A TALK by INSPIRE-initiative sponsored visiting graduate student

KIM FAHLSTEDT
Dept. of Media and Cinema Studies, Stockholm University

"Tracing THE CHINESE REVOLUTION:
In Search of the Lost Origins of a Silent Film"

Friday, February 15, 2013, 10:00 a.m.
Seminar Room, Freeman Fellows House (912 S. Fifth Street, Champaign)

ABSTRACT:
In the spring of 1912, a documentary style newsreel of the ongoing Xinhua Chinese
Revolution was registered at the U.S. Library of Congress. Simultaneously, elaborate ads for
the films appeared in the American film trade press, promoting the films U.S. exhibition. The
film was titled, simply, The Chinese Revolution.

But retroactively nothing appears to have been simple about this silent film. Unusually for
an early film, the print has been preserved. We can view and analyze its contents, as some
scholars have done, and also learn the name of its U.S. distributor, but pending further
cinema historical research we cannot yet be sure of its circumstances of production and
circulation. Where was it made, and by whom, and to what purpose? Where did it actually
play, and to what effect?

This talk will summarize my efforts to find answers to these and related questions, as part of
a larger project I am conducting to trace early trans-Pacific media flows.

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