuyi yanjiu hui) and the Federation of Young Chinese Anarchist Communists(Zhongguo shaonian wuzhengfu gongchan zhuyizhe liangmeng, usually abbreviated to Shaolian) in 1927. When Lu arrived in Shanghai he shared living quarters with Ba Jin. Lu later put together a collection of Ba Jin texts. Lu and Ba Jin launched the Shanghai anarchist magazine Minzhong (Masses)in September 1925.This aimed to act as a liaison between anarchists in southern China as well as providing information on both native and foreign anarchist groups.

From 1926 he contributed to the Spanish anarchist magazine La Revista Blanca , edited by Federico Urales.

In 1928 Lu had to flee from Shanghai to escape the persecution of the Guomindang. This was a result of his and his associates’ sharp criticisms of any sort of alliance with the GMD, as advocated by some anarchists. Lu had established a friendship with Ba Jin, who, whilst disapproving of collaboration himself, adopted a middle position of cooperation between both anarchist currents, and they fell out over this although their friendship was later mended.

In late 1927 the GMD anarchists had established the influential Labour University in Shanghai. The Minfeng she agitated among both teaching staff and students at the University, calling for struggle against the GMD and Lu recalls a meeting held there “with tens of individuals” attending. These activities contributed to his eventual flight.

One of the accusations thrown at Lu and his anarchist current was that they were “Bolshevised”. Lu demonstrated the falseness of this accusation in his articles on the dictatorship of the proletariat in three issues of the magazine Xuedeng (Light of Learning) in 1924, where he stated that: “Facts tell us: the inner lining of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of a single party-the Leninist party. The Soviets have already been captured by bureaucratic socialists”.

The prophecies of Lu and his comrades proved correct when the GMD turned on its anarchist supporters in 1929, branding them Communists and shutting down their societies and workplace unions.

When the war with Japan broke out in 1937 Lu and other anarchists were able to start publishing Jingzhe (Spring Festival) at Chengdu in Sichuan when the GMD moved there in retreat from the Japanese army. They advocated a popular war against the Japanese. At the same time they publicised the Spanish Revolution, for example printing articles on Durruti. Another way Lu sought to spread anarchist ideas was via the Esperanto movement and via his concept of "proletarian culture". He was editor of the Esperanto paper Verda Standardo (Green Standard) from 1934, as well as being a committee member of the Chinese Esperanto League, member of the Universal Esperanto Association and of the SAT (Anational Association).

Over the years he and his brother Lu Kien Ten jointly translated many anarchist texts from other languages.

Lu had an emancipated position on the liberation of women, writing articles for the feminist magazine Xin Nuxing (New Woman) writing Tan Xing (On Sex) in a 1928 issue. He also contributed other articles on the role of women, Tan Xing Ai (On Sexual Love) for Huanzhou(The Mirage) in 1926. He actively supported Deng's participation in anarchist propaganda work.

By 1944 he was professor of the history of ancient Greece and Rome at Chengdu University, where he initiated Esperanto classes.

In 1945 he established links with the Commission of International Anarchist Relations (CIA) liaison bureau, based in Paris, which was attempting to re-establish communication in the international anarchist movement. Through the CIA he was in contact with the anarchists Taiji Yamaga in Japan and M.P.T. Acharya in India. As a result some of his writings appeared in the French anarchist weekly Le Libertaire in June 1948 and in the trilingual Universo edited by Spanish exiles in Toulouse. In addition Lu maintained a long correspondence with Chinese anarchists in San Francisco via Red (Ray) Jones (real name Cai Xian alias Liu Zhongshi) from the 1920s to the 1950s.

In this period he assisted Ba Jin in bringing out the complete works of Kropotkin in Chinese, as well as attempting to set up a Kropotkinist Association. He proposed to translate L'Internationale by James Guillaume and La Commune by Louise Michel, although it is unclear whether these appeared. We do know that his translation of an article by Malatesta did appear (letter from Ba Jin). Lu also contributed to the international anarchist youth magazine, Senŝtatano, in Esperanto, set up at the initiative of the FIJL (Spanish Libertarian Youth) and edited by Eduardo Vivancos and Victor Garcia (real name Germinal Garcia).

The coming to power of the Communist Party in 1949 curtailed Lu's activities. He was eventually pressurised to join the Party, although it always appears he maintained his anarchist beliefs. One young man, Ma Schmu, was in contact with him and Ba Jin and he later was a founder member of the libertarian communist group in Hong Kong, the [70s Front](#), in the mid 1970s(1) He died on 8th December 1991 in Chengdu

(1) I corresponded with the 70s Front at the time on behalf of the British Anarchist Workers Association and met some of its members who were then living in Paris.

Nick Heath

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