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TIEN AN MAN FORUM 16TH MAY 76 HONG KONG

Minus 8 is edited by members and friends of the 70s Biweekly, a libertarian socialist group in Hong Kong. Please note that Percy Fung and Li Ching are no longer connected with the editing of Minus 8. Percy is now working on radical film-making and Li Ching has gone into publication of anarchist literature. Li's publication plan includes the re-issue of George Orwell's 1984 in Chinese. (Eight years to 1984 is the meaning of Minus 8). Note that our permanent address is 180 Lockhart Road, 1st floor, Wanchai, Hong Kong.
Some Thoughts on the Chinese Revolution

By: Lee Ya See and Wu Che (Two Chinese anarchists)

1. From the beginning, the Chinese Communist Party was a bourgeois organism. The party was structured along hierarchical lines. It was a miniature state. It assimilated all the forms, techniques and mentality of bureaucracy. Its membership was schooled in obedience and was taught to revere the leadership. The party's leadership, in turn, was schooled in habits born of command, authority, manipulation and egomania. At the same time, the party was the spineless follower of the Comintern directed by Moscow.

2. The rigid dogma adopted by the Chinese Communist Party was that of Leninism-Stalinism, an ideology which had led to the consolidation of a system of state-capitalism in Russia. Not by deviating from but by following Lenin's ideas, a new dominating and exploiting class came into power over the working masses.

3. China was an economically backward country in which the old ruling classes were incapable of carrying out industrialisation. The young native bourgeoisie had neither the strength nor the courage to revolutionise the old social structure, in the way that a genuine modernisation would require. The "bourgeois tasks" were to be solved by a bureaucracy.

4. In pursuing the strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside in its attempt to seize state power, the Chinese Communist Party built up a peasant army. But such an army, organised by a bourgeois party, became a tool of the party and therefore a capitalist machine.

5. 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.

6. Having won control of the state machine, the only way to move forward for the Maoist bureaucracy was to impose a regime of ruthless exploitation and austerity on the working masses.

   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.

7. The new bureaucratic capitalist class in China did not emerge because of the development of new modes of production. It was on the contrary, the bureaucracy which brought the new mode of production into existence. The Chinese bureaucracy did not originate from the industrialisation of the country. Industrialisation was the result of the bureaucracy's accession to power.

8. Soon after the accession to power of the Maoist bureaucracy, intraparty feuds occurred. Such feuds originated out of two different conceptions of how China was to modernise in agriculture, industry, science and technology.
9. The Maoist-radical faction (led today by Chiang Ching, Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan) advocated self reliance, the active mobilization of the “popular masses” behind the state and the economy to promote production by ideological rather than material incentives, “redness” over “expertness”, the “infallibility” of the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung, hostility towards Soviet Union, “revolutionising arts and literature to serve the single purpose of propagating the official ideology, the need for endless mass movements and struggle because “in the long historical period of socialism, the principal internal contradiction is the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie.”

The so-called capitalist roaders (Liu Shao-chi, Teng Hsiao-ping, et al) favoured the retention of wage differentials and the extension of material incentives for increased productivity. They also stood for a more efficient technological apparatus, rapprochement with the Soviet “revisionists”, liberalisation of policies in relation to the arts, rejection of the personal cult of Mao, the priority of national construction over endless “class struggles”.

Both lines represented different strategies designed by the different factions of the bureaucratic capitalist class for attacking the working masses, for intensifying their exploitation.

The Maoist-radical road was leading to a “feudalistic social-fascist dictatorship”. The road of the “capitalist roaders” would bring a “destalinised Russian type of society” like today’s Russia.

10. Mao’s way to develop and to modernise the Chinese economy had the opportunities to be tried out fully in 1958. From “top to bottom”, the Party announced its policy of the “Three Red Banners”.

The first “red banner” was the “general policy of socialist construction.”

The second “red banner” was the “great leap forward”.

The third “red banner” was the formation of “peoples’ communes”.

As a result, China experienced three years of economic difficulties.

11. The Great Leap Forward failed dismally and the intra-Party conflicts of the two lines grew into sharp political struggles.

Mao’s influence was reduced in December 1958 when he resigned the State Chairmanship, though retaining the Chairmanship of the Party. Mao said, “I was extremely discontented with that decision, but I could do nothing about it.”

12. With Mao’s weakened control over the country, the “capitalist roaders” adopted a series of policies to minimize the economic crisis — in part created by the Great Leap Forward and in part created by natural disasters of various sorts. The “capitalist roaders” proceeded to develop and to modernise the economy according to their own perceptions.


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.

The immediate and tumultuous response of the masses to Mao’s call for rebellion pointed to the extreme discontent towards the policies of “capitalist roaders” and the system that have been set up since 1949.

The masses ended up opposed to, not just the “capitalist roaders”, but to the bureaucracy.
14. A pseudo-revolution had turned into a real revolution.

"90 percent of the senior cadres (of the Party) were made to stand aside. In Hunan, Chang P'ing-hua, Chang Po-shen, HUA Kuo-feng and the like had their power reduced to zero. At the Centre (Peking), power seizure (by representatives of the Cultural Revolution) took place in the Ministry of Finance, the Radio Broadcasting Administration Bureau and other departments; and the power of people like Li Hsien-nien, Ch'en Yi, T'an Chen-lin, as well as that of Chou En-lai who represented them, was greatly diminished. Into whose hands did the assets go at that time? They went into the hands of the people, who were full of boundless enthusiasm, and who were organised to take over the urban administrations and the Party, government, financial and cultural powers in industry, commerce, communications and so forth."

The masses had risen to take hold of their own destiny.

Mao ignited the revolution but he could not control it.

With the aid the Lin Piao and the military, Mao suppressed the revolutionary masses.

15. The bureaucracy, now temporarily controlled by Mao Tse-tung, led China further drifting down the road of "feudalistic social-fascist dictatorship."

16. Some phenomena under this "feudalistic social-fascist dictatorship" include "giving prominence to (empty) politics which rewarded the lazy and punished the diligent, the "daily reading (of Mao's works and quotations)" which resembled the incantation of spells, the "discussion-application (of Mao's works and thoughts)" which became more and more hypocritical, the "revolution erupts from the depth of the soul" which became more absurd, the "manifestation of loyalty" which encouraged political speculation, the grotesque "loyalty dance," and the excruciatingly multitudinous rituals of showing loyalty — morning prayers, evening penitences, rallies, falling in, reporting for and quitting work and making duty shifts, buying and selling things, writing letters, making phone calls, even taking meals — which were invariably painted with violent religious colours and shrouded in such an atmosphere. In short, loyalty occupied one hundred percent of the time and one hundred percent of the space. The movements of this "good" and that "good" were, in fact, competitions of "left! left! and more left!" and contests for "the most . . . . the most . . . . and the most." The innumerable "meetings of representatives of active elements" were, in fact expositions of hypocritical, evil and ugly behaviour and a gambling house which offered "10,000 times profit for one unit of capital;" "the formula 'preaching' of class struggle, and the 'scum hole' type of cow pens (meaning detention camps) which were more so and no less (inhuman) than the massacre of the historical incidents such as 'March 18', 'April 12', 'May 30' and 'June 23' because in Kwangtung Province alone nearly 40,000 revolutionary masses and cadres were massacred and more than a million revolutionary cadres and masses were imprisoned, put under control, and struggled against."

17. Lin Piao, officially designated Mao's heir apparent and the closest comrade in arms of Mao, became the "arch traitor, renegade, political swindler and double dealer". "On September 12, 1971, Mao was returning to Peking from Shanghai by train. Lin had arranged to blow up the train somewhere north of Nanking." And when the plan was thwarted, Lin fled on a plane which "ran out of fuel and crashed in Mongolia, killing everyone who was still alive by the time it crashed."

Once again, the bureaucrats manoeuvred above the heads of the masses who were not informed of the "Lin Piao affair" until months later.
18. By 1973 Teng Hsiao Ping, the capitalist roader during the Cultural Revolution, was re-instituted and became one of the most powerful men in the Chinese Communist Party hierarchy. Closely aligned to Chou En-lai, Teng was soon seen as the person to succeed Chou, who was Premier and first Vice Chairman of the Party, one of the most efficient bureaucrats to have administered China. Chou also richly personified the most opportunistic elements that genuine revolutionaries despised — with little principles, Chou always sided with the faction commanding a position of greater strength.

19. However, Chou seemed to be the target of the Movement of Going Against the tide & the Anti-Confucius movement waged by the Maoist radical faction of the bureaucrats, but skilfully Chou “adopted the soft, supple Taoist strategy of non-interference and non-resistance: like a judoka, he never opposes the adversary’s impact, he yields — and then manipulates the switches so as to send the enemy rushing under his own steam onto a sidetracking leading nowhere.” Chou managed to divert, control, distort and neutralise the movement aimed at him by identifying the “erroneous current” as the Lin Piao current. The movement was circumscribed to the innocuous denunciation of an already discredited corpse.

Thus the anti-confucius movement was successively designated by three names: first, “criticising Confucius” (pi Kung), then “criticising Confucius and Lin Piao” (pi Kung pi Lin) and finally “criticising Lin Piao and Confucius” (pi Lin pi Kung).

Unlike Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, Chou En-lai managed to die as a member of the Chinese Communist Party.

19. The masses were unenthusiastic about the “criticising Confucius and Lin Piao” movement, because “China is no longer the China of yore, and the people are no longer wrapped in sheer ignorance.” The “criticising Confucius and Lin Piao movement”, the movement of “Going Against the Tide”, the “Study of Proletarian Dictatorship Campaign”, the attack on the 14th century classic Water Margin, the movement “to counterattack the Right Deviationist Attempt to Reverse Correct Verdicts” are only struggles between the different factions of the ruling class. The masses understand that such mobilisations are to ensure their own servitude and to promote production, i.e. intensifying their exploitation.

20. According to the “Renmin Ribao”, (People’s Daily), “Early April, a handful of class enemies, under the guise of commemorating the late Premier Chou during the Ching Ming Festival, engineered an organised, premeditated and planned counter-revolutionary language, they brazenly clamoured that “the era of Chin Shih Huang is gone.” Openly holsting the ensign of supporting Teng Hsiao-ping, they frenziedly directed their spearhead at our great leader Chairman Mao, attempted to split the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao, tried to change the general orientation of the current struggle to criticise Teng Hsiao-ping and counterattack the Right deviationist attempt to reverse correct verdicts, and engaged in counter-revolutionary activities.

The counter-revolutionary activities culminated on April 5. At about 8 am, a loudspeaker car of the municipal Public Security Bureau was overturned, the body of the car and its loudspeakers smashed. After 9 am, more than 10,000 people gathered in front of the Great Hall of the People. At its maximum the crowd at Tien An Men Square numbered about 100,000 people.”

The “Renmin Ribao” also reported that people broke into the barracks of the People’s Liberation Army and occupied it. They overturned cars and set them on fire. Windows and doors at the barracks were smashed. Then they set the barracks on fire. Members of the fire-brigade and policemen were beaten up. Several hundred worker-
militiamen who went up the flight of steps leading to the Great Hall of the People to stand guard were broken up into several sections. More than 100 Peking worker-militiamen were injured, a dozen of them seriously wounded. The riot continued. At 6.30 pm, Wu Teh, the chairman of the Peking Revolutionary Committee, made a broadcast Speech at Tien An Men Square. "Most of the onlookers and the masses who had been taken in quickly dispersed. But a handful of counter-revolutionaries continued their desperate resistance and again posted some reactionary poems around the Monument to the People's Heroes. Three hours later, on receiving an order from the Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee, tens of thousands of worker-militiamen, in co-ordination with the people's police and P.L.A. guards, took resolute measures and enforced proletarian dictatorship."7

On the 7th April, 1976, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China announced that "on the proposal of our great leader Chairman Mao, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China unanimously agrees to appoint Comrade Hua Kuo-feng First Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, and that "having discussed the counter-revolutionary incident which took place at Tien An Men Square and Teng Hsiao-ping's latest behaviour, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China holds that the nature of the Teng Hsiao-ping problem has turned into one of antagonistic contradiction. On the proposal of our great leader Chairman Mao, the Political Bureau unanimously agrees to dismiss Teng Hsiao-ping from all posts both inside and outside the Party while allowing him to keep his Party membership so as to see how he will behave in the future."8

The acts of appointing Hua Kuo-feng and dismissal of Teng Hsiao-ping are apparent contravention of the provisions in the constitution of the People's Republic of China.

Contrary to the pronouncement of the official New China News Agency, the demonstration and riots were clearly not "organised, premeditated and planned". All other eye witness accounts pointed to the opposite.

The "Renmin Ribao" refused to admit that the direct and immediate cause of the riots was the premature removal of the Ching Ming wreaths for Chou En-lai.

It was in fact a spontaneous mass demonstration with the participation of the majority of the 100,000 people at Tien An Man Square. If it were an action of a minority, how could the several hundred worker-militiaman standing guard at the Great Hall of the People be broken up into several sections? How could the riot last through the whole day? And why was the need to send in "tens of thousands of worker-militiamen" in addition to the people's police and the P.L.A. guards?

The "Renmin Ribao" report said that the rioters were "opening hoisting the ensign supportung Teng Hsiao-ping", but eye-witnesses said that they neither heard nor saw any direct references to Teng. And what gains would be made by Teng and the "capitalist roaders" by organising a mass demonstration without corresponding actions to attempt to seize power?

The spontaneous demonstration of the 100,000 at Tien An Man Square (and similar demonstrations reported to have occurred at Chengchow, Kunming) signified that the Chinese masses are formulating their answers to the question "Whither China?", that they have intense hatred for the existing system and the ruling class, that they want to control their own destiny, that they want an end to "Chin Shih Huang's feudal society."9

For the first time since the Cultural Revolution, the masses asserted them-
selves in a big scale.

Were the masses supporting the "capitalist road"? No! The masses had passed their verdict during the Cultural Revolution.

When the masses paid their homage to Chou, they were making their protests in a round about way. This was necessitated by the extremely repressive nature of the existing system of rule.

23. In face of self actions of the masses, the bureaucracy acted swiftly. Reaching a compromise to sack Teng Hsiao-ping (but keeping him as a party member), the Maoist-radical faction joined hands with the "capitalist roaders" in suppressing the masses. Ignoring the violations of the constitution of the state, the ruling class shows nakedly that it will stop at nothing to perpetuate its continued rule. The bureaucrats, Mao, capitalist roaders and all, trembled at the self-action of the masses.

24. The socialist revolution is a long and tortuous road, but the end of the barbaric era of Mao Tse-tung is in sight.

Note 1: Quotation of Mao Tse-tung

Note 2: "Whither China?" Shengwutien document; reproduced in full in forth coming publication of the 70s Biweekly, "The Revolution is Dead, Long Live the Revolution!"

Note 3: Li I Che's Big Character Poster - "Concerning Socialist Democracy and Legal System", reproduced in full in "The Revolution is Dead, Long Live the Revolution".

Note 4: For details of the Lin Piao Plot, refer to the famous article by Wilfred Burchett published in August 1973 in the American Maoist paper, the Guardian weekly. The same article was also carried in the August 20, 1973 issue of the Far Eastern Economic Review.


Note 7: For full text of the "Counter-Revolutionary Political Incident at Tien An Men Square," refer to no 15, Peking Review, April 9, 1976.

Note 8: Refer to No. 15 Peking Review, April 9, 1976.

Amnesty International Support Group: An Amnesty International Support Group is being set up in Hong Kong. Amnesty International is a world-wide organisation concerned with political prisoners. It campaigns against the use of any kind of torture and for the release of the hundreds and thousands of prisoners who have been jailed for their political beliefs. The support group recently protested at the Indonesian Consulate in Hong Kong against the continued imprisonment of thousands of women political prisoners who were jailed as a result of the 1965 coup in Indonesia. However, the Hong Kong Support Group of Amnesty will not take any action over the political prisoners recently arrested at Tien An Man in Peking because according to the charter of the organisation, a national chapter or support group should not be involved in any campaign concerned with local political prisoners. But one wonders if Amnesty International is doing anything about the Tien An Man political prisoners at all.
New Publications: "Huang Ho" or "Yellow River" is a monthly magazine in Chinese which will be out very soon. It is put out by a group of ex-Red Guards who had become disillusioned with the Maoist regime and fled to Hong Kong. Working as unskilled labourers, white collar workers, or researchers, these young, ex-Red Guards believe that they have a contribution to make to the future of China, i.e., by presenting the real picture of China to anyone in Hong Kong and the outside world who is prepared to lend an ear. Extracts of articles from "Huang Ho" will be translated and published in Minus B. Copies of "Huang Ho" may be obtained from APS Asia/Pacific ($1.00 US per copy airmail postage included).

"The Revolution is Dead. Long Live the Revolution!" is a collection of essays on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution all written from an ultra-left perspective. The book has three sections running into almost 400 pages. The first section consists of analyses of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by the Progressive Labour Party (US), a Chinese Trotskyist and International Socialist (Great Britain), the ultra-left of the Marxist-Leninists. The second section consists of articles by Libertarian communists, including an essay by an International Situationist, another one by a member of a Dutch Group called Think and Act, and two others. Perhaps the most important are the five articles in the third section. Together they represent the ultra-leftist trend of thought and its development among the young people in China during and since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. "The Revolution is Dead; Long Live the Revolution!" will be out in June 1976 and is published by the 70s Biweekly. Copies are available from APS Asia/Pacific at $8.00 US each.

"Hong Kong: Britain's Responsibility" is a small pamphlet published by the Fabian Society in London. The author is Joe England, one-time deputy director of the extra-mural department of the University of Hong Kong. Despite its moderate tone, the pamphlet is quite a good expose of the injustices in Hong Kong. However, the Maoist press has not been too enthusiastic about the pamphlet, possibly because of section 4 of it.

Who Runs Hong Kong?

Definitely not the people. Hong Kong is a class society controlled and dominated by the local and foreign capitalists, administered by the bureaucrats of British imperialism, with the consent of the red capitalist class of China. There is an often repeated saying i.e. "Hong Kong is run by the Jockey Club (a club run by the extremely wealthy and powerful), the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (which issues 90 per cent of the currency in circulation in Hong Kong), Jardines (which has prospered into a huge multi-national corporation since Jardine and Matheson were enterprising enough to introduce the first opium clipper ship, and so making massive fortunes out of the opium smuggling trade), and the Governor in that order. The saying is not far away from the truth. Even the bourgeois American Newsweek magazine in a recent issue singled out five men and a woman as the people who really run Hong Kong. They are Kan Yeut-keung, the Chairman of the Trade Development Council, David Newbigging, the chairman of Jardine Matheson and Co. Ltd., Sally Aw Sian and Fei Yi-ming, two publishers, Phillip Haddon-Cave, the Financial Secretary, and Jack Cater, the Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Kan is a lawyer, banker and multi-millionaire scion of one of Hong Kong's oldest
families. When Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited Hong Kong in 1975, "Sir"-Kan welcomed her on behalf of "all of the people of Hong Kong."

Newbigging does not only have a big name. He is the most influential businessman in Hong Kong. His firm's influence does not stop at Hong Kong. It is getting quite imperialistic.

Aw Sian runs Hong Kong's largest and most powerful publishing empire, Sing Tao Newspapers Ltd., which prints three magazines and five daily newspapers, with a combined circulation of 350,000.

Fei Yi-ming is Peking's unofficial representative in Hong Kong and is a member of China's National People's Congress. He is the Director-General of two newspapers, Ta Kung Pao and the New Evening Post. He is the man Hong Kong's businessmen, diplomats and China-watchers seek out for information on events and trends in China. Chiang Ching and other radicals in Peking who have not got the upper hand probably regard Fei as one of their own. But to most people in Hong Kong, Fei is a red fat cat.

Financial Secretary Haddon-Cave draws up Hong Kong's annual budget. He controls its foreign exchange reserves, sets tax rates, doles out export quotas for the textile trade etc. At the same time, he also believes that the economy of Hong Kong is self-regulating i.e., nothing much can be done to alleviate the sufferings caused by mass unemployment or rampant inflation. Haddon-Cave became so powerful that even the Governor (according to one American economist) asked a group of management consultants to come to Hong Kong to devise ways and means to diminish the power of the financial secretary. (For further details refer to the book The Hong Kong Budgetary Process.)

Jack Cater is the head of the ICAC Independent Commission Against Corruption, also popularly known as I Can Accept Cash. ICAC is becoming the most powerful institution of the Hong Kong colonial set up. With powers of arrest, the armed ICAC officers have often resorted to secret police tactics.

Hong Kong's Revolutionary Tourist Guides

No place on earth is a paradise, but thanks to the local tourist guides, many tourists within hours of their arrival in Hong Kong are painted a true picture of Hong Kong, a place which is nothing short of a hell on earth.

The Hong Kong Government propaganda machine spends hundred and thousands of dollars every year to convince people abroad that Hong Kong is not a sweatshop and that people here have reasonable living standards. The visitor to Hong Kong knows differently.

According to Margaret Spackman, writing in the South China Morning Post, the local rag, "If a visitor has taken the much vaunted Kowloon and New Territories tour, by the time he returns to his hotel from such an outing he can claim to know more about the true situation of Hong Kong than many people in the Government."

Margaret went on such a tour and here's part of her report: "As the coach jockeyed for a position among five other buses crammed with tourists from Japan, the United States and Australia at Shek Kip Mei Resettlement Estate, our ever helpful guide told us: "This is one of the oldest resettlement estates in Hong Kong. The Government built it in a hurry after a fire which destroyed a lot of squatter huts. Each family living there has a room area of only 120 or 140 sq. ft. Most live six to a room. They do not have their own bath rooms or watertaps. So they have to use communal facilities. Forty
families have to use one bathroom so, as you can understand, they have to queue up a long time. And there are always sex maniacs prowling around which is why there are such a lot of sex crimes. They are always hanging round in toilets waiting to rape women. You can see those stoves out there on the balconies. They are there because there are no kitchens. You can see those washtubs hanging up on the wall as well. They are there because the people have to do their washings there. The passage is only three feet wide and it is all crammed up with all those things. Do you wonder what it would be like if there were a fire?

Our salute to the numerous tourist guides, whoever you are. You are contributing to the revolutionary cause, in countering government’s lies.

TIEN AN MAN INCIDENT PUBLIC FORUM
About one thousand people attended an open air public forum on the Tien An Man Incident on Sunday 15th May 1976 at the Victoria Park, Hongkong. The forum was jointly sponsored by the 70s Front, Daily Combat Bulletin, Young Militants and Young Socialists. 70s Front is a libertarian socialist group very closely associated with Minus 8 but the other three are of Trotskyist tendency. The four groups, although differing from one another ideologically, are unanimous in their vehement condemnation of political suppression in China today and are demanding the unconditional and immediate release of the political prisoners arrested at the Tien An Man incident on 5th April. Earlier on 12th May 1976, the four groups had already lodged a protest note at the New China News Agency. At the rally on Sunday two members of the 70s front, Comrades Chung Wai Kee and Wang Kai Hon delivered speeches representative of the group’s view, calling for a social revolution in China and received tremendous applause from the audience. A handful of Maoist supporters sought to disrupt the rally but were unsuccessful apart from creating a little bit of confusion for a short time. Despite of the fact that the Maoists were offered opportunities to air their own views and defense of the repressive actions of the Chinese bureaucrats, only one man with a Mao cap dared to take the advantage. The whole tone of the forum was therefore one of condemnation of the Peking bureaucrats and their suppression of the Chinese masses.

The Maoist press on the following day did not have a single report on the rally, although numerous reporters from the Maoist press were in sight at the rally. Meanwhile, the Maoist press and organizations were deliberately spreading vicious and groundless rumours that the non-Maoist radicals are all Russian backed and are working for the KGB.

To continue their domination of the Chinese people, the bureaucrats could only accumulate lies!
Police vs The People

The photographs reproduced below are really nothing new to the Hong Kong people. The local papers are splashed with such photos of police confrontation with the masses every so often. Hong Kong is in such a state that the masses constantly find themselves at odds with the government on numerous issues: from housing to hawking, and from rights to demonstrate to rights of a decent education. Minus 8 will seek to report and analyse such community actions in its future issues.
An Interview with An Ultra-Leftist from China

The following is a record of the interview originally published in Undergrad, issue 15, 1975.

Note from the editor of Undergrad: Wu Man was a member of the Red Guards in Canton during the Cultural Revolution. He fled to Hong Kong in 1973. The introduction to the book ‘Revelations that Moved the Earth to Tears’ was written by him. This interview consists of 2 parts, the first dwelling on the political views of Mr. Wu, and the second on the literary trends in China and the background of the book ‘Revelations that Moved the Earth to Tears.’

Q. Many of our students have read ‘Revelations that Move the Earth to Tears’ and have considered it representative of the literature of China after Liberation. The book should foster much discussion, but, its significance isn’t limited to its function as a work of art; it leads us to an evaluation of the new China. It is a re-evaluation of China by the youths who went through the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. It can rightfully be termed ‘historical literature’ as it carries with it the spirit of the times, and is basically different from the over-done traditional anti-communist propaganda. Therefore before we go into the literary aspects of this book, we would like to know your views on China.

A. This is a formidable question. We could review what we know about China’s revolutions. Previous issues of Undergrad have featured a series on New China in which Yu Shihet’s ‘The Dusk of Rationality’ is representative of our views. The Cultural Revolution had a decisive impact on us, in that youths who were generally idealistic about the revolution began to denounce their previous ideals.

Q. We all know that during the revolution, all members of the ultra left of the Red Guards had been extremely important essays ‘Whither China?’ which the 70s biweekly had reprinted. Why was there a markedly different approach to the above essay and ‘The Dusk of Rationality’?

A. There was a new viewpoint in ‘The Dusk of Rationality’, and compared with ‘Whither China?’, should be seen as a new stage. But ‘Whither China?’, appearing in the form it did at that time, had its limitations. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Tse Tung assumed the guise of the liberator of the people from the clutches of the bureaucrats. In the latter part of the Revolution, the spontaneous movement of the people made Mao Tse Tung feel personally and politically endangered. In other words, Mao Tse Tung had to switch from one tactic to another.

The author of ‘Whither China?’ could grasp this point very clearly, but in view of the situation, had to make use of the promises Mao Tse Tung made to the people, as a cover for attacks on the bureaucrats. We could not interpret them solely by the terminology they used, for the bureaucrats used the same terminology, but the essence was quick different.

Q. We should differentiate Mao Tse Tung from other bureaucrats as he himself advocated their overthrow. Maoism actually is idealistic as Mao Tse Tung personally sparked off the Revolution to eliminate bureaucracy. But the ultra left Red Guards had carried his ideals to the extreme so that Mao had to fall back on realism. Criticisms on Mao Tse Tung should be based on concrete analysis.

A. This is a good way of looking at it. We should not just write him off as a
bureaucrat, as he had his ideals also, although he was the chief representative of the class. Mao Tse Tung's power had been stripped before the Revolution and it was the bureaucrats who had victimized him, and therefore he had deep resentment and bitterness towards them. After weighing the pros and cons, and geared by his own stubbornness, Mao Tse Tung turned to the Cultural Revolution. He felt that in order to implement Communism, the 'new ideal man' must and should be moulded, for the Chinese society is basically different from the West. The Revolution had become an experiment to him.

If Mao Tse Tung's aspirations were the same as those of the people, it might work out, but regrettably, Mao Tse Tung, as all other rulers do, feared the people. This was due to his limited knowledge of Marxism and his need to keeping his position within the national political power structure. To guide the practice of the Revolution through Marxism, on one hand brought success but on the other resulted in a degeneration of the ideals. This was the tragedy of Marxism. Marxism had its roots in humanism, but through the conscious effort of making socialism scientific, rationalistic and realistic, had resulted in a 'political realism'. Throughout his lifetime, Karl Marx had few chances to put his ideologies in to practice, therefore he could well have retained the humanistic element. But by the time of Lenin, Marxism had undergone a qualitative change. Lenin was more of a democrat, but he still could not help becoming autocratic. When Stalin took over, Marxism degenerated into utilitarianism, a "Marxism" which sneered at human ideals. Mao Tse Tung did not interpret Marxism through humanism in the endeavour to maintain its best qualities, but interpreted it as a tool for struggle with dialectics as the method. When he discovered that Marxism had failed on a world scale, he decided on an unprecedented act - to complete the communist revolution in China. He often found it easy to compromise with reality, for example, during the January Revolution, when the people rose to seize power aimed at setting up the People's Commune, Mao Tse Tung then indicated that it was not yet time for such establishments but suggested instead the establishment of revolutionary committees.

From a certain point of view, the Cultural Revolution could be said to have changed from idealism to realism. Mao Tse Tung exemplified this point in that at the onset of the Revolution, his beliefs were not yet consolidated but the Revolution taught him just as it had taught the people. Mao gradually came to realize the aspirations of the people just as they gradually came to see his. The people were not one homogeneous mass according to the ideal, but rather that they had individuality and were eruptive, with sentiments and feelings. The model Mao Tse Tung had set up to mould man, could only destroy the nature of the people. This situation explains why during the latter stage of the Revolution the people were so oppressed and the revolutionary ideals discarded.

Q. What is this humanism on which you have laid so much emphasis? Why does Marxism, containing this humanistic element, not work out in the end? Hasn't your criticism of Mao Tse Tung gone beyond the realms of reality into nihilism?

A. Humanism is not the teaching of any scholar, any school of thought nor is it the teaching of any particular class. We believe that man is born with the ability to reflect on the complexities of his own life and that of the collective, to cherish the true and the good and discard the evil and decadent. Since history began, man has gone through numerous catastrophes to leave us an invaluable legacy - this bit of human spirit. This
human spirit is reflected in all aspects of life, in the products of the field, in literary works, in scientific development; man is obstinate in keeping what is good. He can transcend his reality, for example, Reminiscences of Utopia by Tao Yuan Ming, and the uprising of Spartacus. In the history of man, all good revolutions were coloured by a healthy humanism.

As to whether the practice of Marxism brought about tragedy and the criticism of Mao Tse Tung I have just made is severe enough to be called nihilism, our views are as follows:

The practice of Marxism and its belief are quite different things. It could be clearly seen that humanism and agitation for class struggle were incongruent with each other. People have always believed that socialism is the obvious outcome of the revolution, that the revolution will certainly lead to a brighter future and prosperity. Compared to the misery of the people before the May 4th movement, this belief could be considered valid. But viewed from the history of humanity, by the tenth year after Liberation, China has left an ugly scar on humanity, marring her own progress to modernization. Our criticism was levelled at Mao Tse Tung not because he could not reach the Marxist ideals, but because his form of government was a bad influence on the future of China and the rise of a humanistic society.

Q. There is still an unresolved question, the conflict between subjectivity and objectivity, idealism and realism, theory and practice. Was it the limitation of objective factors such as the economy, political structure of the society, that hindered Mao Tse Tung from putting ideas into practice?

A. I recall that after the article, The Duck of Rationality had been published in the Undergrad, there were many different responses. Some friends raised this point also, mainly pointing out that revolutionary ideals were necessary, but during this 'transitional period', Mao Tse Tung just couldn't realize his ideals. We could not accept this 'transitional period' as excuse, for if we accepted it, many problems would disappear. We deliberated on this point and felt that 'can't be helped' was only an excuse. Suppose we refrain from criticising Mao Tse Tung from an individual, minority or even the people's point of view, and take a more 'objective' view (the mere mention of objectivity will certainly solicit a torrent of criticisms) — and evaluate him through his own philosophy. At any time, rulers have used the same excuse — monarchists are forced to foreign intervention for the sake of keeping peace; it 'can't be helped' if demonstrators are arrested by colonial governments etc. We do not need any theories to back us up in handling these kind of problems except we don't want 'transitional periods'. Who would dare to say that India is not on the way to Communism?

You may ask what are the solutions to this problem? Many feel it is difficult to answer. We feel that there cannot be a complete answer for every group or every one of us. An example can be seen from the socialist revolution of the peasants in Ji Shui, Hubei mentioned in "The Duck of Rationality". It would be seen that the people can find their own directions.

Q. Enough of politics. Shall we move to literature? The Introduction of 'Revelations that Move the Earth to Tears' criticised the Chinese Communists, since their takeover of the country, for practising the 'neo-religious literature', flowery language, 'publicity literature', which is more political than anything, instead of realism in literature.
It is generally referred to as the "neo idealistic heroism" in literature. What actually is it? To our understanding, literary work was markedly different after the Cultural Revolution. This New Idealistic Heroism trend refers to officially-recognised works published after the Cultural Revolution. Could you further explain literary trends after Liberation? The content, style and technique employed in the 'Revelations that Move the Earth to Tears' is definitely different from other literary works published after Liberation. What are your views on its nature and function?

A. Many people are of the opinion that literature is basically free and unique. This neo idealistic heroism should be considered within its Maoist context. Mao Tse Tung had made it very clear in his lecture at the Yenan Conference on Literature and Art that he regarded literature as a means, a screw in the machine. This concept was picked up from Lenin. Marx and Engels had little to say on literature, but Marx personally loved literature, especially the work of Heine. Everyone knew that Heine was not a revolutionary although he was sympathetic to the revolution. Lenin criticised Gorki for not conforming to the revolution. Mao Tse Tung used this point to stress the usefulness of literature in revolution. Everyone disobeyed him on the sly before the Cultural Revolution: the literary field was still able to ignore Mao Tse Tung's directives. It was through the Cultural Revolution that Mao Tse Tung was able to consolidate his literary influence.

The term neo idealistic heroism was in fact a very narrow term and was used because we could find nothing better. Literary trends since the May Fourth Movement were influenced by writers like Gogol, Tolstoy. Critical realism in literature was very popular then and writers from Lu Hsun to Mao Tun were affected by this trend, and what was called 'literature from life' and the 'people's literature' came into being. After Liberation, people felt that critical realism should be the trend literature should take. Camus could not find a suitable term to describe the trend in his discourse on literary works in socialist countries and simply used the term 'socialist realism' whereas in actual fact literary works after Liberation had nothing to do with realism. It could be said to be 'anti-realism' - for allowing realistic portrayals to appear in literature would be allowing the political world to be ridiculed. Realism in literature tended to be controversial as it brought to light an undemocratic society, inequality and a deformed reality. Writers who were in fact loyal to the Party and country were criticised after Liberation because they were advocates of realism.

This trend, the neo idealistic heroism advocated by the communists, also influenced us. We have been educated in an idealistic spirit and tend to write everything down as 'transitional'. We always looked forward, neglected and despoiled reality, so therefore the works found in this volume of literature are strongly idealistic. I recall a reporter from the New York Times asking me whether life in the country had been difficult, and why hadn't it been reflected in the book. It was entirely the result of idealism making one oblivious to reality. What was painful to us while we were in the countryside was not that life was hard but that we were disillusioned. The lower middle strata of the peasants had not conformed to the image as publicised. Private plots were filled with greater care than the communal land. They were not the heroes depicted by Mao Tse Tung. It was in discovering all these facts that we felt the greatest anguish.

Q. If your works were merely depicting reality, displaying the dark side of socialist China, your work might have degenerated into rightist anti-communist anti-
Chinese formalism. It was because your work reflected an insistence on searching for the ideal that made them works of art.

A. I am not saying anything against idealism. Many great works of literature contain idealism, like Cervantes' Don Quixote. But we would reject the new idealistic heroism because it was created by tailoring it to the concept of one man and one party. Mao Tse Tung's idealism had strangled literature. We wanted an idealism that is not a doctrine nor a vacuum but an integral part of life, unique and with passion. We don't want idealism that comes as a screw in a machine.

Q. Then idealism should be part of life.

A. That's right. I can tell you a story. One of the authors of the poetry section, L, was almost a fanatic in search of idealism. She thrived entirely on the intellectual sphere. After the Cultural Revolution, she also went into the countryside taking with her many questions. She fervently studied the works of Marx and Lenin day and night with the intention of evaluating Marxism. This was a dangerous thing to do. Yang Hsi Kwang's "Whither China?" had brought him 20 years of imprisonment and actually no one really knew whether he was alive or dead. L was prepared to sacrifice herself in putting her thoughts to paper, so that others coming after could benefit from it and then she would willingly die for her cause. But she could not even accomplish this. None of her comrades would agree to safeguard her papers. One female officer of some rank finally took pity on L but she only made a double layer leather case for L to hide her papers, and told her to take it with her to the countryside. Up to this point, before L had a mental breakdown, she could not sleep and it suddenly dawned upon her that her idealism was out of touch with reality. She should have sought idealism from life. In the 'Song of Man' she wrote 'I finally understood: there is no such thing as abstracting oneself from reality. Ideas and beliefs should be obtained from life and yet I have forsaken it.' She completed her work with all her energy.

Q. We feel that this book is strongly individualistic, that it has swung from one extreme to another, as illustrated in the love stories. We know that Russia has produced a writer Solzhenitsyn whose works represent an accusation against Russian autocracy, but some Marxists from the West point out that this is an reactionary aspect of Solzhenitsyn's work. What are your thoughts on this point?

A. Firstly I would like to point out that this sort of manuscript is plentiful in the underground in China. The point is how can we understand the personal feelings of the authors. After Liberation, everyone refrained from writing realistically for this trend had become a grave offence. Why was it that everyone felt that Mao Tse Tung was being criticised when they read 'Hai Jui's Dismissal from Office'? It could be that everyone could not and avoided expressing their opinions frankly under the long-term autocracy. This situation extended through all levels of the society. Just take a look at the 'Red Flag' Magazine in which one attacked the other. Everyone understood that 'temporary officers' 'being spoilt' and 'pacifist' were euphemisms launched at each other by the two parties. This was the spirit which was permeating the whole country and naturally, appeared in writings. For example, there is a line in 'The Dialogue and Comments on a Plain' which said 'someone committed a monstrous offence'. Outsiders can see nothing in this phrase, but actually it is hinting at the Lin Piao incident. Some friends asked me to decipher the incidents one by one, but it is impossible, for there are far too many metaphors and understatement. Love poems reflect the reality that a lover was no more
than the projection of an ideal. "I Fear What I Love is Only the Beauty in My Heart" illustrates this point very clearly. Ideals were generally expressed in feminine forms often as goddesses.

I cannot comment on Solzhenitsyn as I have only read "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich". Individualism is of course something very natural. After Liberation the Chinese communists severely repressed individualism, but after the Cultural Revolution, it grew to enormous proportions. It was understandable within the context of its socio-psychological background, as people had no way to balance out their needs, except through an impulsive release of feelings or sublimation. Viewed from this context it is possible to understand the individual in the works in this book. Letters and poems are an expression of the individual but in fact they incorporate and reflect the plight of the whole generation. It is different from the individualism expressed by young people abroad, as the works in this book are the condensation of thoughts on the meaning of life by Chinese young people of this generation. After going through considerable psychological upheaval, they can scarcely look after themselves let alone reflect the aspiration of all the Chinese people. Was it not the same situation for Lu Hsun after the 1911 Revolution? He was copying epitaphs alone under a wattle tree, oblivious to the cold and clammy caterpillars falling upon his neck. Therefore the poetry section contains one piece:

- I have been
  feeding my life's loneliness
  on the blazing fire!
  The green flames, leapt endlessly
  - Then it froze, and turned into three feet of ice.

In China the ideal was not accomplished by the collective character of the people but by strangling the life of the individual. In clinging to our individual ideals, we are rebelling against autocracy. This is invaluable to us, as it is the future hope for China.

Q. This leads to another question — how does the individual reconcile with the group? What are your views to this large and somewhat philosophical question?

A. I have always felt that insisting that the individual fit in with the group is perfectionist; we should rather expect unending search for a balance between the individual and the group, to maintain a suitable distance between the two. To my understanding, subjectivity can always transcend the objective environment. Struggles are only the unwholesome and debased price we had to pay. In the hands of the politician the revolution is tainted, but that does not mean that we are against the revolution. This is an distressing situation but we would have to throw ourselves into it. The individual and the group are so different yet cannot be separated. No man is an island. There are no Robinson Crusoe's, but we must admit that man has to reserve some living space for himself.

Q. There is a quite interesting question. One journalist asked me to get her a copy of this book as she was anxious to read it but doubted its truthfulness. We also have some doubts as the works in this book reflect a lot of reading and understanding of foreign literature, which we believe is difficult to come by in China. Could you tell us about the general reading habits in China?

A. This is a question of interest to many people. We must not be biased by the anti-communist propaganda that the people are all ignorant and the Mainland is a hell. In fact before the Cultural Revolution, China had published a number of works by Western
writers, especially Russian ones. That was a fine series of very high standard. Therefore many students were familiar with foreign culture. I have met some young people from China in Hong Kong, who have a very deep understanding of Russian culture.

The Cultural Revolution is also an important reason why we could read so many books. This might seem unbelievable. The one thing the general public abroad could not forgive China was that the authorities encouraged Red Guards to 'destroy the four ancients' thereby destroying Chinese culture. Actually we did not destroy it - we rushed into the national libraries and confiscated the books which we then read in private. Professor Fung Nai Chao of Chung Shan University had a personal collection of books which we confiscated. After the Cultural Revolution, a document issued by the Sheng-wu-lien "Whither China?" further stimulated our desire for reading. "Whither China?" affected us very deeply, for which we have the Communist leaders to thank. When they issued an order to criticise this essay, the whole country was in an uproar. All the Red Guards fought to get a copy of it. The method they used was to attack it on the surface but to promote it on the quiet, like putting a comment on each publication saying that this essay was being criticised by the Central Committee therefore everyone should read it in detail; once was not enough, it must be read at least three times over. The mere title "Whither China?" was challenging enough, and the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Our Mission", "The Program of Sheng-wu-lien" all stimulated us to think. We needed a lot to read, to provide a basis for discussion. Our discussions went really deep, for some had already raised such questions as 'the revolutionary could remake the world' but could he 'maintain his hold on it'; the validity of Marxism etc. The fervor with which the Red Guards devoured books had to be seen to be believed. Because it was forbidden to read the banned books in public, we established underground libraries in which we circulated our books and discussed problems. The learning potential of the Red Guards went far beyond anything this book can express. A large number of masterpieces were composed, eg. some wrote articles discussing Marxism, the Cultural Revolution, the revolution in China, and there was a script for a movie in which the film started with a flutter of leaflets from a train leaving Wu Han. The technique fitted a montage and it was a pity that these compositions could not pass out of China for they would open a new page in the history of Chinese Culture.

There is one more point I would like to raise, that is we have been raised in different environments and the problems we face are different. We former Red Guards are in better position in a way, for we could feel and get to understand the oppression and alienation you experience in bourgeois society. We can also have direct access to what you write. Your situation is different. You have not lived in China. One of the purposes of publishing this book is, hopefully to bridge the gap between young people abroad and ourselves. We are Chinese despite all our differences. There are many areas in which we need to fight side by side. Long-term separation would only increase our rejection of each other and make us strangers. Let's hope that we can exchange views more often.

Next Issue: (1) The True Story of The Tien An Men Incident 
(2) A Revolutionary Tourist Guide to Hong Kong

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