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# Chinese Trotskyists released

By Chinese Trotskyists overseas

ACCORDING to reliable and confirmed reports, eight Chinese Trotskyists — among them Zheng Chaolin (Cheng Ch'aolin), a founder member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) — were released by the Chinese authorities and restored to full citizenship on 5 June this year.

These eight people (apart from Zheng, the only other names we know for sure are those of Wu Jingru (Wu Ching-Ju), Zheng's wife, and Jiang Zhengdong (Chiang Chen-tung), a leader of the Shanghai workers' insurrection in 1927) were arrested along with over two hundred others on the night of 22 December 1952 by the CCP secret police. They have spent the entire period since then in prisons and labour camps, despite the fact that they were never publicly tried or sentenced.

As far as we know, over the last 27 years some of those arrested have been released under strict surveillance and returned to their places of origin, where they were forced under conditions of great hardship to participate in unpaid or badly paid manual labour, after spending five or more years in detention. Others died as a result of their sufferings in prison. Zheng Chaolin and the other seven now released probably represent the last batch of those fortunate enough to have survived this experience.

The Chinese Trotskyists originally constituted, and for many years remained, the Left Opposition of the CCP. This Left Opposition was originally formed around Chen Duxiu (Ch'en Tu-hsiu), founder of the CCP, who was elected or re-elected general secretary at each of the first five congresses of the party.

The Chinese Left Opposition, basing itself on the experience of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 and the theories of internationalism and permanent revolution, directed its



ZHENG CHAOLIN in 1941

energies toward freeing the CCP from the grip of Stalinist nationalism and bureaucratism. After the defeat of the revolution, we advanced a revolutionary democratic programme and actively opposed the CCP's Moscow-inspired adventurist line.

During the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-1945, we resolved to support and actively participated in the anti-Japanese resistance, but we did not abandon our revolutionary position, and after the victory of the resistance we called for immediate implementation of agrarian revolution as a means of countering Guomintang (Kuomintang) repression, and eventually of completely overthrowing the reactionary rule of Guomintang.

During the period of the civil war (1946-1949) we participated in the struggle on all fronts, and played a special role in the big cities of east and south China, where we led struggles in workers' districts. After the victory of the revolution our main contribution was in the struggle for the democratisation of the new organs of government and for further advances along the road of socialist

revolution. All this, far from being a crime, was positively in the interests both of the Chinese workers and peasants and of the revolution itself.

However, the CCP leaders, especially the Moscow-controlled Wang Ming faction, all along saw us as their main enemy, and attacked us mercilessly. Their first step was to expel us from the party. Later they slandered and persecuted our supporters. They took all sorts of unscrupulous measures against us, not stopping short of murder. Finally, in December 1952, they crushed our entire organisation by arresting all our comrades throughout China.

The CCP's treatment of the Chinese Trotskyists over the past fifty years is the most flagrant of the 'false charges', 'frame-ups' and 'mistaken verdicts' currently being denounced by the Peking leaders. If the latter are sincere in their resolve to 'rectify' such abuses, then they should start by reversing the verdicts wrongfully passed on the Trotskyists, and completely rehabilitate them. They should not only restore them their freedom and their right to work, declare their innocence of any crime and restore their good name as revolutionaries, but also grant the Chinese Trotskyist tendency full legal rights.

Will the CCP authorities grant these demands? This depends on the struggle carried on by socialist revolutionaries both inside and outside China. In the past, not only did Trotskyists on a world scale protest on behalf of the comrades in China, but even the human rights organisation Amnesty International expressed its concern.

These protests and expressions of concern played at least some role in the recent release of Zheng Chaolin and the other comrades. We are grateful to these people for their past help, and hope that they will continue to give us support in our future struggles.