Two Modern Chinese Philosophers on Spinoza
(Some Remarks on Sino-German Spinoza’s "Festschrift")

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Selten erheben sich in unseren Tagen Stimmen der selbstlosen und unabhängigen Humanität, besonders selten klingen sie nach China hinüber aus den Ländern, die ihrerseits mit Leidenschaft und Selbstverständlichkeit die höchsten Werte philosophischen Denkens zu ihrer Belehrung und Bereicherung aus China hinzunehmen. Sei es der Stimme Spinozas vergönnt, China ein edler Dank zu sein für das Edle, das es Europa gab! Sei die Stimme Spinozas für China das selten gehörte, aber stets wirksame Bekenntnis Europas zu der Wahrheit, daß sich derselbe Himmel über Europa und China wölbt.

(Deutsch-Chinesische Nachrichten, Tientsin, 24. November 1932)

The words quoted above as a motto of this paper are in some respects quite realistic for Central Europe of that time and also for distant China. Shortly after these words had been written, Hitler seized power in Germany and there was no more room for Humanität in that country. The situation prevailing in China was different but equally dismal. Shortly before that, one of the philosophers to be spoken of presently, declared: "The Kuomintang has now lost popular confidence, partly because its political programs cannot satisfy the people’s hopes and partly because [its] moribund ideology cannot win the sympathy of the progressive intellectuals. On the day when the sympathy of the progressive intellectuals is completely forfeited, the Kuomintang will have reached the end of its tether."

These words, at least as far as the Kuomintang was concerned, were fulfilled partly in 1949. In the interim, however, China had to endure the occupation of Manchuria, Five Encirclement Campaigns, the Anti-Japanese War and the Nationalist Defeat. West, Central and Eastern Europe, between 1933 and 1945, went through the most dreadful years of its modern existence.

The words of the introductory motto seem less true in some other respects. Within the framework of Chinese possibilities, the introduction of European philosophy went at a truly intensive pace. In return for das Edle that China gave to Europe from Leibniz up to Hegel, Europe gave and went on giving

1 Jerome B. GRIEDER, Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance, Harvard University Press, p. 245.
to China Plato, Aristoteles, Kant, Nietzsche, Marx, Engels, Goethe, Tolstoy and others.

Spinoza, too, received a certain measure of attention, though incomparably less than the other outstanding European philosophers. He was, however, not quite unknown in China. In 1902, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao devoted one of his short essays to Spinoza, while Sun Yat-sen considered him to be Darwin's precursor. Spinoza was one of the favourite authors of members of Ch'uang-tsao-she, Creation Society, as apparent from the statement of one of them — Cheng Po-ch'i. This was true of at least one of them — Kuo Mo-jo (born 1892), who became acquainted with Spinoza's philosophy through Goethe. He himself reminiscences that he read his Ethica, Tractatus Theologico-Politicus and Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione. He probably read also about Spinoza, for he mentions both "direct and indirect" reading.


4 Yin-ping-shih ho-chi Collected Essays from the Ice-drinker's Studio, vol. 3, Shanghai, n. d., pp. 95—97. It is one of the three essays. The first one is devoted to Th. Hobbes and the last to J. J. Rousseau. The central idea of them is the so-called min-yüeh, social contract. In Liang's Hsin-min ts'ung-pao, 'New Citizen', No. 15, published on August 1, 1902, we find the portrait of B. Spinoza together with that of G. W. F. Hegel.

5 A. G. Krymov, Osnovchesvennaia mys' i ideologicheskaia borba v Kitae (1900—1917 gg) ("The Social Mind and the Ideological Struggle in China from 1900 to 1917"), Nauka, Moscow 1972, p. 295.

6 Cheng Po-ch'i, Ch'uang-tsao-she-ti chi'hsiang The Tendencies of the Creation Society, in: Chung-kuo hsien-tai wen-hsüeh shih ts'an-k'ao tz'u-liao ("Material for the Study of Modern Chinese Literature"), vol. 1, Peking 1959, p. 162. Spinoza was known among the Chinese Marxists who wrote about the problems of dialectics, see Shen Chih-yuan, Chin-tai pien-cheng-la shih ("A History of Modern Dialectics"), Shanghai 1949, 180 pp. He was quoted also in K'o-hsüeh, che-hsüeh yü jen-sheng ("Science, Philosophy and Life"), by Fang Tung-mei, published in 1936. Professor Ch'ü Shih-ying devoted to him two pages of his Hsi-yang che-hsüeh-ti ia-chan ("Development of Western Philosophy"), Shanghai 1930, pp. 65—67. He mentioned Spinoza's influence on Schelling, Hegel and Samuel Alexander. Spinoza was a favourite philosopher of Feng Yu-lan (born 1895). He was often mentioned by him, e.g. in A History of Chinese Philosophy, vol. 1, Princeton University Press 1952, pp. 237 and 244, or in Chuang Tsũ, Shanghai 1933, p. 19.

7 Kuo Mo-jo, Ch'uang-tsao shih nien ("Ten Years of Creation", in Mo-jo wen-chi) ("Collected Works of Kuo Mo-jo"), vol. 7, Peking 1958, p. 58.
Kuo Mo-jo states (though this is open to doubt) that in reading Spinoza and Goethe he discovered for himself the "pantheist" traditions in ancient Chinese philosophy of Chuang-tzu\(^{[19]}\) (3rd cent. B.C.)\(^8\). Possible, and even very probable, however, was that the philosophical ideas expressed first by Spinoza, whom he thought of most from among European philosophers of modern times, then by Goethe, reminded him of the philosophical values embodied in old Chinese philosophy. In 1925 Kuo Mo-jo admitted that he had always liked Chuang-tzu, but originally he was interested only in his beauty of style wen-tz'u\(^{[23]}\)\(^6\), while the sense of Chuang-tzu's message, which he could not grasp, escaped him. A great incentive to Kuo Mo-jo to study philosophy, whether Chinese or European, proved to be the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming\(^{[25]}\) (1479—1529)\(^10\).

At one place Kuo Mo-jo explicitly stated: "Spinoza is a pantheist. There is no gainsaying it." This self-evidence gave birth to the first essay which is one of the subjects of our analysis. It was published together with another essay in a special issue of the "Deutsch-Chinesische Nachrichten" on the occasion of the tercentenary of the birth of Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza, November 24, 1932, under the title Dem Andenken Spinozas. Spinoza's Festschrift appeared on 20 pages of a newspaper format at Tientsin and was edited by the staff of the German Seminary of Peking University.

The special issue Dem Andenken Spinozas comprises two parts: a German and a Chinese section. The German part is to some extent repeated in the Chinese, but not entirely; that is they differ partially. The German part is the more interesting for the ordinary reader. It begins with the most diverse thoughts expressed about Spinoza between the years 1770 till 1831 by his great propagator J. W. Goethe, follows with excerpts from Herder's Einige Gespräche über Spinozas System and winds up with the fragment Der Tod des Spinoza from the novel Amor Dei by K. B. Kolbenheyer. This is preceded

\(^{8}\) Loc. cit. Chuang-tzu or Master Chuang was allegedly called Chuang Chou\(^{[20]}\) according to Ssu-ma Ch'ien's\(^{[21]}\) (1457—89? B. C.) Shih-chi\(^{[22]}\) ("Records of the Historian"). The text called Chuang-tzu was written not by one particular man, but by a group of individuals.


\(^{10}\) Ibid. pp. 37—51. More about Wang Yang-ming see in Carsun Chang, The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought, vol. 2, Bookman Associates, New York 1962, pp. 30—159. Professor Chang mentions briefly two common points between Spinoza and Wang Yang-ming. The idea of amor intellectualis Dei in Spinoza is the same as Wang's belief that knowledge of universe is the key to Tao\(^{[26]}\) (Way). According to Chang, Spinoza's assertion that will and intellect are not one and the same thing (Ethics) is also a discovery of Wang Yang-ming (p. 147). Wang Yang-ming's works were translated by Wing-tsit Chan, see Instructions for Practical Living, and Other Neo-Confucian Writings of Wang Yang-ming, Columbia University Press, New York 1963.


\(^{[19]}\) 莊子 \(^{[20]}\) 莊周 \(^{[21]}\) 司馬遷 \(^{[22]}\) 史記 \(^{[23]}\) 文辭
\(^{[24]}\) 王陽明礼贊 \(^{[25]}\) 王陽明 \(^{[26]}\) 道
\(^{[27]}\) 論詩三札

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by two-and-a-half pages of other quotations reaching from Leibniz to Einstein, entitled *Maledictus et Benedictus*, and *Spinoza im Urteil der Nachwelt*.

The Chinese version was evidently destined to another reading public, more prone to abstruse thinking and was clearly intended to fulfill certain tasks that could not be performed by the normal, purely Chinese publications printed outside the competence of foreign concessions. This part starts with a Chinese ode by Professor Ho Lin[28] entitled *Ssu-pin-no-sha hsiang tsan*[29], *Admiration before Spinoza’s Portrait*. Then follows the Chinese translation of Spinoza’s biography by Lucas[13]. On pages 10-12 are the most significant contributions that will be spoken of presently: *Ssu-pin-no-sha yü Chuang-tzu*[31], Spinoza and Chuang-tzu by Hu Shih [32] (1891—1962) [14], and *Ssu-pin-no-sha-chih cheng-chih che-hsüeh*[33], Spinoza’s Political Philosophy by Carsun Chang (alias Chang Chia-sen) [34] or Chang Chün-mai [35] (1887—1969) [15].

Professor Hu Shih begins his essay by noting the great similarity between Chuang-tzu’s and Spinoza’s philosophy. Similarity, however, does not rule out differences. “Would it not be a pleasant and rewarding work” asks the

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[12] Ho Lin (born in 1902) after 1941 was the Chairman of the Committee of the Philosophical Society (founded in 1935) for the translations of the important works of Western philosophy into Chinese. He was a translator of *Chih chih pien* [28] which is presumably Spinoza’s Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione. The poem in Spinoza’s *Festschrift* is an example of Ho Lin’s calligraphy (p. 7). Together with Ho Lin’s poem on the same page we can find another one by Rudolf von Delius entitled Vor Spinozas Bildnis. Ho Lin studied in Germany, and according to O. Brière, *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy, 1898—1948*, New York 1965, he was “one of the best representatives of Sino-occidental idealism” (p. 54). In Germany he studied Hegel, in China especially Wang Yang-ming. In 1962 his translations of Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and a part of *Vorlesung über Geschichtsphilosophie* were published in People’s Republic of China.


[14] The best treatment of Hu Shih’s life and work is the above mentioned book by Jerome B. Grieder. The philosophical views of Hu Shih are expounded there briefly, but not his philosophical works except some articles concerned with propagation of instrumentalism and criticism of Marxism. Hu’s essay on Spinoza remained probably unknown to Professor Grieder.


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[28] 賀麟
[29] 斯賓諾莎像讚
[30] 致知篇
[31] 斯賓挪莎與莊子
[32] 胡適
[33] 斯賓挪莎之政治哲學
[34] 張嘉森
[35] 張君勛
author of the essay, "to investigate in what Spinoza and Chuang-tzu agree and in what they differ, and why they agree or differ in individual points?"

This seems to be the aim of the essay. As we shall see later, Hu Shih succeeds only with the first part of the task — even though he does intend to exhaust it consequently; as to the second part, the more difficult and the more important one, he only outlines it and leaves it open. At the end of the essay the reader has the feeling that something ought to follow, but there is nothing, at least not in this essay.

According to Hu Shih, Spinoza and Chuang-tzu agree most in pantheism. That omnipresent (wu-suo pu tsai-ti) Chuang-tzu calls Way (Tao), and Spinoza God (Shen). Even though both make use of different terms, they nevertheless have something very similar in mind. Spinoza's word God is very close indeed in its significance to Chuang-tzu's Way and is remote from the normal Christian or Jewish interpretation. Spinoza's God is "substance" and here Hu Shih quotes from Spinoza's Ethics: it is something "which is in itself and is conceived through itself." This is in agreement with one characteristic of the Way in Chuang-tzu: "It is its own source, its own root", or "nobody knows its beginning, nobody knows its end." Just as Spinoza's Deus sive Natura, the Way is causa sui.

Hu Shih demonstrates the omnipresence of the Way from Chapter 22 of Chuang-tzu, which states that the Way is in the ant, panic grass, tiles and shards and in shit. Hu Shih does not document Spinoza's "substance", although he presumes it. All things (wan-wu) are but modes — Spinoza's term — (hsing-t'ai) of the self-revealing (tzu-hsing suo-ch'eng) of substance. Spinoza calls it "affections of substance." Hu Shih sees Spinoza's concept of God or Nature as self-creating (Natura Naturans) in

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18 A Concordance, loc. cit., and Watson, p. 82.
19 The whole passage in Watson's translation is as follows:
"Master Tung-kuo asked Chuang Tzu, 'This thing called the Way — where does it exist?'
Chuang Tzu said, 'There's no place it doesn't exist.'
'Come,' said Master Tung-kuo, 'you must be more specific!'
'It is in the ant.'
'As low a thing as that?'
'It is in the panic grass.'
'But that's lower still!'
'It is in the tiles and shards.'
'How can it be so low?'
'It is in the piss and shit!'
Master Tung-kuo made no reply." (p. 241)
20 Hu Shih, Spinoza and Chuang-tzu, p. 10.
21 Ethic of Benedict de Spinoza, p. 1.
Chuang-tzu’s self-creating Way that “gave spirituality to the spirits and gods” 22.

The second point of contact between Chuang-tzu and Spinoza is, according to Hu Shih, in determinism, and this in absolute determinism. While in the first point of contact Hu’s examples were very clear, the explication of the second point is inadequate and lacks conviction. He considers some thoughts from Chuang-tzu’s book as proof of the “absolute determinism”: “What should you do and what should you not do? Everything will change of itself, that is certain” 23. Or: “If you are content with the time and willing to follow along, then grief and joy have no way to enter in” 24. Or, finally: “Therefore, the sage wanders in the realm where things cannot get away from him, and all are preserved” 25.

The examples cited by Hu Shih in support of Chuang-tzu’s determinism are certainly not the best. Moral determinism does become manifest in them, but Hu Shih makes of it universal determinism, and Chuang-tzu has better examples for this, as shown by Feng Yu-lan, even though the latter does not term it in that way. According to Feng Yu-lan it is spontaneity of all things, and this is a better characteristic 26. Hu Shih notices “absolute determinism” in Spinoza, but does not prove it from his writings.

According to Hu Shih, the points of contact analysed above, namely, pantheism and determinism, generate further contiguities. Hu mentions a common attitude towards religion, but does not exemplify it either from the one or the other philosopher. He claims that they possess in common also what he terms “going along the natural make-up” 27 and “following things as they are” 28. But similarly as in the preceding cases, Hu Shih fails to exemplify this theory of “letting alone” from Spinoza’s works.

In Hu Shih’s view, Chuang-tzu and Spinoza differ in their approach to logic. Chuang-tzu “did not scold over right and wrong” 29, while Spinoza

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23 A Concordance, p. 44, Watson, p. 182.
24 A Concordance, p. 8, Watson, p. 53.
26 For example, Feng Yu-lan in the above mentioned book A History of Chinese Philosophy, vol. 1, p. 227 “records an apocryphical speech made by Lao Tzū to Confucius: Do you, Sir, wish to cause the world to be well governed? Heaven and Earth have their constants. The sun and the moon have their brightness. The stars have their groupings. Trees and shrubs have their life and growth.” Cf. also A Concordance, p. 35 and Watson, p. 149—150. Very good example for determinism are the following Chuang-tzū’s words: “Life and death are fated — constant as the succession of dark and dawn, a matter of Heaven. There are some things which man can do nothing about — all are a matter of the nature of creatures.” (A Concordance, p. 16, Watson, p. 80)
28 Loc. cit.
29 A Concordance, p. 93, Watson, p. 373.
believed in his "mathematico-logical" (shu-li)\textsuperscript{48} method and considered it to be absolutely reliable in determining what is "right" and "wrong" or "good" and "bad". Chuang-tzu was convinced about an incessant movement and change of things. "Right" and "wrong", "good" and "bad" are likewise changeable magnitudes. Hu Shih quotes Chuang-tzu: "Everything has its 'that', everything has its 'this'"\textsuperscript{30}. Or: "Its right [of the Way or of a person, M.G.] then is a single endlessness and its wrong too is a single endlessness\textsuperscript{31}." As neither of the quotations is easily comprehensible, we cite one that is quite evident in meaning and expresses Chuang-tzu's attitude to the above mentioned opposites: "What one calls right, the other calls wrong, what one calls wrong, the other calls right\textsuperscript{32}". Chuang-tzu believed in the equality of things and opinions.

Again, Hu Shih does not document Spinoza's divergent view from the latter's philosophy, but from his life. He points to the fairly known case of Spinoza's sister who, on the death of their father, tried to appropriate the entire legacy. Spinoza won the lawsuit, but he renounced his share in favour of his sister. He was not interested in the inheritance, but held to show clearly the evident difference between "right" and "wrong", "justice" and "injustice".

In Professor Stuart Hampshire's words, for Spinoza, "logic and theory of knowledge . . . is designed as the necessary introduction to his moral teaching"\textsuperscript{33}. The same might be said, despite the great divergence of views, also of Chuang-tzu. But the manuscript of Professor Hu Shih abruptly ends here. He makes no mention of the socio-political aspects of Chuang-tzu's and Spinoza's teachings.

The reason for this hiatus will probably be never known. Hu Shih's essay bears the date of 11th November, 1932, that is something over a year after the Japanese aggression on Manchuria. At that time, Professor Hu was also interested in this question, as borne out by his numerous contributions to the magazine \textit{Tu-li p'ing-lun}\textsuperscript{44}, "The Independent Critic", which he edited\textsuperscript{34}. Later, in a reply to a Japanese journalist Murobushi Köshin\textsuperscript{45} Hu Shih made use of several literary images that fittingly characterized his intellectual physiognomy of those years. He writes there that "the tiles that mark the boundaries" in the garden he was living in and the "marble threshold at the gate" both were brought from the ruins of the Summer Palace and they are recalling the history of the sack of the Summer Palace by Anglo-French soldiers. But this picture is a bit vague. Hu Shih sees a dark shadow on the white snow, cast by a Japanese plane flying over Peking. The shadow disappears as fast as the plane. It reminds, however, Hu Shih of the saying of

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{A Concordance}, p. 4, \textit{Watson}, p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{A Concordance}, p. 4, \textit{Watson}, p. 40.  
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{A Concordance}, p. 4, \textit{Watson}, p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{33} Stuart Hampshire, op. cit. p. 115.  
\textsuperscript{34} Jerome B. Grieder, op. cit. p. 246—255.
an unnamed ancient Chinese philosopher: “The flying bird’s shadow never moves.”

These last words belong to the philosopher Kung-sun Lung, whom Hu Shih knew from reading Chuang-tzu. Hu Shih made use of this paradox in order to point out in an unusual, poetic manner perhaps the biggest problem that weighed him down: the aggression that might have far more disastrous consequences for China than those of the Anglo-French expeditionary forces in 1860.

Some time later, towards the end of 1933, Professor Chiang T’ing-fu published an article in “The Independent Critic” entitled Koming yu chuan-chih (“Revolution and Absolutism”), in which he claimed that China must become united and that this is possible solely through absolutism. This triggered a heated discussion on democracy vs. dictatorship in which Hu Shih also took part as an adherent of democracy. This was no surprise to anyone, for Hu Shih was known as a prominent defender of the democratic form of government and in 1929 had some unpleasant experience with Ch’en Te-cheng, director of the special Kuomintang headquarters in Shanghai and its propaganda department for the counter-revolutionary activities and for his opposition to the “Three Principles of the People”. What did cause a surprise were his two propositions that had never occurred in his writings and now became the guiding ideas of his political philosophy. Hu Shih aiming at discrediting the view that strong governments are good governments (the idea of Chiang T’ing-fu) proposed the so-called wu-wei, non-action which was Chuang-tzu’s idea. That was the first proposition. The second one, which interests us less here, was the theory that democracy being “the least sophisticated form of political life — ‘a kindergarten government’” (you-chih cheng-chih) was the best one for the Chinese people inexperienced in modern political life.

It may possibly have been Hu Shih’s work on the essay Spinoza and Chuang-tzu that drew his attention to the values in Chuang-tzu’s socio-political philosophy. As to Spinoza’s political philosophy, Hu Shih just does not refer to it by a single word. But he equally fails to make any reference to Chuang-tzu’s political views. Nevertheless, a few months after the publi-

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38 Jerome B. Grieder, op. cit. pp. 240—244.
cation of this essay, he wrote: "The political philosophy that China needs now is certainly not the positive, activist philosophy popular in Europe and America since the nineteenth century. What is needed today is a political philosophy that advocates non-action. When the philosophers of ancient times preached non-action, [their purpose] was not to instruct men to refrain from all activity, but merely to urge men not to act blindly and wildly — to open their eyes and examine the situation to determine whether or not, given certain objective material conditions, action was possible." 

What Hu Shih preached in 1933—1934 as wu-wei philosophy, was not the philosophy of Chuang-tzu, Lao-tzu [51] or Han Fei-tzu [52] (died in 233 B.C.). It was not the philosophy of the first of these who was to a large extent a political anarchist. Political anarchy was, of course, outside the frame of Hu Shih's political endeavours. Nor was it the philosophy of the second one of the three, who was for a policy of laissez faire, for Tao "is the same thing as universal spontaneity". In no manner of ways could he identify himself with the sophisticated attitude, but harsh laws (la) [53] and methods (shu) [54] propagated by the last of them, Han Fei-tzu. Hu Shih explicitly emphasizes that people must be given a "rest" [42], and is against the grandiose plans of the government which they are not able to carry out. Since Hu Shih was opposed to absolutism and dictatorship alike, who can say whether he did not approve of Chuang-tzu's idea of wu-chün-chih [55] ("Herrscherlosigkeit") [43]. However, he could not afford to propagate this in public. It could have been interpreted as an anti-Chiang Kai-shek campaign, even though Herrscherlosigkeit is not equivalent to Herrschaftslosigkeit. Chuang-tzu turned to the old idealized society, while Hu Shih, even though advocating the ideals wu-wei, had before his eyes the ideal society of his time. 'Kindergarten democracy' was nothing but a wu-wei policy in his apprehension, but expressed in different words [44].

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Carsun Chang's essay *Spinoza's Political Philosophy* begins with a brief introduction into Spinoza's philosophy. It takes note of similar problems as Hu Shih: pantheism, determinism and others, for example, a mechanistic apprehension of the world. Political issues are taken up in the second part.

Here Professor Chang distinguishes two types of political scientists — those following Plato, who aim rather at ideal aspects of government, and those who are for Aristotle, concerned rather with the practical side. Spinoza belongs to the latter type.

Carsun Chang begins his analysis of Spinoza's political philosophy with a criticism of the first type of philosophers when he writes that they think of people "not as they are, but as they would like them to be" thus making use of Spinoza's own words. The result is that this most real of sciences (tsui shih-chi-ti k'o-hsüeh) — Carsun Chang thus calls political science —, does not originate in human nature and its expression in practical life. Chang follows up with intent Chapter I of Spinoza's Tractatus Politicus and applies his mind to politics. Human passions, like love and hate, jealousy, anger, pride, these he does not consider to be vices of human nature, but the properties as heat and cold, wind and storm . . . This, according to him, Spinoza holds in common with modern philosophy. The latter too is concerned with an objective, scientific approach to social phenomena.

Carsun Chang devoted about two thirds of his essay to three important questions of Spinoza's philosophy: that of the identity of the concept of right and power, that of the state of nature and political State, and the question of the freedom of thought and speech.

While in the first part of his essay Professor Chang adhered strictly to the Tractatus Politicus, now he calls to his aid also the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus. The statement concerning the identity of right and power is taken from the first book, while concrete illustration to it comes from Spinoza's second work. Both of them — power and right — are bound by a relationship of reciprocity. Right is determined by power. Man may enjoy as much right as he is able to win for himself or maintain ("he has as much right as he has power and strength") Chang illustrates this Spinoza's axiom from Spinoza's work about fish swimming in the water. Their life is determined by their presence in the natural element. At the same time big fish eat small ones — and with perfect right. Spinoza speaks of natural power and right. One has as much (natural) right as he has (natural) power. And Spinoza considers also

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man, as long as he is not firmly set in some State framework, only as a part of nature. "Right is the sphere of man's free movement", writes Carsun Chang, faithfully interpreting Spinoza, "there is no other [right] except that whose basis is formed by power" 47.

However, to explain man who is a social animal (Spinoza) or a political animal (Aristotle) solely from a "state of nature" is not enough. An important factor here is the determination of society, of its individual members. Even though man "acts summo naturae iure", "he can scarcely be said to be sui iuris" 48. That is why State formations are set up.

Considerations on State formations lead Carsun Chang to the lengthiest part of his essay that deals with the State, or the so-called contract, or social contract. In this part he compares Spinoza's views on social contract with those of Th. Hobbes, J. Locke and J. J. Rousseau. He could not be said to stick up for anyone of them. Naturally, Chang's attention is focused on Spinoza's views on social contract and he justifies them from a relatively wide angle as being the consequence of Spinoza's metaphysics and his view on the psychophysical habitus of the "political animal". It may be of interest to observe here that in this part he takes no note at all of the historically derived forms of this social contract: monarchy, aristocracy or democracy, but only of the general differences between the "state of nature" and "social contract". This is rather difficult to understand at first glance, for Spinoza devoted more space to the problem of the forms of State power than to the analysis of the "state of nature" or "social contract" just referred to. This will become clear to the reader only when he goes carefully through Chang's longest quotation from Spinoza and its application to Chinese conditions of the time:

"The best condition of a commonwealth (imperium) is easily discovered from the purpose of political order: which is simply peace and security of life. Accordingly, the best commonwealth is one in which men live in harmony and the laws are kept unbroken. Rebellions, wars, and contemptuous disregard for law must certainly be attributed to the corrupt conditions of the commonwealth rather than to the wickedness of its subjects. For citizens are not born, but made. Besides, men's natural passions are the same everywhere; hence, if wickedness is more dominant and crime more prevalent in one commonwealth than in another, this certainly is due to the fact that the first has not done enough to promote harmony, has not framed its laws with sufficient foresight . . . For a political order which has not removed the causes of civil strife, where war is a constant threat, and laws are often broken, differs little from a veritable state of nature, where everyone lives as he pleases with great danger to his life 49."

Carsun Chang applies these thoughts directly to China. He says that "our country still lives in barbarism and cannot even be called a State" 50. These

47 Carsun Chang, op. cit. p. 11.
50 Carsun Chang, op. cit. p. 12.
last words probably sounded like blasphemy in the ears of traditionally educated Chinese. Certainly, they are very strong and may have been wrongly interpreted by the government. But the words of Spinoza are even stronger. As a matter of fact, Chang in his translation leaves out the end of the last sentence but one, in the passage quoted. The statement that a commonwealth (or State) "has not done enough to promote harmony, has not framed its laws with a sufficient foresight" is immediately followed by words which agents of the Kuomintang's secret service might have interpreted as an instigation to rebellion: "... and so has [i.e. this commonwealth, M.G.] failed to acquire its absolute right as commonwealth." In other words, more comprehensible to the Chinese, it might be said that the Kuomintang wielding absolute power in China of that time and practicing the political tutelage failed to preserve the "Mandate of Heaven" (t'ien-ming), hence, it was right, politically and morally justified, to take steps to remove the political and civil chaos. What induced Carsun Chang to distort Spinoza's very revolutionary message and wrongly assess the prevailing Chinese political situation? Besides the Kuomintang's special headquarters, it was probably the fact that at the time of writing this essay Chang was already the head of the illegal State Socialist Party (Kuo-chia she-hui lang). The name is reminiscent of Hitler's party, but the Chinese State Socialists had nothing in common with that one. Their views greatly resembled those of German Social Democrats. Carsun Chang evidently did not wish that either he or his party would become an object of attention.

Another point of interest is that in the fifth and last part of his essay dealing with freedom of thought and speech, Chang deals not of "barbarism" any more, but of an ideal State, such as was, for example, the city of Amsterdam in Spinoza's times. In his exposition of the freedom of thought and speech, he adheres to Spinoza, but distorts him to some extent: he sets the ideal of a free development of the individual largely in an antithesis to the governing system of the society. This was evidently due to the political reality in which Chang lived. The mercantile community of Amsterdam of 17th century was incomparably more democratic than the Republic of China of the 20th century. Spinoza did not set the human individual into opposition to the State if the ideal freedom was implemented. However, both Spinoza and Chang agreed that "the purpose of the State" is not "to change men from rational beings into brutes or puppets," but "to enable them to exercise their mental and physical powers in safety and use their reason freely, to prevent them from fighting and quarrelling through hatred, anger, bad faith, and mutual malice. Thus, the purpose of the state is freedom."

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51 Spinoza, The Political Works, p. 309.
52 Chester C. Tan, op. cit. p. 253.
53 Spinoza, The Political Works, p. 231.
54 Loc. cit.

[59] 天命 [60] 國家社會黨

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In this part of his essay Chang further states in agreement with Spinoza that the people have a right to the freedom of thought and speech, but again distorts him in a certain measure when he says that this freedom “cannot extend to acts (hsing-wei)\(^{61}\)”\(^{55}\). According to Chang, an analysis of things is a matter of “right” and “wrong” and belongs to the competence of philosophers and scholars, and who incites the masses against government is a “rioter and rebel”\(^{66}\). To maintain order and peace, the State must punish these rioters and rebels. However, when reading carefully the political writings of Spinoza, we find that this was not what he meant to say. True, it was his intent to outline a picture of such “social contract” as would be ideal, one that would be the realization of freedom. He propagated neither revolt nor revolution, but the possibility of and justification for revolt and revolution derive from his concept of power and right. At one place of his *Tractatus Politicus* he wrote: “It is, of course, natural for men to conspire together, either through common fear, or desire to avenge some common injury; and since the right of a commonwealth is determined by the collective power of a people, the greater the number of subjects who are given cause by a commonwealth to join in conspiracy against it, the more must its power and right be diminished\(^{57}\).”

Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was written almost as a social order in support of the efforts of the republican leader of the city of Amsterdam, Jan de Witt (1625—1672), a fighter for democracy, and *Tractatus Politicus*, his last work, was intended to show “how a Monarchy and Aristocracy must be organized if they are not to degenerate into Tyranny, and if the Peace and Freedom of the citizens is to remain intact”\(^{58}\). Even that which was written went beyond the goal that had been set: Spinoza showed democracy to be the best (even though relatively only) form of government. He died at the time he was engaged in writing the chapter on democracy which he did not finish.

Carsun Chang’s was quite a different situation. Chiang Kai-shek was no Jan de Witt and set no store by Chang’s views for they differed for the most part from his own. Under the given circumstances, Chang did not dare to deny to Chiang his right to the “Mandate of Heaven” nor recognize the right of the oppressed masses to *ch’i-i*\(^{69}\), an uprising. He believed more in a parliamentary democracy, electoral and votal procedures than in the masses that would enforce their right and power by means of an armed conflict. Among rioters and rebels he may have classed also Chinese communists. It is hardly by pure chance that an article of such a tenor was written at the time of the Fourth Encirclement Campaign against Chinese communists.

\(^{55}\) Carsun Chang, op. cit. p. 12.

\(^{56}\) Loc. cit.


\(^{58}\) Ibid. p. 257.
which proceeded under the slogan: "Fear no bandits, underestimate no bandits, seek for them and destroy them." The historical fact was, however, that these "bandits" who were not to be underestimated, deprived Chiang of that which Chang had not dared to deny him and gave substance to that prophetic vision which Professor Hu Shih had confided to paper.

Both the essays under analysis were contributions by Chinese philosophers and politicians in their fight for democracy. Hu Shih’s essay in this contribution was only an impulse, Carsun Chang’s was related to the fight for bourgeois democracy directly, even though it was not a consistent fight. Professor Chang has distorted Spinoza’s message in order to avoid direct confrontation with Chiang Kai-shek and not to have to sympathize with the struggle of the Chinese communists.

Nevertheless, Carsun Chang’s demand for freedom of thought and speech must be evaluated as a very progressive one for that period. In order that Spinoza’s idea of freedom of thought and speech might stand out more clearly, an abbreviated translation (chieh-i) of Chapter XX of Tractatus Theologico-Politicus dealing with this topic was included in Spinoza’s Festschrift. The translator gives a word-for-word translation of certain passages, but omits to translate the title of this chapter which shows that “in libera republica unicumque et sentire quae velit, et quae sentiat dicere licere”. A point of interest and rather significant one is that this particular translation, as the whole Festschrift appeared at a time when the Propaganda Department of CCKMT published its “Regulations for Censoring Propagandist Writings” prohibiting, besides communist propaganda, also writings that would express dissatisfaction with the policy of the Kuomintang government. The translator did not sign his true name: Li Shu-li was a pseudonym.

In addition to the works analysed or at least referred to so far, the Chinese section of Spinoza’s Festschrift carried also the first chapter of Ethics in Pro-

60 Spinoza’s Festschrift, p. 15.
fessor Ho Lin’s Chinese translation, Spinoza’s decline of an invitation from the Elector Palatine to the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, and a fragment from the biographical novel by Berthold Auerbach entitled *Spinoza, ein Denkerleben*.

The *Festschrift* dedicated to Spinoza may be said to be a praiseworthy international achievement. Its initiators were Germans and it appeared as a *Sonderausgabe* of a German newspaper. Spinoza had nothing in common with the German nation. The Germans, however, were the first to manifest serious interest in him. Their first great philosopher Leibniz went to seek his advice and his counsel; they were the only ones to invite him to lecture at their university. Even though Leibniz concealed him from the world, the Germans revealed him to the world. The generation of their greatest philosophers and poets from the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries grew up under his influence. Goethe read him together with Charlotte von Stein, and even read him together with her in Latin. To Hegel, Spinoza was “der Mittelpunkt der modernen Philosophie”.

That precisely the Germans wished to express their thanks for *das Edle* that China had given them, is nothing strange in the light of historical reality. They took from China more than others. However, when it proved to be Spinoza’s voice that was to be that *edler Dank*, then it testifies to the noble role of cultural values which should aid in an implementation of human ideals. And one such ideal — an unselfish and independent humanity — was the message of Spinoza to the whole world.

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