Now it is 1977 and just seven more years, it will be 1984. Minus 8 then is now Minus 7.

Like Minus 8, Minus 7 will continue to be published by the Alternative Press Syndicate (Asia-Pacific) which is the co-ordinating body for the underground and alternative press in the Asian-Pacific region. Minus 7 is distributed free of charge to all members of the APS. Subscription rate for institutions and individuals who can afford it is $10 US. Send draft or money order to Minus 8, 180 Lockhart Road, 1st floor, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

We apologise to those who have subscribed and not heard from us for some time. We hope that Minus 7 will come out much more regularly that Minus 8 (hopefully, once every month). Our difficulty is of course in the main a matter of finance. Donations and contributions are therefore greatly appreciated. In the past months, much of our financial resources has been diverted to financing the 300 page publication in English, "The Revolution is Dead; Long Live the Revolution!" subtitled "Readings on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from an ultra-left perspective". The price of the book is $8.00 US per copy to readers of Minus 7.
This issue of Minus 7 is simply a collection of the translation of the various documents of the 70s Front concerning the Tienanmen riot 5th April 1976. In addition, there is an appeal for concern of political prisoners in China especially over Li-I-che and Yang Hsi-kwang. The writings of Li and Yang can be found in "The Revolution is Dead; Long Live the Revolution". The next issue of Minus 7 will carry articles on both Li and Yang. Minus 7 is helping to wage an international campaign demanding the release of Li, Yang and those arrested for participation in the Tienanmen revolt. Can you help?

Labour Day Repression

May 1st has long been honoured by the proletariat all over the world. Although the local Maoists in Hong Kong have always used the occasion to organise a few big banquets during which members of the Maoist trade unions hear their trade union bosses repeat the latest directives and the utterances of the bureaucrats in power-holding positions in Peking, never have the Maoists organised any open air public rallies or gatherings. Likewise, because of the lack of tradition, workers have not really spontaneously organised any activity on May Day in the past. The 70s Front, believing that everyday is Mayday and that everyday we must raise uncompromising struggle against the capitalists on many levels and by different means, has not made it a special date. However, the Revolutionary Marxist League, an organisation which split from the 70s four years ago and is of Trotskyist orientation, decided to use this year's Mayday to launch their transitional programme and to mobilise support to build their "vanguard party" to "lead" the workers in Hong Kong.

A rally, organised by the RML, was scheduled to be held at the Victoria Park (demonstrations and open air rallies are allowed to be held only in two or three public parks in Hong Kong if permission is forthcoming from the police and the Urban Council) on 1st May.

The application to hold the rally was however turned down for the reason of "security". So at the whim of the police, any open rally can be banned arbitrarily. Members of the RML disregarded the ban and began to publicize the rally which was now deemed to be illegal. On 29th April, a seven member team of the RML waged a publicity operation at Tai Yau Street, Sanpokong in which two members of the team were arrested and beaten up. The two arrested were secretly taken to a close prison in the New Territories, forbidden to make contacts with the outside and refused bail until 70 hours later.

On the following day the 70s Front made its premises available to the RML and jointly organised a Press Conference denouncing the brutal repression of the police. The 70s Front, while disagreeing with the vanguardist approach of the RML to the peoples' movement, believed that its right to organise the rally on Labour Day must be upheld.

However, after a series of discussion with the RML, it was decided that the occasion was not appropriate for an all out frontal confrontation with the forces of repression. It was decided to call off the rally to avoid bloody clashes with the police and instead, two members of the RML dressed with protesting "masks" to "launch" a march. Two members of the RML dressed with protesting "masks" to "launch" a march. The 70s Front made its premises available to the RML and jointly organised a Press Conference denouncing the brutal repression of the police. The 70s Front, while disagreeing with the vanguardist approach of the RML to the peoples' movement, believed that its right to organise the rally on Labour Day must be upheld.

However, after a series of discussion with the RML, it was decided that the occasion was not appropriate for an all out frontal confrontation with the forces of repression. It was decided to call off the rally to avoid bloody clashes with the police and instead, two members of the RML dressed with protesting masks appeared at the Victoria Park for a sit in on 1st May. Meanwhile, several car loads of policemen had surrounded the area. Members of the 70s Front and the RML leafletted the areas adjacent to the Park as a supporting action. The two members of the RML attracted hundreds of sympathetic onlookers and later led a procession of several hundred to the Star Ferry three kilometres away. Subsequently as the two marchers sat down to rest, the Police violently arrested them.

The Lesson?

The masses must be prepared. The capitalist state is not going to be dismantled or disintegrate peacefully.
On the anniversary of the Tienanmen Incident (5th April), the 70s Front (libertarian communist) and the Revolutionary Marxist League (Trotskyist), despite their ideological differences, jointly sponsored a rally to commemorate the Tienanmen revolt which took place in Peking last year and to revert the official verdict concerning that incident. The rally was smoothly run although at the planning stage, the police sought to obstruct it on the ground that their manpower would be inadequate to maintain order because 5th April is a public holiday (the Ching Ming Festival)!

About 300 attended the rally. At the rally, there were speeches from representatives of the two sponsoring groups and other organisations, followed by a 3 minute-silent tribute to commemorate those murdered at the Tienanmen incident and it ended with delivery of a wreath to the New China News Agency, the employees of which refused to accept it, accusing the rally organisers of distorting facts, claiming that no one was killed during the Tienanmen incident.

The text of the leaflets distributed during and prior to the rally by the 70s Front has been translated into English and printed below. The 70s Front welcomes discussion and contact with interested groups and individuals.
MARCHING ON THE ROAD TO SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

70s FRONT

"China is no longer the China of yore
And the people are no longer wrapped in sheer ignorance,
Gone for good is Shih Huang-ti's feudal society.
What we want is genuine Marxism-Leninism."

5th April 1976, at the Tienanmen Square, the Chinese people rose up courageously to protest against the removal of the wreaths sent to commemorate Chou En-lai and the other late revolutionaries, and to express their hatred of the bureaucrats in the form of more wreaths, poems, blood and tears, and actions. In the face of the righteous act and demand of the masses, the opposing factions of the bureaucrats, in order to protect their common interest, joined hands to execute the brutal suppression of the masses, openly slandered the masses and labelled the revolutionary act of the masses as counter-revolutionary.

We believe that the people should have such democratic rights as the freedom of speech and of association. The bureaucrats' slander, attack, arrest and suppression of the masses, and the subsequent covering up of the suppression all point to one fact: the interests of the bureaucrats run directly against the interests of the masses.

Following the death of Mao Tse-tung, the intensification of intra-party struggle and the fall of the Chiang Ching gang, the new power holders headed by Hua Kuo-feng, with the intention of more bitterly attacking the Chiang Ching gang and maintaining and consolidating the bureaucratic rule, finally subtly uncover the fact that the Tienanmen Incident was not at all a conspiratorial movement of a handful of counter-revolutionaries, but a spontaneous, revolutionary uprising of the masses. The people, far from being deceived, divided and capitulated, have at last awoken from the myths created by the bureaucrats, after the 20 years of repressive bureaucrats rule. They have learned from past experience how to employ the strategis of struggle. Hence on 8th January, 1977, the anniversary of the death of Chou En-lai, seizing upon the opportunity of the disagreement among the bureaucrats on the question of Teng Hsiao-ping's reinstatement, the Chinese people once again vented their revolutionary cry, which was more explicit and militant than before:

"Reverse the verdict on the Tienanmen Incident!
Avenge for the death of those demonstrators!
Implement Socialist democracy!"

The demands of the masses are revolutionary ones. The new rulers, being afraid of meeting with these demands, resorted to removing the big character posters silently. Once again, the Chinese people were taught a lesson. The suppression of the masses by the bureaucrats always serves to further expose the ugly face of the rulers, and helps the masses to grasp the right direction and strengthen their will to march onward. The revolutionary action of the Chinese people on the 8th of January can best illustrate this.
The Chinese people in Hong Kong and those in the mainland are inseparably connected. The struggle of the Chinese people in the mainland is our struggle too! Last year, we have already affirmed the revolutionary implications of the Tienanmen incident and have held a mass rally at the Victoria Park to express our fullest support. As long as bureaucratic rule still exists, the revolutionary movements of the masses will never end. We therefore decide once again to hold a mass rally at the Victoria Park on April 5th this year to commemorate the anniversary of the Tienanmen Incident. We hereby demand resolutely that

"The verdicts on the Tienanmen incident be reversed at once;
All those arrested for the Incident be released;
The families of those killed at the Incident be compensated;
The truth of the suppression be clearly revealed;
Those bureaucrats responsible for the suppression of the masses be punished."

We also call upon all Chinese people to
"Continue to fight for socialist democracy and the end of bureaucratic rule!"

Notes:

1 This is a joint statement of the 70s Front and the Revolutionary Marxist-League distributed in thousands on several consecutive days before the April 5th rally.

2 See note 5 in document "Reversing the Verdicts on the Tienanmen Incident."

3 The 70s Front should have insisted that "commemorate" and "late revolutionaries" be put in quotation marks.

REVERTING THE INVERTED FACTS: Our View on the Tienanmen Incident

70s FRONT

Meek and gentle though the Chinese people may be, they will blast out their cry of rage when being put under incessant enslavement and suppression. On the 5th of April, there erupted at Tienanmen Square, Peking, a riot. The Chinese authority claimed that the Tienanmen incident was a "premeditated, planned and organised" counter-revolutionary incident, and stressed that this was the conspiracy of a handful of class enemies, despite the obvious fact that there were over a hundred thousand people at the Square. Yet, by reading between the lines in Renmen Ribao's account of the incident and from foreign releases, we got an entirely different interpretation: the incident was not premeditated, planned nor organised. In China where secret police heads like Hua Kuo-feng, Wang Tung-hsin and Lee Kwong-chang are keen at ensuring that the society is "as clear as marble, as smooth as glass" and attaining the nine Nos (no hidden counter-revolutionaries, no counter-revolutionary banners and pamphlets, no raping, no robbing, no murdering, no stealing, no rioting, no gambling, no fire disasters), how can the people conspire a "premeditated, planned and organised" movement and not be detected in advance? The Chinese authority's account of the incident has indeed much exaggerated the degree of freedom the Chinese people are given!
Customarily, on every Ching Ming Festivals there are people sending in wreaths to the Monument of the People's Heroes at the Tienanmen Square and the wreaths will not be cleared away until the Festival is over. This year, however, the Chinese authority removed the wreaths on the eve of the Festival. The next morning, seeing that the wreaths were removed, the people were astonished and enraged when they got no satisfactory explanation from the police on duty. Then later, the removal of more wreaths by several students of the Tsinghua University despite feverish protest further provoked the long subdued anger of the people hence igniting a riot. Setting fire to the barracks, burning up vehicles, punishing the police, rushing into the Great Hall of the People..... this is an anti-oppression riot! Despite the official claim that this is the act of a handful of bad elements, the New China Agency reported "Several hundred worker-militiamen who went up the flights of steps leading to the Great Hall of the people to stand guard were broken up into several sections." A handful of people will surely be not enough to obstruct the several hundred militiamen organised in teams. Perhaps not all the one hundred thousand people there had participated in this riot, but surely most of them had actively participated or else, how could the riot persist in the face of the repressive machinery till night and be suppressed only after hundreds of people were arrested?

Many newspapers, Chinese and foreign, including the official account all claimed that this riot is one which is pro-Chou, pro-Teng and anti-Mao, anti-Chiang; the Maoist report of course tried hard to discredit the incident by all means but other rightist or neutral newspapers also reported with a sense of regret that the riot had not succeeded; some even spoke for the moderate faction headed by Teng Hsiao-ping, as if once the moderate faction led by Teng were in charge, all problems will be solved and paradise will be in sight. Such fallacious commentaries are of course just the wishful imagination of the reactionaries, who are used to distorting facts. When left with no better choice, the people will perhaps mostly prefer the moderates which, when compared to Mao and Chiang's "radical" faction, will not afflict the people with more painful sufferings, and will at least not demand the people to perform the faithful dance, "pray at morn, repent at night, left, left and MORE left..... the most, the most and the most". Yet what in fact the moderate faction led by Teng is? It is identical with the line of Liao Shao-chi. Liu's line had had the opportunity to get fully implemented when Mao retreated to the second echelon after the disastrous failure of the Great Leap Forward. But in 1965 at the eve of the outburst of the Cultural Revolution, the mere outcry of Mao gained the support of all people and Liu and Teng were finally "dragged down the horse". Why were the people responding to Mao's summon so enthusiastically? Apart from the charisma of Mao, the main reason lies in the fact that since 1949 all counter-revolutionary measures adopted by the Chinese government which were aimed at suppressing the people and negating their wishes were said by Mao to be entirely the faults of Liu Shao-chi. However when the masses felt that the fall of Liu and Teng had not mitigated but accentuated their sufferings, they gradually woke up from their illusions. Shang Wu-lien, for example, put forward the question of "WHITHER CHINA?", following which was another article "The Cry of the Battle Horse" which accused Chou En-lai as the Chief representative of the red capitalists. With his supreme authority. Mao Tse-tung, employed whatever means possible and sought to deceive the people Saying "Revolutionary committees are the more suitable",
he forcibly imposed the three-in-one alliance, seizing away the political power that the masses had gained for themselves and putting it back into the hands of the bureaucrats. Further he dispatched these millions of revolutionary youths down to the countryside and strangled to death the genuine revolution which had grown up from the pseudo-revolution. The revolution is dead; long live the revolution! Lies could never stand the test of time and the counter-revolutionary nature of the bureaucrats at last revealed itself to the people. Hence there appeared in Canton Lee I-che who re-asserted the well known fact that there exist in China a new class standing over and above the people and enslaving them: "The essence of the new bourgeois mode of production is 'changing the public into private'. When the leader of the state or an enterprise redistributes the properties and powers of the proletariat in a bourgeois manner, he is in fact practising the new bourgeois private possession of these properties and powers. What has been commonly observed is that some leaders have allowed themselves, their families, pinfolk and friends special political and economic privileges, even going so far as swapping amongst themselves and pushing their children into political and economic positions through back-door channels."

The public servants of the people have become their masters instead. Thousands of prisons have been erected all over the country and the people have become the subject over whom the bureaucrats impose their dictatorship. The so called "mass movements" are merely movements to mobilise the masses to fight against the masses, so as to achieve the goal of the consolidation of the socialist in name but essentially feudalist-fascist-dictatorship. To say that the hundred thousand people involved in the Tienanmen incident are merely supporters of the line of Liu and Teng is only a reflection of the fact that under the malignant tight control of the Chinese rulers, the people have to choose the less frightening devil, though in reluctance.

"China is no longer the China of yore, and the people are no longer wrapped in sheer ignorance. Gone for good is Shih Huang-ti's feudal society..... What we want is genuine Marxism-Leninism. For the sake of genuine Marxism-Leninism, we fear not shedding our blood and laying down our lives." This so called counter-revolutionary poem is the best reflection of the essence of the Tienanmen Incident. Knowing too well the real intention of the people the Chinese bureaucrats deliberately quoted lines from the poem so as to gain unanimous support in the Political Bureau for the dismissal of Teng Hsiao-ping and to label the incident as counter-revolutionary, hence preventing the movement from spreading all over the country for it is reported that people have started to support the Tienanmen uprising in places like Chang Chau and Kunming. The Tienanmen incident is an anti-oppression uprising directed right against the bureaucrats. It is an indication of the awakening of the masses. Having learned the lessons from the Cultural Revolution, and being aware of the malice of the bureaucrats from the Lin Piao Affair, they will not entrust their future to the bureaucrats any more. Apart from asking "Whither China?" they fearlessly enriched the originally threadbare content of the slogan of "four modernisations", directed the spearhead at the bureaucratic class headed by Mao, fought for their right to voice their opinion on China's future, strove to rid their chains and asserted themselves as their own masters, while at the same time declared to the world that the Mao Tse-tung era would be fading out from history very soon. It is precisely due to this fact that the bureaucrats are forced to put aside the factional struggle for a moment and join hands to ruthlessly
suppress the people, to the point of violating the constitution which had been used to deceive and benumb the masses, and dismissed Teng Hsiao-ping from his post of vice-Premier. It can thus be seen how fearful and anxious the bureaucrats are when faced with the people's furious uproar so that they have to utilise the entire machinery of suppression to smother the revolutionary demands of the masses.

1976 is the tenth anniversary of the Cultural Revolution. Marching along the road spilled with the red blood of the late revolutionaries, the Chinese people have started to howl and act. Though the last revolution has been strangled, the new seedling is growing. Let us participate in watering to help it get rooted and grow stronger!

Hong Kong is an integral part of China so that its future is intimately tied to the success of genuine socialist revolution in China. To avoid being victimised by the dictatorship of the Chinese bureaucrats and a repetition of the tragedy of the Kronstadt Uprising, we have to strive by all means for the out burst of socialist revolution in China. Our immediate task now is to voice our support for the revolutionary masses in China and press the Chinese bureaucrats to release all political prisoners. Above all, we should make use of this incident to achieve a better understanding of the reality in China; tear off the deluding mask of the Chinese communists and expose its feudalistic-fascist nature which is no different from the reactionary character of the Soviet Union.

15th April, 1976.

* See note 5 in document "Reversing the Verdicts on the Tienanmen Incident."

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE WORKERS IN HONGKONG ON THE 1st ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIENANMEN INCIDENT

Fellow workers,

When reactionary governments seek to repress the revolutionary demands of the working class, they do not just use the naked brute force of suppression. They would deliberately create a group of "labour union bosses" to obstruct the progress of the workers' movement and to split the revolutionary strength of the proletariat. Messrs. Chan Yiu Choi, Yang Kwong, and Chang Yiu Tong of the Federation of Trade Unions are examples of such running dogs. They adhere to the counter-revolutionary diplomacy of their masters to flirt with and befriend the imperialists. They see eye to eye with the colonial government in Hong Kong. They claim to be patriotic and anti-revisionist, using them as pretexts to hinder the struggle of the working class against the colonial government and capitalists in Hong Kong. In order to pursue their ends, they accused the workers who had risen spontaneously against the capitalists to be "Russian spies" or "a small group of bad elements who are anti-communist, anti-Chinese and anti-people." They receive substantial financial support from the bureaucrats and therefore are in control of a great number of newspapers and magazines such as the Ta Kung Pao, Wen Wei Pao, the New Evening Post, the Seventies Monthly, and the Wide Angle etc. which mystify the workers. In fulfilling the mission set for them by the bureaucrats, the "labour union bosses" help to contribute to the prosperity and stability of the British colonialists in Hong Kong.

The series of dramatic changes last year have exposed their "fox tail" and the Tienanmen Incident was a powerful mirror which revealed the demons. When the revolutionary masses at Tienanmen declared with their actions that "Gone for good is Shih Huang Ti's feudal society", that "China is no longer the China of yore" and demanded that they be their own masters, the labour boss Yang Kwong could not wait to jump out to help the bureaucrats to whitewash and to accuse the Tienanmen revolt as a "premeditated, planned
and organised" counter-revolutionary incident. Yang Kwong and his fellow travellers, with scarcely any authority, declared, "the unanimous agreement to dismiss Tang Hsiao Ping from all his duties within or outside the party represents the wishes of the people in the country, as well as the wishes of all the workers in Hong Kong. This is marvellous. The workers in Hong Kong would not tolerate a handful of class enemies creating a counter-revolutionary incident at the Tienanmen Square".

At that time, the 70s Front was pointing out the fallacy of such points of view and we indicated that Teng Hsiao Ping's dismissal should in no way be identified with the revolutionary spirit and connotations of the Tienanmen Incident. Only the bureaucrats themselves would consider the anti-bureaucratic masses in the Tienanmen Incident as class enemies. Indeed the bureaucrats and the revolutionary masses are natural enemies. Now that there is much talk about the imminent reinstatement of Teng Hsiao Ping and if this is true, then Yang Kwong et al will shamelessly announce that "our leader Teng Hsiao Ping reappears and this represents the wishes of the people in the country, as well as the wishes of all the workers in Hong Kong. This is marvellous!" Yang Kwong and the labour bosses, traitors of the working class, will automatically, through their reflex actions, become the running dogs of those bureaucrats who have been victorious and try to deceive the workers.

We call upon all workers to clearly recognise the ugly faces of this gang of labour bosses. Get them out of the unions and restructure our organisations to ensure direct democracy in them, eliminating any possibilities of our organisations being captured by the labour bosses to fulfill their opportunistic aims. Instil among ourselves with the revolutionary spirit so courageously manifested in the Canton-Hong Kong general strike in the late twenties. Our daily life must be linked with the anti-capitalist struggle. Let us support the revolutionaries in China and the rest of the world who fight for genuine socialism. We must affirm and glorify the anti-bureaucratic content and the revolutionary spirit of making oneself to be one's own master, embodied in the Tienanmen incident. April 5th this year will be the anniversary of the Tienanmen incident and there will be a mass rally to "Reverse the Verdict on Tienanmen". Please participate that we might all openly discuss the question "Whither China?", a question we must resolve to provide an answer. The bureaucrats and the capitalists will not collapse on their own. To talk emptily of patriotism and anti-revisionism in abstract and to be detached from actual struggles is but a means the labour bosses utilise to fool the working masses. We must act now and fight for the socialist tomorrow.

70s Front

A PROTEST NOTE TO THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY

As long as there exists such a bureaucratic reactionary regime of the Chinese communists, there will be a shameless propaganda machine like the New China News Agency. This fact has been demonstrated most clearly by the Tienanmen Incident on 5th April last year. Using the pretext to commemorate Chou En-lai, the masses in Peking at the Tienan-men Monument of the People's Heroes blasted out their revolutionary cries which made the bureaucrats tremble. The masses, through their actions, openly declared to the whole world that "Gone for good is Shih Huang-ti's feudal society", "China is no longer the China of yore and the people are no longer wrapped in sheer ignorance". Indeed, because of insufficient strength, the masses were ruthlessly and bloodily suppressed. But the call by the people that they become their own masters spread like prairie fire in the whole country. The bureaucrats utilised the New China News Agency and similar propaganda machines to slander the Tienanmen incident, calling it a "pre­meditated, planned and organised counter-revolutionary incident". At the time, we were already pointing out that the reports of the NCNA were blatant lies. NCNA accused us to be "a small handful of bad elements with ulterior motives, anti-communist, anti-Chinese
At the Rally

Organisers of the rally chanting with the masses

“reverse the verdict on Tienanmen”

“smash bureaucratic rule”

& “fight for socialist democracy”
3 minute-silent tribute to the heroic people who were killed on 5th April 1976 for protesting against the “feudal” rule of Mao Tse-tung.

Member of Free Li-I-Che/Yang Hsi Kwang Action Committee Addressing Rally.
and anti-people”.

Now, as a result of the fierce struggle between the bureaucrats, the truth about the Tienanmen incident has been indirectly and partially revealed. The true facts so far revealed are sufficient to refute the NCNA’s claim that the incident was “counter-revolutionary”. On the contrary, the masses, through their revolutionary actions, were formulating answers to the question of “Whither China?” The Deputy head of the NCNA Lee Kuk San dares no longer utter his nonsense: Teng Hsiao Ping being the chief representative of the counter-revolutionary forces behind the Tienanmen incident; that his counter-revolutionary activities are planned and incorporated with a programme and the continuation of the counter-revolutionary lines of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. This is not because he is ashamed of himself and of spreading false news. His refusal to stand by what he said is simply due to the fact that Teng Hsiao-ping is in favour again. His prime task is to lick the arse of those people in power. How then would he want to talk about the Tienanmen revolutionary spirit and Teng Hsiao Ping together?

A bureaucratic organisation like the NCNA will not be “saved” as a result of protest. But our protests will have the effect of demonstrating its corruption and revealing its true reactionary nature. We call upon the workers in the Agency to get rid of the running dogs of the Chinese bureaucrats heading the Agency and to begin the reconstruction of the Agency. We call upon the workers in the Agency to eliminate the control and to expose the ugly faces of the Chinese bureaucrats. Let us link together with the masses to end the bureaucratic rule of the Chinese communists. On the anniversary of the Tienanmen Incident, a mass rally is organised at the Victoria Park. On the one hand we shall seek to reverse the verdict on Tienanmen. On the other we shall explore the road to socialism in China. We hope that the workers at the Agency would be with us together to fight for the early success of the implementation of socialism in China and the whole world.

70s Front

Delivering the wreath to the New China News Agency.
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE HONG KONG FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

We are sending this open letter to you, so soon after you have become members of the Executive Committee of the Federation, not so much to surprise you but to express a wish that the Federation might still be capable of functioning in a progressive way. The Federation once left the ivory tower in the early 70s concerning itself with Chinese affairs and participating in agitation for social reforms. During the "Chinese Language Movement" and the "Protect Tiao Yu Tai Campaign", it was influential in mobilising post-secondary students, so helping to deepen the two movements. But over recent years, some members of the Executive have become "Maoist" and the good tradition of the Federation's involvement in social movements has been sacrificed. The slogans they raise, "Understand the Fatherland and be concerned with society" have the hollow ring of emptiness. Students' involvement in social and public affairs has become confined to "study and research" and once again, the students have retreated to the ivory tower. Students are no more to be seen fighting side by side with the workers and the people in the movements which have developed in the past few years.

When the "April Fifth Tien An Men Incident" erupted last year, the reactionary nature of the Maoist executives' slogans of "Understanding the Fatherland and being concerned with society" were emphatically demonstrated. When the masses in front of the Monument of Peoples' Heroes made their great revolutionary declaration that "China is no longer the China of yore, And the people are no longer wrapped in sheer ignorance. Gone for good is Shih Huang-ti's feudal society!" and the Chinese bureaucrats were ruthlessly executing their bloody suppression, the Federation was silent. Certain members of the Executive were acting on behalf of themselves, denouncing the Tien An Men incident as counter-revolutionary, parroting the groundless accusations of the Chinese bureaucrats. This attitude was most unfair to the revolutionary masses, who were waging a fierce struggle against the bureaucrats, and who were bitterly suppressed. Such acts betrayed the emptiness of the slogans "Understanding the Fatherland and being concerned with society."

A series of drastic changes has taken place in China over the past year. Because of the internal conflicts between the bureaucrats, the true story of the Tien An Men Incident is becoming known. Now the Chinese people want to reverse the verdict on the incident and the accomplices of the bureaucrats are silent. A year ago they repeated the official words, but now these words have become the "black utterings" of the Gang of Four according to the clique of bureaucrats who now hold power.

To really understand China, one's thoughts and actions must correspond. One must assess critically the developments and changed situations, and should not become an appendage of the bureaucrats. To be concerned with society, one must be involved in the struggles together with the masses, and should not stop at "study and research". On the 5th April this year, there will be a mass rally "To reverse the verdict on the Tien An Men Incident" and to discuss "the road to socialism". "Whither China?" is indeed a controversial question but the executive members of the Federation have the responsibility to mobilise the students and the masses to take part and express their views.
REVERSING THE VERDICTS ON THE TIENANMEN INCIDENT

70s FRONT

"Whoever wins and is victorious is Marxist-Leninist;
Whoever loses and is defeated is taking the capitalist road;
Pointing to a stag and calling it a horse is the order of the day.
— True and false turned upside down,
  Black and white made indistinguishable.
It's too hard to keep up with the factional struggles;
Waiting for instructions seems the best alternative.
Keeping silent can find you "lagging behind the tide");
Expressing your views, though, can get you criticised.
Alas, I make up my mind
To repeat the official words,
  sail along with the wind,
  support the new Chairman,
  and learn from the Four Greats*
— All without feeling a trace of shame!"

*The Four Greats refer to the four notorious literary figures in China who would kiss the arse of anyone to save their own necks.

On the fifth of April last year, over one hundred thousand people gathered at the Tien An Men square in Peking, and a struggle which surprised the whole world erupted. At the time the bureaucrats said firmly that "class enemies" were "openly hoisting the flag of Teng Hsiao Ping", whose "spearhead pointed at the Great Leader Chairman Mao". They claimed that "a handful of class enemies were opposing the on-going movement to counter the right deviationist attempt to reverse the Correct verdict", and that the "counter-revolutionary incident" was "premeditated, planned and organised". The incident was claimed to be a "small-scale Hungarian counter-revolutionary incident"! At the same time, the 70s Front nevertheless pointed out that the Tien An Men Incident was a spontaneous revolutionary upsurge by the masses in response to continued slavery and oppression. It was an anti-bureaucratic struggle to assert the right of the people to become their own masters. Following last autumn's drastic changes Teng Hsiao Ping, former "unrepentant capitalist roader", has become the subject of speculation and will be reinstated very soon. The bureaucratic class is also seeking to reverse the verdict on the Tien An Men Incident, but the bureaucrats' intentions are most different from the demands of the masses.

The bureaucrats' attempt to reverse the verdict on the Tien An Men Incident is primarily aimed at eradicating the "antagonistic contradiction" label which subsequently accrued to Teng Hsiao Ping, in order to prepare the way for his re-appearance on the political scene. The recent release of those arrested for the incident can also be understood as a backlash by the bureaucrats in the face of public sentiment. For the bureaucrats
will never "reverse the verdicts" to suit the people, knowing too well that to reveal the true story of suppression and to penalise all those bureaucrats responsible for it must imply an open recognition of the rights of the people to express unorthodox opinions on the future of China. People who feel themselves to be their own masters, are liable to express such demands as "Fight for socialist democracy", "the right of the people to elect and dismiss officials", and "ensure the right of the people to express different political viewpoints and to supervise cadres of various levels", just as they did on the anniversary of the death of Chou En Lai. For the bureaucrats, therefore, there is only one way of reversing the verdicts on the Tien An Men Incident. Any others invite instant suppression. This explains why, prior to 8th January this year, big character posters calling simply for the reinstatement of Teng Hsiao Ping were tolerated, while the very mention of "socialist democracy" or the right to "elect and dismiss" led to their removal.

The bureaucrats' deceptive attempt to reverse the verdicts on the Tien An Men Incident is intended to create a series of illusions to give the impression to the outside world that the reinstatement of Teng Hsiao Ping is the people's most urgent desire. Apart from paving the way for Teng's final reappearance, this can serve to discredit the "Gang of Four", while at the same time helping to boost the reputation of the ruling elite headed by Hua Kuo Feng, and so dupe the people into trusting Hua to "restore order after the great confusion". Thus is achieved the ultimate goal: consolidation of the interest of the bureaucratic class. To this ends, the bureaucrats, apart from utilising their internal and external propaganda machine to disseminate the desired "public opinion", deliberately allowed so-called "confidential papers", (including "The Final Message of Chou En Lai", "Chairman Hua's three directives to Teng Hsiao-ping" and "Teng Hsiao Ping's report to Chairman Hua"), to be published in 'Ming Pao' with the obvious aim of arousing public sentiment. Yet this 180 degree turn in official attitudes was far too rapid and drastic. Instead of faithful adherence to and constant recitation of the sayings of the Gang of Four the line has become a bitter attack against the now-defeated Gang of Four and earnest support for the former "unrepentent capitalist roader". This must be difficult for anyone to adapt to. Even the old bureaucrat Wu Teh could not help saying things like "Continue to criticise Teng and Counter the right, deviationist attempt to reverse correct verdicts" in his report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in celebration of the liquidation of the Gang of Four. Realising the mistake Wu had made, the bureaucrats at once re-wrote the speech, crossing out such inconsistencies before re-issuing the speech. If Wu couldn't keep up, no wonder the editors of 'Pan Ku'3, who had only come to identify themselves with the Communist Chinese in recent years, sigh, "Prior to this incident, we knew almost nothing of the real line of the Gang of Four, but simply accepted that Chang Chun Chiao and Yao Wen Yuan were experts in the theory of Marxism-Leninism.... It is hence understandable that some people may feel it so difficult to figure out the struggles between lines on the Mainland that they simply resort to "waiting for instructions"!

Such confusion over black and white, right and wrong can partly be attributed to the activities of opportunists capable only of flattering those holding seats of power, but the main reason lies in the fact that under bureaucratic rule, the people are deprived of the freedom of speech, and thus can only reiterate the official line. Even that running
dog of the bureaucrats, Yeung Kwong of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, is now losing sleep over what he said a year ago: "The dismissal of Teng Hsiao Ping is the fervent desire of the people of China and the workers of Hong Kong. Well done! The workers of Hong Kong will never permit the counter-revolutionary acts of the small handful of class enemies at the Tien An Men Square." This logic of "Whoever wins and is victorious is Marxist-Leninists. "Whoever loses and is defeated is taking the capitalist road" is an outright manifestation of the bureaucrats' supplanting of the interests of the people and of the revolution with those of the intra-party factions. This is a logic which perpetuates the enslavement of the people.

"China is no longer the China of yore,  
And the people are no longer wrapped in sheer ignorance.  
Gone for good is Shih Huang-ti's feudal society!  
What we want is genuine Marxism-Leninism!"

The people have at last awoken from the past. They have learned that they must never again entrust the future of China to the bureaucrats, and the Tien An Men Incident is the clearest symbol of their awakening. Despite the deliberate hailing of Teng as one under whose leadership every problem can be solved (the editor of 'Ming Pao', for instance, has likened Teng to a kind of ointment which can heal all diseases; 'North and South Pole' magazine also featured an article entitled "When Will The General Start Off with His Horse?") , this is wishful thinking only. A year ago, we already pointed out that Teng Hsiao Ping's policies were nothing but a re-hashing of Liu Shao Chi's line, already rejected by the people during the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps someone will ask, "If the people do not welcome Teng Hsiao Ping, why do they long for his reinstatement so much?". Admittedly, there are people who choose Teng for realistic purposes. This is only a reflection of the fact that under repressive bureaucratic rule, power is exclusively concentrated in the hands of the bureaucrats so that the people, not having the means to crush the entire bureaucratic machine, can only resort to a lesser evil. Compared to Mao Tse Tung's "idealism" the line of Teng Hsiao Ping is far from revolutionary, though closer to reality. China under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party is still stuck in the stage of capitalism. The people are denied all democratic rights and are subject to the harassment of the bureaucrats.

"The essence of the new bourgeois mode of possession is 'changing public into private' under the conditions of socialist ownership of the means of production......What has been commonly observed is that some leaders have allowed themselves, their families, kinfolk, friends, special political and economic privileges, even going so far as swapping amongst themselves, and pushing their children into political and economic positions through back-door channels."  

The current struggle against the Gang of Four revealed numerous facts which reaffirmed the existence of a new class of bureaucrats standing over and above the people. Under such circumstances, how can the people believe in the propaganda of the CCP and work laboriously for the construction of the socialist state? The stagnation in production is the greatest problem confronting the economy of China.

To solve this problem, Mao put forward the "spiritual incentives" and the "grasp the revolution, promote production" doctrine, driving the people to produce hard by means of "class struggles". The failure of the Gang of Four betrays the ineffectiveness of such a method. On the other hand, the "material incentives" method put forward
by Teng, despite its capitalistic flavour, is the more "realistic". This explains the rationale behind the people's preference for Teng. Teng's reinstatement is now almost certain. Yet, can Hua and Teng, working together, make 1977 a year of prosperity and order for China? Let us first examine the policies proposed by Teng as embodied in his "Concerning the Promotion of Industrial Development" "introducing advanced techniques", "increasing the export of coal", "Reorganising Management of Enterprises", "The Two Positives", "Distribution according to labour" "Taking Care of Workers' Livelihood", "Red and Expert" and "Party's leadership" etc..... In a word, this corresponds to the development model adopted by the underdeveloped countries on their advance towards capitalism - that is, obtaining foreign currencies by means of the utilisation of raw materials, introducing advanced techniques, reinforcing entrepreneurship which emphasizes responsibility, promoting production by material incentives and improving workers' welfare. This is no different from Liu Shao Chi's policy of "Three privates and One Guarantee". In his speech at the Second National Conference on "Learning From Tachai in Agriculture", Hua Kuo Feng put forward" the main fighting tasks for the whole Party, the whole army and the people of all nationalities throughout the country in 1977" Again, the ring of emptiness. The first task he mentioned was "Deepen the great mass movement to expose and criticise the Gang of Four". Had not Hua already said that, "the problem of the Gang of Four has been solved without 'once firing a gun' and 'without a drop of blood shed'?" The second task of "Strengthening Party building" implies not the granting of more intra-party democracy, but rather the strengthening of party discipline: "We must affirm anew the discipline of the Party, namely: (1) The individual is subordinate to the organisation; (2) the minority is subordinate to the majority; (3) the lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and (4) the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee." As Chairman of the Party, what Hua has proposed is obviously aimed at establishing his own absolute leadership. The third task, "Deepen the mass movements: in agriculture, learn from Ta Chai; in industry, learn from Taching; strive to push the national economy forward", is so abstract in tone that it cannot even parallel Teng's theses. As for the fourth task, "Make further efforts to bring about a new tide in the mass movement to study the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and Chairman Mao's thoughts", everyone can see that this is put in for decorative purposes only.

From the above examples, we can see that the line of Hua and Teng is based on the strategy of bourgeois economic development in the context of state capitalism in China. Such a line offers no more than did Liu Shao Chi's line prior to the Cultural Revolution. On the Chinese New Year, the supply of commodities was insufficient. Hua Kuo Feng and his associates simply put the blame for such economic difficulties on the Gang of Four and their local followers: for example, the ruining of the economy of Hangchou by Jung Shun Hsu, the damage to the railroad system in Changchau by Tang Chi-Shan, and harm done in Kiangsi by Pan Si-Kao... etc. Sure enough, the divide and rule tactics employed by the Gang of Four in their struggle for power impeded economic development, but now that the Gang of Four have already been arrested and their accomplices ferreted out or shot, why is the supply of New Year commodities even worse than last year's?
The Gang of Four was no doubt fond of rallying one faction to attack the other, but is not Hua Kuo Feng doing just the same? The difference is just that he has managed to eliminate the other factions and emerge victorious. The winning side, however, has not given the people the right of factory management and has not improved their livelihood either. To the people, "working harder or not yields the same monthly wage of 36 dollars", so that they all prefer idling to working like a donkey. In the agricultural sphere, the distribution of food in 1967 at the Sha-ho Commune of suburban Canton was such that the state took away 20% of the grain as taxation, buying another 14% in addition; the Commune and production teams took another 36% hence ultimately leaving only 30% to the people themselves – the exploitation was even greater than that once imposed on the peasants by the landlords! Though these figures are based on the pre-Cultural Revolution situation, the constant advocacy by the CCP of the abolition of private plots can in a way be indicative of the increasing exploitation of the peasants, though no official information is available. Under such circumstances, how can the peasants work at ease? Are not the slogans of "mechanisation of agriculture" and "in agriculture, learn from Tachai" merely colourful but empty words? Teng Hsiao Ping’s proposal of "material incentives" may improve the economy to some extent, but it will not outstrip even the Soviet Union, let alone the other developed capitalist states! The presence of the bureaucratic class suppresses and destroys much of the people’s initiative and creativeness, thereby impeding the rapid development of productive forces. The extravagance of the bureaucratic class (Chiang Ching, for example, spent a sum equivalent to a peasant’s lifetime production in just half a month) is a deterrent to the accumulation of resources for economic development. The 1977 February issue of “Red Flag” featured an article by the theory group of the Commercial section calling for the people to grasp well the production of pans, bowls, laddies, trays, knives and scissors, matches and light bulbs... Amidst such material shortages, the bureaucrats still decided upon the no-strings attached construction of a railroad for the reactionary governments of Tanzania and Zambia, and put up satellites one after the other. Indeed, the extravagance of the bureaucratic class and the vanity of military competition have robbed the people of their means of livelihood, resulting in 28 years of poverty and the shortage of resources for essential constructions. Is not the present boast about the realisation of the four modernisations too unconvincing? Even with the help of “Oil”, the Chinese economy can only at best catch up with the Soviet Union. Even though there may be no more shortages of food and clothing, the Chinese people are still nothing but the slaves of the bureaucrats. Well fed slaves are still slaves!

How much suffering have we borne, how much blood our ancestors shed! Our righteous hearts should bear the fruits of equality, our red blood nourish the flowers of liberty. But the fruits of equality and the flowers of liberty have been seized by the bureaucratic class! This is something we cannot tolerate. Instead of accepting our continued enslavement and suppression and letting the bureaucrats lead us along the road travelled by the Soviet Union, let us all resolutely join with the revolutionary masses to wage a life and death struggle against the bureaucrats, to smash all forms of bureaucratic power, to assert ourselves as our own masters, and to work for the realisation of genuine socialism inside China and the whole world! Separated from our brothers and sisters in the Mainland by physical barriers though we be, yet we can still in Hong
Kong voice our support for the revolutionary struggles inside mainland China, pressing the bureaucrats to give more and more ground until the time is ripe to smash the entire bureaucratic machine. Reversing the verdicts on the Tien An Men Incident is our first step! By doing so, let us start striking the death toll of the bureaucrats and sound the advance of genuine socialism!

Notes:
1. For full text of the "Counter-revolutionary Political incident at Tien An Men Square" refer to number 15, Peking Review, April 9, 1976.
2. Ming Pao is a Chinese daily newspaper in Hong Kong which claims to be taking a neutral stance between the left and right.
3. Pan Ku is a Chinese monthly magazine which is pro-communist China.
4. The Pan Ku magazine.
5. The 70s FRONT is opposed to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and we feel that the slogan should be understood to be a demand for an ideal society in which people are their own masters.
6. See our article "Reverting the Inverted Facts" written in April, 1976.

Free Li-I-Che! Free Yang Hsi-Kwang!

Soon after the death of Mao Tse-tung and the defeat of the Gang of Four, the new rulers of Communist China made their debut via satellite to the thirty billion people of the world. Over the imposing wall of Tienanmen, red flags could be seen fluttering in the wind, and below them millions of people holding banners and cheering with joy. One foreign news agency commented at the time: "Perhaps the Chinese people are getting used to cheering their new leaders."

How brave, and yet how shortsighted this foreign reporter was! His speculation will most certainly prove mistaken for in reality, the eight billion people of China, together with the hundreds of thousands of overseas Chinese are holding their breath. Meanwhile, they are carefully observing the direction in which the new driver, whose vehicle has gone through a long, difficult, exhausting, chaotic and distressing journey, will take China and its eight billion people. Meanwhile, people have started discussing the fate of Li-I-Che, and reminding each other that his fate and that of "the Chinese People's conscience" as represented by him warrant everyone's concern.

Yes! The fate of Li-I-Che and others is a test not only for the new power-holders of Communist China, but also for the eight billion people in China and the hundreds of thousands of overseas Chinese!

Five months have lapsed since the shake-up of last autumn, and now, sources from Canton confirm the news that Li-I-Che had been arrested, labelled as a "counter-revolutionary", and sent to a labour reform camp.

The state machinery described by Li in his big character poster as "social-feudalist-fascist", after the fall of the Lin Piao System and the Gang of Four, once again set out to demonstrate its strength by having that deadliest enemy of the Lin Piao system and of the Gang of Four -- that relentless Li-I-Che -- "swallowed"!

Everything is so clear and obvious!

Can it be that the Li-I-Che big character poster, turning back a hidden corner of the forbidden curtain, has enabled the people to learn of the Great Slaughter at the end of the Cultural Revolution? Yet there is something that the people have themselves experienced and will never forget unless they are all imprisoned!

Can it be because Li-I-Che's big character poster, by putting forward the demand for "Democracy and Legality" that people might be granted a moment of relief and
the right to speak, has irritated the ruling bureaucrats? This is understandable but if so, why should they still talk of "peace order throughout China" and "socialist democracy"?

Can it be because Li-I-Che's big character poster expressed sincere concern for the profound crisis now confronted by China, deep anxiety for the country's future, cry of grief at the people's living conditions, and strong affection for his country and people? Was it that his courage contrasted too sharply with the cowardice, selfishness and the lack of feeling of the ruling elite and that is what irritated them?

Or can it be because Li-I-Che dared to speak out where others were afraid, rattling the prison bars at a time when most people were in the depths of despair, becoming the people's conscience and so forcing the authorities to eliminate him?

There are many more young people, who, like Li-I-Che, are "not afraid of tigers." They too have been imprisoned for their criticisms of the regime. Though such suppression of political dissidents has been going on endlessly, what is surprising is that everywhere - in China, in Hong Kong and among the overseas Chinese - everyone is so "calm". Perhaps the whole world has forgotten those people already!

Ten years ago, a seventeen year old secondary school student, driven by his enthusiasm or revolutionary ideals, wrote a big character poster "Whither China?" and was subsequently sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. That was in 1968. Later he was completely "forgotten" by everyone. Now the ten years have passed and his sentence is up - will he be released soon? His name is Yang Hsi Kwang. Is he still alive? He would be 28 now.

Can anybody still remember this person?

"Everyone should be held responsible for the way he is ruled!" Can we as Chinese living overseas abandon responsibility for this?

It is stipulated in the Chinese constitution: "Citizens have the freedoms of speech, communication, association, demonstration and the right to strike." (Constitution of the Chinese People's Republic, Chapter 3, Article 28)

Can we, witnessing as we do the constant violations of the laws by Mao Tse-tung himself, and the ritualistic nature of the Constitution, keep silent and give up the right to live freely? Are we all afraid to speak out, or even shed our blood to see the genuine implementation of our Constitution? Li-I-Che and many others have already begun this work. Are we to fold our arms and simply watch them being swallowed by the tiger?

This is a task which none of us can escape from! It is not a question of can or can't, but a matter of conscience.

We hereby call upon the people in Hong Kong and overseas Chinese, regardless of your political views, religions, creed, class, sex or age to use whatever means you think the most appropriate to express your -

Deepest concern for Li-I-Che's fate;
Deepest concern for the date of release of Yang Hsi-Kwang;
Deepest concern for the fate of those arrested for the "Tiananmen Incident" and Deepest concern for all those arrested in the numerous political campaigns in China!

We call upon the upright people all over the world, regardless of nationality, race, political views, religious creed, sex or age, to use whatever means you think the most appropriate to express your -

Deepest concern for the question of China's political prisoners and Deepest concern for the violations of human rights by the Chinese Communist Party.

29th March, 1977

The "Free Li-I-Che and Yang Hsi Kwang" Action Committee.