


Copie de la lettre de Wang à P.F.

x: IC, BIC, Les
Jus

29 June 1979

Dear Cde.,

 I just received a brief but very important message from Shanghai about Cheng Chao-lin and his wife Wu Jing-ru. Cheng as you know was arrested in December ¹⁹⁵² ~~1979~~ and has been imprisoned in various prisons and labour camps since then. The letter which told me a change of Cheng's situation was written by a young man, son of one of Cheng's old neighbour who had managed to maintain some relation with him over the past twenty seven years. The following is what the letter says:

"Uncle Cheng asked me to inform you immediately that on the 5th of June the United Front Department of the government and the Supreme Court of the People's Republic of China declared him to be not guilty and he was restored to freedom on the same day. Later the Revolutionary Committee of Shanghai treated him and some others (seven all told*) to dinner and afterwards he was led to visit some places to see the achievements of the government. Now the government has told him that he and his wife may move out of the labour camp to a flat in the city center at the end of the month. He asked me to give you the good news first and then in July he himself will write to you." The letter is undated, but the post-mark is 10th June.

Since the fall of the "Gang of Four", nearly all opponents of Mao and other dissidents have been released and "rehabilitated". Even the war criminals of the Koumintang were set free. But nothing has happened to Chinese Trotskyists behind bars. We began a new campaign for their releasement in our own papers immediately after the change of direction of the political wind in China, but to no avail. In 1977 Cde. G. Benton wrote an article "Teng's Comrade still Behind Bars" and published it in The Guardian (9 November 1977). It had some influence for the first time. It was quoted by the 1978 report of the Amnesty International on the political prisoners in China, which, I believe, did bring some pressure to bear on Peking authorities. In last March, we got more information about Cheng and his wife and we asked AI to take further steps to help our friends in prison. In the May issue of the AI Newsletter, Cheng Chao-lin was featured as the "Prisoner of the month" and people were urged to write letters on behalf of Cheng to Chairman Hua Guo-feng. Now came

the very good news. I won't say that Cheng's releasement is the direct outcome of the AI campaign, but it is not unlikely that there is some connection between the two events. The new leadership of the CCP is much more readily to listen to the public opinion of the West than the "Gang" were.

I am anxiously waiting for more information from Shanghai, especially from Cheng himself. I don't know what does "not guilty" mean. Cheng was arrested and convicted as a "counter-revolutionary Trotskyist". Does that mean the CCP no longer consider Chinese Trotskyists as counter-revolutionary? Does it mean that the CCP is going to grant a legal status to the Chinese Trotskyists? Obviously, things cannot go that far. I do not harbour any illusion in that respect. But anyway this is a change, or a beginning of a change.

After we are informed of all details in connection with the releasement of our comrades in China, I think the whole International should launch a publicity campaign not only to praise their courage and loyalty to our cause, but also to further the struggle of Chinese youth now developing in many big cities of China for the democratisation of the CCP and the country.

Cheng Chao-lin is 78 years of age, of which 34 years were spent in prison (7 ^{under} in the KMT prison while 27 under the CCP regime). People usually say that August Blanqui was the longest "record holder" for serving the longest prison sentence, who spent 33 of his total 75 years behind bars. Now Cheng has served one year more for the banner and cause of the Trotskyism! He really has set an example for our young friends.

I'll keep you informed of the further developments of ~~that~~ ^{the} affair. Please forward this letter to the cdes. of the U2Sec.

Fraternally,
F. Wang

*The letter mentioned seven people who were "treated" by the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee. I don't know who were the other six, but I think at least some of them were ^{also} Trotskyists. as