FREE LI I-CHE!
FREE YANG HSI-KWANG!
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS
ARRESTED AT 5th APRIL
TIENANMAN INCIDENT!

This issue of Minus 7 consists of more information on Yang Hsi-Kwang and Li-I-Che. Yang was the author of the famous Sheng-wu-lien article "Whither China?"* and Li wrote the big character poster "Concerning Socialist Democracy and Legal System."* Both essays were damning critiques of the bureaucratic regime in China and the authors were not tolerated and were imprisoned. A "Free Li-I-Che and Yang Hsi Kwang" Action Committee had been set up in Hongkong to seek the release of Li and Yang. Minus 7 has been helping to wage an international solidarity campaign and June 5th 1977 was designated as an International Day to support Li and Yang. Friends and groups in fraternal contact with Minus 7 had been putting up specially made stickers in four languages outside Chinese embassies and institutions in many parts of the world. The stickers demanded the Chinese authorities release, Li, Yang and the political prisoners arrested at the Tianamen revolt. We hope to initiate further international action at a later date. Further information can be obtained from the Free Li & Yang Action Committee c/o Minus 7.

*The essays have been collected in "The Revolution is Dead; Long Live the Revolution!"
AN INTERVIEW WITH FANG KUO, A FRIEND OF YANG HSI KWANG
Recorded by the Free Li & Yang Action Committee

FANG Yang Hsi-kwang’s ideas developed after he had come into contacts with educated youths. Why would I know this? The reason was that I myself knew the educated youths for a long time and so I was aware of the changes of Yang after he had come into contact with them. I believe that the special investigation committee on Yang Hsi-Kwang had a detail report on this;

There was a book of collected essays of Yang and the preface of the book also described this aspect of Yang’s life. I really like to find out who the author of the preface was because most probably he is a person that I know. Yang came to know the educated youths in October 1967 and during this time until he openly published “Whither China?” in February 1968, I was closely in touch with him. The Hunanese friends he knew were also my friends. The person who knew this background of Yang must be a friend of his during this period. This is why I am very interested in meeting the author of the preface.

Before Yang published his essay, he was just an unknown student. But after the publication of the essay, Yang was condemned as a reactionary and he became a prominent name.

Now let me say a few things more I know about Yang Hsi-Kwang. Yang Hsi-Kwang was a student of higher middle 2/3 at the 6th Middle School of Changsha. He was only 19 then and he was most unhappy about the “great union” atmosphere at that time. The so-called “great union” was the stage formulated by Mao Tse-tung to dampen the high tide climaxed in the Cultural Revolution (ie to return the state of political instability of the Cultural Revolution back to stability, in other words, when order was to replace great disturbance.) At that time, the Liu-Teng clique had already been destroyed and Mao Tse-tung had attained his political goals. Then was the time when the mass movements were no longer needed and to Mao, it was the time for peace, order and appointments.

However Yang Hsi-Kwang and his fellow ultra-leftists believed that the revolution had not been thorough and real power was not in the hands of the masses. The fruits of the revolution had been expropriated by the established interests. He felt that since power was vested with the established interests, China was treading the old roads of failure and capitalism. The capitalist roaders would continue to exist because the established interests would not know the needs and interests of the peasants and the workers. Nor would they care about the development of industry and agriculture. Yang proposed the smashing up of the state machine and the establishment of the Chinese People’s Commune.

I personally feel that Yang Hsi-Kwang made more than a few errors in his essay “Whither China?” However, he was also correct in many places. We must not be over-concerned with the correct or incorrect arguments in his essay. We must see that between his rights and wrongs, there was the righteous voice of a young generation. He was speaking from the standpoint of the people. He might have appeared to be naive and childish but this only manifested the ignorance of a young man. This certainly is no ground to jail him for ten years.

Errors could be debated. The Communist Party possesses large number of newspapers and different opinions should be published in them. If the 10,000 words written by
Yang Hsi-Kwang were incorrect, 10,000 words can be written to reply. Only through never-ending discussion shall the truth be arrived at.

When the freedom of expression of the hundreds and thousands of people was suppressed, the rulers appeared and became the self-appointed saviour who would manipulate the destiny of the people. They would, whenever it pleases them, cut up, direct and persecute the people. The people became sheep who could not think and were simply living machines. This is an anti-democratic mentality – a kind of dictatorship.

Question: Can you please tell us something about the personal history of Yang Hsi-Kwang and his circle of friends?

FANG: As I said, Yang studied in Changsha. His father was Yang Ti-wu and was the secretary of the Hunan secretariat. I know nothing much else about other members of his family. Yang was critical to his family and regarded his father a typical capitalist roader and a degenerated revolutionary. Therefore he did not want us to know his family.

QUESTION: Would you please describe Yang’s character and his readings?

FANG: It can’t be said that Yang was a follower of Marx and Lenin. He had not dwelt deep into Marxism-Leninism. From an examination of his writings, one would be aware that his thoughts were those of spontaneous anarchism. I don’t think he understood the real conditions of the Paris Commune. He was simply influenced by the prevalent spirit of anarchism at the time.

QUESTION: What was the background of Yang Hsi-Kwang’s arrest?

FANG: Yang Hsi-Kwang was arrested in February 1968. I myself was arrested in April. So I was not too sure about the details of his arrest. Very briefly, he was arrested in Wuhan and before he was caught, he was on the wanted list of the Revolutionary Committee of Hunan.

QUESTION: Can you tell us how many people with whom you came into contact were arrested?

FANG: There were simply too many to count.

QUESTION: On what grounds did the government make the arrests?

FANG: It was a very simple matter for the authorities to arrest a person. It was only necessary to say that, the person was attacking Mao Tse-tung thoughts, being counter-revolutionary and a reactionary destructive element and then he or she might be arrested and jailed.

QUESTION: What was the connection between Yang Hsi-Kwang and Shengwu-lien?

FANG: Yang belonged to a small unit of Sheng-wu-lien and the seventeen or eighteen people were known as the “Seize Military Power” group. Towards the later stage, when there was a mass wave of arrests, a lot of people left so that only seven or eight left behind. They were persistent, did not fear arrest or being condemned as reactionaries. We surely must respect their fighting spirit for once they were imprisoned, they were finished. FANG KUO was an ex-red guard who personally knew Yang Hsi-Kwang, the author of the famous Sheng-wu-lien essay “Whither China?”. As Yang was condemned counter-revolutionary, Yang’s correspondence with Fang was discovered. Shortly after the arrest of Yang, Fang was also arrested in Canton. Fang was subsequently jailed for eight years. On being released, Fang fled to Hong Kong. Minus 7 hopes to interview Fang on his experience and his thoughts in a forthcoming issue of Minus 7.
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SEVERAL ESSAYS  By Li I-Che

It has been most fortunate that "Concerning Socialist Democracy and Legality" by Li I-Che has been leaked and circulated overseas so that the current of thought so representative of the generation of Chinese youth is now known outside China.

"Concerning Socialist Democracy and Legality" was openly put up in November 1974. Before this, "Li I-Che" had already written other big character posters of high standard, deeply exposing the sicknesses found in the present day Chinese society. "Concerning Socialist Democracy and Legality" had been written on the basis of these other posters.

The author of this article had the opportunity to read a few other big character posters of Li I-Che and what follow is the gist of those posters recalled from memory which may be useful for reference.

"What is to be Done in Kwangtung?"

This poster was put up in or around March 1974, and was the first to appear in the streets since the end of the Cultural Revolution in Canton.

"What is to be Done in Kwangtung" ran into more than ten pages. In paragraphs after paragraphs, facts and examples were produced to expose and analyse the problems of the Kwangtung province as well as the whole country.

The facts presented came under three categories:

(1) When Lin Piao was at the height of his power, the power holders in Kwangtung suppressed the rebels and the masses. The pretext used to justify the suppression was also discussed.

(2) In the 13th September events (the Lin Piao coup day) the power holders of the Kwangtung province were closely associated with Lin Piao. Certain leaders in the Canton Garrison were preparing for Lin Piao to flee to the South and set up another Central Committee of the Party.

(3) After the 13th September events, the power holders in Kwangtung clamped down the desire of the masses to thoroughly criticise Lin Piao.

After having cited a lot of facts which were already widely known, the essay concluded: only when the democratic powers of the people were totally denied would it be possible for Lin Piao's feudal fascist dictatorship to exist. In other words, only when the people's democratic powers were ensured would it be possible to prevent the restoration of the Lin Piao-like feudal fascist dictatorship. The essay further stated that those power holders who ignored the people's rights and repressed the people in order to protect their own vested interests constituted the supporters and the foundation of Lin Piao's feudal fascist dictatorship. To have such people leading the "Criticising Lin" movement would only make it coolly supported.

The essay asked for the return of democratic power for the people, restoring the "four great freedoms". Only then, the poster argued, would the "Criticise Lin" campaign be deepened; and the poisonous residue of Lin Piao be totally eliminated; only then would the Kwangtung province have a bright future.

The big character poster was up for two days and torn down.

"The Revolution is Dead; Long Live the Revolution!"

This was put up in the middle of May and was a poster summarizing the experiences
of the Cultural Revolution. It ran into fourteen to fifteen pages.

The essay pointed out that Mao Tse-Tung summarized his own experiences and Mao concluded that the major manifestation of capitalist restoration in the socialist countries was the appearance of revisionism inside the party. Mao also found the weapon to combat the capitalist roaders in the party ie. to give the "four great freedoms" to the people and the masses would supervise and control the power holders. The Cultural Revolution was initiated by Mao Tse-Tung and the people were able to exercise their democratic rights. It was a revolution in which the people used the weapon of "four great freedoms" to get the power-holders under their supervision and control. In the course of the revolution, the masses truly grasped the meaning of "revolutionary mass democracy." They also grasped the methods to combat against revisionism inside the party.

The essay analysed the causes of the failure of the Cultural Revolution. The revolutionary masses were somewhat politically immature and so mistakes were inevitable, thus giving a pretext to the men of ambitions in the party to take away people's democratic rights. The Cultural Revolution rose as the people attained mass democracy and failed as mass democracy was lost.

The essay gave a lot of evidence to support the point of view expressed above. It further pointed out that after July 1968, the people were deprived of the right to independent thought, the right to express political opinions and the right to supervise and control the leadership. What the people secured in the Cultural Revolution were lost once again. It is in this context that the Cultural Revolution was dead.

However, Li I-Che believed that the spirit of "revolutionary mass democracy" which was so esteemed and respected during the Cultural Revolution had been deeply rooted in the minds of the people and would have significant and lasting effects on the future of China. This is something which cannot be stopped by anyone and the spirit of the Cultural Revolution shall live on in China eternally!

The essay thus ends with the words, "The Revolution is Dead; Long Live the Revolution!"

The Story of the Hall of "Single Spark and Prairie Fire" Subtitled "On the New Religious Movement"

In the foreword of the essay, Li I-Che indicated that he originally sent it to the "Southern Daily" – the official organ of the Kwangtung province, and expressed hope that it would be published to arouse some discussions and he was not fearful of being criticised. However, the Southern Daily declined to use it. Apart from sighing over the fact that the people did not have a revue to express their opinions, Li decided to resort to the means of big character poster to "publish" it himself.

Because of the original intention to have his essay published in the party newspaper, the Story of the Hall of Single Spark and Prairie Fire was the most serious and substantial piece of writing by Li I-Che. The length of the essay ran into forty pages and the poster was put up along Peking Road. Days and nights people gathered to read it blocking the motorway. Public transport had to make detours. The sensational impact could thus be sensed.

In the essay, Li I-Che analysed the "three loyal to" activities in the adoration of Mao Tse-Tung. It went on to expose the "reactionary nature" of the "Lin Piao System". Very skilfully Li I-Che was successful in creating among the readers a feeling that the Lin Piao System was built on the basis of personal cult and its deficiencies were the deficiencies
of contemporary China. To criticise the "Lin Piao System", attention must be paid to the political system of “personal cult” and “personal rule”.

The Hall of Single Spark and Prairie Fire began its construction during the Cultural Revolution to be a memorial of Mao Tse-Tung. It was to incur a very large cost, occupying a very large area. Li I-Che pointed out that the construction of the Hall was the result of the policy to promote the personal cult pursued by the Central Committee and it reflected the madness of the eight billion people practising the personal cult.

The essay produced a lot of evidence to prove that the craze of “personal cult” was fanned and initiated by Lin Piao and his fellow travellers. First Li I-Che compared the various activities of worshipping Mao Tse-Tung, eg., asking for directives in the morning, reporting in the evening, reading quotations everyday, self reflection and the three sentences before each meal, with the older religious ceremonies and found that both had startling similarities in form and psychological impact on the people! The essay stated that the promotion of the personal cult by Lin Piao was to create a new religion making use of this religious fervour of the people, Lin set down the rule that “whoever opposes to Chairman Mao would be struck down.” Mao embodied the supreme law and Lin successfully made use of the personal cult to maintain total control of the people.

Li I-Che pointed out that Lin Piao substituted the “rule by rites” of “whoever opposes will be struck down” for socialist legality. Li analysed the motive behind the setting up of the system of rule by rites – it would be simple for those with ambitions to accuse dissidents and opponents or the revolutionary people to be opposing the thoughts of Mao Tse-Tung and therefore they should be suppressed and eliminated. The headquarters of Lin Piao was able to seize and expand its power under such social conditions.

Li I-Che arrived at the following conclusions: (1) the characteristic of Lin Piao's feudal fascist dictatorship was the substitution of “rule by rites” for “legality”, (2) the supporting pillar of “rule by rites” was the practice “striking down whoever that opposes”, (3) in order to erect and support the principle of “striking down whoever that opposes”, it was necessary to set up a saintly idol, to feverishly promote the “personal cult” and to preach “the theory of the genius”.

This essay was put up in June 1974 and a lot of comments were put on the poster by the readers - many were in agreement although some were critical. There was a paragraph from the essay which went something like this: Lin Piao attempted to make Mao Tse-Tung's thoughts absolute and become the doctrine of a new religion. As for Lin himself, he wanted to be the archbishop in red cloak, monopolising the right to interpret Mao's thoughts so that he would be able to use Mao's thoughts to give orders. There was someone putting up a small character poster criticising Li for uglifying the thoughts of Mao Tse-Tung stating that Li should “die ten thousand times.” Such was an example of the feudal club of “whoever opposes should be struck down” hitting down. However, there was an immediate reply – to repeat the old path of Lin Piao will only lead to destruction. Such responses from the masses clearly indicated that Li I-Che's big character poster was making very significant impact on them.

A critique on “The Boiling February”

“The Boiling February” appeared in the “Kwangtung Literature” magazine. It was a piece of reporting literature describing the rebel faction of the Canton Railway as the baddies who disrupted production. The struggle and repression by the conservative faction were praised.
Through the criticism of "The Boiling February", Li I-Che investigated and summarised the experiences and lessons of the struggle between the two factions since the Cultural Revolution.

The essay pointed out that on the basis of Marxian class analysis, the two factions in the Cultural Revolution belonged to the same class and so they should enjoy the same political rights. The "extension of democracy to the people" should imply that people belonging to either faction be given democratic rights. The repression and suppression of one faction by another will inevitably destroy democracy within the class and lead to the loss of democratic rights by the whole class ultimately.

The essay cited many cases of repression and anti-repression struggles between the Conservative faction and Rebel faction, the subsequent crack-down of the Rebel faction by the Conservative faction and the legacies of the repression. It was illustrated clearly that the repression of one faction by another was most undesirable and was damaging even to self-interest. When factional repression turned "people's democratic dictatorship" into "dictatorship of a faction of the masses" class democracy had died.

The essay further argued with evidence that "dictatorship of a faction of the masses" led to the "feudal fascist dictatorship".

Li I-Che felt that the promotion of factional struggles and glorification of the suppression of one faction by another was completely non-Marxian and ran opposite to the interests of the people. This would benefit only those who sought the restoration of the feudal fascist dictatorship. The repression and counter-repression relationship between the factions should be turned into one of criticism and counter-criticism.

Li I-Che did not criticise or accuse the repressive activities of the Conservative faction from the angle of being a member of the Rebel faction. He was openly admitting that there existed a tendency for the Rebel faction to consider that they were the only leftists. Li I-Che was seeking to defend the people's democracy and not pre-occupied with factional bias. This showed the reflection on the part of Li I-Che and his ability of "revolutionising oneself". This is what made the Big Character Poster unusual.

PLEASE COME AND BE TRAPPED

This is an essay in reply to the official onslaught by "Hsuan Chi-Wan."

Li I-Che had pointed out that the main pillar of the Lin Piao system was the principle of "striking down whoever that opposes." The power holders needed only to prove that their opponents were "against the thoughts of Mao Tse-Tung" in order to crush them. Whether the opponents were right, reflecting the objective conditions or acting in accordance with the interests of the people, became irrelevant. Such was the most economical way to govern.

"Hsuan Chi-Wen" were using the same tactics to demolish Li I-Che. They picked a few "most reactionary" paragraphs from Li I-Che's articles and examined them thoroughly to prove that they were against the thoughts of Mao Tse-Tung. Thus Li I-Che would be proved counter-revolutionary and being counter-revolutionary, he would be deprived of the right to speak.

Unfortunately, a large number of the paragraphs selected by "Hsuan Chi-Wen" were quotations of Mao Tse-Tung. Li I-Che did not in his using the quotations identify the sources. In "Please come and be Trapped", Li I-Che showed that while Hsuan Chi-Wen were criticizing the "black words of the poster", they were criticizing the thoughts of Mao
Tse-Tung and Marxism-Leninism. Using the logic of "striking down whoever that opposes", Li I-Che easily put "Hsuan Chi-Wen" into the rank of the "counter-revolutionaries." The end of the essay emphasized the absurdity of the principle of "striking down whoever that opposes."

After finishing the writing of "Please Come and Be Trapped", Li I-Che was deprived of his right to speak. (It was believed that the provincial committee of Kwangtung ordered that "Li I-Che should not be allowed to emit poison anymore"). Thereafter, the Chinese people saw no more the militant writings of Li I-Che.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT LI CHENG-TIEN

by Pik Tin

Since the publication of Li I-Che's big character poster, much interest has been aroused and many in Hong Kong and overseas have expressed concerns. This indeed is a fortunate thing for Li I-Che and others who are concerned with the fate of China. What appear below are events which have occurred quite some time ago but they should contribute to further understanding of Li I-Che and the poster.

When the big character poster was put up at the Peking Road in Canton, it was October in 1974. It was the time when the "Gang of Four" was most outrageous and dominating. Yet the poster "said what people wanted to say, said what people could not say" (there were some who were angry but dared not speak out) and the poster spear-headed at the "Gang of Four" who were on top forbidding any questioning of their authority and it was critical of "the socialist system" of the "Gang". The poster tore down the mask of the Gang, revealing the true meaning of the campaigns "to criticise Lin and Confucius", "to oppose to Confucianism and praise Legalism" and "to go against the tide". The masses responded with approval and clapped their hands in praise silently. The authors were admired for their resolute defense of democracy. Such may be appreciated by the readers of the outside world.

Although Li I-Che is the collective name for three persons and the contents of the big character poster were formulated after discussions and approval by other comrades, the most influential person among the masses was Li Cheng-Tien.

Li I-Che's ancestors were from the province of Anwhei. He lived in Wuhan. His age is about 31. Li's father was a high ranking officer in the Kuomintang army, defecting to the communists at the uprising of Changsha. Li's mother worked as a cadre. His brother and sister worked in the People's Liberation Army. Seeing that her loving son being arrested and for a few years hearing nothing about Li, his mother died of illness. Li's brother's marriage was obstructed because of his relation to Li. Li Cheng-Tien tasted and experienced bitterly the "class struggles" waged by the Gang of four.

When Li was a child, he was found to have special aptitude in painting and at 11, he was selected to attend the primary school affiliated to the "Canton Art College." Before the Cultural Revolution, Li was a third year student at the College and his talents were greatly appreciated by the professors. As a result of many years of training in art, Li was extraordinarily sensitive and observant to his surrounding world. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Li was attacked as counter-revolutionary because he did not submit to the work-team and the party committee at the College. Further Li was supposed to have come from a reactionary family and was only "expert" but not "red". In March,
1967, Li was once again identified as counter-revolutionary because he was involved in the "Army question" and he was jailed by the Canton Police Command. During the whole period of the Cultural Revolution, Li was an active member of the Canton Red Flag red guards. He was the chief leading member of the political propaganda section of "Canton Red Union" (the federated organization of the Flag factions in Canton). He was responsible for the publication of "The Call of the Red Command," propagating the idea of "Seeking great peace and order through great confusion" which had become the main-stream line of thought among the radical red guards. Striking headlines were used with very articulated writing style to oppose the "red terror" which was repressing the majority of the people. Their posters attracted a lot of street readers and Li had earned himself the nickname of "big leather shoe."

In August 1968, Li Cheng-Tien was arrested in Wuhan by the "Canton Police Command" and later brought back to Canton. Subsequently for four years, he was solitarily confined in the "Study Class of the Canton Police Command", receiving his "education by being criticised." Within this period, he experienced several tens of "struggle meetings," some of which were big, some small. He was beaten up and kicked around often and to force him to bow his head to admit guilt, his head was hit on the floor, bleeding and spectacles smashed. (However, Li never bowed his head). Li even tasted being "shot" although the bullets hit next to him. As Li said, he survived after being devoured by the tiger. It was only in 1972 was Li released and sent back to the Art College and he was given the pay of university student. But since the nature of Li's case had not become definite, he was allocated no job. At the beginning, he even had to seek permission to go out the College. And whenever he appeared for meals at the dining hall, there would be a stir in the hall with many wanting to have a look at the "Counter-revolutionary" Li Cheng-Tien. Nevertheless, Li was very much at ease (because he had already gone through so much) and everyday apart from reading, he would play the piano and paint (Li was quite a good pianist and a male tenor). When he was in the mood, he would lead a discussion among those who had gathered around him and the leadership in charge of the College was not sure how to deal with him because afterall, as Li said of himself, he was but a "crushed can." So passed a period of relative peace and quiet. Then in May 1974, Li ventured to put up the big character poster "What is to be Done in Kwangtung" in the streets of Canton. Subsequently, there was a struggle of "putting up – torn down – putting up." During that time Li was attacked and often physically assaulted. Yet, Li and his comrades were to put up the now world famous "Li I-Che Big Character Poster" - On Socialist Democracy and Legality and its Preface in October 1974 written with their blood and tears.

As soon as the big character poster was put up, it attracted numerous street readers and people rushed to tell one another and the Peking road became crowded with people wanting to read it. Within a few days, the poster was filled with comments. Some took great risks to go to the Art College to donate paper, brushes and ink, expressing the desire that the big character poster might be widely circulated.

However, what made the poster known to everybody were those who suppressed democratic rights and attempted to demolish Li I-Che. The point is that the "Li I-Che Big Character Poster" was put up in the broad day light and according to the directives of Mao Tse-Tung, "a Big character poster is a very effective weapon" and this should be something permitted by Mao – an open tactic and not a secret conspiracy. A lot of the cadres who were discontented with the actions of the Gang of Four were able to agree
with the Big Character Poster at many places. Therefore, at the beginning, the authorities were divided in their opinion and were making no comments on the big character poster. In fact, when “What is to be Done in Kwangtung” was put up, the then secretary of the Provincial Committee Chiu Tze-Yang personally met Li Cheng-Tien to enquire about the persecution of the masses after the Cultural Revolution. For this, it can also be noticed that the two factions within the party differed quite a lot in the handling of many questions. Eventually, those who were opposed to Li prevailed and immediately “the appearance of the Li I-Che Big Character Poster” became the centre of “the new direction of the class struggle at the present stage”. The article was reprinted and duplicated and widely circulated to the various levels of all provincial departments as well as the rank and file units in the localities and the streets. In the Canton city, there was a high tide to criticise and struggle against the “Li I-Che Big Character Poster.” Inevitably Li Cheng-Tien became the target of attack.

The authorities concerned mobilized all their resources to form a “think tank” – “Hsuan Chi-Wen” to fight and attack Li I-Che. Every few days, they organized at the factories, government departments and the schools “Criticizing Li I-Che” meetings. Li Cheng-Tien was “encircled” by “Hsuan Chi-Wen” of high-up places, university professors and “angry” masses of workers, peasants and members of the PLA. But, unless Li Cheng-Tien was compelled to be silent, such “Criticizing meetings” would become occasions of speech-giving by Li during which Li would debate brilliantly with his accusers. Among these occasions, many were rather comical: there was one meeting in which an accuser picked a quote from the big character poster and said that it was slandering the communist party members. The quote was “the bad habits of autocracy and despotism are deeply imbued in the minds of the masses, even in those of the communists in general.” Calmly, Li pointed out that it was a quotation of Mao and identified the source. Embarrassed, the accuser confusedly said that Mao made the comment in the long time past and that it was no longer applicable. Li in reply asked whether the words of Mao Tse-Tung were limited by time and the accuser dared not pursue anymore. Indeed, many of the “heresies” in the “Li I-Che Big Character Poster” are extracts from the classics of Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung. But because the sources had been deliberately left out, even the “red think-tank” – Hsuan Chi-Wen were trapped, not to speak of the ordinary men. Li I-Che invited them collectively to fall in the trap.

The Gang of Four and their fellow-travellers were at the beginning confident that with their numbers, clubs and hats, they would easily demolish the “Li I-Che Big Character Poster” and crush Li Cheng-Tien. Therefore, the format of the “Criticise/Struggle meetings” was one during which the accused was allowed to speak up in defense so that it would appear to be democratic. Unexpectedly, Li was capable of taking advantage of such meetings to gain the understanding of the people. Eventually, every meeting had to be rehearsed beforehand and yet Li’s opponents were no match to him. Finally, they resorted to their usual tactics – first taking Li Cheng-Tien in custody to “protect” him and then in August/September 1975, sending him to the coal mines at Shek Yan Chang to be “re educated by the working class.”

Youths like Li Cheng-Tien had become more mature and arrived at the political stage – a side product that the initiators of the Cultural Revolution did not want to see.
In the beginning, with the zest of youth, Li started to read the works of Mao Tse-Tung, Karl Marx and Lenin. Then he found that he was not allowed to stop — especially during the four years of “Police Command Study Classes.” Li managed to plough through thoroughly the four volumes of selected works of Mao. He further read the major writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and reference books which were permitted. Because of his wide reading and strong memory, Li had built a very good foundation for his critical thoughts. At first, he read because he wanted to understand the world. During the Cultural Revolution, such knowledge was essential in combatting the opposing factions. From later experiences and lessons, he recognised that “one had to use the opponent’s words to counter the opponent’s ways.” In order to expose the open tactics of the dictator and to arouse the people who had been hookwinked, Li felt that he must grasp the theories with which they fooled the masses. Therefore, all of the arguments used in the “Li I-Che Big Character Poster” were based on the works of Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung. Mao was quoted especially frequent. It is for this reason that at many of the “criticise/struggle meetings” Li Cheng-Tien was able to obtain a lot of support and agreement from those blind worshippers of idols among the masses and the leading cadres.

The “Great revolutionary link-up” during the Cultural Revolution enabled Li Cheng-Tien to travel from the south to the north and around. The understanding of the conditions in different part of China allowed Li to obtain first hand information on the provincial committees, factories etc. at all levels. The many drastic changes in the Cultural Revolution and his own imprisonment have made Li imbued with a vivid understanding of the totalitarian system and its power of total control.

The fate of Li Cheng-Tien is unknown but Li Cheng-Tien will have self-confidence and will be able to search and proceed forward. If Li Cheng-Tien can escape the fate of death or imprisonment, China will have a person who can serve the country well.

BOOK REVIEW

THE REVOLUTION IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION: READINGS ON THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION FROM AN ULTRA-LEFT PERSPECTIVE. Hong Kong: the 70's, May 1976.

THE REVOLUTION IS DEAD presents a mixed bag of essays on the so-called “Cultural Revolution” which swept China from May 1966, when this “revolution” was officially declared “on” by the late, un lamented Mao Tse-Tung, until 1968, when Mao, seeing that matters were getting out of hand (specifically; his hands), declared the “revolution” thenceforth “off.” In 1968, however, a mere decree would not suffice; the armed might of the mis-named Peoples’ Liberation Army (PLA) was needed as extra persuasion. As the essays in this book demonstrate, the Cultural Revolution was an extremely complex, event, or series of events. Causes, motivations, interpretations — are likewise varied.

The book is divided into three sections. The first is Marxist-Leninist in orientation (the Progressive Labor Party’s “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Reversal of Workers’ Power in China”; International Socialist Nigel Harris’ “China: Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom”; and veteran Chinese Trotskyist F. H. Wang’s “On the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”). The second section’s selections are more libertarian (the editors call them “libertarian communist”: Marxist Humanist Raya Dunayevskaya’s
"Mao's China and the 'Proletarian Cultural Revolution'; the Situationists' "The Explosion Point of Ideology in China"; from Aberdeen Solidarity, Cajo Brendel's famous "Theses on the Chinese Revolution"; and an "essay" by K.C. Kwok - psuedonym of an American formerly with the above-ground Weathermen — "'Everything Remains the Same After So Much Ado'). The third section and appendix present the views of Chinese "ultra-leftists" — some printed for the first time in English (Sheung-wu-lien's "Whither China?"; Yu Shuet's brilliant "The Dusk of Rationality," of which more a non; Wu Man's Introduction to a book of poems authored by former Red Guards, REVELATIONS THAT MOVE THE EARTH TO TEARS; an interview with Wu Man; Li I-Che's "Concerning Socialist Democracy and Legal System"; and Lee Yu See's and Wu Che's "Some Thoughts on the Chinese Revolution.")

As can be seen, many of the essays in the first two sections are old friends—or acquaintances, depending on your theoretical palate. In quality, they range from Wang's pathetic "revive the Fourth International & Save China!" to the incisive "The Dusk of Rationality" — which to this reader is the best piece in the entire book. Before discussing that particular essay, we will comment on the others.

Harris' "China: Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" receives high marks for sensibility, factual information (especially as concerns working class resistance both to the "Red Guards" and the official government, ranging from strikes for so-called "Economist" demands to armed clashes), and a general freedom from Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist-Maoist (mix or match at will!) rhetoric and dogmatic strait-jacketing. The subject of working class resistance (and the formation of "embryonic independent trade unions" etc. is ignored by the PLP, Kwok (his article is almost completely worthless, being in large part direct - but unacknowledged - quotes from "Whither China?"); "Wither China?" and Li I-Che. These last four essays assume an identity of interests between and among workers, students and peasants - an identity that may have been assumed by these ultra-leftists, but more often than not without any real basis. Harris convincingly shows that their interests were in fact often diametrically opposed.

The PLP article - which is a critique of Mao Tse-Tung - makes some highly telling points, even though the essay has to rank as one of the most tedious in the entire book - unfortunately, its the first one (if you can honestly say that you ENJOYED reading Lenin's IMPERIALISM: THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM, then you may enjoy the PLP article. And you have my sympathy for enjoying it. . .). Specifically: they note the change from an equalitarian pay-system (the "supply system") for Communist cadres, to one based on material incentives; the Anti-Soviet Revision Campaigns (which the PLP claims dates from Russian refusal to supply atomic bomb technology to China); the Great Leap Forward; the use of piece-rates and the re-introduction of one-man management into Chinese industry. Unfortunately, the article is fatally marred by PLP ideological assumptions - that post-Liberation (1949) and pre-Cultural Revolution (1965) China was a socialist, or peasants' and workers' State - when in fact China was, and is to this day State Capitalist; their basic Leninism, seeing the Communist Party as the so-called "vanguard" of the working class (for example, in speaking of the change from "supply-system" to a differentiated wage structures amongst Communist cadres, they state (p. 10):

...Having taken power without a mass force of workers and peasants won ideologically to communism and having committed itself to satisfying the immediate material aspirations of the masses, the party had to rely on the bourgeois technicians to manage affairs a state and economy. If the masses had been won to a
greater degree of socialism, a totally different course would have been possible – the creation of new organs of power and administration putting management directly into the hands of the people, under the leadership of the party. (Emphasis added)

Since 1949, the Chinese economy and society has been under the leadership of the party...

The section quoted above also points to the common Marxist-Leninist-Etc., ist equation of poverty/asceticism/material deprivation with 'socialism.' Us "masses" are supposed to live like slobs, and like it. Socialist transformation! Harris is closer to the mark when he writes that (p. 48) "...the Maoist stress on the need for poverty and self-sacrifice is a stress on the need for a common subordination to central control, a common sacrifice of consumption for national accumulation." (Emp. added). This point is made even stronger by Brendel, who states that since, at the time of the Revolution (1949), the bourgeoisie was incapable of "fulfilling its historical role", the Party assumed the place of the bourgeoisie, as in Russia. State Lee Yu See and Wu Che (p. 284f):

The so-called 1949 revolution was nothing in common with a genuine socialist revolution. It was simply a violent take-over of the state by a bureaucracy better-placed to manage the national capital than the old ruling clique.

They continue (p. 285):

The bureaucracy began to carry out the task of primitive accumulation. Because of the lack of capital-intensive industry, economic development depended on the most primitive methods of extraction of surplus value: in the countryside, mobilizing millions of peasants and semi-proletarians around the construction of public works and irrigation projects, built almost bare-handed by the rural masses; in the cities, forcing the workers to work long hours for extremely low wages, banning strikes, putting restrictions on the choice of employment and so on.

Under capitalism, in its "primitive accumulation" stages, us "masses" groaned under the brutality of the new Master Class; under "communism," we're supposed to smile under the brutality of the new Master Class... Socialist transformation!

Returning to the PLP piece, they see the Cultural Revolution as "The First revolution in history to attempt to take power back from the revisionists." (p. 5) State Lee and Wu: "It was a power struggle between the two factions of the bureaucratic capitalist class and also an attempt to mould the Chinese people and their thoughts according to the cast of Mao." (p. 286). Harris sees the motivation behind the Cultural Revolution as "...an attempt to overcome the sluggish rate of China's economic growth, and one of the results of that sluggish rate, localised power groups which inhibited central direction." (p. 46).

The only interesting section in the Trotskyist Wang's article is his analysis of the "objective foundation" for the "Red Guards Movement" (note: Red Guards was simply a collective term for those that "waged" the "Cultural Revolution," primarily students; at no point was there a monolithic Red Guard Organization – there were numbers of groups, of varying size, varying "line," and varying activity). He sees the utilisation of youth as a means (a) of fulfilling Mao's goals and (b) defusing youthful discontent with the quality of life. Like the PLP, Wang insists on "correct leadership," a "vanguard with a clear cut political program," such as (!) the Fourth International, or a Chinese variety of the Famous Fourth. It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway...) that Wang's Trotskyism is the fatal flaw in his piece. We see here demonstrated the willing blindness of the
Trotskyists as to what Trotsky did (the Kronstadt butchery, the betrayal of the Majhno-vischina, his dictatorial rule of Tsektzan, his ignoring of anyone outside the Party, etc.) and said (See, Trotsky's TERRORISM AND COMMUNISM). He cannot see that Trotskyism, Stalinism and Maoism are all branches of the same diseased Marxist-Leninist tree.

Raya Dunayevskaya's article is also well-worth reading. Like Harris, she points to working class and peasant resistance to both the Red Guards and their enemies, the so-called "capitalist roaders."

Brendel's THESES need little comment, being an essential outline account of 20th century Chinese history; the state-capitalist nature of China today, etc. The THESES are a basic "libertarian socialist" document that must be read.

"Whither China?”, billed as "one of the most famous and important documents produced by the ultra-left in China,” was a product of the Sheng-wu-lien organization (state the editors: "The full name of Sheng-wu-lien is 'Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionary Great Alliance Committee.' Sheng-wu-lien is literally province, proletarian, and alliance.”). The article represents an attack on the “new class” of "red bureaucrats,” and states that one of the main motivations of the Red Guards was to put into effect Mao Tse-tung's directive that strong steps be taken towards the realization of the “Peoples' Commune of China” (the May 7th Directive). As the editors note, however, “...it seemed that the group still had some illusions about Mao Tse-tung.” This is evident throughout "Whither China?” with its constant references to Mao Tse-tung Thought, "the great teacher of the world proletariat," "the great supreme commander of the proletariat," etc. How much of this is protective coloration is hard to establish. In various parts of "Whither China?” the editors bracket their own comments as to factual inaccuracies. An example; Sheng-wu-lien writes "(Working class) enthusiasm had never been so high, and their sense of responsibility as masters of the house had never been so strong. Changsha Weaving and Spinning Mill and other factories also created rebel working-groups and countless other new things." Comments the 70's: "According to information reaching the outside world from Shanghai, the situation there was far from happy...and was reflected in workers' criticisms of changes enforced by the Red Guards."

Nonetheless, we see the seeds of something that may go beyond Mao Tse-tungism, once premises are taken to logical conclusions. The slave - still speaking the language of his master - is beginning to think for himself!

Li I-Che's (the collective pseudonym of a group of three ex-Red Guard's) giant wall poster, the final draft of which was written in 1974, is partly a defense of the Mao-suppressed “ultra-left" (they blame it all on Lin Piao & Co.); an attack on the "Lin Piao system”; and calls for an upcoming "Peoples' Congress" to do a number of things ("1. Legal system, not ‘system of rites’; "2. Restriction on special privileges"; "3. Guarantee of the peoples' right of management of the state and the society”; "4. Consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and sanction against reactionaries”; "5. Taking Concrete measures to ensure the fulfillment of policies”; "6. From each according to his ability, to each according to his work” (i.e., an end to special privileges for party bureaucrats). As with Sheng-wu-lien, there are glimmers of something yet-to-come - mixed in with Marxist-Leninist-Maoist authoritarianism. For example, while invoking Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, they decry the "historical concept of genius,” and "rule by rite, "accusing Lin Piao & Co. of wanting "people to worship Mao Tse-tung Thought as a kind of religion!” (p. 259) This may be protective coloration, or a Great Leap Forward - but the tension between authoritarian upbringing, thought and language, on the one hand, and a repudiation of this kind
of society - is apparent.

One of the problems presented to the non-expert Western reader (such as myself) in both the Sheng-wu-lien and Li I-che articles are the illusions to Chinese classical and modern literature, and the shorthand references to the various Maoist campaigns, articles, lines etc (eg., "going against the tide," the "five-dar spirit," etc.) The editors made some effort through the use of bracketed comments to explain some of these terms, but not always. Sometimes the non-expert Western reader may have the distinct feeling that the authors are speaking in (to paraphrase Lenin) an "accursed Aesopian language." A helpful addition would have been to include a glossary of abbreviations, literary and political allusions. As well as a comprehensive index.

Lee and Wu, two Chinese anarchists, previously quoted, present their views in an appendix written in Brendel's numbered-paragraph THESES style. This article is well worth reading - sensible, dogma-free, clear.

We finally arrive at the piece-de-resistance - Yu Shuet's "The Dusk of Rationality." In another article ("Interview with an Ultra-Leftist"), former Red Guard Wu Man states that "There was a new view point in 'The Dusk of Rationality', and compared with 'Whither China?', it should be seen as a new stage." (p. 241)

"The Dusk of Rationality" is more than just a "new stage." It takes off from some of the bare glimmerings of "Whither China?", and goes beyond the Cultural Revolution, beyond China, beyond "correct lines." to question Marxism, Leninism, Maoism and the very concept of State Socialism (she herself does not use that particular term). In "Whither China?" and the Li I-che poster, there were protests against the "system of rites," i.e. the Maoist cult of personality, acceptance of Marxist-Leninist dogma as the Revealed Word, etc; Yu takes it all one step further. Her article begins by speaking of "religious socialism" — this view of Marxism (and it's offspring) as a religion is woven throughout the piece. In her second section, "A Critique of Theory", she discusses Marxism, pure materialism, the Marxist "theory of necessity," and the anti-individual emphases of Marxism and Leninism. The result: Marxism, is, as Rudolf Rocker, wrote, a "fatalistic religion." Much of this essay is reminiscent of Rocker's dissections in his monumental NATIONALISM AND CULTURE - he, too, wrote of the contempt for the individual by the "collectivist-based" Marxists (i.e., starting not from the individual and his/her rights, but from the rights of the "collective").

In the next section, she deals with the three kinds of capital: private, monopoly and state. Russia, China, etc are properly placed in the third category. She correctly points out the fallacy of believing that the expropriation of capital spells the end of capitalism. She notes the continued existence of the wage system in the so-called "communist" countries, saying:

The only difference between the wage system in Russian style and that of the traditional system in capitalism is that it may be affected by social and economic fluctuations under capitalism. Under the Russian system, the wage system is strictly planned and regulated. But this distinction cannot separate the Russian wage system from the domain of capitalism. On the contrary, this only indicates that the exploitation of labour under Russian state capital is unlimited. (p. 210)

And further:

Money, commodities and commodity exchange value are still kept with their functions. Only the running dogs of the totalitarian capitalist can smell socialist fragrance in state ownership of the means of production. (p. 211)
In the fourth section, we once again take up the thread of "religious socialism," in conjunction with the place of the individual in a totalitarian society:

Division of labour confines a man to a state of impotence. The religion of Mao Tse Tung has managed to become a social force because of the sense of dependency and the psychology of withdrawal of the weak caused by individual impotence within the masses. (p.212)

In other words – where the State is all, man is nothing.

In this section, she deals directly with the Cultural Revolution, seeing it as attempt at "spiritual transformation," noting that the "advanced" Red Guards "could not shake away their worship of Mao Tse-tung. (p. 216) She continues:

The revolution of the people by the people ran into direct confrontation with Mao's conception of the 'Chinese People's Commune.' The idea of Mao-Tse-tung to turn China into a commune was such that its backbone was to be provided by the bureaucrats, and that social reforms in China would be carried out according to his will. On the other hand, the internal strife within the ruling party had not been settled. How could Mao really care about the 'May Seventh' blue-print? Mao had supported the revolutionary seizure of power which occurred all over the country. His wish was that with the help of the mass movements this would create a situation where all bureaucrats would stand aside. Such a situation was necessary if Mao was to reconstruct his bureaucratic machine. (p 217).

In the fifth section, she trains her guns on those "clean Leninists," the apostles of St. Trotsky. As she states:

When the 'socialism' of Stalin and Mao Tse-tung had become so stale and notorious, the 'Fourth International' jumped out to save the 'revolution.' They wanted to take up the leadership of the workers' movement. According to Trotskyism, this is a task which should be accepted without hesitation. So the programs and flags of the Fourth International were appointed by its adherents as the unchangeable directives for the liberation of the proletariat. Without the guidance and directives of Trotsky, the proletariat would be facing a leadership crisis, and man would come to the verge of degeneration. After Stalin, Trotsky had become another 'saviour' who was to 'reform mankind.' What is pitiable is that when the thoughts and actions of the Trotskyists are examined, the blood connection between them and the Stalinists is so obvious in so many places. Trotskyism holds fast to Leninism (part of which originated from Marxism), a kind of forced and unnatural "socialism." (p. 221)

Yu then goes on to analyze, discuss, and point out the inherent fallacies in various of Trotsky's theoretical writings.

Yu's essay could have easily been subtitled "Lessons Learned from the Cultural Revolution." A primary lesson: rejection of authoritarianism, the authority principle, and state socialism. Although many of her conclusions are nothing new to anarchists (I have mentioned the similarity between her "religious socialism" argument, and Rocker's "fatalistic religion" viewpoint; or, with Bakunin's GOD AND THE STATE). Her conclusions are, nonetheless, still exciting. Exciting because of the manner in which Yu arrived at conclusions. It is a voyage of discovery.

Yu does not come from the Anarchist tradition. She was brought up in the Maoist milieu, with all the brainwashing, newspeak, and "scientific" claims that entails. From her essay, it does not appear that she is familiar with Anarchist writings and ideas. She has travelled her own path. Her conclusions serve to buttress Anarchist ideas of the State, the
authority principle, etc. This reader can hardly wait for her next opus.

In the Dec. 18, 1976 issue of FREEDOM'S ANARCHIST REVIEW is a translation of a paper presented at last year's International Conference of Bakunin Studies that was held in Venice - Luciano Pellicani's "The Red Bureaucracy." Pellican's paper should be read by one and all; especially those interested in the Cultural Revolution. In the critiques leveled against the Chinese Communist bureaucracy, we see the tragic fulfillment of Bakunin's predictions. Pellican's excellent presentation, in fact, seems to have been tailor-made for the object of this review. What Bakunin predicted (in theory), Yu (and others) discovered (in fact).

While some purists may sniff at having to read Marxist-Leninist essays, they would be making a big mistake not to do so. In just about all of the essays presented there are solid kernels of information and/or analysis. It is to the editors' credit that they did not restrict their collection to only this school, that school, this line, that line.

Readers are also recommended to the 70's little magazine, MINUS EIGHT, whose quality and coverage has improved mightily over the past year or so. There is more and more coverage on China, articles by ex Red Guards, and other "former residents" who have fled to Hong Kong.

From the pages of THE REVOLUTION IS DEAD, and MINUS EIGHT, one thing is for sure: people in China are beginning to think and act for themselves. Read, and rejoice!

-Shelby Shapiro

FROM CHARLES REEVE

Dear Comrades, I got your book "The revolution is dead" and the different issues of MINUS 8 that you send me as well as the chinese anarchist paper. Thank you for sending it. I am going to make the book and magazine circulate amongst as many people as possible, maybe some one can also send you some help. I had also written a small presentation of your publication for the next issue of an independent leftist paper (Spartacus) that is open to any revolutionnary agitation material; when it comes out I will send you a copy. It's probably the best way of getting your material known in central Europe, since the magazine is read by a lot of people, independently from traditional groups and marxist and anarchist sects! Please keep sending me Minus 8 and anything else you put out, surface mail is OK if they arrive here anyway! I passed "Underground" to a french comrade that reads Chinese and to an old leftist comrade from Hanoi who lives in Paris since the war. I will let you know what they think, maybe I will convince them to write to you directly!

I read all the material you send me, that's why it took me so long before answer you... free time is little, I am wage laborer nine hours a day and only in week ends I have enough time to write! I liked very much your magazine, it brings something from the inside China that is difficult to get elsewhere. The majority of the articles interested me a lot and I am planing to translate some of them to publish here. Specially those concerned with a vivid analysis of what is the 'New Chinese personality created by Maoism', such as "Social personality in Chinese Communist society" (Minus sept/octob 76) and the chapter 4 of "the Dusk of rationality," in your book. In fact this question of social mentality seems to me to be an essential one for the problem of radical social transformation of society, since it determines (to a certain extent) the revolutionary energies and wills of working people. By the way, would it be possible to have more concrete information about the
living conditions of Chinese working class, the way they live, the way they see the Party and other maoists organisations, what they feel about all the party internal struggles, etc? That's something that lacks in Minus 8... maybe it's hard to get informations on it! On the book, I read only the Section three and the Appendix, since the other texts are well known here. And in Section three the "Whither China?" article and the Li I-Che one, I already knew. The last one was recently translated in french with a preface from the "situationist people"; a completely insane preface where they spend their time attacking the China - specialist professors from the french university establishment...that can be understood if one knows that these "situationists," after so much Ado about integration and recuperation, all became professors of this same establishment, and that, of course, they now claim to know better than the old pro-maoist professors! Who cares anyway... 

Amongst all the texts it was "the Dusk of rationality" that interested me the most, specially the part on China, since its analysis of State Capitalism or even its attack on Trotskyism are less original from my view point. I will try to put here some thoughts that it raised in my understanding. Two points seem to me quite discussible. For one it is said that the maoist ideology has the objective of "reform the human behaviour according to a specific model" (p.211), which seems to me a correct approach but to say that "this" movement (...) is according to the design by one man" (p. 211), that is, I think, of course a erroneous and limited way of seeing it. Mao's desires had, probably, some importance in his politics, but the determinat factor had been the motions laws of the wage system relations that rule the chinese society. Looks like the author of the article reverses the original principles of the red-guards that trust Mao as a real revolutionnary (see "Whither China?"); before Mao was a real revolutionnary, things happen despite him... now he is not a revolutionnary which explains why things happen so! The second point on that I will raise some criticism is related to this "new chinese personality". In all the former red-guards text's one can be impressed by the importance they give to the problem of "individualism" and "freedom". These preoccupations are for sure, the result of any totalitarian system based on denial of "individual needs". One can also see these preoccupations in the present intellectual refugees coming from Russia (Bukovsky, for example). That seems also to appear more and more inside china, as one can see in the recent Tien An Man demonstrations. But these questions raise some problems if one looks at them with the historical experience of modern capitalism. What is "individual freedom" and what are "individual needs?" Modern liberal and parliamentary capitalism hasn't itself based its ideological power on the assumption that individual freedom is protected? Of course It's not the point to deny such problem, but when raising them one should be clear enough not to present them in a bourgeois traditional way. That's why the Russian intellectual refugees in France are so much used by the capitalist power in ideological terms, they keep asking for "freedom" without ever relating this concept to the basis of the exploitation system, to the wage system in itself; looks like if the intellectuals could have "freedom" in these countries everything could be OK, workers could keep working for the rest of society! And look's like everything is OK in "our countries", where individual freedom is respected! Of course, one could ask the question of knowing if such limited "freedom" would not be in contradiction in the totalitarian systems, with the needs of maintaining the ideological oppression of the working-people! But that's another thing then. Only recently a book came out relating both questions: "Salaire aux pièces, ouvrier dans les pays de l'est" "work-pieces wages, workers in the East countries", by an Hungarian young intellectual that spend several years working as metal-worker in a big plant and that tells
his experience, the internal life in a “socialist factory”; when he talks about “freedom” there is no ambiguities, thats the end of any form of capitalism! Always on that question of “freedom” and “equality” as a formal principle of capitalism itself, I will write you what A. Pannekoek (council communist from the 30’s) said in his book “the Workers Councils” (Chapter “La democratie”, pages 284 from the french edition. . .sorry maybe someone can translate it for you!)

“Le capitalisme répose sur l’égualité des citoyens (...): les capitalistes vendent leur produits, les travailleurs vendent leur force de travail. Mais agissant en commerçants libres et égaux, ils obtiennent comme résultat l’exploitation et l’antagonisme de classe: le capitalisme est le maître et l’exploiteur, le travailleur l’esclave de fait. Sans violer le principe de l’égualité juridique, mais au contraire en s’y conformant, on obtient une situation qui le viole effectivement.”

Well, that’s all I wanted to tell you about the texts now; do not get it in a conflitual way but more in a fraternal one...

On the current trends on China nothing too much interesting has appeared here, if not the good reportages from the french bourgeois and serious paper “Le Monde”, that has a newmsman in Peking. Also in the last issue of the parallel paper “Le Monde Diplomatique” there was an interesting article translated from the american magazine “Foreign Affairs”, september 76 issue, which gives some fantastic informations about the military help the USA is now starting to provide to China, and that was increased after the fall of the “Gang of the four”... My self I am now hardly working on a text on China where I will try to complete the book we have done in the past and that is now translated in 5 languages. It should be an attempt to see, behind ideological clashes, what different trends exist within the party, concerning the problems of capital accumulation and social manipulation; that from the GCR till today. We will use your material too of course, and when it will be out (probably in march or so) you will have copies. Still on that subject, it seems to me more and more clear that the “Gang of the four” pushed somehow, and very much in a confused way, towards a more state capitalist tendency, a kind of more “modern Stalinist” orientation, against individual private property, forced collectivisation in the country side and low wages in industry, while the present tendency in power opposed to it because it will cause social unrest to do such policies.

If you want some particular material from here just tell me, I will try to get any leftist pamphlet or material on China (that come out to send you; if the book on the hungarian “socialist factory” life, interest you let me know, I will send it to you (it’s in french).

Keep in contact and send any material you think it is interesting. Keep up the good work!

Fraternally

Charles Reeve
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.