

Revolution and Repression in Tiananmen Square

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“**T**urmoil” was the Chinese government’s word for the six weeks between mid-April and early June, the label with which officials chose to brand the student protest movement. The news readers on China Central Television’s English service pronounced it with an emphasis on the second syllable, and it figured in every official speech. Any important event, or movement, or set of ideas must have a standard appellation in China, where sloganizing and repetition of set rhetorical formulas is raised to an art. The now-infamous *People’s Daily* editorial of April 26 labeled the movement and simultaneously fanned its flames by insulting and threatening to suppress it. “Turmoil” is the standard translation adopted for “*dongluan*,” to make chaos. “*Luandong*” refers to free-form dancing, the sort of individually creative movement popularized in the West during the 1960s. Beijing students liked the reversal; they were dancing in spontaneous order, they said, not making chaos.

Early Days: April 26–May 11

On April 27, columns of students pushed through the only slightly resisting ranks of policy officers and into Tiananmen Square. Apparently the gov-

ernment would not make good its threats of harsh repression. The policy barriers were spaced every few hundred yards, and each successive breakthrough drew greater cheers than the last, building the momentum of protest. Students marched in groups of classmates; those on the outside linked arms to keep each unit defined and keep out police or agents provocateurs. Shortly before, a Xian demonstration had been marred by violence. The students intended this one to be forceful but peaceful.

Students were marching on Tiananmen Square as part of China’s third substantial prodemocracy movement in a decade. This one had been touched off by the death of Hu Yaobang, who as premier had presided over the last in 1986–7. His inability to contain it had cost him his job. Now he was transformed from somewhat liberal party leader to revered martyr. Mourning him provided a pretext for taking to the streets and putting forward renewed demands: rehabilitate Hu; end corruption; hold a serious dialogue between party leaders and students.

The April 27 march was a huge success, beyond even the most optimistic student expectations. And May 4, the date symbolizing the crucial student and intellectual uprising of 1919 was just coming up. On

May 4 police and troops kept discreetly to the sidelines, numerous but unarmed. The students basked in the bright sun and felt their new power and freedom. The march had a holiday atmosphere; townspeople turned out to watch and cheer the students. A quarter-of-a-million people gathered, but there was a strange sense that nothing happened. The march was curiously relaxed and slightly anticlimactic. I watched brigades of students from the main universities marshal in northwest Beijing, carrying banners and signs, a few wearing sashes bearing slogans. As on April 27, they knew that "the whole world was watching," so sported signs in French ("*vive la liberté*") and English ("give me liberty or give me death") to attract the television cameras and make their protest communicate on the evening news in Europe and the United States. They marched the six or eight miles into Tiananmen Square, joining others on the way.

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University contingents from the other parts of town made it to the square first. But once there, they had little idea of what to do. It was hot, and people kept drifting away in search of a drink while the crowd waited for its last and most influential components to arrive from Beijing University, People's University, and Beijing Normal University. Occasionally someone drew a cheer by circling the Monument to the People's Martyrs waving the blue-and-white flag of the Beijing Autonomous Students Association. A few students made speeches, unamplified and audible only to those immediately around them. Many took pictures of each other.

The one really striking event of the May 4 demonstration was the arrival of a contingent of journalists carrying signs calling for the right to report the news objectively, and supporting the students. When the last marchers arrived, there was a cheer, a pause, and then everyone gradually dispersed. The students' repertoire of protest had few dramatic scripts, nothing to focus attention or keep the crowd entertained and motivated. The occasion seemed eerily quiet; I realized that in my mind such an event always involved music.

Over the next four weeks, the students expanded their repertoire of collective action, multiplied the numbers at their rallies, and captured the center of attention in Beijing and worldwide. The movement

grew in several steps, with occasional lulls. Before May 4, student leaders had put forward a list of ten demands ranging from an end to official corruption to recognition of the autonomous student association and retraction of the April 26 *People's Daily* editorial in which leaders (apparently backed at the highest level by "paramount leader" Deng Xiaoping, perhaps at Premier Li Peng's urging) had condemned the students' protest.

Not surprisingly the government rejected the demands, but there seemed to be hints that leaders listened. Zhao Ziyang, the chairman of the Communist party, returned from Korea saying that the protesters were patriotic in intention and the party shared the desire to end corruption. Several high officials declared that democratic reform was an appropriate goal but must be pursued gradually. Moderation seemed to be carrying the day. Most students returned to classes, at least temporarily, though some, particularly at Beida (Beijing University), held out.

The government tried staging a carefully orchestrated meeting of leaders from the officially recognized student associations. The idea was apparently to show an interest in students, emphasize the availability of "proper channels" for communication, and at the same time to suggest that the mainstream students were orderly and supportive of the government. Those who participated earned the bitter condemnation of their classmates; the delegate from Beijing Foreign Studies University (Beiwai) did not dare to show himself on campus again. To the amazement of most students, however, the government did agree to a dialogue of sorts with dissenters. Yuan Mu, spokesman of the State Council and a former journalist, met with a number of students for a televised exchange.

Yuan Mu wasn't quite the top policymaker students had hoped to meet, but the idea of any senior Chinese official appearing on TV to be interrogated about policies and the possibility of corruption was a startling novelty. The government seized the initiative by inviting its own roster of students and thus excluding the movement's most visible leaders (people like Wang Dan, from Beida, Chai Ling, the only woman in the prominent leadership, and Wu'erkaixi, the telegenic, unhealthy Xinjiang native from Beijing Normal). Yuan Mu proved a much more sophisticated performer on camera than the students, easily parrying most of their charges. It seemed, indeed, that the students were about to be outmaneuvered by repressive tolerance—or at least some substanceless hints of openness from the government. But people took heart from the very fact of the government's agreement to hold the meeting. And while putatively cooler heads (i.e., younger teachers and some graduate students) urged the students to consolidate their gains, others

poured contempt on Yuan Mu's slick performance, saying that oiliness was no substitute for real dialogue and demanding that real, responsible leaders meet with the students.

Exactly what sort of dialogue the students expected was unclear. Indeed, the Chinese term translated as dialogue is "*da shuo*," meaning literally "big talk." It does not carry the connotations of multiple, conflicting voices or dialectics that characterize the Greek-rooted Western word. At Beiwai, students hailed the reputedly very conservative, Russian-educated university president out for dialogue of their own. A former classmate of Li Peng's, this man had spent most of his career in the army. He smiled nervously, declared that he had a heart condition, said that he loved the students but they must be patient and return to their classes.

Turning Point: May 17

On Saturday and Sunday, May 12–13, a crucial new idea took root: three hundred students began a hunger strike. The core came from Beijing University, People's University, and Beijing Normal University though a few from Beiwai and other smaller schools joined at the outset; this move captured attention and sympathy immediately. The number of hunger strikers swelled to some three thousand before the organizers refused to allow more to join. When I went to see the hunger strikers on Monday, the Tiananmen crowd was already back at the quarter-of-a-million level, and it seldom sank below that, even at night, during the next ten days. On Tuesday I gave my last lecture; the strike was renewed and I began going to Tiananmen every day, usually with one or another group of students.

Mikhail Gorbachev's felicitously timed visit helped the student movement gain momentum. Western news media flooded into Beijing for the event, giving the students a chance to gain positions on the front pages and news broadcasts that they were not to relinquish for weeks. The powerful visual images of the movement, set against the backdrop of both imperial and communist landmarks, made for effective television.

Gorbachev appealed to the students as an attractive reformer in another communist country, one who provided a symbol of the possibility of change within communism and particularly of the validity of political liberalization. Students came to Tiananmen Square carrying his pictures and signs in Russian (though his Chinese government hosts did their best to make sure he didn't see them). This was a departure from the students' more usual contempt for Russia compared to the West and especially for Russian influences on China. Though rumors circulated about Gorbachev's alleged rebukes to his Chinese hosts, he seems rather to have decided to allow them to save face by making no

direct reference in public to the unplanned demonstrations. Still, students were impressed by his very style; it was almost unimaginable that a Chinese leader would stop his limousine as Gorbachev did to mingle informally with crowds of ordinary people.

The presence of the media and Gorbachev inhibited the government from taking harsh action to suppress the student protests. But no doubt the humiliation doubled the official anger. The historic summit marking the resumption of friendly relations between the two greatest communist powers was overshadowed. Gorbachev's arrival parade had to be canceled lest he see the protests. His schedule was continually readjusted. He had to be whisked ignominiously into the Great Hall of the People by the back door. He was never able to see the Forbidden City.

Wednesday, May 17 was a turning point. More than a million people converged on Tiananmen for the largest protest ever, exceeding even Zhou Enlai's funeral in 1976. I marched with the Beiwai contingent, at first uncomfortable about whether I really belonged in this protest, not being Chinese and being very visible, standing a head taller than almost anyone else. I decided that democracy was an international goal, however, and observed that the government seemed bent on blaming a "small number of foreign agitators" anyway, even when there weren't any. So I shouted "Long live democracy" and signed my name on countless shirts in what became the primary mode of souvenir creation throughout the occupation of Tiananmen Square. Foreign signatures seemed to be particularly sought after, but I worry that these shirts are dangerous souvenirs in the current repression. The Beiwai students were proud of me and of the other, equally obvious, Westerner in our group, a blond English professor from San Diego and kept thanking us "for winning us much more applause than we would have received otherwise."

Marching with the group brought me more into the center of things and gave me more evidence of the organization of the strikers and their supporters. We rode our bikes to within a mile of Tiananmen and marched the last stretch of Chang'an Avenue. At the northeast corner of the square we turned south, following a path, invisible from the edge of the crowd, monitored by lines of students called "pickets" (i.e., fence posts). We marched in a U around the core of protesters, were led in to what I later learned was the second but not innermost circle to pay our respects, then marched out to one side for a rest, drink, and snack. After that we made another circuit and headed back to our bikes.

All manner of people had turned out to protest. Students from the major universities in Northwest Beijing kept commenting that they never knew

there were so many universities in the city—universities of iron and steel, travel and tourism, broadcasting, commerce, and public security, beyond the mainstream range of academic curricula. This was also the first time that substantial numbers of students from outside Beijing arrived—particularly a large contingent from the nearby port city of Tianjin. There were a few protesting soldiers and policemen, and a great many more officials from various government offices—the ministry of trade, the foreign ministry, the Xinhua News Agency, and the railways. There were small entrepreneurs and owners of large businesses (the latter arrived in an air-conditioned bus with a banner across the back reading “we are rich but we still want justice”).

By this time, things were getting more and more serious. Students had starting collapsing on Monday, having refused drink as well as food. They were taken to increasingly crowded hospitals all over Beijing. By Wednesday the ambulances were running every fifteen to twenty minutes, and by Thursday afternoon every six to eight minutes. Once revived by intravenous drip, students left the hospitals (sneaking out if need be) and returned to the square to resume their fast. Several made that round-trip ten or twelve times; I heard that the record was fifteen.

That night I was invited along with a group of student leaders; we had a ‘passport’ which enabled us to enter the inner circle. In addition to marking off routes for marchers (something not done May 4 when people milled-about in more confusion) students had cleared paths for ambulances, using plastic ribbons running among human pickets to keep these open. Similar cordons marked off two circles. The outer housed all the protesters actually camped at Tiananmen; only those from their universities bringing them food or specifically eligible as classmates were allowed in. The inner circle housed the hunger-strikers, themselves divided into separate groups for each school, and the core leadership. Not only did those in the outer circle care for those fasting inside, this system kept the massive, dense crowd at bay and allowed some freedom of movement and at least a little air circulation where the strikers slept. It provided a place for midnight organizational and strategy meetings. It also continued the students’ earlier tactic of marching with linked arms to prevent penetration by agents provocateurs or other unwelcome elements. All but a few journalists also found themselves frustrated in efforts to reach the inner circle.

On Wednesday spirits had been high, but Thursday had an air of crisis about it. One group of radicals had talked of burning themselves if the government failed to meet demands; now the story spread that their fellows had to actively restrain them from doing so. The hunger-strikers were in

worse shape, rumors circulated that the police might move in soon (Gorbachev had left for Shanghai), and worst of all it had rained. Students erected makeshift tents, throwing plastic sheets over sticks lashed together with string. The hunger-strikers themselves were better protected, as buses had been brought in to house them—mostly Beijing city buses donated by their drivers, it seemed. The Beiwai students were particularly demoralized because they had expected a visit of solidarity from their teachers, but nearly all the teachers had called it off when one of their number (a party member) returned from an official meeting with the claim that the government had agreed to a dialogue and that leaders would be going to meet the students at midnight. They did not, of course, although this was in fact the night that Zhao Ziyang, at 5 A.M. visited the hunger-strikers, tears in his eyes, declaring that “we have come too late” and earning strong student support for his show of sympathy.

News and Rumor

Unbeknownst to the students, Zhao had come from an all-night meeting at which he had been sharply outvoted in the standing committee, apparently spelling his downfall; the tears in his eyes might be for himself as well as the students. His decision to visit the students had been condemned, but he insisted on going, violating the discipline of the party. Li Peng rushed out to visit the students as well, but in striking contrast, he did not enter their buses. Instead, he had a few leaders come to the Great Hall of the People where he lectured them sternly and arrogantly, sitting in an overstuffed chair. When student leaders began to ask pointed questions after his speech, he stood up and walked away, declaring the meeting at an end. Wu'erkaixi, still in pajamas from the hospital, put Li particularly sharply on the spot. The next day film clips of the two visits were shown on TV almost hourly (though the insulting end to Li’s was edited out). I kept imagining that the Chinese people were being asked to vote for the leader they liked better. In fact, the popular preference was clear but largely irrelevant to the topmost core of the leadership; the populace didn’t know this yet.

That night in the square I was reminded of a battlefield. It was damp and lit mainly by the moon. Sirens sounded from ambulances; occasionally a white-clad Red Cross crew would rush by carrying a stretcher with an unconscious hunger-striker on it. I thought of the Crimean War, or Napoleon’s invasion of Russia or the War between the States; there was a nineteenth-century feeling, with makeshift tents, and students trying to stay warm in layers of ill-fitting, mostly donated, clothing with the vaguely military look favored by Chinese producers in the Maoist era. When the sirens were particularly loud,

I thought of science-fiction renderings of the world after a nuclear explosion, and imagined it would look much like this. Of course, few people were as badly off as all that. I was responding both to the surreal scene and to the general mood; the moods were important, shifting quickly, often for no apparent reason or because of a rumor one's conscious mind discounted.

The dependence on rumor was greatest when there was least to be learned from reliable sources. The worst of such times came not Thursday night, but toward the end of a five- or six-day period when the Chinese press defied all precedent and current orders and began to report what was going on the campuses, in the streets, and especially in the square. Increasing numbers of journalists joined the marches, calling for press freedom. Print and radio reporters appeared first, followed by television news readers and journalists. They were visible in all the major marches of the next two weeks. For a few unprecedented days, the Chinese press was full of news reporting opposition to the government, denials of official reports, etc. The *People's Daily* ran a two-page photo spread, complete with a mother worrying over the health of her hunger-striking son. Television showed footage of Tiananmen and of protesters being fed intravenously in hospitals. Sometimes a hint of caution remained, an implication that journalists still thought a few things were too hot to touch, but the reversal was remarkable. The movement lacked, however, any organized media "voice of the students." Despite talk of forming a newspaper, none ever materialized. Hand printing presses produced single-sheet flyers, but there was no place for reporting news from the students' viewpoint, let alone a journal for discussion. Even the democracy movement in 1979 had formed several of these. The 1989 movement was stronger on mobilization and found deeper popular sympathy, but it fell behind on both theory and communication.

The BBC and the Voice of America did spread reports to much of China, in both Chinese and English. CBS, CNN, and various European and print media spread the word abroad, and were most active during this very period. It was remarkable, though, how sheltered many of these reporters were. Photojournalists proved extraordinarily brave during the violence of early June, but many reporters and anchormen came with superficial knowledge of the situation, and often stayed distant from the Chinese. The CBS crew took over the fifth floor of one of Beijing's best joint-venture hotels, the Shangri-La; they went to Tiananmen Square, in a bus or a two-ton red truck which they parked well away from the core of the protest and from which they only ventured on specific forays for interviews or footage. They were able apparently to arrange lots of interviews, including interviews with key leaders,

but they seemed to have little direct acquaintance with events. Junior reporters found subjects and started interviews; big names like Dan Rather were brought in for the crucial footage. Journalists kept asking me—and often each other and other Westerners generally—to explain things. Many seemed more interested in the predigested accounts of other Westerners than in the first-hand statements that Chinese students—many fluent in English—could provide for themselves. In one interview during this period, a reporter asked me who Yuan Mu was and why people kept referring to May 4.

There was a remarkable sense of the press building on itself. Near the end of May, I saw this explicitly, without the disguise of 'informed sources': the *Hong Kong Standard* quoted the Xinhua News Agency quoting the *Guangming Daily* to the effect that students had returned to classes in Beijing—something I can certify to be false. More generally, press coverage was uneven. There were good, serious stories, and there was junk. Still, despite the knowledge that the papers were often simply reporting rumors, and that their major advantage was better access to rumors coming from government circles, the sense of being deprived of information and the difficulty of figuring out what was going on drove me out each night to buy two or three foreign papers. Except for a couple of days right at the peak of the resistance to martial law, one could get the *Hong Kong Standard*, *South China Morning Post*, *International Herald Tribune* and *Asian Wall Street Journal*. And, except for three days of apparent jamming, BBC and Voice of America broadcasts came through at least faintly. But the Chinese papers had only their short period of relative freedom. By May 20, the infamous Yuan Mu had been put in charge of the *People's Daily*. Thereafter only the slightest hints of the newfound 'objectivity' appeared—a bit more coverage to the party power struggle than many leaders would probably have liked, rather gleeful reporting on liberalization in Hungary, an occasional use of quotation marks around a work like "turmoil." Even this silence was forthright compared to the radical rewriting of history that Yuan Mu would superintend after the June 4 massacre.

Imminent Military Repression?

On Friday May 19 the rumors ran particularly hot and heavy. Zhao had just triumphed with the students when the stories spread of his imminent demise. There was great excitement and great uncertainty. That evening I rode up to Beida and Renda (People's University) with a Chinese-speaking American friend. There were great crowds at Beida, with speakers debating whether or not to withdraw from Tiananmen Square. Those urging moderation got polite hearings at best, and applause

only when they praised the overall goals of the movement. Later, others said "this is time for actions, not words; march to Tiananmen," and the crowd was off with little hesitation. It picked up more people at Renda and headed for the square. We rushed back to Beiwai to report what we had found to students whom we knew were debating similar questions at the graduate-student dormitory. And debating they were, as perhaps only graduate students would do at such a moment. They dithered; they hesitated; they argued for three hours about what to do. Word came that the hunger-strikers had decided to end their fast at 9 P.M..

The rumors of Zhao's repression raised questions about the wisdom of returning to Tiananmen. Hearing that the students of Beida and Renda had marched, some of the leaders of our, rather-more-affluent students, with better career prospects at risk, suggested that this meant that there was no need for marchers from another, smaller school. Several-hundred students were in fact expecting to march and had lined up, carrying water, food, and something to keep them warm. But nobody was willing to call for the march to start, and the marchers were unwilling to go without a leader. Students wept, half in sorrow over the apparent crises of the movement, half in anger over their own failure to move, yet leaders only dithered or found excuses for staying put ("maybe we should stay and see what the news is on TV"). The very Chinese sense of needing to move as a whole group or not at all was never more apparent to me.

Li Peng solved the problem. Late in the evening—near midnight—the television broadcast his speech to a selected gathering of senior cadres. He was ill at ease, occasionally muffing his lines, reading woodenly, though with periodic angry emphasis, from papers in front of him. The speech was arrogant and hostile, and could not have been perceived more negatively by the students, whom Li ordered to quiet down and who were instead enraged. After he spoke, it took three hundred students less than ten minutes to achieve unanimity and depart amid tears of anger and into the face of what they were sure was imminent military repression. They feared a bloodbath; none of us imagined that the spontaneous action of the people of Beijing would stop the army.

The Actions of People: Halting the Military

Beginning Friday night, the citizens of Beijing repulsed all attempts by the army to clear Tiananmen Square. In fact, only a few soldiers made it as far as the square (using the subway tunnels—though not the trains, since workers had shut them down). On a number of other occasions, trucks of soldiers entered the city from a variety of directions only to be stopped by impromptu barricades and crowds.

I saw one such incident on Xisanhuan Avenue. Five open trucks and one bus of military police drove south in moderate traffic. Students with banners and flags simultaneously moved into the path of these trucks to stop them and stopped other trucks and cars to make a roadblock in front. A substantial crowd of local people formed instantly. Drivers of other trucks got out, and all joined in talking to the soldiers, greeting them, telling them they had been brought by a corrupt government and urging them not to attack the students. The soldiers claimed to know nothing of such a purpose, but to have been told that they had been brought into Beijing for "military maneuvers." They agreed to turn back, to great applause from the crowd.

On this occasion I was with a Ph.D. student in English literature, a nineteen-year veteran of the army, now employed as a teacher at one of the military colleges. He was moved to tears by the popular blockade of the soldiers and the troops' willingness to go along with it. This level of emotion was not uncommon. Part of the genius of the hunger strike was that it tapped into very strong popular sentiments. People felt an emotional bond with these students who were risking their health and even lives to protest a corrupt government. To protect them was perhaps the dominant motive expressed by those who crowded into the streets, even in the middle of the night, and built barricades to stop the soldiers. Again and again, people told me how inspired they were, first by the students and then by the actions of "the people." This sense of inspiration seemed set against a background of shame for the Chinese people's passivity in the face of repression. Some students, quoting Lu Xun's comments from seventy years ago, suggested that only now were the Chinese people beginning to come alive.

By Saturday night, barricades had been set up on most or all of the major roads into Beijing. I spent all that night at one, but despite several alarms, the army never arrived. A crowd of perhaps eight hundred to a thousand people stayed consistently in the street, blocking one of the main roads from the west. When alarms were sounded that troops were near, the number quickly doubled or tripled as people appeared seemingly out of nowhere. Almost all were local residents and workers, though a group of secondary-school students was the best-drilled contingent, and the only group to try leading songs to help pass the time. I spoke to staff from the nearby Shangri-La Hotel, a geological engineer, a truck driver, and others.

The range of occupations is indicative of the broad range of support for the students and opposition to the government, to martial law, and especially to Li Peng personally. It is hard to overestimate the revulsion people expressed towards Li Peng after his speech. He seemed not only

to oppose their interests but to deny any legitimacy to their desires, opinions, and even what they saw with their own eyes; they took his manner as a personal insult. Keeping the army out and expressing their distaste for Li Peng seemed the most concrete reasons to be out in the street. Beyond this, people's goals and desires varied, though most seemed rather vague.

The young hotel staff spoke mainly of the high incomes of Li Peng's children in contrast to what

Students and young intellectuals not
only think China needs change,
they think it needs them specifically to
bring it about.

they considered their own low pay (though by Chinese standards they in fact had very good jobs). They spoke longingly of Western consumer goods, rattling off names of cars, brands of cigarettes, and various Western currencies. The engineer, by contrast, mentioned corruption but stressed democracy, by which he seemed to mean mainly the right of free expression and a government responsive to the will of the people, though not necessarily elected by them. He spoke angrily and bitterly of Li Peng's speech as proof that the government didn't care about the people. When I spoke with other Beijing citizens on barricades or as bystanders at demonstrations, they nearly all expressed strong support for the students, though a few expressed concern that the protests would simply bring a crackdown initiating worse repression than they currently experienced. A number spoke of prices as a key concern; one businessman stressed the need to move ahead with opening the economy; several made direct comparisons to what they took to be Gorbachev's greater openness and desire for reform. Bringing wages and prices in balance seemed the most important long-term goal to nonstudents; next most frequently mentioned were stopping official privileges and corruption, followed by "having the government listen to the people." Rather strikingly, these did not embody the idea of the Lincolnian phrase "government of the people, by the people, for the people," which students often repeated to me, but only a sort of claim to plebiscitary consultation on the assumption that government would always be something sharply different from "the people."

Barricades were put up on nearly all major roads into Beijing, backed by others on the main internal thoroughfares. The one at which I spent that first

night consisted of a series of partial blocks constructed mainly out of erstwhile bicycle-lane barriers, concrete posts, and steel bars, together with some concrete pipe from a nearby construction site. Vehicles had to slow to enter this zig-zag course, and could be stopped by the crowd for examination and interrogation. Later a couple of the city's so-called trolleys were pulled over by the crowd to supplement the barricade. During the day they were parked by the side of the road, at night dragged back into service. A gang of motorcyclists—not Hell's Angels but snazzily attired, prosperous small entrepreneurs—sped from barricade to barricade reporting troop movements and other news. They never failed to draw cheers and fervent praise even when they roared by without stopping. People who might have complained about these nouveau riches a week before found them inspiring now. The cyclists seemed to be having a ball.

Troops did arrive by the thousands at other barricades that night. Nearly all told the same story of having been tricked by the government, of never knowing they were moving against the people, of having been denied newspapers and TV for up to a week. The soldiers were young boys, apparently mostly from peasant families. In the April 27 protest, the marching students had taunted them with shouts of "go back to your fields; this is not your business." But by mid-May, such class bias was no longer manifest. The troops were greeted warmly, asked to accept that they too were part of the same people. The implicit message, of course, was not to shoot one's fellow citizens. Most of the soldiers I saw appeared bewildered, tired, sometimes a little flattered by the attention and kind words from the city-dwellers. For the most part, they were unarmed—until the night of June 3rd.

On May 20 and 21, few people imagined that the stalemate between government and citizens would last as long as it did. Most expected the army to move in greater force at almost any time. Each night the rumors spread, "they're coming now; things are coming to a head." These rumors had been false so many times that even after the violence of the early morning of June 3 I doubted them.

It was generally accepted that if the army were to move with force, it would overwhelm the civilians quickly. Tanks were available, after all, to smash through the barricades. The questions were about the will of the leaders to risk a bloodbath and of the soldiers to undertake one. Only gradually during the next few days did we begin to realize how deeply divided both soldiers and party leadership were. Still, the troops in most places did not move forward and did not retreat for four days. When I visited those at Liulichao bridge on May 21, they were still stuck. Eleven truckloads of soldiers were drawn up in a line before a barricade anchored by two

articulated buses. A crowd of perhaps fifteen hundred people surrounded them. The troops looked very hot and a little baffled as to what they should do. Citizens climbed all over their open trucks, occasionally offered them food, and constantly jabbered at them. An English TV crew filmed them; dozens of locals snapped pictures too. The student friend I was with gave a page of "news" from the student viewpoint to each truck. Though the soldiers had guns—a few were cleaning them, perhaps to pass the time—they did not seem very threatening. They did seem very tired of having no place of refuge, of sleeping in or under their trucks, of baking in the hot sun, and of being lectured.

Members of the government also began to think these troops were both tired and insufficiently threatening. The longer they remained in close contact with civilians, the less likely they would be to take up arms against them (a rumor has since circulated that this was in fact the plan of Qin Jiwei, the defense minister who advocated a softer line on students and was subsequently condemned as part of the counterrevolutionary clique). Eventually orders came for them to pull back and make camp a little outside Beijing. When things did finally come to a head at the start of June, the government replaced all those front-line troops who had seen the people they would be asked to fight with others brought in fresh from far-northern provinces, many of whom were not even fluent in standard Chinese (Mandarin, or *putonghua*).

Changing Leadership: Government and Student

The military's halt was felt as a victory, but the mood became increasingly grim afterwards, with only intermittent new bursts of enthusiasm. While many hoped for the government to break down, and rumors to that effect periodically circulated, few really expected it. But there was widespread conviction that severe repression would not be tolerated by the country, nor, perhaps, by a large part of the leadership. Rumors circulated that various senior officials and government offices had condemned either Li's seizure of power (in which Deng was always considered to be the key behind-the-scenes actor, but it gradually became evident that various other senior officials, especially President Yang Shangkun, had also played important roles) or the prospect of violence, or both. On the barricades there were reports that one of the surviving Marshals from China's Revolution said that if the troops were to fire on the students, they should shoot him first. The Foreign Ministry was said to have denied the legitimacy of the new leadership. After news spread that Wan Li (the chairman of the National People's Congress) had sent a telegram from Canada questioning the martial-law decree, great hope began to be placed on the prospect of his return.

Everyone I talked to agreed that Li's and Yang's new government was illegitimate. "Li Peng, step down" and "Down with Li Peng" were the main chants of May 20. Zhao Ziyang's popularity was high because he was visibly moved by the hunger-strikers and visited them in an open, warm way that contrasted with Li Peng's so-called dialogue, and because he proposed an investigation into official corruption starting with his own sons. But a week before, protesters had emphasized that the problem was systemic, not merely a matter of individuals. I was beginning to think this was being forgotten, that I would not again hear "long live democracy" as a slogan, when the student leadership at Beiwai held a rally proclaiming precisely the importance of not focusing solely on individuals. But there was a common tendency to see both evil and salvation in terms of individual personalities. It was very easy for the protesters to slip from talk of real democracy to implicit calls for the replacement of a bad dictator by a benevolent one.

The Western media also sometimes seemed obsessed with elite personalities and intrigues. The news reaching China in outside papers focused heavily on the power struggles among the various factions of the Communist party. Obviously crucial, such disputes may have determined a great deal of the outcome. Internal disunity, ideological uncertainty and the power struggles of an impending succession crisis no doubt weakened the authorities and made it harder for them to respond coherently to the protest movement. This disunity extended into the army and, as much as sympathy for the students, explains why troops were slow to enforce martial law. These disputes were indeed fought on the basis of personalistic ties among the leaders. But the creative ferment that brought democracy onto China's immediate agenda was not engineered by one or two individuals.

Even the reporting on the students focused on a handful of leaders. To some extent, the very leadership of these individuals was created or greatly enhanced by the press. Wu'erkaixi, for example, was seized upon as the most telegenic, charismatic of the students. He was without question an influential leader. But the media sought him out to the exclusion of others—including others of quite divergent views. They made him and a few others seem more central than they were, which went to the heads of some. Other students complained of a lack of internal democracy among the student leadership, of seeing the leaders headed off to fancy joint-venture hotels for interview dinners with the press, and of the fact that such leaders seem often to smoke Western cigarettes while their less-favored comrades smoke Chinese brands.

Wu'erkaixi, Chai Ling, and Wang Dan, three of the original leaders and favorites of the press, were

actually voted down in planning sessions during the last week of May, and at least temporarily withdrew from the struggle (and later were said to be in hiding). They advocated more caution, including withdrawal from Tiananmen, partly to bolster the fortunes of Zhao Ziyang. The hunger strike had ended Friday, May 19, three hours before martial law was declared. But the occupation of Tiananmen Square continued. Wu'er, Chai, and Wang suggested a pullout on Tuesday, May 30, with a declaration of victory to put the ball back in the government's court. The alternative seemed to be a gradual decline followed by repression. These "moderates" (as the other students described them) argued that the struggle for democracy was not long-term, not a battle to be won in a week. Others insisted they owed continued occupation of Tiananmen to the people who had saved them from the army, that they must live up to the people's expectations. Some simply noted the importance of the square as a focal point for protest.

Two rows of soldiers stared straight ahead and refused to make eye contact with students and workers.

These issues were debated for ten days, but the decision was always to stay perhaps in part because the majority were hesitant to try a withdrawal that they could not enforce, and that would leave their movement looking weakened if a minority stayed in the square. But there was also the absence of any clear plan for what to do next if the occupation were abandoned. There were splits within the leadership of the Beijing students. Even more potently, the Beijing students did not seem to speak for those who had come from outside Beijing, who were apparently more radical. At least, they were more determined to continue the sit-in in the square, and they may have been more volatile, cut off from the potentially calming influence of their classmates at home and particularly subject to wild rumors and wide mood swings.

It was not until the night of Wednesday, May 24, that the students finally announced a reorganized leadership, a new commitment to stay in Tiananmen, and plans for more "propaganda" or "educational activities" with "the people" (understood as distinct from the three estates of intellectuals, government, and army). The students from the rest of the country announced the formation of their own independent student association on May 25. After a visit to Tiananmen that day, I noted that

for the first time I recognized "clearly a shift which in retrospect I thought had been taking place all week. The students from Beijing are wearing out, becoming demoralized and worried. But students from outside Beijing are replacing them in the square. The proportions have reversed." This shift continued, and became quite sharp.

What Does Democracy Mean to the Chinese?

"Democracy and Science" was the slogan of the intellectuals who created the May 4 Movement of 1919. This was perhaps the most important historical inspiration for the current student movement, just as its precipitation by the death of Hu Yaobang was a reference to the democratic movement of 1986-87. Students at Beijing University sold "democracy and science" T-shirts in May of 1989. In 1919 as today, the movement was partly focused on opening China to ideas from other parts of the world, and on awakening a people passive before their own fate. This awakening and an Enlightenment emphasis on the importance of reason against the forces of superstition and ignorance remained the main referents of the "science" part of the slogan. But what of democracy? For most people, it seemed a fairly nebulous and vague concept. The students emphasized the rights of self-expression (repeating sometimes a line from a currently popular Chinese pop song called "Follow Your Own Feelings"). Equally, and relatedly, they called for recognition of their own independent student organization—and thus indirectly for the right of free association. This demand was echoed by a few workers who called for free trade unions, or declared on at least two occasions that they had already formed one.

In the first weeks of the protest, only one student, and no other citizen, spontaneously mentioned elections to me as an important part of democracy or a significant goal. And that one student thought the road to free elections in China lay through the intermediary stage of a military coup d'état and caretaker government. This has changed somewhat; certainly after June 4 fewer people looked forward with any optimism to the thought of military rule. Yet even then, some hoped that seizure of power by a 'friendly' army (e.g., the Thirty-eighth) would prove a way out of the crisis.

More generally, there was a marked learning process among the Chinese students during the course of their protest. Not only did they make tactical innovations (like linking arms to keep out agents provocateurs), and develop new symbols (like the "goddess of democracy"), they refined and enriched their ideas. They pumped Westerners for their ideas about what democracy meant—though this usually elicited platitudinous responses and the Chinese students often went away with only slogans.

They continued to read, to think for themselves, and above all to discuss. The current crisis of governmental authority, which was partly a preliminary to the problem of Deng Xiaoping's succession, made them think about how leaders were chosen. But like many of the Chinese intellectuals of 1919, some students harbored doubts about whether the Chinese people were ready for elections (in 1919, intellectuals pointed to machine politics and other examples of the problematic nature of elections in the West; I didn't hear similar comparisons this year). They did not seem to have conceived of the election process as itself a matter of political education. Rather, they envisaged education as something that has to be accomplished first, before elections will work, and most regarded education as something that they—the intellectuals—should do *to* the people.

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vague concept.

In general, the students' ideas and motives in this protest seem substantially shaped by their particular interests as budding intellectuals (though this is one of the areas in which they have been broadened by the movement itself). Few good jobs await today's Chinese university graduates (roughly what the Chinese mean by intellectuals—i.e., educated people), even though they are a very narrow, elite portion of the population. A Chinese university degree reflects performance in the top 2 percent or so of one's age cohort (compared to about the top one-third in the United States). Yet as the common comparison has it, even senior university professors earn less than taxi drivers. Students have little control over whether they will be assigned to remote teachers' colleges or major universities—except by toeing the line within the system. Beyond the academy, employees of joint-venture businesses may earn several times the salary of journalists or teachers. Various sorts of entrepreneurs (including many working on the margins of legitimacy) earn far more than top engineers.

The benefits of economic reforms have been real, even if very unevenly distributed. But reform has brought both a discomfiting inflation in the price of food and other ordinary goods and a new proliferation of consumer goods. And the students were not immune to these factors: their protest expressed their own class interests as well as their aspirations for all of China. Students live in poured-concrete dormitories (often not even reinforced against

earthquakes) with blank concrete walls and floors. Undergraduates live up to six or eight to a room; M.A. students are privileged to share with only three others, while two Ph.D. students are considered enough to fill a room. Still, their position has improved noticeably during the last decade (though they do not always recognize how much). Students at the protests raised "Walkman" tape recorders to record their favorite speeches; they used 35 mm cameras to snap photos of large character posters they admired (as well as of each other); a few rode ten-speed bikes to Tiananmen Square for demonstrations. Nonetheless, their prospects are very limited compared to their aspirations, not only for material standards of living but for a chance to express their ideas and have an impact on society. Both sorts of aspirations have been raised by the much-greater familiarity with the West, brought about through the media, through their studies, and through the extensive reports sent or brought back by classmates who have gone to the United States or other Western countries to study.

These young intellectuals' resentment is compounded by their sense that China needs strong intellectual leadership, new ideas, and better ideas about how to link Chinese traditions, Western influences, and future possibilities. This was dramatized last fall by the popular and controversial television program "Hushan," which turned a story of the Yellow River into a criticism of Chinese backwardness and a demand for Western-style modernization—with recurrent images of the Yellow River flowing into the blue sea. Its criticism of both traditional Chinese culture and the lack of intellectual leadership from Mao and other Communist officials was shocking to Western experts, let alone to ordinary Chinese viewers.

Students and young intellectuals not only think China needs change, they think it needs them specifically to bring it about. One side of the history of Chinese intellectuals is the long tradition of the gentleman-scholar and scholar-official under the emperors; it has bred a legacy of distrust between intellectuals and other people. On the other side of the equation is a traditional view of intellectuals as the conscience of the nation—a view especially pronounced during the struggles of the late Ch'ing dynasty and republican and warlord eras. Students play a crucial role in the latter tradition because they are assumed to be more easily able to act on purely ideal motives, not being bound by the same family and job responsibilities that bind their elders. During the democracy movement of 1989 teachers seldom criticized students. They praised not only their goals but their sense of obligation: students, they said, were playing their appropriate role in the process of social change and renewal.

Seeking further information about what students

wanted, and what other citizens think, a student (call him Xu, after his favorite poet, Xu Zhimo; I won't use his name for fear it would lead to reprisals) and I went to Tiananmen Square with questionnaires that I had formulated and he had translated. Our experience went contrary to all accounts we had been offered and our own experience of Chinese unwillingness to divulge information or opinion under ordinary circumstances, let alone controversial information at a time of some risk. Far from being unwilling to respond, people clamored for the chance to fill out the forms. Some wanted their pictures taken with me; most thanked us for giving them the opportunity to voice their opinions. We had planned to get five or ten responses from the camps of up to fifteen smaller schools, then fifteen to twenty from each of the four main Beijing universities. This went fine for several hours, until we had two schools left. As we were searching for the Beijing University and People's University camps, however, we were besieged by a crowd of people from a wide range of schools demanding that we give them forms. There was great protest when we ran out. We had to get more copies made and come back for the two major schools.

But that wasn't the high (or low) point. I had prepared a separate questionnaire for bystanders. We went to a sidewalk in front of the museum of the Chinese Revolution (just east of Tiananmen) to give them out. We were going to do one at a time. When Xu started with one middle-aged man, a second man immediately appeared and insisted on getting one too, and right then. In a few seconds a crowd was snatching forms out of each other's hands, ripping them in the process. It looked like a rugby scrum as Xu passed his shoulder bag (which people were ripping open) out to me. Fifteen people began pulling at the bag, at papers in my hand, at my shirt, but like an American football player I pushed through the crowd and over a small fence. They didn't follow, and I was left alone wondering what to do as everyone stared, a few yelled, but no one seemed brave enough to make an approach in open territory. Then a few people began to call timidly, waving the forms they had completed during the *melée*, wanting to turn them in! Xu escaped with no real injury, and we decided to try interviewing bystanders later and elsewhere.

I haven't been able to analyze these results very much yet. A preliminary look suggests a very wide variation in ideas about democracy, in points of emphasis among the movement's goals, and in optimism about success. Bystanders were much more likely to stress economic factors while students put the emphasis on freedom of expression and other civil liberties. All thought an end to corruption central.

Little changed during the next few days, except

that the student movement installed loudspeakers in Tiananmen for music and speeches. Rumors veered from positive (Zhao was fighting back) to negative (old leaders to the right even of Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng were seizing power). The biggest event was a march of intellectuals on Tuesday, May 23. It was announced on large character posters at a variety of locations, and then news was passed on by word of mouth. I never did figure out who called this or any similar march. When I asked, some people said leaders at Beida, but when I asked there, people said leaders elsewhere. Even more people said no one, "it was just decided." I think there is some truth to that: while leaders played an important role in this protest movement, leadership was remarkably widely diffused. When one large character poster struck a positive chord, others echoed it, people drew attention to them, and a collective action was born.

Pessimism Takes Root

I left from Beiwai with several hundred others around 2:30 P.M. By this time marches were being enlivened by singing and ever more creative slogans. "The Internationale" was by far the favorite song; I wondered if it was chosen because it suited the occasion or because everyone knew it (even I, albeit in English), or if it signaled some continuing respect for socialism. Close second favorites were doggerel verses to tunes like "Frere Jacques": "Down with Li Peng, down with Li Peng, Deng step down, Deng step down . . ." Slogans were more welcome the cleverer the puns or tongue twisters they embodied; both quickly outstripped my miserable Chinese.

By the time we reached Fuxingmen Avenue we had joined up with several other groups, thousands strong. Still others converged on Tiananmen from other directions (although I think Xinhua News Agency's figure of one million was an exaggeration based on wishful thinking and perhaps a desire to send a message to Li Peng). More remarkable than our sheer numbers, however, or even our composition—professors, journalists, bureaucrats, foreign-ministry officials, librarians, translators, school teachers, lawyers, doctors, foreign experts—was our perseverance. By the time Fuxingmen Avenue turned into Chang'an Avenue (perhaps a mile from the square), a bitterly cold, very heavy rain began to fall. Winds intermittently blew so strongly it was hard to walk straight. But we marched past Tiananmen to Taijichang Street where we turned south and stopped to chant outside the People's Government of Beijing: "Li Peng, step down," "Down with Li Peng," "Down with dictatorship" and a variety of stronger slogans suggesting that people would not sleep until Li Peng committed suicide, that they would laugh when he drank poi-

son, etc. We marched back west to Qianmen, and up into Tiananmen again. In the hour since we had first passed through, someone had covered the giant portrait of Mao on the Gate of Heavenly Peace with a canvas tarp. Three vandals from Mao's home province had thrown paint to deface it, but afterward had been apprehended by students who interrogated them briefly before handing them over to the police!

Thoroughly soaked by then and facing the bitter wind, our bedraggled group of intellectuals headed back to the beginning of Chang'an where we had left our bikes near Xidan intersection. Already frozen, we had to ride home without the "Internationale," which had cheered us on the way in, and with no slogan-shouting to warm us or keep our spirits up. But spirits were high. I bathed (a privilege denied the students, who get hot water for only a few hours each afternoon) and went off to a late dinner of Xinjiang noodles with a group of students and teachers.

The good mood lasted through Wednesday. Though confident of victory, students and others still manned barricades at night in case of a "desperate move." But people were back at their jobs, traffic was pretty much normal, policemen reappeared on their stands to direct traffic. Though the Chinese government claimed the "turmoil" had caused all sorts of hardships and privations, this was not apparent and was vehemently denied by nearly everyone—including people interviewed on TV. One *New York Times* reporter wrote of shortages of eggs, vegetables, milk, etc. She was mocked locally by those of us who guessed she must have based her account on the official Chinese news agency releases. I looked all over Beijing, and saw no shortages at any time before June 4. One could choose duck or chicken eggs, plain or chocolate milk, apples, pears or oranges, beans or cauliflower—prices did not inflate until hoarding began after the massacre.

Though people remained well-fed and the markets were bustling, the waiting seemed strained on Thursday. Nothing in particular happened, but a sense of tiredness spread. People stopped building barricades since no more soldiers came. In fact, most of the soldiers stuck on the outskirts pulled back to make better camps just outside the city on Wednesday night and Thursday. By Thursday the rumors were running in Li Peng's favor; he consolidated this mood shift with a televised appearance (on the occasion of greeting three new ambassadors) during which he claimed to be firmly in control and confident that his government could deal with all disturbances. When this was first shown, I was with two Chinese graduate students and teachers, who mentioned that they didn't like Li's apparent self-confidence but didn't make much of it.

By Friday morning, May 26, however, the consensus was that this indicated that Li was coming out on top of the power struggles. Zhao was rumored (by large-character poster) to be under house arrest. Wan Li was detained in Shanghai, reputedly for medical care. Most people I talked to on May 26 said, "it's over," though they simultaneously said they thought students would remain in Tiananmen and declared their own readiness to march. It's hard to know whether the TV and radio reports were a sign of Li's success or a weapon in his struggle. The mood was gloomy, full of talk of reprisals and persecution.

Seven of China's eight armies reportedly reaffirmed their loyalty to Deng Xiaoping and thus to the Li Peng regime. When the television broadcast a written statement allegedly from Wan Li (though read by someone else) endorsing the imposition of martial law and the Li Peng regime whose legitimacy he had previously questioned, the rebellion seemed finished, and gloom became all but complete. Wan Li may have written this report only under pressure (if indeed he wrote it at all) but he had been a last hope among the officials. Rumor had it that Wan Li had told a family member before leaving the United States that they should believe only what they actually saw him say, but on June 9, Wan Li appeared beside Li Peng, and the next day with Deng Xiaoping, as each thanked the soldiers for their acts of repression.

The Goddess of Democracy

No sooner did pessimism seem to take root, partly because the search for a savior inside the government seemed futile, than a sign of hope was created from outside the system. In a moment of inspiration students at the Central Academy of Creative Arts made a statute of "the Goddess of Democracy," modeled on the Statue of Liberty.

When word of the statue reached our campus, I joined some fifty students who rode off at break-neck pace for the square, trying to get there in time for an unveiling ceremony rumored to be planned for 9 P.M. We were nearly an hour late, and waited for three more hours before learning that the statue would not be completed until the next morning, due apparently to some difficulties in getting the materials into the square. But flags waved from a large scaffold, some students did a dragon dance, and the mood began to lift. At the same time, the crowds were a little more surly than they had been during the previous two weeks. There was massive pushing and shoving, teetering on the edge of danger. A student from a remote provincial town was in our group for her first visit to one of these protests. She had been scared even by the crowds of cyclists; now she grabbed hold of my hand and held on tightly as we were tossed about. Students dominated

the crowd, but there were many more nonstudents (and possibly students from outside Beijing) who refused to submit to the discipline of organizers. Groups, including our own, were asked to sit down as we ringed the scaffolding. Some refused and in a few cases surged in the direction of those sitting. But no harm was done.

The next morning a mood of jubilation spread. The statue was a much-needed dramatic move. It gave a new rallying point to the protest, for one thing, as well as putting the positive message of democracy back on center stage alongside the calls for Li Peng to step down. It also brought relief from the succession of calls simply to march to or gather in Tiananmen, calls that had become boring and were producing ever-smaller crowds. The erection of the statue brought new morale, and the crowds were instantly large again (though not as enormous as they had been—perhaps peaking now at a couple of hundred thousand). Moreover, pedestrians, cyclists, and bus riders all saw the statue.

The thirty-foot, pure white Goddess was situated in a superb symbolic position, facing not only Beijing's main street, but the gigantic official portrait of Mao Zedong. As the Goddess of Democracy held up her torch in a two-handed gesture of defiance towards Mao, she also challenged Imperial China, for Mao's portrait hangs on the front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, leading into the Forbidden City. Behind her spread the tent city of student protesters, divided by a seemingly ceremonial pathway leading to the Monument of the People's Martyrs, and behind that Mao's mausoleum and the Qianmen gate. The scene was brightened by fresh new tents: bold red and blue igloo-style around the statue, olive green with red flags on either side of the path to the martyrs' memorial, apparently donated by supporters from Hong Kong. They were arranged in very neat, precise rows to give the lie to Li Peng's accusations of chaos and anarchy reigning in Tiananmen Square.

Massacre

The erection of the statue was the latest, and one of the best, in a series of innovations in protest. Some of these were Chinese originals, like the linked arms clearly establishing a definition of each unit. Others may have been borrowed from the international repertoire of collective protest—like the slogan "Power to the people," which echoed the Philippine revolution of 1986 as well as the 1960s throughout the West. Where early rallies had been quiet, students later brought battery-operated megaphones (occasionally abused in arguments over strategy) and put up somewhat distorting but effective loudspeakers, which now blared constantly over the square. They mixed Chinese pop, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," and Western music from

the 1960s—though the latter was not the music of protest, but "bubble-gum" pop. The hunger strike had focused attention and built support. Each Beijing university appointed couriers between the square and its campus. And now protesters had the statue. But with the sense of renewed exuberance the Goddess brought came a new jittery anticipa-

Students counseled nonviolence, but they were not the majority.

tion of repression. Surely the authorities would not let her stand.

In retrospect, the end moves of this struggle seemed to begin late on Thursday, June 1. A few more policemen had gradually become visible on the streets, though not an alarming number. The soldiers who had been camped in the Beijing train station began to come out in public for brief forays—jogging around Tiananmen between 6 and 7 A.M. Friday morning, for example. On campus, pressure was stepped up to get classes meeting again. The vice-chancellor reported that 60 percent of undergraduates had returned to the university—a claim that seemed plausible from just looking around, though it was not clear that their presence on campus meant that they considered themselves no longer on strike. But word seemed to have come from central education authorities that it was time to step up efforts to resume normal activities. At the same time, the government began to stress again the martial law decrees prohibiting foreigners from associating with, reporting on, or being generally in the vicinity of any people committing banned activities, activities defined sufficiently broadly that they included virtually all gatherings of any groups, reading of posters, and critical discussions of the government. In short, an effort was being made both to get foreigners to stay home, and to stop or minimize journalistic coverage of the struggles.

Thursday was China's Children's Day. The government issued demands that the square be cleared for celebrations, complete with attempts to tug on the heartstrings by reminding listeners of how they had looked forward to Children's Day visits to Tiananmen when they were younger. This and similar propaganda blared out over the north end of the square on high-powered loudspeakers; the students competed with their own, somewhat weaker sound-system. And on Children's Day they made their own plans to entertain the youngsters. Many kids did arrive, even after the government canceled the official celebration. Perhaps prompted by teachers or parents, they told the students they too believed in

democracy, and offered small collections of money—90 yuan from one group I saw—for “their big brothers and sisters.” Some students had prepared a song-and-dance show to entertain the youngsters.

The tension increased on Friday, with the soldiers maintaining a higher profile, but there were no startling events. Rumors spread of an assault on Tiananmen to topple the Goddess of Democracy, which so troubled the authorities. Government condemnations of the protest focused even more on the statue than the students themselves did. The official media called it an insult to the people’s martyrs and an affront to the solemn dignity of Tiananmen Square. But it remained, for the time being. At 4:00 that afternoon, a prominent singer and composer (born in Taiwan but returned to the mainland), a Beijing Normal University lecturer, a Communist party member, and the chief of the Planning Department of Stone Computer Corporation (one of the powers of China’s nascent business community) began a seventy-two hour hunger strike. The musician, Hou Dejian, struck a particularly resonant chord because of his recent song calling on the people of China to “awaken the dragon.”

Beijing citizens expressed strong support for the students, though a few expressed concern that the protests would simply bring a crackdown.

But Friday night the protesters lost the initiative. I wasn’t present when a military jeep or truck (reports conflict) ran over four pedestrians in the area west of Tiananmen called Muxudi. It’s still not clear how the presumed accident happened. The official story was that the jeep was on loan from the army to Chinese television and that its military driver was on his way back to his barracks after dropping off the film crew when he lost control. Eyewitnesses estimated that he was going a hundred kilometers an hour, however, and in the midst of the martial law and progressive military occupation of the city, many people were ready to believe the worst. The driver was taken into custody, but the stage was set for further confrontations. The mood had not been cheerful for some time, but on Friday it had still been fairly relaxed. Sightseers mingled with the crowd and had their pictures taken first with the Goddess of Democracy as backdrop and then with the giant portrait of Mao and the gate to the Forbidden City. A few vendors sold buttons proclaiming “Victor[y], Tiananmen, 1989” and others hawked

T-shirts with the two fingered “V” for victory on them. But after Friday no one was at ease; many people seemed almost spoiling for a fight.

Early Saturday morning a small column of troops—most guesses range from fifteen hundred to three thousand—tried to enter Tiananmen Square on a forced march, half-running some of the time. They were unarmed, and they were repulsed. Some students called after them “We love the People’s Liberation Army, the People’s Liberation Army loves the people.” But other protesters stripped soldiers of their tunics, helmets, and boots, and sent them back humiliated.

At about the same time, other troops began moving in toward the square from other directions. They too failed to reach their objective. Just as on May 19–20, crowds of citizens and protesting students surrounded them and built barricades to stop them. There were a few instances of gunfire from the soldiers, and there were a few cases where the crowds attacked the soldiers. At Zhongnanhai compound, where China’s senior leaders live (and from which they have virtually not emerged for a month) protesters were teargassed shortly after midday and responded by throwing stones at police. When I passed by later, two rows of soldiers stared straight ahead and refused to make eye contact with students and workers trying to talk with them from their own more ragged lines, just inches away. A protester told me they were new guards brought in from Inner Mongolia, unable to speak *putonghua*. I never saw them speak at all. A student held a spent tear-gas canister as he made a speech. Cracked bits of paving stones lay all about.

In the late afternoon I rode my bike to about a mile from Tiananmen, parked, and walked in. No one tried to stop me, though the government had been at pains all day to tell foreigners that they were forbidden from the streets and would be made to obey the decree by “any measures.” Before I left Beiwai, a student had claimed that the entire area around Tiananmen was sealed off by the soldiers, and indeed the radio reports had implied that the soldiers had been more successful than turned out to be the case. But citizens were far more in evidence than soldiers, and the latter were not faring very well.

The first barricade was set up at Muxudi, scene of the recent auto accident and a major intersection where one of the main roads from the north meets the main east-west artery. A big, articulated bus was now blocking the way. Further along, was a bus torn in half and more of the ubiquitous iron and cement bicycle barriers. Beyond this were two captured military vehicles, one still occupied by half-a-dozen soldiers. The crowd was closed tight around it; people climbed all over it, pounded on the sides, and pressed up against the windows. The soldiers had

been closed in there for up to eight hours. A protester on the roof displayed weapons, clothing, and helmets taken from them. A little closer to the square men were working under the hoods of a couple of military trucks, disabling them (throwing parts of the engines over their shoulders like characters in an old cartoon). Behind the Great Hall of the People, the crowd at a barricade still held off several-hundred soldiers trying to beat their way into the square with belts. Glass was everywhere from broken windows. People had armed themselves with, among other things, branches torn from the trees that line the avenue, and they had beaten the buses that brought the soldiers into battered hulks. People's need to vent their anger was evident everywhere. They also captured a few weapons from the troops, which boded ill for the future.

Students counseled nonviolence, but they were not the majority of this crowd. Most were workers, I thought, though a surprising number of families with small children were out for ice cream and the entertainment value of disaster and a fight. But even though the peaceful protest had begun to be marred with violence, even though people sensed that a confrontation was coming, few had any idea how brutal it would be. I didn't. I stopped on the Avenue of Eternal Peace for soft drinks and again for supper from street vendors, less than two hours before the shooting started. I walked into Tiananmen Square itself to check on the Goddess of Democracy. It still stood, bedecked with flags and flowers. I was a little proud that the original stood in my country. It was the last time I saw the statue.

I also saw a group of students from my university marching under our familiar white, green, and rose banner. They smiled as I waved. At least one of them is now dead, another missing, part of a toll of fifteen unaccounted for at our small university of two thousand total students.

Around 8:30 P.M. troops began a concerted movement towards the square from both east and west. The worst bloodshed came as they fought their way past barricades on their way to Tiananmen, especially at Muxudi. Starting in the southwest, four miles from the square, one group massed near a princess's tomb at a major intersection. They fired, first into the air and then into crowds, with AK-47 automatic assault rifles. They were backed by tanks, armored personnel carriers, and more than 200,000 additional troops. Unlike their more hesitant predecessors earlier in the week, these young men had unmistakable intentions. Tanks pushed through barriers and crushed protesters under their tracks. The advancing troops reached Tiananmen around 2 A.M.; other soldiers poured out of the Forbidden City through the Gate of Heavenly Peace. An armored personnel carrier eventually toppled the Goddess of Democracy, and crushed students huddled

in tents beside it. Their bodies, said an eyewitness, were like porridge. The students were in the tents because they feared only tear gas; it did not occur to them that the army really meant to kill them.

By early Sunday morning the troops had cleared the square, but the students and citizens refused to give up. A group of students linked arms in front of soldiers on Chang'an Avenue, and the soldiers shot them down en masse. A second row, of students or workers, took the place of the first. Throughout Beijing troops encountered surprising resistance. Some protesters threw rocks and Molotov cocktails. Others used weapons captured from the military earlier. Surprisingly often they managed to set a tank on fire, usually after persuading its occupants to surrender it, occasionally with the soldiers inside. Gunfire continued sporadically even at 11 P.M. on the June 4. I resisted the urge to go out to find the action; my movements after the June 4 were mostly restricted to a mile or two from Beiwai. I moved for two days to the Shangri-La Hotel to use the phone and fax machine and to see the news on satellite TV. From my twentieth-story window plumes of smoke were visible here and there as vehicles were set alight. I walked out Sunday night about 2 A.M. to see the crowd gathered around the burned carcass of a tank. On my way back to the hotel I saw what appeared to be a truck full of bodies (mostly covered with a canvas tarp). The army drove them out of town, I was told, to crematoria where they could be made to disappear, reducing the evidence of brutality. The gunfire and cries could still be heard occasionally, though I was several miles from the heart of the struggle. And the sirens sounded all too often.

The next day I learned that one student friend had never returned from the center of town after the massacre. She was a bright, vivacious twenty-four-year-old student of foreign languages who had shaken with anger after Li Peng's arrogant, hostile speech declaring martial law. She had known that protesting meant taking a risk, though I think she feared a bad job assignment or denial of a passport more than slaughter. But she did not discount violence altogether, and helped to talk me out of joining the march just after Li's speech. Several of us focused our anxieties on looking for her, but hospitals were overflowing with victims of the massacre. The wounded lay on mattresses in the corridors, and there were too few staff to keep the blood cleaned up. Trying to find a particular individual was hopeless, but our friend did turn up the next day; she had spent the night in another hospital, not as a patient but helping to care for the wounded. Thousands of other missing students had not been found by the time campuses began to empty on June 6. I thought of the parents who would never know for sure how their children perished. But this

time the happy ending filled us momentarily with joy even in the midst of disaster.

Last Days

At midday on June 6 I began to draw this narrative to a close. I was about to return to the campus and had neither time nor energy (having slept no more than seven hours in three nights) nor heart to write much more. Outraged, in the early morning hours on June 5 I had written an open letter to George Bush, pleading for a stronger U.S. response supporting democracy and condemning the carnage. A day later I learned that he had eventually taken somewhat firmer action and used words less fuzzy than those of the last several weeks.

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I visited student friends whose anger was like a dose of amphetamines; they punched the mattresses on their bunks or stood shaking, unable to sit down as they talked in a jammed dormitory room of their different experiences. Some had been on barricades, others in hospitals. Friends standing next to them had been killed. They all repeated over and over again that they had never believed this would happen. Some talked of hearing the shooting begin, and assuming that the army was using rubber bullets. One said he was talking with an acquaintance on a street near Muxudi, and turned his back when he heard shots, imagining that a stray rubber bullet would hurt less on his back. Then his companion dropped to the ground, a pool of blood formed, and "he died instantly; his eyes were still open."

A few called for revenge. One said that he was a true Marxist and the time had come for violent revolution. "I can shoot a gun," he said, "I can throw a grenade fifty meters if I need to." The chances of armed rebellion succeeding without the support of at least a large part of the Chinese army seemed as small as the chances that he could throw a grenade fifty meters. But that did not diminish the intensity of his anger, or of the anger that filled the room, more powerful than any I have ever seen, occasionally lapsing into numbness and depression only to flare again. My young friend, just back from her night in the hospital, put a black band around my arm.

She, like others, kept saying that this repression, this massacre, was totally unprecedented. What was unprecedented, I said, was the student and popular

movement that had gained a momentum well beyond its predecessors in 1979 and 1986-87. Unfortunately, the repression and violence have all too many precedents in China and around the world. But the immediacy of anger foreshortens historical perspective. The Chinese students were prone to that foreshortening in any case, forgetting the real gains of the last few years as well as failing to place present evils in comparative historical perspective. Ascribing all China's current ills to a continuation of feudalism, as some students did, made no more sense than those Western news reports that categorized the student movement as simply "anticommunist." In any case the self-declared communist rulers of China had betrayed the ideals of their own revolution (and even more clearly of Karl Marx) far more decisively than the students.

That Monday afternoon a senior professor demanded that I conduct a previously scheduled seminar; I was incredulous, but felt put on the spot, and none of the half-dozen teachers with him when he approached me challenged him (though I think they were all there on his orders). I had been told by everyone, including the vice-chancellor, that there would be no classes or such activities that day. But I saw no way out, and so I gave my talk on the intellectual breakup of some traditional intellectual orthodoxies in and after the 1960s, and on the impossibility of separating politics and reflection, emotion and intellect too neatly. Certainly I could do neither at that point. At the end, the old professor bizarrely began to talk about plans for the next three weeks' meetings of the seminar (a group of faculty and Ph.D. students; no other students would break strike to attend let alone find themselves able to overcome grief, horror, and anger to join such a discussion at that time). I tried politely to say that our context made such activities hard. Finally one student ('Xu,' from my survey experience) spoke up and said he could not come to such a seminar. The old professor (a seventy-four-year-old power in the university, and this young man's supervisor) looked shocked. Other faculty finally spoke up and supported Xu, eventually in what turned out to be unanimity. I realized that the old professor had appeared unmoved when I talked of the recent massacres; it transpired that he had not left his apartment and knew only the few official government reports and the slightest echoes of gossip. He thought the government might have used more restraint, but had no idea of the carnage. The plan to meet again was dropped, amid awkwardness all around about the embarrassment the old man had brought on himself.

By Tuesday news reports and rumors merged. It appeared that Li Peng had been shot, though to widespread disappointment not fatally (and if later television appearances are any indication, either

not seriously or not at all). Many people expected the Thirty-eighth Army to move against the Twenty-seventh Army, which had run amok and attacked the city and the students. The Twenty-seventh assumed defensive postures and dug in with extra tanks at major intersections, but there was no military engagement. It would have meant civil war, and I doubt that anyone wanted that; we will probably never know how close a risk they were willing to take. Amid all the carnage it occurred to me that a tank battle in Tiananmen would probably mean the destruction of the Forbidden City, perhaps the most important relic of imperial China. Rumors also suggested that the campuses might be occupied at any time. They were plausible, though I thought that the army probably felt a more pressing need to defend itself against military threat—if or as long as that proved real. I was torn about returning to campus.

Aftermath

On the one hand I liked the access to CNN and good phone lines provided by the hotel, along with the view over the city: I could see army trucks move about, spot the occasional helicopter and, I imagined, follow any more major fighting. But being in an international hotel is like being nowhere in particular; I felt oddly cut off even though I could get more hard news. On campus there was little to see, only the BBC radio for news, and difficulty using the phone. But at the university at least I felt I was in China, and in a community, albeit one depleted by evacuation of Westerners and departures of locals for their family homes. I decided to return. By Tuesday evening only about 10 percent of the students were left at Beiwai. The situation was much the same at Beida and, I am told, elsewhere. The slogan "Empty the universities" spread. It was partly designed to make the campuses less attractive for military occupation, but it also got students out of the most obvious places where they could be rounded up when the repression came. I had dinner in a student dining hall with a couple of Ph.D. candidates. At that time students bravely assured me that they were not much worried about repression. If it came, they thought, it would not be guns or prison, but mainly bad job assignments or refusal of visas for study abroad. "There are too many of us," they said. Still, wherever I went, people stopped me, nodded at my black armband, and said "you are very brave." I could never think of a good reply and only mumbled denial or said it was not I who was brave but the students. What impressed people, I think, was that a non-Chinese, someone who didn't have the same moral obligation, should care.

I grew more and more depressed. About 10 P.M. the U.S. Embassy called to say that they were asking all American citizens to leave. The caller made clear that this was not evacuation, which would oblige the

embassy to find transport, but just the strongest possible travel advisory. The embassy, she said, would offer no help getting to the airport or finding a plane.

The twenty-odd Americans left at Beiwai met and decided reluctantly to leave. It was a hard decision because emotional attachments ran high. Many of us had considered moving our departures up a little, but had not expected to leave on a few hours notice. I had decided to stay at least a week more. But I changed my mind. I was not afraid of violence, particularly; I didn't think violence would be directed against foreigners, especially those who didn't take cameras into combat zones. But I was afraid of loneliness, my growing depression, and of being a burden to my students, though they said that was not an issue, and I more or less believed them. We were wrong, for the repression mounted two days later made even conversation with foreigners dangerous. After considerable effort, the school officials were able to arrange a bus to the airport; drivers had not wanted to venture out. I was fortunate to get a ride in a car taking a UN translator to the airport. We drove past roadblocks, burnt-out tanks, tanks still functional and on the move, troops repositioning themselves, but no one tried to stop us. As we passed the edge of the city proper and entered the tree-lined boulevard to the airport several miles out of town, things began to look more normal. I began to doubt whether I really had to leave.

Several hours later I was gone, able (for a price) to get aboard one of the extra planes JAL sent to evacuate Japanese. In Tokyo there was little more news; the stalemate continued between Thirty-eight and Twenty-seventh armies. China began to seem slightly more like a dream, one of the intense dreams that one can't quite shake off on waking. To my amazement, I found merely leaving had made me (briefly) a celebrity. Television and radio reporters from the United States tracked me down in Tokyo to ask me about "panic" at the airport (too strong a word, I thought, just too many people and too few spaces on the plane), about whether Deng Xiaoping was firmly in control (how was I to know?), about how I felt (tired, depressed, a little guilty for leaving).

By the time I reached the United States the armies had achieved some rapprochement and the repression had started. Students were being arrested on campuses, a "tattle-tale" hot line had been set up for those who wanted to turn in "counterrevolutionaries," people on the street turned their faces to avoid Western reporters. The apparent leaders of China had themselves filmed and broadcast on Chinese television to demonstrate their solidarity and control. Before I left Yuan Mu had declared that twenty-three counterrevolutionary thugs and hooligans—some of them possibly students—had died

after attacking the People's Liberation Army sent to keep order in the capital. A thousand soldiers had perished, he said, making one wonder what kind of marvelous Shaolin masters these counterrevolutionaries must have been to inflict with their bare hands such disproportionate damages on heavily armed troops. But that was not enough, and by Thursday June 9 the official media upgraded the official lie about June 4: An army general declared that no students had been killed. The lie will not work well in Beijing right now, where too many saw the peaceful protest and the massacre, and where too many bullet holes and bloodstains remain, but it may work in some parts of China where news has not flowed very fully. And it may work for history, if it is made too hard to tell an accurate story of the past two months.

But I think this movement is more likely to be one of the moments to which future Chinese democrats will look for inspiration, as they did this year to May 4, 1919. The inspiration of the movement will come partly from the very scale on which it happened, and partly from the common cause found for a while between students and intellectuals and workers and other citizens. However thinly it may be understood, the idea of democracy was spread. People demanded to be seen as *citizens*, not just as the government's masses. The citizens of

Beijing (and other Chinese cities) showed that the totalitarian communism had not destroyed all institutional bases for social revolt; "society" was still separate from "state," at least to some extent—an extent growing because of Deng-era reforms. Perhaps most of all, however, the movement will be remembered for June 4, the day of infamy and massacre. It has brought about a massive loss of legitimacy for the government, and perhaps even more tellingly for the army. Over and over again students told me, "the People's Liberation Army will not shoot the people." They will not soon be so trusting again. □

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