

GOVERNMENT AND STUDENT TENSION IN CHINA:
A STUDY OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENTS
IN THE 1980'S

BY

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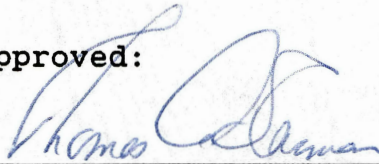
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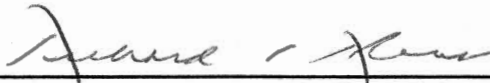
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The 1989 student movement in China has written a very unique page in the Chinese history. During the course of this movement, I was in the process of selecting a topic for my dissertation. Deeply effected by what transpired in Tiananmen Square and concerned about the future of China, I decided to devote my dissertation topic to the study of the relationship between the Chinese government and the students and their movements.

In the course of choosing the topic and conducting the research, I have received a lot of help and guidance from several individuals. Here I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Thomas A, Karman, the chairman and advisor on my dissertation committee, and Dr. Richard Rohrs, department head of history, for encouraging and guiding me from the initiation of the thesis topic to the development of the contents. My special thanks goes to Dr Karman who not only gave me a lot of valuable suggestions in writing this paper but also encouraged me since the first class of my doctoral studies. My special thanks and gratitude go to Dr. Rohrs who had gone an extra step in helping me with this research, whose guidance, help and

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Without progress

There will be retrogression

Chinese Proverb

As if on the track of an aged mill, history grinds on,
slowly and heavily; in the riverbed which has accumulated
silt and sand of the ages, the Yellow River flows on, as
slowly and as heavily.

Is another flood coming?

Or is turmoil gone forever?

We are asking the Yellow River. We are asking history.

From River Elegy-television series

"Chaos often breeds life
when order breeds habit."

-Henry Adams

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of modern China, there has been constant tension between the Chinese government and intellectuals, particularly students. This tension has contributed to many student movements and political changes. This research attempts to investigate the tension between the government and the students and its impact on higher education and the student movements in the 1980's.

For many people, Chinese and foreigners alike, who have been exposed only to the isolated events of the student movement of 1989, understanding the Chinese government, students and their demonstrations is difficult. This research, by investigating the connection between the political situation and the student movements of this decade, should offer a framework within which the relationship between the government and the students can be reflected upon and the student movements in the 1980's understood better.

Having grown up in China, having been educated by the higher education system after Mao, having witnessed and experienced and occasionally participated in the student movements in China since 1978, I feel that I have

an advantage in discussing, analyzing, and presenting the topic. So far, to my knowledge, there have been several books written on the student movement of 1989, but no systematic research has been done which examines the longer-standing tension between the government and the students and how this tension impacted the student movements in the 1980's. Thus, this research will make a body of knowledge available in regard to a critical period and serious topic in Chinese history.

The major sources were from periodicals, magazines and newspapers, documents and books published both here and in China. Many materials have been obtained through the OSU library and other channels, such as Microfiche, interlibrary loan, and personal collections. Data dealing with issues like politics, economy, and education were drawn from primary sources such as government documents, from secondary sources such as books written by Chinese as well as foreign writers. The criteria for determining exclusion and inclusion of primary as well as secondary sources were the relevance to the purpose of this study. In addition, I am a native Chinese. The language skill has helped to translate some primary sources into English.

As the topic of this dissertation encompassed a large domain of politics, education, and student movements from 1978 and 1989, it was impossible for me to dwell in detail on each one. Consequently, this study was intended only to

illustrate the relationship between the Chinese government's educational policy and the students, and its impact on the student movements. Chinese political movements since Mao's death have not been confined to the student demonstrations, but the non-students movements have not been treated here, noticeably the 1978 Tiananmen Democracy Wall by workers.

This study used historical research method. Attention was first given to the historical background of the Chinese politics, higher education development and the students, then to the chronology and examination of the development of the tension between the government and the students in the 1980's.

There is no consensus among scholars as to how Chinese names should be romanized. In general, with exception of those which have long been standardized (such as Confucius and Chiang Kai-Shek), all names of persons and places before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, have been romanized according to the Wade-Giles system. All names of persons and places after 1949 have been romanized according to the Hanyupinyin system.

The research started right after the demonstrations of 1989. Being a Chinese student from Mainland China, the student demonstrations had an emotional impact on me. However, in the course of the research, I tried to avoid personal feelings as much as possible so that the reader can get an unbiased view of the research topic.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chinese Higher Education and Student Movements

Chinese higher education and student movements are a modern phenomenon. Although the ancient Chinese civilization flourished for several thousand years, higher education institutions in the modern sense and student movements in China began only in the late eighteenth century. The political situation, the evolution of higher education, the major student movements, and the interaction of the three are important to the understanding of the relation between the Chinese government, students, and their movements in the 1980's.

Prior to the early nineteenth century, the traditional Chinese traditional educational system embodied the study of the Confucian classical texts for the Civil Service Examinations.¹ This testing mechanism served as the sole criterion to recruit capable candidates into public service and formed the basis of traditional Chinese education, which completed the cycle since education supported the examination system while the exam system supported the classical education. There were a few public schools and some private ones. Teachers were generally men who had

passed the exam or who had tried but failed. Bright students would either go to school or have private tutors at home. The curriculum consisted of Confucius' Four Books and Five Classics which did not include applied subjects such as medicine, mathematics, and engineering.² Students devoted much time to memorizing the classics and composing poems and essays. China had gone through many transformations in three thousand years of dynasty cycles, but the function of education had never gone beyond that. The Chinese regarded the traditional educational system as the only possible system until near the end of the eighteenth century.³

Higher education in the modern sense started during the late eighteenth century. The fire power of British cannons undermined the Confucian way of life and along with it the long-standing educational tradition. The Opium War forced China, ill-equipped militarily, to fight for her territorial sovereignty. The need to learn Western technology first resulted in the establishment of professional colleges for the study of foreign language, military science, and navigation.⁴ These colleges were very different from the traditional schools in which only Confucius' books were taught, but what dominated the curriculum of that time was still the study of the classical literature and culture. Nonetheless, colleges in the modern sense came into being, and college students began to appear on campuses.

When Japan defeated China during the Sino-Japanese War

in 1895, the Chinese came to the realization that, besides developing military forces, they must also develop their economy, industry, and education. They needed not only modern military and naval officers but also scientists, industrialists, and other professional men.⁵ This enlarged view about the mission of the country enabled the progressive reformer Chang Chih-tong to compile the 1904 educational regulations. These regulations accomplished three very important tasks: the establishment of nationally run universities in large cities to replace or incorporate the privately owned schools of the traditional period; the founding of a Ministry of Education to provide centralized direction; and the elimination of the Civil Service Examinations.⁶

The abolition of the exam caused by the decree was a decisive turning point in the decline of the Confucian educational system. With it, a new system of higher education organized on modern lines was ushered in. The newly-founded Ministry of Education set up new colleges, incorporated the old schools, and expanded the curriculum to offer subjects in more areas. To staff the new colleges, the government sent many students to foreign countries to study technological and industrial development, knowledge not available in China then. In a few years, there were about thirty-five thousand students who received higher education in Japan.⁷ By the year 1909, there were altogether

650 students studying in the United States.⁹ Students who were studying abroad became increasingly aware of the needs of their own country, perceiving that "the task before the Chinese students today is to build up of a new, strong and powerful nation out of the old tottering China."⁹ The Chinese students home and abroad were to "supply the country the future leaders, statesmen and diplomats, lawyers and doctors, teachers and professors and engineers and scientists of all kinds."¹⁰

The 1911 political revolution in China toppled the imperial system that had lasted for several thousand years, and Chinese society underwent fundamental changes. At the beginning of 1912, a republican form of government had been established at Nanking with Sun Yat-sen as the provisional President. But governing authority after 1912 and increasingly so between 1916 and 1926, fell to the control of warlords.¹¹ Contrary to the hopes of many revolutionaries, the Revolution of 1911, which overthrew the Chinese imperial system, failed to produce a unified republic. During the time when control was in the hands of the warlords, there was a great breakdown of central authority. This political autonomy also manifested itself in higher education.

The absence of centralized political control during this time provided opportunities for Chinese educators for the first time to create institutions that would contribute

to modern economic, academic, and intellectual development. By this time, China had established quite a number of universities, with many of them concentrated in a few cities, particularly Beijing.(Peking) Beijing became the educational and intellectual center with its cluster of celebrated universities and colleges, such as Beijing University, the National Normal University, Tsing Hua, Yenching, Beijing Union Medical College, and a scattering of smaller schools.¹² Of these several institutions, Beijing University-Beita was acknowledged as the most prestigious. Chai Yuan-pei, the German-educated chancellor of Beida brought together on its faculty a remarkable assemblage of intellectual leaders. Together with other intellectuals, he not only transformed the organizational structure of Beida into a university designed to create intellectual leadership in China but also stimulated the rise of a new political and intellectual consciousness among the students at Beijing University as well as at other educational institutions.¹³

The higher education institutions as a whole moved away from the autocratic educational system of earlier European and Japanese models and imitated in part the decentralized and more democratic American system.¹⁴ Consequently, the institutions began to offer courses of pure and applied sciences and humanities. They also implemented the system of distribution and concentration to ensure that students had an exposure to a range of knowledge areas. The pure and

applied sciences developed together, and this blending of practical aspects of the social sciences and humanities led to a high level of political activism among the students.¹⁵ "Political activism, if not outright revolutionary conspiracy, was unquestionably the principal extracurricular activity of most of these young men and women."¹⁶ It was during this time the student movements began.

Historians believe the modern Chinese student movements started from the demonstration of May 4, 1919, which set a prototype for a generation of student rebellion.¹⁷ On May 4, 1919, politically-alert Beijing University students and thousands of students from several other institutions congregated at Tiananmen Square to protest against the Paris Decisions.¹⁸ The provisions of the Treaty of Versailles allowed Japan to retain control of the German-leased territory in Shantung. The Chinese Minister to Japan, Chang Tsung-hsiang, had officially replied to Japan's request as being "accepted with pleasure."¹⁹

Japan's demand and the warlord government's response infuriated the students and the public. The students wrote in their own blood on the walls of university dining halls and dormitories, denouncing both the Japanese and their Chinese partners. The students' outrage aroused the public. Merchants, shopkeepers, and workers joined them in organized demonstrations and in boycotting Japanese goods. The

student demonstrations took place in at least two hundred places, including Shanghai where merchants closed their shops for a week, and workers went on strike in forty factories. The Beijing authorities arrested many students but capitulated under pressure, and some 1115 students marched victoriously out of jail.²⁰ The warlord government was also forced to reject the treaty and removed the minister and other collaborators from their posts.²¹

The students carried on their resistance against Japan and the warlord government after the demonstration. The All-China Students' Federation was founded and held its first congress in June of 1919.²² Immediately after the incident, Beijing students started to organize the students of the nation in support of their cause. They also endeavored to win the sympathy of the general public by means of publicity, mass meetings, and demonstrations. In this process, they began to establish closer contacts with the masses of illiterate people and to secure strong and effective support from the merchants, industrialists, and urban workers. The students spread their new ideas throughout the cities of the country.²³

The substance of this movement and manner in which the students expressed themselves were unparalleled in Chinese history. This movement was not merely an anti-imperialist campaign. By expressing their nationalism, the students challenged the authority and proclaimed their lack of

confidence in the warlord government. By confronting the government for its policies and decisions, the students demanded their political and democratic rights. As one participant and leader of May Fourth Movement put it, "The most pressing democratic demands at that time were the democratic rights to freedom of assembly, association, speech and publication."²⁴ The message that the Chinese people would deny the legitimacy of any government in which they could not place their confidence constituted the real impact of the May Fourth experience on later Chinese politics.²⁵

The warlord era from 1916 to 1927 was a blessing as well as a curse to China. The divergence between political decline on the one hand and intellectual, economic, and social developments on the other illustrated the pluralism of this era.²⁶ The lack of central government control allowed a great deal of political autonomy during this time and this autonomy allowed all sorts of ideas and practices to stem forth unrestrained by authority. For the very first time, universities became centers for ideas, for intellectual debate, and for dialogue. Students engaged in activities far beyond the traditional curriculum. The May Fourth Student Movement took place under this relaxed political climate. But China as a nation suffered. It lay defenseless before foreign enemies while military adventurers of individual warlord devoured the land.

Japanese demands for China's territory were a clear sign of the aggressiveness of foreign powers and the inability of the warlord government to act in defense of the country. Modern colleges and universities had attracted the ambitious youth during the warlord era, but the constant fighting and disputes among warlords disappointed the students. Many public institutions faced hard times as the warlord administrations cut educational funds in order to pay military expenditures.²⁷ The faculty were underpaid while the expanding student bodies were crammed into shabby dormitories, seething with discontent and frustration.²⁸

After the May Fourth Movement, the dominant sentiment in China was for national unification by ending warlordism and gaining independence from foreign occupation.²⁹ The students were struggling to organize themselves and searching for a cause to which they could devote themselves. There were two political parties at that time. The Nationalist Party, known as the Kuomintang (KMT), was the only existing party that seemed to be promising and many of the educated youths found themselves in agreement with its goals.³⁰ The Communist Party, which came into being in 1921, was at this time relatively small and obscure. The Kuomintang had long wanted to launch a Northern Expedition, a military campaign from the party's base in south China northward to Peking, conquering all the warlords along the way.³¹ From 1925 to 1927, students paved the way for the

Northern Expedition.

Higher education institutions and the students became important instruments for expanding the Kuomintang's political influence and achieving social reforms in China.³² The Kuomintang successfully recruited many students from Chinese universities, for both its civilian and military organizations. Under the influence of KMT educators, some universities became centers of the national revolutionary movement. Shanghai University's president, Yu Yu-jen, brought partisan intellectuals onto the faculty and furthered the recruitment of students for Whampoa, the military academy and the movement in Canton.³³ A variety of KMT-allied organizations channeled the young talent of the vast Yangtze basin into recruiting agencies, and such operations at Shanghai alone processed over five thousand recruits during 1925, the year preceding the Northern Expedition.³⁴ Students became editors and writers for the official organs, street lecturers, labor union organizers, rural cadres, military propagandists, and government officials; they staged constant street demonstrations to keep mass enthusiasm alive.³⁵ The Northern Expedition of 1927 led to the final downfall of the warlord government and established the first stable republican government under the Kuomintang--the Nationalist Party.

Higher education after the Northern Expedition underwent manifold changes. Higher education institutions

had increased rapidly. By 1930, there were fifty-nine universities and colleges with a total teaching staff of 5,212 professors, instructors, and teaching assistants plus 41,966 students.³⁶ The Kuomintang Party, in order to maintain political control, favored a centralized educational system. "In line with the general political orientation of the Kuomintang, education was declared to be an ideological weapon in the hands of the party."³⁷ Students' political activities, which had earlier helped the nationalists to seize power, were now seen as a threat to political order.³⁸ The government wanted to disengage the youth from politics through education. Beginning in 1928, the Ministry of Education made efforts to standardize all university curricula, and in 1930 the government announced a series of required courses for students in various disciplines.³⁹ The Kuomintang government looked to Europe for more centralized higher education organizational patterns and placed emphasis on the natural sciences because of the determination to reduce social science enrollments. The social science courses and the students who majored in those areas had demonstrated a tendency toward examining practical problems of the political and social order, and the government considered such to be detrimental to the party's political power and stability.⁴⁰

Hard as they tried, the Kuomintang leaders were not very successful in coercing or beguiling students into

acquiescence by thought control through curriculum. The student involvement in and concern over national affairs culminated in demonstrations over the loss of Manchuria to Japan in September 1931.⁴¹ On September 18, 1931, the Japanese officers concocted an incident which aimed at the conquest of Northeast China. When Japanese soldiers looted, burned, and occupied the largest city in that area, the students were enraged. Like the May Fourth Movement in 1919, the students were not only indignant at the Japanese aggression but also abhorred the government's non-resistance foreign policy. The students from major cities, such as Peking, Shanghai, and Nanking, convened emergency assemblies, organized anti-Japanese associations, and sent telegrams to the Kuomintang Party demanding punishment of the commanders of the Northeast forces who were responsible for the failure to resist the invaders.⁴² Following the example of students from these major cities, students from all over China arrived in Nanking by the trainload, protesting Japan's conquest of Northeast China, insisting that the government take action, and volunteering for unpaid service.⁴³

The student protests continued until January of 1932 with mixed results. They established various student associations, organized strikes, drafted petitions, triggered demonstrations, and engaged in fund-raising. They ventured to enlist the masses to join them in persuading the

government to take actions." But the government failed to take heed and continued its non-resistance policy.⁴⁵

Thwarted by the Kuomintang's practices, the students who had helped the party to gain power and who had been loyal began to withdraw support from the government."

The student rebellion of 1935-1936 was the beginning of the end of China's non-resistance policy. Although the student movement in 1931 failed to affect the government's foreign policy, the student movement in 1935 did. After the conquest of northeast China in 1931, Japan furthered the aggression in 1935, seeking the separation of North China from the South. On November 1, an impassioned petition signed by students from several Beijing universities, was sent to the Plenary Session of the Kuomintang and addressed to the press, news agencies, magazines, public institutions and organizations, schools and universities, and students organizations.⁴⁷ The petition called for open conduct of foreign relations, cessation of arbitrary arrest, protection of territorial integrity, and termination of illegal arrests of students and all civil war. The petition demanded that the Kuomintang government guarantee the right of free speech, and of the press and pleaded with the government to realize that "in this period of national crisis each citizen must individually shoulder responsibility and act to save his country."⁴⁸

The government's slow reaction to the petition prompted

a demonstration in December. December 9, 1935, one day before the announcement of the separation of North China from the south, a city-wide student strike and demonstration began.⁴⁹ Students from various universities in Beijing, carrying propaganda leaflets, flags, and placards marched and sang their way to the Forbidden City in defiance of the police while shopkeepers, housewives, artisans, teachers, and merchants applauded from the streets.⁵⁰ That same evening, representatives of the participating schools met at Beijing University and voted to begin a general strike in the morning. The following day, mass meetings in more than a dozen schools supported the decision to strike, approved the demands for the immediate release of the arrested students, and called for punishment of the police and soldiers who had injured demonstrators.⁵¹ By December 13, almost all students were on strike at Yenching, Tsinghua, Beijing, Chaoyan, Fujien universities and several other schools.⁵² On December 17, a second massive demonstration swept Beijing and Tientsin with tens of thousands students participating. Although the police injured many students, and the government arrested nearly two thousand of them, the students held a third demonstration a week later which called for an end to civil war and a united front against Japan.⁵³

The student movement of 1935 was a forerunner of a united front against Japan. The students' petitions,

demonstrations and strikes won the support of the masses and helped to push the Kuomintang regime toward a united front with the Communists against Japan. The student movement ended the non-resistance policy of the government and prevented the Japanese attempt to take over China by mere diplomacy.⁵⁴

The outbreak of Sino-Japanese war in 1937 plunged China into eight years of bitter struggle which resulted in the steady deterioration of social and economic conditions.⁵⁵ The civil war was equally devastating. The Kuomintang government and the Communists, which by this time grew into a formidable force to be reckoned with, fought painfully for the power to govern China. Even before the Sino-Japanese war, the Kuomintang was paranoid about the existence of the Communists. To the Kuomintang, the Communists were intimidating with an ideology, a program and a very able revolutionary leadership. It regarded Communism as a military problem rather than a social economic force and failed to realize that to eliminate the Communists, one had to eliminate the social and economic ills upon which Communism thrived. The Kuomintang's policy of exterminating the Communists before responding to Japan and other domestic problems was a mistake of priority.

To decrease the influence of Communism and stop the growth of the Communists, the Kuomintang sharply intensified its program of thought control through education. The

government believed that the higher education institutions were centers for the Communists activities and, therefore, turned them into battleground where indoctrination, secret police surveillance, starvation, terror, arrests, and disappearances of students and professors dominated daily campus life.⁵⁶

The students had supported the Kuomintang Party during the Northern Expedition and had anticipated a new China that would embrace democracy, science, and freedom from foreign aggression, and freedom from social and economic problems. But the Kuomintang government blundered badly and was unable to satisfy any of those expectations, yet it could no longer blame China's acute problems on warlord misrule.⁵⁷ Among all the causes of the civil war, the loss of confidence in the Kuomintang regime by the students was the one indispensable factor. The failure of the Kuomintang to take positive action led to pessimism, stagnation, and repression, driving hundreds of the ablest and most patriotic young students to the Communists as China's last hope.⁵⁸

The Communist Party began its dominion over China in 1949, compelling the Kuomintang government to retreat to a small island known today as Taiwan. The Communist Party was founded in 1921 after the May Fourth Movement. During the period of warlordism and Kuomintang control, the Communist Party demonstrated its sympathy for and support of the

democratic movement in order to unite all political forces against Japanese militancy. It became not only an enthusiastic voice for the democratic movement but also seemed to be its strongest promoter. The repeated failure of the Kuomintang in domestic and foreign affairs altered the orientation of the majority of the students and intellectuals to the Communists, and this alteration actually was one of the important factors that caused the flight of the Kuomintang government from the Mainland.

The higher education institutions and programs which the Kuomintang left were inadequate to the Communists' new purpose, and called for many transformations. One of the Communists' goals was to use education to change the ideological outlook and political loyalty of the population in order to have the support of the populace for the Communist leadership and its program.⁵⁹ They did so by first eliminating institutions of higher education supported by foreigners and missionaries.⁶⁰ In December of 1952, the new government set up a Ministry of Higher Education, that had authority over all higher learning institutions, dictated uniform curricula in all institutions, and unified the teaching plans. All students had to sit for the college entrance exams. Once the students were in college, the universities held formal lectures and discussions for the purpose of indoctrination through political propaganda.⁶¹ While encouraging academic excellence, the party also made

it clear that political reliability, resulting from proper indoctrination, must accompany it.⁶² Universities had to forsake academic freedom as understood in the West for state control and to sacrifice spontaneous development of the individual for organized learning. The new government largely limited the enrollment in the social sciences.⁶³ The central concern was to achieve and maintain political order, which was very similar to that of the Kuomintang's. "Once in power they had even less tolerance for the intellectual dissent that had been useful in the revolutionary struggle."⁶⁴

Another goal of the new government was to change higher education to suit the economic development and industrialization plan of the Communist Party.⁶⁵ Based on the experience of the Soviet Union since 1928 and on the growing influence of Soviet financial aid and personnel assistance, a new structure of higher education emerged. Following the Russian model, the government changed institutions into three types: general universities, polytechnical universities, and technical institutions. It also eliminated or transformed most of the comprehensive universities with departments of natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities into specialized colleges or technical institutes, such as institutes of geology, mineralogy and metallurgy or chemical engineering.⁶⁶ The intent was in order to strengthen specialized education in

important fields to speed up the process of training technical personnel for industrial development. As a result, "universities have actually become training centers for professional engineers and skilled technicians rather than places of learning where knowledge is pursued for its own sake."⁶⁷ More than eight thousand Chinese students and scholars went to the Soviet Union to study, with most of them enrolled in undergraduate courses, and 7,324 finished their studies with proper qualifications.⁶⁸ The returned students further enhanced the role of Soviet ideas and practices in China during the early years of the regime.⁶⁹ Between 1949 and 1966, higher education in China had graduated all together 1,716,000 students, and there were four hundred institutions of higher learning in existence.⁷⁰

The Proletarian Cultural Revolution that dominated the Chinese political and economic scene for a decade had many adverse effects on higher education. The Cultural Revolution was officially launched in 1966, and education was a major focal point. The Communist Party accused higher education institutions of fostering the selfish ambitions of individuals and of being incapable of producing deserving successors to the Communist causes.⁷¹ In response to the party's new policies to reform education, institutions of higher education were closed from 1966 to 1970.⁷² In 1970, following Mao's "Latest Directive" which asked for the reopening and revolutionizing of some universities, a small

number of colleges began to enroll students.⁷³ The students who went to college from 1971 to 1976 were workers, peasants, and soldiers with at least two years work experience under the recommendation of their local party and revolutionary committee. This requirement was to ensure that acceptance to college was based on correct political attitudes rather than on academic records. The duration of college study during this period was reduced to three years. The most dramatic change to occur was in the curriculum, with subject matter now confined to six areas: political theory and practice, language, mathematics, military training, physical education, industrial and agricultural production.⁷⁴ Beijing University, the center of intellectual ferment in the May Fourth era, was one of many universities affected by this change. When reopened in 1970, 90 percent of the student body was from workers, peasants, and soldiers, and the faculty were also from workers and peasants, a vastly different group from the most highly respected and progressive intellectuals of the earlier years.⁷⁵ It was no surprise that one person said, "this great university has become an inferior junior college."⁷⁶ Qinghua University, China's MIT, recruited twenty-seven hundred persons, all of whom were workers and soldiers' sons and daughters; its library was full of the works of Mao, Marxist-Leninist literature and other Chinese classical works unchecked out and covered with dust since

1965.⁷⁷ During this ten years, China lost one and a half million students.⁷⁸

The Communist Party floundered at least as much as the Kuomintang. Thirty-years of totalitarian control in Mainland China turned the country into an ideological and class struggle battleground while the economy was on the verge of devastation. Like the Kuomintang Party, the Communist government attempted to use higher education institutions as an effective means for propaganda and indoctrination. Unlike the Kuomintang, which had failed to succeed in its goals, the Communist Party thrived. It was able to shroud students in ignorance by using the educational system, and many students became either instruments or victims during the Cultural Revolution. The spirit of the student movement initiated by the May Fourth Movement had not been seen during these ten years and with good reason. But this situation began to reverse in 1976.

The death of Mao in 1976 ushered in a new educational era of China. The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party was held in December, 1978, and set the pragmatic policies for China's domestic development as well as for its attitude toward international cooperation. Deng Xiaoping said in his opening speech to the Educational Conference in 1978 that the country's mission was to modernize agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology within this century.⁷⁹

To reach that goal, China needed to have scientific and technical manpower, and Deng called for tremendous expansion and improvement in education. Higher education was vital to economic success in this new political context, and the major change aimed at reforming, consolidating, and improving existing universities plus building new ones.⁸⁰ Practices that had been stopped by the Cultural Revolution were reinstated. Admission to universities depended upon academic achievement on the unified state examination for university entrance. Once in school, the students were encouraged to excel academically. In all, the Chinese leadership tried to reverse the orientation of higher education after twenty years of moving in the general direction of revolutionary politics and anti-intellectualism.⁸¹

The over-emphasis on political studies and the lack of other social science courses began to change. Prior to 1978, political studies and ideological propaganda occupied a major place in the higher education curriculum. Deng's speech to the National Science Conference was intended to alter the direction:

We can not demand that scientists and technicians and the overwhelming majority of them study a lot of political and theoretical books, participate in numerous social activities and attend many meetings not related to their work.⁸²

Starting in 1978, there were relatively few references to

the political ideological goals of higher education or to political ideological curriculum. The enrollment of students in social science areas increased from 43,111 in 1980 to 183,672 in 1985, representing a nearly fourfold growth in the areas of importance for the future direction of Chinese politics.⁸³ Universities also introduced general social science electives into many other programs and departments and encouraged the students in the sciences and humanities to reflect critically on problems concerning the Chinese social and economic system.⁸⁴ The required political education courses have been modified in a more liberal direction.⁸⁵

The new Chinese leaders also recognized the importance of international exchanges in higher education. They called for Chinese scholars and students to learn from foreign countries what was valuable and relevant for China's modernization drive. Universities and colleges sent students and scholars abroad, received foreign students and teachers on campus, set up cooperative research projects, established partnerships between sister institutions, and organized international meetings.⁸⁶

The years between 1978 and 1989 signified a new era for China and Chinese higher education. By the end of 1987, there were 1063 institutions of higher learning in China having graduated four million students.⁸⁷ The restoration of Chinese higher learning institutions, the change of

orientation of the curriculum and the knowledge structure, the reformation of the composition of student body, the loosening of political ideological education, and the interaction with the West soon renewed the tradition of the Chinese student movements. The college students became increasingly aware of the political restraints in China and sought to be instrumental in bringing needed political reform. From 1978 onward, there were constant struggles to achieve this end.

Modern higher education in China originated for the purpose of strengthening the nation militarily to protect herself from colonization. When the Japanese defeated China on land and sea, higher education functioned not only as a means to build a strong military but also to energize the nation's economy. Higher education during the early warlord era was characterized by intellectual ferment and students political activism. With the rise of the Kuomintang Party, higher education served as a vehicle supplying professionals for the country on the one hand and training the party loyalists on the other. The Communist control from 1949 to 1978 put higher education through many ordeals. The period after Mao's death and before the massacre in Tiananmen in June 1989 was a very unusual time for China and Chinese higher education. Facing the dilemma between economic development and political modernization, academic freedom and thought control, the Communist Party had its share of

agony.

Student movements began with the inception of modern higher education. The May Fourth student movement was a historical landmark followed by several decades of student uprisings and unrest. "Intelligence, courage and indifference to death for their cause gave the Chinese new youth an influence out of all proportion to their numbers."⁸⁸ Almost every student movement in recent Chinese history has had a discernible political impact. The Communist regime, through thought control and effective indoctrination, constrained Chinese student movements and left them smoldering for years. But the student movements regained their momentum after Mao's death in 1976. From 1978 to 1989, the second era of student uprising in modern history of China began.

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CHAPTER II

THE CHANGING MISSIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT OF 1980

China faced inevitable changes after Mao's death. The changes in the political missions and policies of the Chinese Communist Party from 1976 to 1980 greatly influenced the transformations in higher education institutions. The loosening of higher education institutions from political strictures and ideological indoctrination and the unique characteristics of the students resulted in the first student democratic movement of 1980.

The Mission and Policy Changes of the Communist Party

The death of Mao in 1976 signalled the beginning of the end of the Maoist era. His demise escalated the factional struggle and brought about the purge of the most notable Cultural Revolution leaders known as the "Gang of Four." Hua Guofeng, a designated heir, succeeded Mao as Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, but Deng Xiaoping successfully challenged him. Beginning with the Third Plenum in December 1978, Deng Xiaoping gradually

consolidated his position within the Chinese Communist Party forcing Hua Guofeng first to step down from the premiership and then to relinquish his party chairmanship. Once the purged outcast, Deng recaptured power from Hua, marking a decisive turn in Chinese political leadership.¹

China needed reforms. Emerging from a decade of devastation brought on by Mao's chaotic Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and besieged by economic difficulties and the loss of public confidence in the Communist Party and government leadership, China encountered one of the most profound political crises of its history. The new leadership, acknowledging the deep and wide dissatisfaction and demoralization of the general public and the wreckage of the economy, described the need for reform as a matter of "life or death" for China's socialist system.² The ideology during Mao's last decade was class struggle emphasizing political over technological or other criteria.³

The new leadership attempted to deideologize policies having to do with economic development; this pragmatism in economics began to infringe upon ideological orthodoxy. The People's Daily, the party's organ, stated "Marxism holds that economics is the basis of politics, while politics is the collective manifestation of economics."⁴ Deng Xiaoping, in his opening speech to the National Science Conference in 1978, stressed that the country's historic mission was to "comprehensively modernize agriculture, industry, national

defense, and science and technology within this century."⁵ Achieving the four modernizations was the means of grasping the essence of Marxism and therefore good politics.⁶ The People's Daily interpreted the meaning of the four modernizations in the following way:

Those on various fronts must see that every kind of work we are doing now is in the service of realizing the four modernization and has the utmost political significance. From this perspective we say that extracting more oil is the politics of the petroleum industry, producing more coal is the politics of coal miner... working hard in studies is the politics of students. The only criterion for the results of political education is the utility in improving the economic situation.⁷

The realization of the four modernizations thus became the driving force to transform China from a preoccupation with class struggle to a concentration on reform and economic development. The Third Plenum of the People's Congress in 1978 further defined and confirmed the importance of the modernization mission by stressing that the large-scale class struggle of a mass character had come to an end, by urging the separation of politics and economics in the party's tasks, and by stating that political work had both to serve the economic base and to guarantee the accomplishment of economic work.⁸

The deemphasis of ideology and the emphasis of economic development provided a guide for the transformation of society. Changes took place in many sectors of society, such as agriculture, industry, and business management.

Higher education was also one of them.

The Implications for Higher Education

The basic principle for understanding the state of higher education was that the general line for national policy was set by China's top party leadership, and the education system was simply one of many sectors of the country carrying out that policy.' The new political missions and policies dictated new objectives for higher education. No phase of education after Mao's death reflected the new policy as clearly as higher education, and no phase of the education system suffered as much disruption and damage during the Cultural Revolution as institutions of higher learning.¹⁰ The years from 1966 to 1977 saw higher education institutions turning into a battleground for Mao's revolutionary goals, oppressing the intellectuals, holding back improvements in the quality of education, and slowing the supply of professionals needed for economic development. The Chinese leadership attempted to reverse the orientation of higher education after twenty years of revolutionary politics and anti-intellectualism.¹¹

The overriding aim of education in the post-Mao era was to serve the needs of the modernization program. To reach the goal of the four modernizations, the mastery of modern science and technology was crucial, and China needed

to have scientific and technical manpower. The goals of higher education, therefore, were to train qualified manpower to advance science, technology, and economic development, and the leadership called for improvement and expansion of higher education.¹² This was in contrast with the earlier goals, which were to transform student consciousness, promote class struggle, consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, and bring up ideological-political stalwarts who could serve as faithful successors to the revolutionary cause.¹³ The concept of "red and expert" described a relationship between socialist political consciousness and academic or technical excellence in China. In the past, the priority was given to "red," the correctness of political ideology even at the expense of scientific, technical, and intellectual competence. But the post-Mao leadership gave precedence to the development of science and technology and demanded an educational program that would speed up the four modernizations by fostering the personnel and the know how needed for this development.¹⁴ As the new leadership identified and redefined the mission for the new era, it enabled China's higher educational policies and practices to alter significantly. Once the guiding policy of higher education was clear, specific changes took place in many areas. The party moved quickly to institute a broad range of changes in higher educational institutions, such as recruitment and curriculum.

As an initial step to help remedy the problems of higher education, the new leadership re-introduced college entrance exams in 1977. It was one of the first measures taken to reorganize higher education by transforming access to higher education through reinstating the pre-Cultural Revolution entrance exam.¹⁵ Higher education institutions had abolished the entrance exam during the Cultural Revolution and had adopted a system based on the selection of students from among the workers, peasants, soldiers, and revolutionary faithful. In October 1977, the State Council announced the implementation of an enrollment examination system for higher education and the purpose of which was to: "Open road for talents, raise the quality of education, train more proficient personnel and make greater contributions at an early date so as to meet the urgent needs in our national construction."¹⁶ Under the new policy, all those qualified for enrollment including workers, peasants, educated youth, demobilized military personnel, cadres, and graduating high school students could apply for and take the exams.¹⁷

There were several criteria which were applied to students who wanted to enter universities. They had to take a total of nine subjects on the exams. All applicants took four tests: politics, Chinese language, mathematics, and a foreign language. Students in humanities took an additional two tests: geography and history. Students in science,

engineering, agriculture and medicine took three additional tests: physics, chemistry, and biology. The competition was strong, and only 5 percent of those who took the exam were accepted.¹⁸ In addition to passing the exam, candidates had to have a good political record and certain political qualifications, such as support of the Communist Party of China, love of the motherland, and love of labor and discipline. But no strict rules were developed to enforce these qualifications.¹⁹ Ordinarily, the standards which were used to select students would determine the kinds of students entering higher education institutions. The use of criteria of academic achievement this time resulted in a high proportion of students with high academic qualifications from the families of intelligentsia entering higher education institutions.

Curriculum changed accordingly. Before, political studies and ideological propaganda occupied a major place in the higher education curriculum. The new leadership attempted to amend the situation: "We can not demand that scientists and technicians and the overwhelming majority of them study a lot of political and theoretical books, participate in numerous social activities and attend many meetings not related to their work."²⁰ There was little doubt that the Chinese leadership had always regarded the educational system as the important factor in both the training of manpower appropriate to the needs of the economy

and the creation of new socialist persons through ideological transformation. But the relative emphasis on these goals varied, and this variability was apparent again. Starting in 1978, there were relatively few references to an ideological curriculum. The universities had modified the required political education courses in a more liberal direction and largely ignored students' disdain of these courses.²¹ The students viewed these political classes as mere indoctrination and propaganda, and teachers had a trying time teaching them. When students made a low grade in these courses, they were seldom concerned in contrast to their attitudes toward other academic courses.²² The proportion between courses of scientific or technical content and ideological study was four to one in 1978 in comparison to one to one in 1975.²³ From 1977 to 1979, students entering colleges and universities began their specialized fields of study in their very first year. It was not until 1980 when students first took general required courses in their field before beginning to specialize. The curriculum paid more attention to the study of science at every level, and it was a requirement for every student to learn a foreign language. Upper level classes in liberal arts departments included the critical study of the philosophy and economics of other countries with different political systems, and students in foreign languages were encouraged to read foreign publications and listen to

foreign broadcasts.²⁴

Other reforms being introduced during 1977-1978 included the reestablishment of post graduate courses, the support of intellectual academic exchanges, the compilation of standardized textbooks for all fields by the Ministry of Education, and increments in the proportion of state budgetary outlays for science and education.²⁵ There was also a new emphasis on research, and intellectuals were officially recognized as part of the working classes, which suggested greater freedom for them. University presidents began to have greater powers in the administration of their institutions.²⁶

The Students

The students of this time were the products of complicated social and historical conditions. The first group of students, who took the exam in 1977, were known as the 1977 grade. They were bright, afflicted and reflective. Many of them were from intellectual families and were persecuted together with their parents by the Communist Party. Most of them personally took part in the Cultural Revolution and worked in the countryside, and many of them were mature adults in their mid-twenties. They passed through the stage of fanaticism (the blind belief and following in Mao and his ideology during the ten years of

revolution), the stage of bewilderment (sense of confusion when they lost faith in the ideals of the Communist Party), and the stage of deliberation (a time of reflection and questioning).²⁷ For these students, the chance of entering into higher learning was a privilege they could never have imagined while Mao was alive.

The 1978, 1979, and 1980 grades were mainly high school graduates. These students came to colleges through competitive exams and were highly intelligent. But unlike the 1977 grade students, many of them did not undergo the traumatic Cultural Revolution and did not have the same experiences. Most of them were young, ranging from sixteen to twenty years of age. Although they did not go through the stage of fanaticism, they too underwent the stages of bewilderment and deliberation.²⁸ They grew up under the strict supervision and indoctrination of the party and were taught to believe that Mao represented the absolute truth and was the savior of the Chinese people. It was also these students who, while in high school, cried so distressingly when Mao died, believing China had lost the leader who had brilliantly directed and led them for half a century. They were more baffled than the students of the 1977 grade by the sudden shift of events after Mao's death and tried desperately to sort things out and make sense out of them. By going to college and mingling with the older students of 1977 grade, these younger students were on the brink of new

learning experiences.²⁹

While in colleges, many students from all grades were craving for knowledge and seeking ways to find answers to various social and personal problems. A survey conducted throughout the university system showed that these students had a great capacity for receiving new ideas, and they tended to think for themselves. Many students were skeptical about Marxism-Leninism and doubtful if socialism was right for China. They sought models of democracy and were engaged in an exchange of ideas. Wishing to build China into a rich and powerful country, they hoped for early modernization. They supported reforms of the new leadership and demanded that the defects in the political, economic, and educational systems be corrected. They were also aware of the great gap between China and the developed countries, and this stimulated their national pride, making them thirst for knowledge to help to modernize the country. But there were also students who did not believe in the party leadership and advocated Western democracy.³⁰ At the time of the election of 1980, the university campuses consisted of a student population of over one million. The students, with their unique characteristics, coupled with the fresh openness in both political missions and higher education policies, began the first phase of the student democratic movement since Mao.

Student Movement--Election of 1980

The student movement took place in 1980 in the form of competitive elections for seats in the local people's congresses. Deng Xiaoping delivered a speech to the Politburo in August 1980 before the opening of the National People's Congress that inspired the "Gengshen Reforms."³¹ The focal point of this reform was to allow citizens to elect the national delegates to the Congress directly rather than having them appointed.³² Through this election, the leaders hoped to reconstruct the public's sense of affiliation with the government and symbolically show the party's claim to rule in the public interest and with public approval.³³ Deng Xiaoping also hoped to solve the problems of bureaucratism, retirement of old cadres, and to eliminate concurrent positions held by party leaders. But the leadership did not foresee that the election proposals "had the potential for a far reaching liberalization."³⁴

The university students took part in this event with such vigor that they carried the election beyond the purposes originally intended by the party. Trusting that the election could be an important step to enlarge the scope of democracy in China, students resolved to exercise their legal rights, the rights to vote and to run for offices, to elect the people's representatives. They theorized that the direct election at the county levels could serve as the

foundation for electing political leadership at the higher levels, which would be an essential basis for the practice of democracy. Direct election would enable the county people's congresses to be in the hands of the people themselves. Through the people's deputies, the people's congresses and their standing committees and the people's governments, the Chinese people would be able to administer the country's affairs and chart their own future and the destiny of the nation and the state.³⁵ Armed with such beliefs, candidates voiced their views and plans for reforming Chinese society and won the support of the public and voters. In terms of style, they adopted the form of a forum for questions and answers. As the campaign progressed, there was an informal network of all college and university students established throughout the country, serving as a base for support, opinions and exchanges.³⁶

This student movement was unique because it was the first time in the history of modern China that students voluntarily participated in politics through elections. Many university students joined in this movement. Generally speaking, students from liberal arts and comprehensive universities were more involved in this election than those from technological institutions. Most candidates emerged from the students of 1977 grade from liberal arts departments.³⁷ There were some outstanding student leaders during this election, especially those who claimed to be the

candidates of the people's congress, such as Xiu Zhengyu of Shanghai Teachers College, Xiu Bengtai of Fudan of Shanghai, Liang Heng, and Tao Sen of Hunan Teachers College, and Wang Juntao, Hu Pin, Fang Zhiyan, and Xia Sheng of Beijing University.³⁸ The students election started early in Shanghai and spread to Hunan, Guzhou, and Beijing.³⁹ The most representative universities of this election were Beijing University and Hunan Teachers University.

Election in Beijing University

Beijing University may be regarded as typical of those universities in which the election campaign was more rational and carefully organized to avoid direct confrontation with school administrators.⁴⁰ Beijing University was China's preeminent liberal arts university and the one which had led the May Fourth Student Movement in 1919. During the direct election of people's deputies in Haidiang District in 1980, the third election district of Beijing University was to elect two people's representatives. The election campaign lasted for one and half months. The student candidates organized their own election committees which included both classmates of the candidates and those who did not know the candidates but were resolute in pushing the reforms forward through the election.⁴¹ The candidates and their committee members ran

election activities in designated areas within the campus, publicizing their aims for participating in the election and their views regarding various social and political problems. They held meetings for questions, answers and discussions in the school cafeteria, halls, and classrooms. There were altogether eighteen such forums during the six weeks of campaigning, which were attended by twenty thousand people.⁴² Candidates held regular hours to answer questions for those people off campus and visited students in their dormitories, classrooms, and playing fields. Several groups of students published periodicals to carry the news of the election. All the campaign documents, tape recordings, and other information were gathered into an archive by a volunteer group from the departments of history and Chinese. Candidates worked out careful campaign positions in consultation with groups of advisors. Different kinds of big character posters, pamphlets, and the results of opinion polls were everywhere throughout the campus. In addition, posters for convening of meetings and suggestion boxes set up by candidates were found in many places. Students were contending, debating, questioning, and delivering impassioned speeches.⁴³ Many students attended the election speeches. The university campus was seething with excitement during this six weeks of election.

In a series of forums and question-and-answer sessions, the candidates expressed their opinions on broad

issues. One of the major topics was democratic reform. Some candidates believed political reform would come naturally from the economic changes, while others emphasized "liberation of thinking" and still others believed in the stabilization of the legal system. Such ideas differed little from the party reformers' program, but these candidates also made radical suggestions such as the separation of powers in government, the reformation of the Communist Party, freedom of speech, an independent press, and the breakup of the concentration of power in the party center."

Hu Ping, a thirty-two year old student in European philosophy, was one the major candidates at Beijing University. His campaign was centered on freedom of speech, and it aroused the interests of a great number of students. He wrote a long essay defending the social utility of freedom of speech. Hu Ping stressed that the aim of this election was to speed up the implementation of freedom of speech and press. He held that enjoying freedom of speech and press did not mean having the right to do everything, but losing freedom of speech and press meant losing everything and he urged people to speak out.⁴⁵ He also wanted democracy and the legal system strengthened. In his view, democracy meant not only majority rule but also the protection of minorities while the powers of the leaders were checked and supervised. Genuine democracy was,

therefore, impossible without free public opinion.⁴⁶

Wang Jun Tao was another major candidate. He made a critical assessment of the last thirty years of Chinese history, dealing especially with the Cultural Revolution and the political, social, and economic problems of the day. He criticized the extreme centralization of political, economic, and ideological control and advocated further liberalization of thought. Like Hu Ping, he stressed the importance of strengthening the legal system, separating powers, allowing free public opinion, freedom of speech, and respecting human individuality.⁴⁷

All candidates called for further reform of higher education. They believed that higher education should give students a well-rounded education and develop their ability to the fullest, rather than turning them into manageable instruments or machines. In this sense, they were arguing for general education that aimed at training students to think, reason, and discriminate. Many candidates said that the administration and process of learning should be democratized and that students and faculty should form a representative council to which the president and other administrators would be directly accountable. They also had concrete suggestions, such as graduate students' assignment being based on a combination of their own personal preferences and the country's needs, not merely the needs of the country.⁴⁸

Student voters also expressed their views. From the very beginning of the campaign, student voters showed an interest in political, theoretical, and social issues. The majority of the student voters considered this election one of the preliminary procedures for realizing socialist democracy, and half of the student population showed great concern and actively participated in the election activities. Even those students who were indifferent at the beginning of the election expressed their views and preferences. In one of the campus polls, 35 percent of the students questioned said they preferred to elect a radical social reformist, 20 percent a moderate socialist reformist, 19 percent a status quo type, and 10 percent a person without strong political coloration. The remainder gave other preferences.⁴⁹ They raised questions such as how to interpret party leadership and what to do to change the situation in which power was overcentralized in the hands of the ruling party, how to develop a people's democracy, how young people should play the role in social reforms, and how to solve the problems of higher education.⁵⁰

The issues, the candidates and student voters raised during the election, intimidated the school officials. On December 11, Hu Ping was elected with the votes of 57 percent of the registered voters. However, the school did not allow Hu Ping to take his post as a deputy, even though the university administration had indicated that it would

not interfere in the proceedings and the local electoral authority had abided by the electoral laws and provided various facilities to ensure the smooth running of the election, including places to put up posters and papers in halls and lecture rooms. The election was not what some party and government leaders intended it to be. Some top leaders outside the university accused various candidates of being "dissidents." The wall posters were torn down immediately after the first round of voting, even though the results had not yet been announced and there was still another round to come.⁵¹ The authorities did not send the candidates of Beijing University to prison, but they waged a cold war with Beijing University student activists.⁵²

Election in Hunan Teachers College

The election at Hunan Teachers College may be regarded as typical of those schools which clashed directly with the school administrators, resulting in student demonstrations, petitions, and hunger strikes. Hunan, the province of Mao Zedong's birth, was resistant to Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic policies, and Hunan Teachers College, the large comprehensive university, was run largely by those revolutionaries who followed Mao during the early years.⁵³ The election started in the middle of September, 1980, and Hunan Teachers College was in the 76th electoral district

with its electors mostly being college students. Its 5,830 voters were to elect four deputies from six candidates.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that the higher leadership initiated this election, the local cadres currently in office were fearful. The longstanding "unified leadership," the "appointment system," and the "lifelong tenure system" made such concepts as "legal system" and "democracy" foreign to the party cadres. The promulgation of "The Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments of the People's Republic of China" and "the Electoral Law for the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses of the People's Republic of China" did not really mean anything to them.⁵⁵ The school administrators told the students that "the electoral law will become effective only through our interpretation."⁵⁶ The administrators of Hunan Teachers College had their own agenda when the election began. They announced that the election committee consisted of the school's vice-president, Su Ming, together with the head of the college's Propaganda Department, the secretary of the campus Communist Youth League, the chairman of the Student Association, and the party leader of each department. They expected students simply to cast votes for the candidate the school leaders chose. But the students of Hunan Teachers College saw things differently and acted accordingly.⁵⁷

Students were determined to take this opportunity to express their views. Many student electors in Hunan

Teachers College had long been discontented with the bureaucratism and with the special privileges which the cadres enjoyed through the appointment and lifelong tenure systems. Because they believed in the top leadership's desire for change and trusted in the election, and also because the candidates' inflammatory and enlivening speeches had aroused them, students eager for change and anxious to establish a new order quickly erupted.⁵⁸ Hundreds of students and citizens from the surrounding neighborhood came before the regular Saturday-evening campus movie to hear the candidates make campaign speeches. Film showings became political rallies; the speakers used borrowed megaphones, and the students gathered on the playing field. The candidates had organized and publicized the forum themselves, without the permission of the college election committee.⁵⁹

Liang Heng and Tao Sen from the Department of Chinese were two major candidates who emerged during this election. The Chinese department at Hunan Teachers College, one of the largest on campus, had about six hundred students. Among them were a number of older students, the students of the 1977 grade, who played a leading role in the election. Tao Sen and Liang Heng expressed their views on various issues. Both of them said they supported the Beijing leadership. But Tao Sen asked for the acceptance of the power of the people's congresses, thorough democratic

reform of the bureaucracy, exposure of party members to criticism from the masses, collective and rotating party leadership, and rigorous enforcement of the law against errant cadres. He also recommended streamlining administration, reasonable independence for literacy workers in their task of serving socialism, and improved conditions for intellectuals, including freedom to select one's own profession and better conditions for students and teachers. Tao called his program "a great socialist reform."⁶⁰

Candidate Liang Heng was the author of the Son of Revolution, and at the time of the election, he was married to an American woman who was teaching English in Hunan Teachers College. He criticized "ideologues who took Marxism-Leninism on faith like some kind of revolutionary religion."⁶¹ He wanted to see whether the new election system would be truly democratic, and he supported the reform policies of the government and believed the essential nature of socialism should be a subject for inquiry. He articulated the goal of reforming the university, especially the job assignment system, by arguing that job assignments for graduates should take into consideration the students' preferences, and the party committee should not arbitrarily decide where students should work.⁶²

When the school authorities tried to block the election, their efforts outraged the students. College officials declared that it was a bourgeois election and that

posters were illegal. They interdicted public speeches and forbade candidates to publish position statements. Finally they nominated their own candidate, the leader of the college's Communist Youth League. These actions set off the students' anger.⁶³ On 9 October 1980, two thousand students from the Hunan Teachers College marched to the office of the provincial party committee. They protested against the actions of the college administration that had broken the Election Law. They organized mass meetings, processions, petitions, and a hunger strike. Students from other colleges supported them, and strikes were organized in colleges and factories. The marchers shouted "Down with bureaucratism, down with feudalism, let the people be the masters, we want democracy and not autocracy." Reporters from Guangming Reibao, the party newspaper, and two provincial party committee members conceded that the students' petition was legal and promised to send a work team to investigate. But when the provincial party work team arrived and met with the student representatives, they concluded that the college election committee had acted legally in adding one more name to the list of six candidates. Their action only encouraged the college administration and further alienated the students.⁶⁴

On 11 October Tao Sen sent a telegram to party General Secretary Hu Yaobang, and on 12 October, Tao Sen, Liang Heng, and another candidate announced their temporary

withdrawal from the election to protest the college's action. Again the students petitioned the provincial party office. This time there were three thousand of them. Two hours later the provincial party leaders turned down their demands. Eighty-seven students, including Tao Sen and Liang Heng, went on a hunger strike. While expressing their determination, they wept. The same day eight hundred students of Hunan Medical School marched through Changsha city in support of Hunan Teachers College students, and three thousand marched that afternoon. On 15 October, the students went on a general strike and were joined by thousands of students from other Changsha colleges. Students all over Changsha as well as ordinary citizens, gathered to show their support, and even representatives of Beijing University flew into the city.⁶⁵

The battle with the school administrators continued. The investigators from the National Election Committee spent two weeks at the college talking with people on all sides and then went back to Beijing to make their report. After weeks of anticipation, the committee issued a document that pronounced the Teachers College Election invalid because of insufficient voter participation. University leaders were ordered to make a public self-criticism for distorting the election rules, and the officials reluctantly did so.⁶⁶

Things began to change dramatically when Deng Xiaoping made a different speech on December 25, 1980, against

"Bourgeois Liberation." The specific reform proposal Deng had in mind did not include some of the issues the students so bravely raised. He had shared the criticisms of corrupt officials, but he did not welcome the questions about the legitimacy of the Communist Party. He may have needed the students to help him put pressure on his opponents, but not to threaten the one-party system. His speech, later issued as Document No 2 of 1981, attacked the "disorderly thought" of certain university students who had "lost confidence" in the party and socialism.⁶⁷

Deng's speech, which represented the voice of the top leadership, clearly indicated to the school officials that they could crack down. In 1981, after Document No 2 had been handed down by the Party Central Committee, the college authorities began to launch an overall attack against the students. When the students returned to campus from winter vacation, the school officials canceled the first three days of classes for intensive small-group study of Deng's speech. During these group studies, the students were asked to indicate their position about political attitudes and to carry out public criticism with respect to the ideas and conduct of Liang Heng and Tao Sen. During those three days of political study, the school authorities did not achieve the expected results. On the contrary, on the afternoon of the last day, a big character wall poster was put up at the college. Its contents ridiculed the tactless performance of

the college authorities and praised the student movement. The poster attracted the attention of teachers, students, staff, and workers. After taking a picture of the poster, the college authority tore it down and immediately launched an investigation by labeling this as a counterrevolutionary incident, a serious yet common accusation used by the Communist leadership to crack down on the opposition and put people into prison. From then on, the students no longer raised their voices. The college authorities used all the methods employed in China's political movements of the past and did a great deal to create disunity and demoralization.⁶⁸ Tao Sen was expelled from school and was charged with committing "counterrevolutionary activities." The leaders never had to go through the law courts. They simply dispatched him to labor camp for three years to be reformed. Liang Heng was spared only because he got a visa to leave China.⁶⁹

The student movement failed in all universities represented by either Beijing University or Hunan Teachers College. Some of them met the "cold war" treatment by the school administrators, while others faced the same consequences as the candidates in Hunan Teachers College. The most common punishment of the election leaders, candidates, and active voters was to dispatch them to the worst places upon graduation.⁷⁰ The regime the students naively believed was supporting them turned against them.

The well-publicized inauguration of free, democratic elections was marred first by school officials who balked at the prospect of having to relinquish their traditional autocratic prerogatives and was finally killed by those top leaders who were fearful of the forces they themselves unleashed.

The 1980 student election was the direct turnout of Chinese political policy of the time. The post-Mao leadership, with Deng Xiaoping as its chief policy architect, reached a consensus during the Third Plenum in 1978 that salvaging China's economy was the first priority. The party expected the active participation and cooperation of Chinese higher education institutions by training and supplying scientists and technicians to save the economy and achieve the goals of the modernization drive. Consequently, the party liberalized controls over higher education institutions by emphasizing academics rather than politics.

In late 1980, the party called for elections as a means to reduce bureaucratism, terminate life tenure of cadres, eliminate overlapping responsibilities and the overconcentration of power. But the students, led by the unique class of 1977, took the opportunity of the election to express their own views that challenged the socialist system, one party control, the legitimacy of the party itself, and demanded political restructuring and freedom of press and speech. These requests were beyond anything the

ruling party could grant.

The relaxation of political austerity in general and higher education policies in particular enabled the college campuses to enroll students not only of high academic quality, but also of unique experiences. The curriculum trends of this time, with the emphasis on science and technology and the gradual decline of the political indoctrination, facilitated students to learn things independently and to think on their own. The students did not initiate the election, but they participated in it with full intensity. The manner which the students exhibited during the election and the depth of the issues the student candidates raised and explored were the direct consequence of the open climate of the time.

In the leaders' view, the leadership of the Communist Party and socialist system could not be contested, at least not now. China is a huge country with a population of over one billion, eighty percent of whom are uneducated peasants. Such a country needed a centralized government. The only way China could maintain her security and stability, and, therefore, the only way to China's salvation, was through the leadership of the Communist Party and adherence to the socialist doctrine. The reform should be gradual and cautious. The election was to solve the practical problems which hindered Deng's economic reform, not to create chaos. From the beginning, the party wanted to control and

supervise the whole process of the election and let those who would conform to the party line and serve the interests of the party, therefore, the interests of the people, be elected.

The ideas voiced by the students during the elections were frightening to the party and clearly contributed to the leaders' decision to launch a final crackdown on the democracy movement. The party did not expect this election to be carried out this far and out of its control. In a larger sense, the party regarded the requests and ideas voiced by the student candidates unrealistic. If the students were successful in getting what they wanted, China would be plunged into utter anarchy, the condition of which were not conducive to the economic reform and the welfare of the masses. In a narrower sense, the fulfillment of the student demands would directly threaten the personal interests of those in power. With these considerations, the party ended the election by suppressing the student leaders.

This unprecedented college student election had far-reaching influence and meaning. It was the first time in the history of the democratic movement in China that the students participated in the movement through election and within the boundary of the law. It also revealed the fundamental discrepancy conflicts between what the students wanted and what the government could grant. After the suppression of the students and the election by the party,

the Chinese political climate and consequently the climate of higher education faced a period of five years' retrenchment. The students were subdued inside China. Only students outside China picked up the momentum for the struggle toward political democracy. It was not until the political thaw of 1986 when the student movement took place again.

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CHAPTER III

INTERLUDE

The political situation after the election took a new direction. Between 1981 and 1984, while the policy of modernization remained in effect, the Communist Party tightened its rules on political control. Higher education institutions were among many sectors of Chinese society that were adversely affected by this changing political atmosphere. The students were subdued; the student movement was in retreat. In the meantime, as part of the modernization policy, the party continued its exchange programs in hopes of expediting the modernization process. The students it sent abroad carried on the democratic movement that was suppressed inside China.

Chinese Political Situation after the Election

Beginning in 1981, the Chinese Communist Party promulgated several documents to indicate the shift of policy. In China, such policy changes were generally stipulated in the regular Communist Party meetings held each year and reflected by important speeches. The People's

Daily and other party organs then interpreted and carried the party's view and policies to the general public through the editorial pages. Sometimes the policy changes could be made without the regular Communist Party sessions. The top leadership made decisions regarding their new intentions, and these were communicated through a numbered "Document" to different working units. Some of these documents were ordered to circulate to the leaders of the unit and then to the general public, while others were merely given to the top leaders of units, who interpreted the "spirit" or the "essence" of the documents to the masses. Every Chinese knew the meaning of "Document," for their behavior and thoughts were constantly regulated and changed by these documents. After the election, several documents were issued targeting different areas of society, and these documents comprised the strongest political offensive of the Chinese Communist Party since Mao's death.¹

The "No 2 Document," which carried Deng Xiaoping's message on the crackdown not only on elections but on all activities and activists of the democratic movement, came on 25 December 1980. The document castigated the viewpoints and trends of thought opposed to party leadership and socialism. It brought charges against phenomena such as illegal organizations and magazines and the open publication of anti-party and anti-socialist speeches. According to Deng, these phenomena demonstrated that the class struggle

did exist and that its seriousness should not be underestimated. To solve these problems, Deng wanted to mobilize and organize people to act consciously and openly in waging an effective struggle against various influences disruptive to stability and unity. The document, in the name of preserving social order and stability, categorized the students' views and activities as counterrevolutionary and expressed the leadership's determination to eradicate the problem. It commanded the party and the people to be vigilant against and to take resolute measures to deal with anti-party, anti-socialist, and criminal activities.²

The document attributed the election disruption to the lack of serious propaganda and urged the strengthening of ideology:

Certain figures connected with illegal organizations have been particularly active lately, publishing unbridled anti-party and anti-socialist utterances under all kinds of pretexts. This danger signal should arouse the full vigilance of the whole party and the people and youth of the whole country. Strengthening ideological and political work and improving propaganda work already constitute an extremely important task facing the whole party for ensuring the smooth accomplishment of the current readjustment and consolidating and developing the political situation of stability and unity. The most important thing in improving party leadership is to strengthen ideological and political work.³

Before the election, Deng, in order to promote and realize his modernization policy, liberated the professionals from party control by requesting that the party organizations at all levels relinquish most routine administrative and

professional work to the government and the professional departments. This made it possible for professionals to attend to their own work for modernization without constantly being disturbed by party organizations which existed in every unit in China. Thus, he created a loosened atmosphere in which political and ideological work were not the biggest priority. Deng might have thought this was the reason that caused the backlash during the election, for he now was urging the party organizations to keep a firm hold on the principles and policies and to decide on the employment of important cadres. He also asked the leading organs of the party to devote most of their time and energy to ideological and political work.' Consequently, the party leaders who surrendered power earlier now regained it, and everything had to be done with the consent of the party leaders.

"Central Document No 7" targeted the field of literature and art. On April 20, 1981, the Liberation Army Daily carried an editorial which condemned the film script of "Bitter Love" by Bai Hua. Bai Hua was charged with expressing views against the socialist system and resenting the party and socialist motherland under the disguise of "love." "Bitter Love" was essentially an essay in artistic self-expression, but the sensitive leadership saw it as anathema to the party leadership and the authorities. The editorial in the Liberation Army Daily commented that

"Bitter Love" was not an isolated phenomenon, for it reflected the erroneous trend of thought of anarchism, ultraindividualism, and bourgeois liberalism to the extent of negating the leadership of the Party and the road of socialism.⁵ The writers and artists always had strong influences on Chinese society through their artistic work. By criticizing and punishing one of them, the party achieved the result of shutting the mouths of the rest. As one famous Chinese proverb went, "Kill the chicken to show the monkey." Bai Hua was a renowned writer in China, and his misfortune quelled the voices of those who held views different from the party.

"Central Document 9" was directed at people's publications and organizations. Number 9 Document of April 1981 instructed the provincial authorities to conduct investigations in all units, arrest participants in illegal groups, expel party members who supported them, and conduct a mass campaign of education against them.⁶ In response to the document about illegal organizations and publications, persons associated with the democratic movement who had escaped previous indictment were rounded up. Pressure from the Mainland led to the closing of some publications in Hong Kong that were critical of the Communist Party.⁷

The messages of these documents were further confirmed by the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party since the Founding of the PRC" adopted by the

Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee on June 27, 1981. This document firmly laid down the four principles as the guiding lines of the party and the people. Deng, in the Number 2 Document, said the anti-party and anti-socialist publications and activities were the result of not "positively, actively, justly, forcefully and convincingly publicizing the four basic principles and the leadership has failed to wage an effective struggle against gravely erroneous ideas opposed to the four basic principles."⁸ The four principles were initiated by the new leadership after Mao's death to provide a political framework in China's economic reform. These four basic or cardinal principles were: upholding the socialist road, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. Before the election, the four principle were merely written on paper but not actively reinforced. After the election, the leadership retrieved these four principles to justify their political stands. The importance of the four principles and the punishment for not implementing them were clearly stated in this meeting:

These four principles constitute the common political basis of the unity of the whole Party and the unity of the whole people as well as the basic guarantee for the realization of socialist modernization. Any word or deed which deviates from these four principles is wrong. Any word or deed which denies or undermines these four principles can not be tolerated.⁹

The reaffirmation of these principles sent a serious political signal to the masses that any action against them would be dealt seriously.

The Spiritual Pollution Movement

This meeting was followed by the most publicized attack on the democratic trend, the campaign against "Spiritual Pollution." This political movement was launched at the Second Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee in October, 1983. The term "Spiritual Pollution" referred to the unhealthy political and social tendencies allegedly creeping into China through its open policy for modernizations.¹⁰ It was defined by the leadership as "abstract propaganda of human value, humanism, and socialist vagaries divorced from Marxism-Leninism; spreading the thought of debauchery, of homicide, terrorism, fantasy and pursuit of a hedonistic and decadent bourgeois life-style."¹¹ The way to eradicate spiritual pollution was: to criticize all non-Marxist-Leninist ideas and speeches in the theoretical, literary, and art circles; to study "selected Works of Deng" and "anti-pollution" documents; to single out targets for criticism; ban all movie films, dramas, recorded and video tapes deemed as "unhealthy," and to ban all "outlandish apparel," including jeans and bell-bottom trousers and wearing long hair and permanent waves.¹² Essentially this

movement was aimed at those activities which disseminated all varieties of corrupt and decadent ideologies of the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes and which fostered sentiments of distrust toward the socialist and communist cause and to the Communist Party leadership. Deng Liqun, director of the CCP Central Propaganda Department, and Chu Muchih, minister, Ministry of Culture, were charged with the job of pushing the movement. The movement had adverse effects on China's economic reform in terms of industrial and agricultural output, on its efforts to absorb overseas Chinese and foreign capital, and on scientific research programs.¹³ By early 1984, when it became clear that the movement had threatened social stability and entrepreneurial peasants, intimidated intellectuals, and scared off foreign investors. In other words, the movement appeared to jeopardize the four modernization program on which the legitimacy of Deng and the party rested and consequently the leadership finally terminated its spiritual pollution drive.¹⁴

Higher Education Retrenchment

All these political maneuvers inevitably affected higher education institutions. The manner of communicating these documents made people feel that the party's primary targets were colleges, universities, and students.¹⁵ Though

Deng Xiaoping reaffirmed the policies toward the intellectuals and acknowledged that they were a force to rely on in the cause of socialism, for it was impossible to carry out socialist construction without culture and the intellectuals, he urged the Party to strengthen and improve ideological and political work and educate the people and youth in the Marxist world outlook and communist morality. As far as education was concerned, he persistently urged the party to carry out the educational policy that called for training students to be "red and expert," integrating the intellectuals with the workers and peasants, countering the influence of decadent bourgeois ideology, overcoming the influence of bourgeois ideology, and fostering the patriotism and the pioneer spirit of selfless devotion to modernization.¹⁶ To use his words, education should focus on "strengthen political education, education on the situation, ideological education or education on the outlook of life, and moral education in schools of all levels."¹⁷

Under these new guidelines and the directives, higher education institutions took several specific measures to respond. The students' election was brought to an end, activists were rounded up, a campaign against deviant thought took place in every university, and political education was tightened. Under "Central Document No 9," Red Bean, a literary periodical published by the students of the Chinese department of Zhongshan University in Guangzhou,

which lasted longest among similar publications, was forced to suspend publication.¹⁸

The enrollment screening criteria were altered to fit the intent of the new policy. On May 9, the Ministry of Education held a conference in Xian on student enrollment by institutions of higher learning. The conference laid down the regulations for "Student Enrollment by Institutions of Higher Learning," which were approved by the State Council and transmitted to the various localities for study and implementation. The "Regulation" asked all units to seriously conduct the political screening of applicants in accordance with the party policy. The students had to support the CCP, love the socialist motherland, observe discipline, and love to participate in labor.¹⁹ Before the election, these criteria also served as a way to recruit students. But like the four principles, they were never earnestly implemented. The leadership assumed that negligence in executing these standards contributed to the disruption of the election, and to change the situation it was necessary to set these standards ardently in place again.

Political and ideological training were intensified. As a second step to change the situation, the leadership strengthened political education in higher education institutions in various ways. Most universities had adopted annual appraisal measures to fortify students' ideological

education and moral evaluation. The specific yearly appraisal measure included the student's brief written ideological summary of his or her own political thinking, moral character, purpose and attitude of learning, sense of organization and discipline, and so forth. A group evaluation meeting was then held at which students carried out mutual criticism and self-criticism and arrived at a group evaluation of each student. Finally, the teacher in charge of each class would comment on each student, pointing out his or her strong and weak points and the direction he or she should follow in future. Beijing Normal University used this annual appraisal measure to ensure that every student's thought was on the right track, the track on which the party wanted them to be.²⁰

Shanghai Jiaotong University had established a student conduct evaluation system to appraise students' political thinking and moral accomplishment and to promote all-round development of students morally, intellectually, and physically. The conduct evaluation was mainly based on political thinking and moral character. The evaluation method was similar to that used by Beijing Normal University. It consisted of the students' brief written ideological summary and evaluation on himself or herself. The teacher in charge and the political instructor of each class then commented on the student's evaluation, gave a grade of each student's moral character based on facts and

his or her performance, and finally submitted the grade to the department and university for review and approval. The student conduct evaluation, done once a year at Shanghai Jiaotong University, was used as an important basis for appraising students upon graduation.²¹ This appraisal in turn greatly affected the job assignment upon graduation.²²

The Anti-Spiritual Pollution Movement, which was aimed at the literary circle, also had repercussions on higher education. Sure enough, when a chicken was killed, the monkey got the message and was hushed. The movement took place in the middle of a semester. The administrators ordered the faculty to change the curriculum that contained the content the movement was opposing. The professors became confused as to how to distinguish what was right and wrong. Was the European civilization course a part of "spiritual pollution?" Was it all right to talk about the Bible and Christianity in religious courses? Was it wrong to teach about paintings of various styles? During that period, it was very awkward for the faculty, especially those in humanities classes.²³ The library was another problem. In many universities, students were forbidden to borrow books written either by foreign writers or by Chinese authors that communicated subtle anti-Communism messages. The students were required to attend more political meetings to study the spirit of the documents regarding the movement and to express their political stands both verbally and on

paper. The four principles were again brought up to set a clear line of demarcation for the students as to what they could and could not do and the consequences of not following the rules. The party commanded school officials to encourage students to make strict demands on themselves and first be red and then expert."

It seemed that the Chinese political leadership was caught in a dilemma between the changes needed to improve the economy and changes needed in political structure to promote economic growth. The leadership did not know how to balance both. For fear of economic repercussion, the regime proclaimed vociferously that the policy had not changed. In his speeches, Deng tried to convince people that the policy of the Third Plenum would continue and that the changing of policies after the election did not resemble that of the "Cultural Revolution." It was true that the policy changes as a result of the election were not as drastic as those of the "Cultural Revolution," and economic reform continued in spite of a temporary breakdown. The movement against "Spiritual Pollution" was halted before it got out of hand completely. In spite of the intensified political control, particularly during the period of Anti-Spiritual Pollution, all other aspects of higher education institutions went on as usual. The continuation of the students' international exchange policy was one example. After all, what Deng wanted was to stop the anti-party and anti-socialist trend,

not the trend of the four modernizations on which Deng had bet his political fortune.

International Exchange Policy and the Students Abroad

The exchange policy initiated after Mao's death was one component of Deng's modernization program. The need to learn from foreign countries arose directly from the realization that, in the effort to accelerate the four modernizations, China must seek the help of other countries and that China was at present so far behind the industrial advanced countries she could not afford to lose any time in learning the technology and science. This need was stressed in practically every speech made at the education and science conferences.

As for natural science and technology, we are behind advanced world levels. We admit our backwardness but we refuse to lag behind. We must catch up. This requires us to be good at absorbing whatever is good in things foreign, take them over and turn them to our account and combine our learning from foreign countries with our own inventiveness so that we can catch up with and surpass advanced world levels as soon as possible.²⁵

Deng's call for the rapid development of the economy to realize the four modernizations and catch up and surpass the advanced world made the international exchanges program an integral part of the reform. It was the leadership's initiative to implement on a large scale the policy of

sending many students and visiting scholars abroad from 1978 onward as part of the open door policy and the drive for the four modernizations. The political changes that took place after the election in 1980 did not stop Deng's economic policy, and the exchange programs continued and expanded. The continuation of the exchange program policy was first reflected by the "The Sixth Five-Year Plan of the People's Republic of China for Economic and Social Development." The plan revealed the party's ambition to boost the economy through education and exchange. The plan confirmed that through the period of the next five years (1981 to 1985), China would send more people to study abroad. During these five years, efforts would be made to send fifteen thousand persons abroad, an average of three thousand persons per year. The plan speculated that within this period, eleven thousand persons would complete their studies abroad and return home. The regulation also stipulated that most of those sent abroad should study in graduate schools and that fewer should take undergraduate studies.²⁶ This made it possible for the students who participated in the election while undergraduates to benefit from this policy. Students sent abroad would major primarily in such specialties as the natural sciences and engineering technology, with emphasis on those fields in which China was weak or needed to explore. At the same time, the regime also wanted a certain number of persons sent abroad to survey and study politics,

economics, law, education, and foreign languages.²⁷

It seemed ironic that the regime would take such a political risk as sending the students to study abroad. The majority of the students went to those countries whose political systems were entirely different from that of China's. The leadership did foresee the negative aspects of sending the students abroad, for those countries would inevitably influence them in many ways. If unfavorably influenced, once the students returned to China, they would pose a political threat to the stability of Chinese society. Again, the Chinese leaders faced an impossible dilemma. Between the choices of cutting off international ties that would slow down economic progress or risking its political future, the party swung the pendulum and chose the latter with circumspection.

Having decided to send students abroad as the lesser of two evils, the leadership wanted to minimize the risk as much as possible. It issued a regulation that those students sent abroad should be strictly examined and selected with regard to their political and ideological levels, academic and foreign language competence, and health so as to guarantee quality. Deng Xiaoping at the 12th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in August 1982 cautioned the party not to let foreign, corrupt ideas sneak into China:

We will unswervingly follow a policy of opening to the outside world and actively increase exchanges with foreign countries on the basis of mutual equality and benefit. At the same time we will keep a clear head, firmly resist corrosion by decadent ideas from abroad, and never permit the bourgeois way of life to spread in our country.²⁸

However, the ideological levels of the students could change once given a chance. The ideas from abroad, decadent as the leadership perceived them to be, inescapably penetrated China with the returned students as the messengers.

Education exchange programs in the form of sending students were developed with Japan, several European countries, the United States, Canada, and other developed industrial countries. There were several main forms of international exchange in existence, and sending students and visiting scholars abroad was by far the most important one. In terms of its sheer scale and the expenditures incurred, as well as its long-term implications for the development of China's education, science, and culture, and the national economy and foreign diplomacy, this form had important implications.²⁹ In terms of the political consequences to Chinese society, this form of exchange held far more ramifications than anyone predicted. The exchange program with Japan began with Deng's visit to Japan in October 1978. The visit spurred interest in closer relations with Japan, and Deng called for learning from Japan and the promotion of cooperation in cultural and scientific fields and student exchange.³⁰ The Chinese

rationale to learn from Japan was rather straightforward. In the nineteenth century and in the years of rehabilitation after World War Two, Japan liberally imported foreign technology and quickly advanced to a stage where she overtook and surpassed the countries from which she had learned. China's situation was comparable with Japan's then. Therefore, learning from Japan would enable China to achieve what Japan had achieved through learning from others. Besides, Japan borrowed Chinese culture extensively in the early period of Japanese history, and it was all right for China to learn from Japan now. Japan hosted the largest number of Chinese scholars and students next to the United States, a total of 3,847 by the end of 1984, West Germany hosted 2,489 Chinese students and scholars on longer term programs, the highest concentration in any European country, Britain and France both hosted well over one thousand students by the end of 1984. Canada also hosted 1,452 students over this period of time.³¹

The United States was the nation which had most extensive educational and cultural involvement in China, at least in terms of participating numbers. Educational exchange programs between China and the United States began in July 1978 with the visit to China by an American Science and Technology Delegation led by Dr Frank Press, science and technology adviser to President Carter and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.³² What made the

exchange programs between China and the American government different from the rest was the openly expressed intention on the part of the American government to use educational relations with China for political purposes. Since the normalization of Sino-American relations in 1979, American officials had encouraged access to their educational and scientific institutions in the expectation that this would influence a new generation of Chinese leaders." Between 1979 and 1986, fifty thousand students and scholars from China came to study in the U.S, and were dispersed relatively uniformly across much of the country, although there were concentrations in New York and California." The continuation of Chinese students' struggle for political freedom abroad were centered in the United States as well.

The Student Movement in Foreign Countries

The Chinese student democratic movement abroad took the form of establishing organizations and publishing magazines during the years 1981 to 1984. As a result of Communist control and political repression after the election, many Chinese students decided to remain abroad instead of returning to China. It was these students who initiated the student movement for democracy abroad. The most prominent organization was the Chinese Alliance for Democracy and its magazine known as China Spring. A thirty-two year old

Chinese student, Wang Bingchang decided to go to the United States after receiving his medical degree from McGill University in Canada. Wang was the first government-sponsored student in North America to earn a doctoral degree since China began to send students abroad in 1979. When he received his degree, he came to the U.S. and decided to "abandon medicine and to devote myself to China's contemporary democracy movement."³⁵ Wang Bingchang was among over one thousand Chinese students who applied for political asylum between 1979 and 1982.³⁶

At a press conference in New York on November 17, 1982, Wang announced the inauguration of the magazine, China Spring, which was to serve as an organ to speak for the resurgence of the democracy movement, for democracy, freedom, human rights, and the government of law. It would operate as a bridge between Chinese at home and overseas. The intent and aspiration of the organization were expressed more explicitly by the founding statement which appeared in the first issue of the magazine:

China Spring will carry on the historical mission of this generation to fight against dictatorship and fight for the rule of law, democracy and human rights. The magazine "China Spring" will apply itself in exposing and criticizing the present system of China and examining China's past and future. It will introduce the social science, humanist thought, the political systems and the experiences of the democratic struggles of other countries in order to accumulate the experiences and theoretical basis for the changes of Chinese society.³⁷

The magazine had eight editors, of whom four were on the Mainland. The board of editors of China Spring decided to name eighteen political prisoners and founders of unofficial magazines who were still in prison as honorary editors.³⁸ The statement to the Chinese within China and abroad by the board of editors carried by the first issue of the magazine called on Chinese within China, overseas students, and overseas Chinese to unite together and participate in the endeavour for democracy.³⁹

In 1984, China Spring established the first organization for democracy. During the first International Conference of China Spring Democracy Movement, held in New York in 1984, over fifty chapter representatives of China Spring came from Hong Kong, Japan, Europe, and North America to attend this conference. At this gathering, the first democratic organization since the founding of the People's Republic of China was established -- Chinese Alliance for Democracy. This event brought China's democratic movement abroad to a new height by formalizing the dissident group. The principal objects of the Alliance were the implementation of a democratic political system that would rule China by law and the establishment of greater respect for human rights and freedom for the Chinese people.⁴⁰ The people who attended this meeting included Victor Sawicki, the author and the founder of the Polish-American Artist Association in the United States; Ralph Schoenman, the

Chairman for the Support of Polish Solidarity Movement Association, Olga Svintsovr, the representative of International Organization of Anti-totalitarianism; and James Seymour of the American Asian Association for Human Rights.⁴¹ The conference lasted for six days, during which the China Spring Manifesto was presented and the China Democratic Leagues Constitution was discussed and adopted. Wang Bingchang, the founder of China Spring, discussed the future tasks of the organization in the meeting.⁴² Soon after its establishment, the Alliance wrote an open letter to Zhao Ziyang, the Prime Minister of China who was coming to visit the United States at that time. The letter requested the Chinese Alliance for Democracy be recognized by the Chinese government, be allowed to operate freely in China, and that China Spring be published and distributed. The letter also appealed for the release of all political prisoners. It praised Zhao's economic policies, but warned him that political modernization was the only salvation for the eventual success of China's economic reform.

As most of the leaders of the alliance are citizens of the people's republic of China, we recognize and praise the economic progresses that have resulted from your administration's pragmatic policies. To lead China onto the road of true prosperity and strength, however, the present totalitarian system must undergo fundamental change.⁴³

Since its inception, Chinese Alliance for Democracy with its magazine China Spring had toiled among overseas

Chinese students and intellectuals to create an international network of Chinese dedicated to human rights and democracy in the motherland. Drawing inspiration from the Solidarity movement in Poland, the alliance pledged to use nonviolent means to promote democracy and improve human rights conditions in China, with the ultimate goal of transforming the existing totalitarian system into a democratic one. The organization started with a few members and expanded across fifty countries on the continent, developing a network encompassing thousands of students and overseas Chinese. It started to set up offices or networks first within the United States, from California to Houston, from Pennsylvania to Utah, then to Canada, Japan, France, Holland, Denmark, and Australia.⁴⁵ The organization, using the media of various countries, expanded its influence and held many press conferences. All overseas Chinese newspapers with the exception of Mainland China carried articles and editorials about the organization and the magazine. It caught the worldwide attention because of news coverage by major newspapers such as New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Montreal Gazette of Canada, Daily News of Japan, and Liberation Daily of France. It sponsored debates and lectures in several universities and promoted the understanding of the organization among Chinese students and foreigners.⁴⁵

China Spring endeavoured to fulfil its mission. The

circulation of China Spring surged from four thousand to twenty thousand. The magazine had managed to obtain and publish the diary of one of China's leading political prisoners and also distributed several recordings of famous pro-democracy speeches by Professor Fang Lizhi.⁴⁶ China Spring had become one of the best-selling Chinese-language publications among overseas Chinese intellectuals. The organization distributed magazines to students from Mainland China free of charge for a number of years. It got financial support from people who believed in its cause. Many people read China Spring. James Seymour, a researcher at Columbia University, said he gained confidence in China Spring when he was "pleasantly surprised to find that my Chinese laundry man reads China Spring. If he reads it, a lot of people read it. They are reaching the masses."⁴⁷ China Spring was smuggled to Mainland China and was dispersed secretly among students and people. As a student put it: "It is a comfort to know the fire of student democracy was still burning. Somewhere in this world, some Chinese are carrying on the torch of democracy and this gives us hope and light."⁴⁸

The organization and its magazine deeply annoyed officials inside China. In 1985, China Spring made international headlines when it sued the People's Daily, the Chinese Communist Party newspaper, in an American court for libel. In 1984, the People's Daily had referred to Wang and

others as "political prostitutes...swindlers who used patriotism as a pretext to racketeer overseas Chinese so as to feather their own nest...hypocrites who deserted their mainland wives and children in order to look for new lovers." The suit was still pending." Even Deng Xiaoping himself, in a speech to the Sixth Plenary Session, referred to Wang as China's most famous dissident. He accused him of "trying to lead China into bourgeois liberalization " and called him "representative of this trend of thought."⁵⁰ Before the students were sent abroad, the leaders cautioned them not to have anything to do with the organization and not to read the publications. Once they were in the United States, the Chinese counselors repeatedly warned the students to stay away from the anti-Communist and anti-Party counter-revolutionary organization and its magazine.⁵¹

There were several other organizations and magazines acting as voices of dissent for the democracy movement abroad. Following China Spring, there was the publication of Search by students from the western part of America. In March 1983, the students who studied in Japan published Chun Lei. The English translation would be Spring Thunder. Some students in New York started the publication of the magazine Quest.⁵² The chapter of China Spring in Japan also began the publication of another magazine Min Xin. People's Wish would be its English translation. It assisted China Spring and its organization Chinese Alliance for

Democracy to reach the students and overseas Chinese in Japan.⁵³ Some students from Mainland China together with overseas Chinese students and patriots from Hong Kong and Taiwan formed another organization, "New China Democratic Association" with its publication Democratic China. All these contributed to the student democratic movement abroad.

Chinese Intellectuals was another journal published in the United States by Chinese students. Liang Heng, the candidate of Hunan Teachers' College election, eventually came to the United States after marrying an American woman. His magazine, academic rather than polemical in content, was funded by a National Endowment for Democracy grant in 1984 and published in New York. It served as a literary journal that allowed intellectuals to express their views freely and to engage in debate and dialogue. The magazine touched the area of politics, philosophy, economics, literature, and history. It intended to promote diversity of Chinese academics and reforms. In 1988 and 1989, when the political situation loosened up, the magazine found a corner in Mainland China. It established an office in Beijing and contracted with a provincial press for printing. The first volume was published, won widespread support. The magazine continued its publication in the United States, uniting Chinese intellectuals and students through probing and studying deeper problems and providing a theoretical basis for the Chinese democratic movement.⁵⁴

The organizations and various magazines, with Chinese Alliance for Democracy and China Spring as the major spokesmen, had a strong impact on the Chinese democratic movement. They served as symbols of the continuation of the Chinese democratic movement that was suppressed inside China. By uniting the Chinese students scattered across the continents, by arousing the awareness of the overseas Chinese about the political situation in China and their patriotism, by smuggling messages into China through magazines, they became a strong force with which the top leadership in China had to reckon. In many ways, they had paved way for the major outbreaks of student democratic movements in later years.

The result of the election of 1980 made the party very cautious about its political reform program. Realizing the potential force of the people, most of whom were students, the party did everything in its power to prevent students' outbursts for political freedom. The fear of anarchy and political disunity was compounded by the fear of losing power. In the party's mind, its concerns for China were genuine and fears legitimate, and it was doing all it could to make China prosperous by accomplishing the goal of economic reform. The students felt differently. The political situation after the 1980 election was stifling. Unable to express its concerns inside China, the students who were sent abroad carried the mission. To a large

extent, what the students did abroad represented what the students at home would have done if the political situation had allowed them.

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CHAPTER IV

THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION OF 1986

The Chinese political climate experienced new shifts in 1985 and 1986. The thwarted economy, which threatened the entire program of Deng's reform, prompted long overdue changes. The emergence of a new generation of technocratic leadership, the discussion of political structural reform, and the enthusiastic participation of the political reform discussion of higher education institutions were the backdrop of the student democratic movement in 1986.

The Leadership Renewal

The renewal of the party leadership, the initiation of a new group of technocratic leaders, began at the end of 1984 and carried over to 1985. Since the crackdown of the student movement of 1980, China was in retrenchment. By the end of 1984, the leadership began to loosen political control to accelerate economic reform. In October 1984, Deng Xiaoping expressed at the meeting of the Party's Central Advisory Commission that the key to the ultimate success of his reform program was to discover and employ

talented people who were more flexible and less resistant to change. Accordingly, the party should promote young and middle-aged cadres, especially those in their thirties and forties, to leadership positions and persuade old cadres to be open-minded and vacate their posts.¹ Toward the end of 1984, the party media announced the fact that the general education level of China's forty-two million Communist Party members was very low: only 4 percent had gone to college; less than 18 percent had attended senior high school. Furthermore, over 50 percent of the party members failed to advance beyond primary school.² Education was only half the problem. The other half lay in the fact that leadership at all levels of the Communist Party was in the hands of elderly cadres recruited before 1949, the year the People's Republic was established.³ These leaders were now in their seventies and eighties; the majority of them clung to the past and were uneasy with the modifications introduced after Mao's death. Instead of being instrumental in the economic reform, they were fearful of its impact on the political arena and attempted to impede the progress of Deng Xiaoping's reform plan, the four modernizations of China. Deng Xiaoping, as the initiator of the economic reform and the one who charted the course of the country, was determined to get rid of the impediments.

The renewal of the leadership hence began and resulted in a series of major personnel changes at the central,

provincial, and ministerial levels. In a break from the system of life tenure that was in practice in China for centuries, cadres by the hundreds of thousands stepped down from leading posts. The retirements occurred across the board, all the way to the very top. Wherever needed, government ministers and party politburo and secretariat members were replaced by younger people picked for their flexibility and proficiency. Some 469,000 young and middle-aged people were prompted to the leading posts in party and government organs or the state-owned enterprises at or above the country level.⁴ During the same period, nearly 1.27 million senior officials, who joined revolutionary work before the founding of New China in 1949, retired from active service.⁵ These efforts reduced considerably the average age of leaders. The promotion of younger cadres also immensely improved the educational level of cadres, over 50 percent of whom had a college education.⁶ As Deng Xiaoping had contended, this new generation of leaders was indeed more liberal in thinking than its predecessors and was more eager to bring about changes. The result was a better mix in the leadership composition, combining experience with freshness. The step was a significant one, even though it did not eliminate all of the party elders and conservatives. The general public welcomed the change and anticipated that the new leadership would make a difference in the country's economic reform.

The Discussion and Debate of the Political Structure Reform

The transformation of the leadership potently influenced the political agenda of 1986. Beginning in 1986, China was besieged by the problems caused by economic reform. Facing the trying situation, the new leadership began to point to the underlying causes of economic problems--the defects in the Chinese political structure.⁷ The Chinese word "crisis" 危机 meant danger and opportunity, for it was also a widely held belief in China that where there was a danger, there was also an opportunity. The newly recruited leaders wanted to take this economic crisis --"danger"-- to push the political structure reform --"opportunity"-- so as to take China out of the predicament the economic reform had brought.

What made this political structure reform attempt more possible was the support from those above, including Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang, the party Secretary. Early in 1980, Deng Xiaoping voiced his concern that the problems of the party--such as bureaucracy and overconcentration of power--could impede the full realization of the economic reform plan.⁸ In 1986 Deng concluded that experience with economic reform had made it clear that bureaucratic impediments were the cause of the slow economic progress and that the ultimate success of the reform depended on the reform of the political structure. He went further to

declare that reforming the economic structure without renovating the political structure would not work.⁹ At a June 20 conference on improving the party work style, Deng argued that the problems of economic reform were the direct by-products of an outmoded political structure, that the unconditional power of the ruling party was the source of all unhealthy tendencies.¹⁰ Hu Yaobang, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China said that China's reform was a historical trend that could not be reversed. Without getting rid of concentrations of power, without streamlining administration, and without decentralizing decision-making powers, it would be hard to further economic reform and difficult to preserve the results achieved. He contested that the party should carry out economic reform together with political reform.¹¹

In June 1986, Deng and Hu entrusted the issue of political reform to the new reformers. Having long waited for this political breakthrough, they immediately put the reform of the political structure on the agenda. The new reformers recognized the resistance of the party conservatives, but they relied on the support from Deng and other leaders who were inclined toward political reform. The principal thrust of the new reformers' effort was to encourage public debate and discussion of the issues of political reform in order to assist with the understanding and clarification of both problems involved in political

reform and to find solutions. As in the past, each major reform or movement was preceded by the discussion and debate among leaders, theoretical workers, intellectuals of various fields, and students, and this was no exception. The effort to stimulate debate and discussion was meant to prepare the ground for the next stage of the political reform.

Since June 1986, people throughout China, under the leadership of new liberal leaders, engaged in discussion and debate about how to create a socialist political system that was efficient, democratic, and supported by a proper legal system. Several influential meetings or symposia were held for the exchange of ideas, and the results were widely publicized, setting models for other debates and discussions. A leading group on the reform of the political structure was set up, headed by Hu Qili and Wang Zhaoguo and endorsed by the Central Party School and the Academy of Social Sciences.¹² Wang Zhaoguo remarked in a meeting of graduates of the Central Party School that reform of the political system would represent an improvement of China's socialist system and an important part of the effort to build socialism with unique Chinese characteristics. The purpose of the reform should be to establish a better socialist political system having a high degree of democracy as well as efficiency and an improved legal system. He also urged the middle aged and young people recently promoted to positions of responsibility in China to support the party's

decision on political reform and be instrumental in implementing it.¹³

The topic of multiparty issue was discussed in another important meeting. Some speakers believed that the development of the forces of production called for corresponding changes in the superstructure and that the current economic reforms had made it necessary to revamp China's political system. Some speakers thought that supervision by the people was inevitable in a truly socialist democratic system. The Chinese Communist Party must listen to different opinions, criticisms, and correct its own shortcomings and mistakes. Supervision by different parties was conducive to strengthening of the party's leadership in socialist development and to the establishment of a highly developed democracy. The speakers suggested institutionalizing political consultation and democratic supervision to create a harmonious atmosphere in which people with or without party affiliation could feel free to speak out.¹⁴

A symposium on the theory of political structure reform was held in Beijing and involved one hundred leading theoreticians, academic and political figures. They pondered questions such as the relationship between political and economic reform, the nexus between the party and economic reform, the basic aim of political modernization, and functions of the Communist Party.¹⁵

The national research symposium on policy research of July 27 was another important milestone in the debate. Wan Li, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and a vice-premier, was among the leading political personnel who attended the meeting. The debate and discussion gained more impetus when extensive coverage was given to his speech entitled, "Making Policies Democratically and Scientifically--An Important Problem of Political Restructuring." The full text of Wan Li's speech was carried in People's Daily and other Beijing newspapers. Linking his remarks explicitly to the issue of political reform, Wan stressed that the previous methods of decision making were unacceptable and that policy making must rely on the most advanced scientific method. The systems for policy consultation, appraisal, supervision, and feedback had to be validated. He said the influence of long years of feudal society and small-scale production, combined with the backwardness of science, education, and culture, an imperfect legal system, the incompetence of officials, and shortcomings in their democratic style of work had left China without rigorous procedures and systems for forming policies. "The time to effect a change in this situation is overdue," he commented, "otherwise, our socialist system will remain imperfect and the national economy will not be able to develop continuously and steadily."¹⁶ Recognizing that intellectuals might be reluctant to challenge powerful

interests, Wan called for the adoption of legislative measures to give legal protection to those engaged in policy-related research, to guarantee their relative independence from political forces.¹⁷ His speech contained such forward and candid rhetoric:

To develop a scientific approach, it is necessary first to create a political environment in which democracy, equality and the free exchange of views and information are the norms of life. Leaders must respect other people's democratic right to their opinions without fear, including those that contradict their own. This is all the more important for soft science research, because it comprises mental work involving political as well as academic questions. Only in an atmosphere of complete academic and political freedom can one hope to form true judgements and feel free to speak out and argue with others.¹⁸

For the next several months, articles and speeches on the necessity of political reform flooded the Chinese press. As the mouthpiece of the party, the press contained articles expounding the views of the leaders. Beijing Review, an official magazine published in English and several other languages, was a typical example. During 1986, especially the latter half of the year, the magazine was full of articles and commentaries on political reform that not only affirmed the economic achievements of Deng's reform but also pointed out that, to reach the ultimate goals of modernization, China needed to change the political and legal systems, to transform people's mentality by overcoming the influences of old customs and outdated ideas, to separate the functions of the party from those of the

government, and to improve the standard of democracy and ethics of society.¹⁹

In the middle of 1986, the political mood in China was again strongly indicating the possibility of political reform. This time it was possibly even stronger than in 1979 when Mao just died. The top leadership seemed to be very serious about reform, and the new leadership was eager to push it as far as it could go. People from all walks of life, particularly intellectuals and students, were actively involved in the discussion and debate over political reform, looking for the theoretical basis for China's reform. With the strong backing from Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, and the young leaders, there was widespread optimism that the momentum for change would be sustained and that the conservatives would eventually have to give in. The urgency of political reform was felt in the air, and people were hopeful that after seven years of economic reform, the political restructure had finally come to the scene.

The Implication for Higher Education

The political ramifications for higher education institutions were immediately apparent. The replacement of the old leadership and the elevation of the young leaders made it possible for a generation of intellectuals to govern

their own academic units. This, coupled with discussion of political structure reform encouraged from the above, enabled the academic institutions that had been repressed since the elections of 1980 to come alive again.

There were two important documents that charted the direction of changes in higher education institutions. One of them was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1984. "The Reform of China's Educational Structure" called for dramatic changes in the country's university system, including the election of administrators to top positions by committees of academics rather than through appointment by the party. This was followed by a more critical one: "The Decision of the Reform of the Educational Structure," which came from the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on May 27, 1985. This document indicated that China's present educational system, educational guidelines, curricula, and methods were not congruent with the socialist modernization program. Over-strict control by government departments had made schools, particularly institutions of higher learning, lack vitality and initiative. Urging that administrative powers be given to universities and colleges, the document granted them autonomy in eight areas: school operation, finance, capital construction, personnel affairs, hiring and job assignments of teaching, teachers, scientific research, and academic exchanges with other counties. It also extended the power of the presidents, including the

right to recommend appointments, to dismiss deputy presidents and leaders at various levels, and to hire or fire teachers and other staff members. In addition, universities and colleges would have the right to readjust their curricula, draw up new teaching programs, and select their own teaching materials to meet social needs. The regulations also encouraged universities and colleges to expand academic exchanges with other countries by granting them more power in accepting contributions from abroad and deciding who would be sent abroad for the academic exchanges.²⁰

The Chinese press and leaders explicated and accentuated the importance of the documents. A People's Daily commentary said universities and colleges as the training centers for professionals should be relatively independent entities for teaching and scientific research. Their management should conform to the laws of education, not the rigid government administration.²¹ Vice-Premier Wan Li at the National Education Conference expatiated at length on the need to abolish traditional educational theories and teaching methods of the closed type that had fixed and ossified content. He argued that such theories and methods could produce students who were obedient and docile but who lacked creativity and originality. He encouraged higher educational institutions to learn from previous experiences, develop new theories, and open new fields of knowledge.²²

Scores of changes took place as a result of these two documents. For the first time since Mao's death, colleges and universities elected faculty to supervise the work of the executive committee responsible for general leadership. Academic heads of departments were also given greater voice in decision making. Faculty and students could openly discuss academic issues, matters of university administration, budget, and broad political questions.²³ The atmosphere created was one in which scientific and intellectual leadership was harmonized with the party supervision.

Although many of the institutions participated in the academic reforms, one higher education institution led the way. The Chinese University of Science and Technology, which was established in 1958 under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Technology (CUST), was a leading institution in both the basic and applied sciences. CUST was located in Hefei, Anhui Province. During October and November of 1986, the Chinese press carried a series of articles featuring the reforms being carried out in the internal administration and governance of this university under the new leadership. Fang Lizhi, the distinguished astrophysicist, became vice president of CUST while his colleague in physics, Guan Weiyan, was appointed president as a result of leadership reform.²⁴

Once in position, Fang and Guan devised a program of

academic reform for CUST. They proposed a plan that would implement a radical horizontal redistribution of power at the university. Instead of having all authority concentrated in the hands of top-level administrators, allowing them to control research funds, granting of degrees, and faculty promotions, Fang and Guan would spread out these functions among special committees and the departments themselves. A second reform involved establishing the rights of faculty and staff to audit all administrative meetings. A third area that concerned Fang and Guan was freedom of speech. They wished to create an open academic and political environment, to establish firmly the rights of students and faculty not only to speak out on campuses, but also to remain free from all forms of ideological repression. It was their conviction that anyone should be able to put up a handbill or hold an event on campus without having to seek prior approval from some higher authority. To foster openness that would have a cosmopolitan dimension, they also sought to establish as much contact as possible with the outside world. By the end of 1986, more than nine hundred faculty members and students from CUST had been sent abroad to visit, lecture, and study, and over two hundred foreign scholars had visited CUST.²⁵

The discussion of the political structural reform provided an opportunity for Chinese intellectuals to raise fundamental questions of academic freedom. Chinese

officials asserted during the debate on political reform that academic freedom was necessary if China were to advance rapidly in science and other intellectual fields. The official press stated that socialist China advocated academic freedom and called for a relaxed social environment in which people were allowed to express different opinions and constantly break new ground. The right to disagree over academic issues should be guaranteed to every academician. Both criticism and counter-criticism should be allowed, and nobody should resort to smothering ideas which conflicted with his or her own or to inveigh against those people who held different opinions.²⁶

Consequently, the academic reform in Chinese higher institutions toward internal administration was paralleled by the debates over academic freedom. Some academicians thought that it was possible to make a clear line of demarcation between political and academic issues and that complete freedom for debate and differences of views should be secured within the university community only on academic issues.²⁷ Others felt it was not possible to draw a clear line between political and academic issues and that the only effective guarantee of intellectual freedom was the democratization of the political system.²⁸ Su Shaozhi, the director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism- Mao ZeDong Thought in the Academy of Social Sciences, was very provocative in his remarks and was frequently cited in the

academic circle. He gave several widely publicized interviews in the autumn of 1986 calling for the strengthening of China's intellectuals as a social group and for the development of an independent mentality so that they "do not always yield to power and link their prospects with an official career."²⁹

Providing substance to the assertions, the party leaders supported controversial writings in economics and literature, the so-called Ma Ding and Liu Zaifu affairs. Both Ma Ding, a young lecturer in philosophy at Nanjing University and Liu Zaifu, the director of the Institute of Literature in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, had written articles that deviated from Marxism. Ma had questioned the continuing relevance of Marxist classics like Das Kapital in seeking answers to the practical problems of socialist development. He advocated the critical borrowing of Western economic theories to supplement Marxist analysis. Liu was critical of theories of literature and art that emphasized political over aesthetic criteria. Both of their writings were controversial but were allowed to be published and discussed.³⁰

By the autumn of 1986, there seemed to be a widely shared perception among colleges and universities that, if the profound effects of the economic reform were to continue in the desired direction, the party had to make changes in the political structure. The discussions and debates were

thought provoking and enlightening. The participation in the discussion of academic freedom and political restructure on the part of intellectuals, faculty members and administrators had animated the students. The students, more than any other group of people in China, were spirited and hopeful of the process and outcome of the potential political changes; they, more than any other group in China, were more daring and determined to see the tangible transformations taking place.

The Students

The students of 1986 were products of the time and had distinctive characteristics. Unlike the students of the 1980 election who were older and experienced, the students of 1986 were young and mostly high school graduates. The revival of the university entrance examination system had provided them with an opportunity to continue their education right after high school. Most of the students were eighteen or nineteen years old. The students of 1986 had come of age during the Three Beliefs Crisis--lack of belief in the party, lack of confidence in socialism, and lack of trust in leaders. Mao and his Cultural Revolution had greatly disillusioned the students. Deng's initial reform had given them hope, but the crackdown of the 1980 student election again disenchanting them. Many of them

became cynical and confused. "Lost Generation" was a term used by the society to describe those students.

The students of this time were exposed to many new thoughts and ideas. Beginning in 1978, China pursued a policy of opening to the outside world, which had led to a tremendous influx of new ideas and things. In spite of the tightened control of the party after the 1980 election, the students continued to maintain contacts with the outside world. After the curbing of the 1980 election, the party had hoped the higher education institutions could immunize themselves from Western influences and therefore adhere to the four principles the party had laid down in 1980. But the reality was contrary to what the party had expected. The students, in one way or another, were exposed to Western ideas and democratic thoughts through the interactions with those students who returned from abroad, those who came to China to teach, to do business, and to travel. The powerful media, such as Voice of America, also played an important role in bringing ideas and news that the students could not get from Chinese media. They had a deep sense of social injustice and a powerful feeling that something was very wrong with Chinese society as a whole--something that could only be corrected by fundamental changes in the system itself.

The renewal of leadership, the participation by higher education institutions in political reform discussion had a

profound impact on the students. New ideas of democracy and freedom, articulated so forcefully even in the official press in the summer and fall of 1986, had created a strong sense of expectation among China's university students. They seemed to be waiting for this occasion for a long time, and when it came, they welcomed with enthusiasm. Campuses were alive with a kind of unregimented political discussion that had been unknown for years. The open climate on campus, the opportunities to air grievances, the freedom of speech and writing, the introduction of interdisciplinary courses and new programs increased chances to attend liberal arts and science courses, lectures and other such activities pleased students.³¹ Stimulated, they lined up with the reformers and hoped for the fundamental changes.

One person who propelled students more than anybody else was Fang Lizhi. Fang Lizhi did not limit his reform within the circle of CUST. He was active in the internal administration reform of CUST as well as being vigorous in advocating the political structure reform outside CUST. In a newly relaxed political climate, not only was there a renewed sense of intellectual excitement, but student organizations were also allowed to book rooms, invite speakers, and put up posters freely to announce events. Fang Lizhi was frequently invited by many campuses as the guest speaker, giving speeches on how to achieve academic freedom and democracy. In his speeches and interviews on

Chinese university campuses, he stressed his two favorite themes--the role of the intellectuals as an independent force for social reform and the need to consider democracy as a right and not as a gift from above. He wanted to ensure freedom of thought as one of the principles of university education.³²

In 1985 and 1986, Fang seemed to turn up whenever and wherever there was open political discussion or ferment. As appeals for political reform reached a crescendo in the fall, Fang traveled to several more Chinese universities making speeches, holding discussion groups, and giving interviews. His calls for democracy were bolder and more uncompromising than ever, and his fearlessness more pronounced. In fact during the month of November, particularly in student circles, one began to hear Fang Lizhi's name spoken more and more often. In Beijing, Hefei, Huzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai, wherever he spoke, young students listened, recorded and even hand-copied his talks, and sent them on to other friends and student groups all across China, even to colleagues studying in the United States and Europe.³³ He addressed students on the subjects of democracy, reform, and modernization, rousing them to repeated rounds of applause. His speeches galvanized those university students to action. To students, Fang not only represented the intellectuals but also the new leadership.

The student movement after the 1980's election began.

The discussion and debate went on for a few months, but there were no specific steps taken by the leadership. The students assumed that the conservative group within the party was obstructing the progress of reform. Restless and determined, the students took the matter into their own hands. Enthusiastic discussion over political reform finally culminated in a massive outbreak of student demonstrations in November and December of 1986, the largest such movement since the founding of the People's Republic of China. At least seventeen Chinese cities were the scene of student marches which in some cases, involved up to five thousand students. If the top leadership had not initiated the political reform, if the higher education institutions and intellectuals had not actively participated in the debate and discussion, the students' hopes and desires would have lied latent and fervor unawakened. But the political overture from the party had provided them an outlet for their pent-up grievances and hopes.

The Student Demonstration of 1986

The Student Demonstration in Hefei

Not surprisingly, the student movement began in Chinese University of Science and Technology of Hefei, Anhui Province where Fang Lizhi served as vice president. Students from various universities and colleges of Hefei had

been dynamic participants during those months of intense and lively debate and discussion on the political structure reform. There was no doubt that Fang and the reform his university CUST carried out had stimulated the students' zeal about the prospect of political reconstruction and had prepared them for the coming incident.

The protest by the students of CUST started with the way the candidates for the local congress were selected.³⁴ The party had designated all the candidates for the December election to the county-level people's congress. Furthermore, the party leaders of CUST refused to let the undergraduates and graduate students contend with the appointed candidates.

In 1980, when the party tried free election of candidates for local people's congress, the students throughout the country vigorously participated in the election. In the process of the election, the students raised fundamental questions that challenged the power of the Communist Party and the legitimacy of the government. Intimidated, the top leadership launched a blunt crackdown on the students and the election. Since then, the party decided who should run for election, and the candidates they chose had to say and do what the party wanted them to. There was no toleration for differences in opinions or any kind of opposition to the party's policies. Between 1981 to 1985, all local candidates were designated from above. The

firm control of the party permitted no challenge to this way of election, and the students, though angry, were largely silent. But the year 1986 was different. In the process of the discussion of political democracy, this kind of election seemed to mock and ridicule the concept of democracy itself. The renewed momentum of the political structure reform discussion prompted students once again to challenge and defy the way the election was conducted.³⁵

The demonstration by CUST students thus began. Wall posters appeared on campus. Some of them quoted the Gettysburg Address "Government of the People, by the People, for the People."³⁶ On December 4, more than fifteen hundred students gathered on campus protesting to the party committee of the school the way the election was handled. At the rally, Fang delivered an inflammatory speech.³⁷ Three thousand of them marched to the offices of the provincial government, insisting on being allowed to run for office. The authorities capitulated. The demonstration was successful in getting local officials to postpone the election, and the students were permitted to nominate their own candidates.³⁸

The demonstration by CUST students caught the attention of the central party leadership. Vice Premier Wan Li came to Hefei and summoned all the leaders from institutions in Hefei to discuss the topic of how to "Run Universities Democratically." Though the discussion did not reach

concrete results, yet the concept of "Run University Democratically" fomented the students in Hefei. They were convinced that if the university were to be run democratically, then non-party candidates including students should be allowed to run for elections.³⁹

The initial success of the students from CUST and the discussion by Wan Li with school leaders enabled the students from other colleges and universities to join in the protest. The students from several universities in Hefei decided to demonstrate concurrently on December 9, the fiftieth anniversary of the Student Movement of 1936. On that day, students from various universities had taken to the streets and demonstrated, demanding freedom of speech and democracy from the Kuomintang Party and protesting against the aggression of Japan. Fifty years later on the same day, several thousand students from universities in Hefei marched toward the provincial building of Anhui. They shouted "Without democracy, without modernization," "Give me liberty or give me death," "We want democratic election," "We do not want democracy bestowed."⁴⁰ Standing in front of the building, the students gave speeches pointing out the flaws of a totalitarian system. In the meantime, they presented the letter petitioning to be allowed to have a democratic election.⁴¹

As it turned out, the student protest in Hefei ended peacefully and with good results. All elections were

postponed, and provisions were made for students to propose candidates of their own. But the demonstration did not stop there, because the student demonstration in Hefei immediately sent shock waves pulsing throughout the rest of the country.⁴²

The students of Hefei sparked the student democratic movement throughout the country. CUST students, ever since their demonstration on 4th of December, used letters and telephones to inform students from elsewhere, urging them to join them in the endeavour for democracy. Many universities across the country received leaflets and other materials issued in the name of the students of CUST.⁴³ On the day when the students from Hefei demonstrated in front of the buildings of the provincial government, students in Wuhan took to the streets in solidarity with the students from CUST. Twenty-five hundred students coming from Wuhan University and HuaZhun Institute of Technology surrounded the provincial building of Hebei Province. Under slogans such as "Without democracy, without modernization," and "We want freedom," they gathered in front of the building for over an hour.⁴⁴ Protests also broke out in Hunan Teachers' College where the 1980 student election had taken place. Fifteen hundred students demonstrated in the city of Changshai and shouted the same slogans. From December 9 to December 15, Sichun University, Nanjing University, Hangchow University, and universities in Shenzhen, the economic zone,

and students from Shanghai and Beijing all participated in demonstrations.⁴⁵ The student demonstrations in Shanghai and Beijing were the most significant in terms of its scale and effect.

The Student Demonstration in Shanghai

The students from Shanghai, the biggest city in the country, joined in the demonstration. During the second week of December, big character posters began to appear in sequence in Jiaotong, Tongji, and Fudan universities. The posters showed their support for the Hefei students and reprimanded the sluggishness of political reform and the stultifying bureaucracy of the party. Urging the students all over Shanghai to learn from Hefei students, the posters encouraged students to unite to protest so as to push the needed changes.⁴⁶ On December 18, thousands of students broke through the locked gates of Jiaotong University and marched off the campus to Shanghai's People's Square. They carried banners and placards with slogans similar to those of Hefei and Wuhan students: "Give us back our human rights," "Long live the power of the people," "Long live democracy."⁴⁷

Following the demonstration of 18 December, students from all major universities and colleges in Shanghai protested for three consecutive days. On December 19,

thousands of students from Jiaotong, Fudan, and Tongji universities flooded into downtown Shanghai. After a mass meeting in People's Square, they surged off to the buildings of the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress Standing Committee. Student representatives gave impassioned speeches, demanding freedom of press, and freedom of election, pressing a list of their requests on the Mayor of Shanghai. These demands were: the government should take no reprisals against demonstrators, acknowledge the legality and constitutionality of the marches, grant students access to the media to air their views, and speed up political reform in both Shanghai and the rest of the country.⁴⁸

When the Mayor of Shanghai failed to give satisfactory answers to the students' demands, the students went further with the demonstration. On December 20, an estimated thirty thousand students from almost all of Shanghai's major institutions of higher learning poured into the streets. Over fifty thousand Shanghai citizens stood by and cheered the students. This was the largest student demonstration since Mao's death. The students surrounded the People's Square and the Municipal Building and then marched to the American Embassy in Shanghai requesting that it take the message of their demonstration to the world and to the Chinese students studying abroad.⁴⁹ On December 21, gathering on People's Square, the students handed out a manifesto on three by five inch mimeographed slips of paper.

The manifesto was addressed to "our countrymen:"

Our guiding principle is to propagate democratic ideas among the people. Our slogan is to oppose bureaucracy and authoritarianism and to strive for democracy and freedom. The time has come to awaken those democratic ideas that have long been suppressed.⁵⁰

Another handout, an "Open Letter to All Fellow Citizens," was also handed to the students:

Between the past and the future, there is only the present. We can not rewrite history, but we can change the present and create the future. In the face of the reality of poverty and autocracy, we can endure. However, we can not just allow our children to grow up abnormally in shackles and in the absence of freedom, democracy and human rights. We can not just allow them to feel poor and abused when standing together with foreign children and the lack of democracy and human rights are the roots of backwardness.⁵¹

The students listened to speeches and read the handouts; the citizens demonstrated sympathy for the protesters by making small contributions of food and money to the hungry, cold students.⁵²

The student demonstration ended in Shanghai without either major confrontations with the police or with any concessions from the government. After three days of increasingly large and tumultuous street protests by university and college students, the Shanghai police finally banned all further demonstrations without a permit. This step effectively made any public protest illegal. On December 22, newspapers and radio stations publicized the Shanghai municipal government spokesman's answers to correspondents' questions on student demonstrations. The

spokesman commented that the majority of students took part in the demonstrations out of concern for reform and with good wishes for speeding up the process of socialist democracy. But he also cautioned the students not to jeopardize the country's stability and unity. This was the first time that the domestic mass media had given a detailed report on the student demonstrations and the first time that a local government had made known its position.⁵³ On the campuses of Shanghai's colleges and universities, officials posted large notices urging students to return to classes and halt the street demonstrations. The pressure from final exams, parents, and official warnings undercut the momentum of the protest, and most students returned to class.⁵⁴ Shanghai student demonstrations were nevertheless significant. They happened in the biggest city in China and caught the attention of a national and international audience. Many first-class universities and colleges were concentrated in Shanghai, and the movement from the students of these institutions was more intimidating to the party and better reverberated through other institutions of higher learning. Most important of all, the demonstration in Shanghai led to the movement erupting in the institutions of higher learning in Beijing.

The Student Demonstration in Beijing

The students from Beijing, the capital of China, also took part in the demonstrations. Starting on 12 December, the campus of Beijing University began to have wall posters supporting the students' demonstrations in Hefei and urging the Beijing students to renew the spirit of the Chinese student movement and join the Hefei students in this endeavour. The posters praised Fan Lizhi for his bravery in backing the students and his role in promoting the political reform.⁵⁵

On the evening of December 23, 1986, the night the students from Shanghai returned to their classrooms, the students from Beijing started their demonstration. Thousands of student protesters massed on the campus of Qinghua University to demand a debate with school officials on the question of democratization and shocked party officials. When their demands were not met, they took to the streets and marched toward People's University, chanting such slogans as "Maintain solidarity with our fellow students from Shanghai," "Long live freedom and human rights," and "Recognize freedom of the press and freedom of publication." A smaller group of bolder students broke off from the main body and tried to march on Tiananmen Square, but they were intercepted by police and turned back.⁵⁶

The demonstration in the center of Beijing worried the leaders, who took steps to control possible bigger demonstrations in the future. The People's Daily published

an editorial entitled "Treasure and Develop Political Stability and Unity" on December 23, the day Beijing students demonstrated. The Daily urged the students to offer criticisms and suggestions through different channels rather than demonstrations.⁵⁷ On December 26, the standing committee of the Beijing municipal people's congress adopted the Provisional Regulations Concerning Procession and Demonstration.⁵⁸ The regulations consisted of ten articles, one of which demanded that the organizers of processions and demonstrations file a written application with the public security organs of the locality five days in advance, and if they violated this regulation, security organs should adopt necessary measures to stop the demonstration. These regulations were published by Beijing Daily the next day.⁵⁹

On December 29, ignoring the ban on demonstrations and the new stridency of the party leaders, students from Beijing Teachers' University took to the streets.⁶⁰ The immediate cause of this demonstration was a dispute with university authorities whom students had caught ripping down wall posters and banners. Waving burning brooms as torches, carrying banners covered with slogans, and shouting "We want freedom," the students rushed off campus and marched toward People's University and Beijing University. There, they broke open the locked gates, poured inside, beating drums and washbasins, and exhorted the other students to join them. The demonstration wound up at Beijing University that

morning without further incident.⁶¹

January 1 brought the biggest demonstration in Beijing. That night, several thousand students, refusing to be intimidated, began a march on the spiritual seat of political power in China, Tiananmen Square. This spacious square is located at the heart of Beijing, in front of both the Imperial City and the Great Hall of the People. Tiananmen Square is a sacred place in the eyes of the Chinese people, and it is particularly meaningful for students. It was in Tiananmen Square that China's first mass student demonstrations touched off the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Students returned several times in later years, protesting the government's corruption and Japan's aggression. When the students reached the square this New Year's morning, they quickly held up well-prepared banners with slogans on them. There were student leaders and organizers in the procession, some of whom took the lead in shouting "Demand freedom of demonstration," "Abolish the 10 article regulations" and "Oppose tyranny."⁶² The Square was surrounded by thousands of police, organized into a human chain to block their way. Uncertain about what to do, the demonstrators milled about, chanted slogans "Long live freedom, give us freedom of the press," and "Long live democracy." The demonstrators soon attracted a much larger crowd of onlookers. The plainclothes police with video cameras tried to take pictures of the students.⁶³

Eventually, the police arrested and hustled away a group of twenty-four students leaders.⁶⁴

As word of the twenty-four arrests began to spread around college campuses, students at Beijing University reassembled to demand the release of the detained demonstrators. "Return our comrades, Return our comrades," they chanted in front of the house of the university President Ding Shisun. When President Ding finally appeared, he was presented with a list of demands, which included release and amnesty for the arrested students, a guarantee that no reprisals would be taken against other demonstrators, and a promise that access to the media would be given to student representatives so that the viewpoints of the demonstrators could be explained to the Chinese people. Student representatives claimed that a boycott of classes would be carried out if the demands were not met. President Ding, claiming that he was in touch with Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong, promised to consider the requests. It was almost midnight when he returned and announced to cheers that the detained Beijing University students would be released. When it was learned that the promised release did not pertain to non-Beijing University students who had been arrested, a crowd once again assembled to march on Tiananmen Square. In the early morning hours, the Vice President Sha Jianxun, obviously fearful that if student demands were not met, the protest would grow in both size and intensity, went

into the streets to announce to the students that the government had agreed to release all of those arrested.⁶⁵ On January 4, five hundred students of Beijing University gathered and burned copies of Beijing Daily. Congregating on campus under a banner that said, "Beijing Daily go to hell," the students, in a clearly intended slap at the party's desire to foster an image of modernity abroad, burned copies of the hated newspaper in front of foreign reporters, who promptly relayed photos of the incident around the world.⁶⁶ As a bonfire sent pieces of flaming paper skyward, students in dormitories threw other burning copies from windows.⁶⁷ Beijing Daily, which was published by the city authorities, had been denouncing students for staging demonstrations. The newspaper portrayed their demands in a very unflattering manner:

The ideological roots of the disturbances have been the poisonous ideological trend of bourgeois liberalism. They want to use the false democracy to create anarchy.⁶⁸

Students, furious at the way they had been portrayed in the media, indulged in one last bit of political revenge. This symbolic action was also an expression of their resentment toward the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.⁶⁹ The bonfire turned out to be the last protest of the whole movement. Providentially for the government, nationwide examinations were about to begin, after which students were to take their month-long winter

vacations over the Chinese New Year. In the highly competitive academic environment of China, few students could afford to ignore schoolwork any longer. On top of all this, the party made known its position on the demonstration. With sadness and disappointment, the students ended the month long protests.⁷⁰

The Party's Reaction to the Student Demonstration

The party's reaction to the student demonstrations was at first tentative and cautious. The demonstrations, which commenced in Hefei by CUST students and ceased in Beijing by Beijing University students, lasted for a month. The views as to how to handle the students and their demonstrations were split between liberal reformers and conservatives, and the central figure of Chinese politics, Deng Xiaoping, did not give specific directions until the students in Beijing protested. Hence, the responses by the authorities to the student demonstrations were at first mainly uncertain and discreet. Colleges and universities in Hefei postponed the election. The authorities in other parts of the country attempted to calm the students by persuasion. Sometimes the leaders even sounded encouraging and sympathetic toward the students. "Student demonstrations will not be suppressed as long as they are not against the law," commented a State Education Commission official when being interviewed by

Xinhua News Agency as the students demonstration broke out in Hefei, Wuhan, and Shanghai.⁷¹ When asked to expound on the fact that students were demanding democracy and freedom, he explained that development of socialist democracy had been a constant policy of the Chinese government, because it was adopted as an important plank in the restructuring of the political system by the party. He remarked that "it is understandable that colleges students should be concerned about the restructuring of the political system and hope to express their views on these issues."⁷²

When the demonstrations rocked Beijing itself, Deng spoke out, and the conservatives prevailed. The demonstration Tiananmen Square in the heart of in Beijing, challenged the central government. Deng finally decided to make use of the hard-liners, the conservatives, to halt the demonstrations. According to him, the crackdown was for the benefit of the country. His fears of this student demonstration were similar to those of 1980 student election. If the students had got what they had asked for, not only would the country lose its stability and unity but also the unchallengeable primacy of the party. In spite of his willingness to push for the political reform, Deng could not let the students get what they demanded. There were restrictions imposed on the political reform. There was only so much freedom that could be given and the students could not overstep the limits. Although Deng was far from

being an outright Maoist hard-liner and had himself initiated the political reform, there were limitations to his flexibility. His tenacious commitment to his four cardinal principles: the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialism, the leadership of the Communist party, the ideology of Marxism--Leninism and the thoughts of Mao Zedong, and his animosity to what was known in the party circles as "bourgeois liberalization" and "wholesale Westernization" were evident in 1980 election crackdown. The stance of Deng toward the 1986 student demonstrations again revealed his attitude toward those who violated his four principles and his aversion toward those who advocated Western democracy. Deng might have sincerely believed that Western democracy was not applicable to China's situation and the only way to curb the chaos resulted from the economic reform was to follow his four tenets. Deng Xiaoping ordered the Communist Party committees at all levels of the government to give new importance to the task of opposing bourgeois liberalization. Just as he had joined the hard liners and turned against the students in 1980 when the election threatened his concept of social stability and no longer served his political purpose, he took the same stand in 1986.

The crackdown began, ending the party's seven-month experiment with political liberalization. Deng's speech of 1980 against the student election was reprinted over and

over in the official press. A special meeting of the party leadership was convened on December 30 to discuss the student unrest during which Deng revealed his position on the demonstration and gave orders to arrest the student leaders.⁷³ The party relied heavily on its media to get the message across. Following the meeting, the Chinese press, the party mouthpiece, was barraged with articles criticizing the students. Speeches by conservative leaders denouncing the contaminating influence of Western political values and free expression swamped China's newspapers and television news reports. The term "bourgeois liberalization" had become the pejorative phrase to describe any Western-style ideas or actions. Although repeating their views that the students' supposed embrace of the West was politically corrupt, these conservatives had also vigorously championed the virtues of the Communist Party, the legitimacy of its dictatorship, and the role it must play in the life of the country.⁷⁴ The conservatives also managed to close some of newspapers, many of which regularly published divergent views on a range of economic and political matters.⁷⁵

The political climate signaled a major change of direction for the Chinese leadership. After Deng Xiaoping sided with the conservatives and began a crusade against bourgeois liberalization, the students began to be concerned about the political fate of those liberal reformers who sided with the students and who really meant to push genuine

political restructuring in China. Two weeks after the student demonstrations, to quell any sign of liberalism, Deng Xiaoping relieved the Communist Party Secretary Hu Yaobang, the second-most powerful man in China, of his post. He was accused of failing to combat bourgeois liberalization and going beyond the party guidelines in promoting an acceleration of political reform. Criticism of Hu focused on his alleged misguided ideological leadership. In particular, he was censured for his tolerance of or even opposition to the anti-spiritual pollution and anti-bourgeois liberalization movements. Regarded as a principal defender of a freer intellectual climate, Hu had been an important spokesman for the reform of political structure during the previous few months. As the second-most influential person in the top leadership, he was the representative of a energetic group composed of the young liberal reformers. Such a startling shake-up in the Communist Party hierarchy had not been seen in nearly a decade, ever since paramount leader Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1979. It was all the more astonishing because Hu, had been handpicked by Deng to lead the party and was widely thought to be in line to succeed the eighty-two-year old leader.⁷⁶ In China, expulsion from the party represented a severe form of political punishment for anyone in a position of leadership. This motion was a relentless personal onslaught against Hu Yaobang and was a harbinger of what was

to happen next.

After the replacement of Hu Yaobang, the party initiated a new campaign of criticism against those liberal reformers and intellectuals who had encouraged or permitted departures from the political orthodoxy and sympathized with the student demonstrations. The party concluded that the result of the demonstration was the spread of bourgeois liberal thought on the part of intellectuals and the fact that some leaders had shown weakness in fighting it. Intellectuals were put on notice that the party would not permit them to explore new political ideas or allow them to question the tenets of the Communist Party as they had in recent months. It warned that the Chinese regime would insist upon rigorous obedience to the four cardinal principles.⁷⁷ Just a few months earlier, the party had loosened the ideological bonds that hobbled intellectual and artistic expression. Now the party reversed its decision and the intellectuals were again the major victims.

As if the criticisms and warnings were not enough to bridle the pernicious inclinations of the intellectuals, the party began a series of purges. The purge of these intellectuals came amid a stream of castigation in newspapers and on television against any intellectuals who demonstrated attitudes sympathetic to Western thinking or values and supported the students. Fan Lizhi, not surprisingly, was dismissed from his vice presidential post

at CUST. His crime was his speeches that defamed the party's leadership, slandered the socialist system, and supported the student demonstrations. CUST's president, Guan Wiyang, was also removed from office for failing to restrain his subordinate and for being responsible for the nationwide bad influence caused by the student unrest at the university.⁷⁸ The party also dismissed two other men, Liu Jixi, the president of the Academy Science, a structural scientist, and Yang Dongsheng, the Academy's vice president and a ceramic chemist. The Academic of Science, which was made up of about one hundred institutes with nearly forty thousand scientists, was responsible for the appointments and control of the CUST.⁷⁹ Their offenses were the appointment of Fang Lizhi to the vice presidential post in CUST and the failure to rein in CUST when the demonstrations broke out. Liu Binyan, a famous Chinese writer, was ousted from the party for having criticized corrupt officials in his writing. Wang Ruoshui, a leading theoretician, was sacked for arguing that alienation or public malaise could occur in a socialist society just as it could under capitalism. Zhu Houze, the Communist Party's propaganda chief and a proponent of liberalization, was also dismissed.⁸⁰ In contrast with the purges in the leadership and in the circles of intellectuals, the students' punishment was mild and symbolic. Having eliminated the top leaders and important intellectuals, the party turned to the

students. One thing the party repeated over and over was that the students were a group of innocent youngsters who did not know what was going on. They were merely led astray by the bad elements, namely people like Hu Yaobang and Fang Lizhi. Stopping the influences of these bad elements was one remedy to prevent students from doing things which would harm the Communist Party and its power. The other way was to intensify ideological education. Once more the emphasis was on an all-round education that would develop the students physically, intellectually, and morally. More political education sessions were added. University students had been required to attend political lectures on Marxism and Leninism. During spring and summer vacations, some university students were sent to work on farms or in factories while others carried out social surveys in rural and backward areas to give them a more realistic picture of life outside "the ivory tower." In September 1987, military training was once more emphasized in schools to make students more disciplined and to prevent outbursts of the movement.⁸¹

The party did punish one particular student. One of the students educated in the United States was detained as a demonstrator. The student, Yang Wei, returned to China after receiving a master's degree in molecular biology from the University of Arizona. He was arrested on January 11 in Shanghai after taking part in the student demonstration in

December. He was put under arrest and charged with counter-revolutionary activities.⁸² To the Communist Party, Yang Wei was not an ordinary student, for he represented the West and western education where bourgeois liberalization originated. Punishing Yang Wei sent signals to those abroad as well as at home--the party would not tolerate the demagogues and agitators who were under the degenerative influences of the West. Yang Wei was not the only student who returned home and participated in the demonstration, but the party used its old tactic--to punish a few to show the rest while avoiding alienating more people than necessary--a tactic that had worked for rulers in China throughout history.

The Chinese students who had been sent abroad over the years had been concerned about events unfolding at home. After the crackdown on the student election of 1980, many students abroad, particularly those in the United States, had been strong proponents for the Chinese political transformation. They were very hopeful of China's future as a result of the relaxed political atmosphere from 1985 until the end of 1986. During this period, students scanned the Chinese press, talked among themselves, and became more optimistic because of the increasingly liberal atmosphere that prevailed back home. The Chinese Alliance for Democracy, with its magazine China Spring, played an important role in this movement. According to statistics of

the organization, for every four students abroad, one would be in possession of the magazine. Those who returned to China would either bring physically or introduce verbally the magazine and the ideas the magazine conveyed. More than ten thousand copies of the magazines were smuggled into China each month. The students from Hefei and Wuhan who were studying in the United States tried to get the magazines to CUST and other students via Hong Kong.⁸³ It was with great anticipation that they observed the whole process of the student demonstrations at home.

It was also with a real sense of shock and apprehension that Chinese students abroad heard of the fall of Hu Yaobang, the expulsion of Fang and the intellectuals from the party, and the arrest of Yang Wei who was just like one of them. On January 20, 1986, more than a thousand Chinese students studying in the United States took the unprecedented step of endorsing an open letter to the leaders of China expressing concerns over recent events and condemning the purges of the liberal reformers. This was the first time that a substantial number of Chinese students in North American had used their names in a letter as such. Copies of the letter were delivered to Chinese officials and to two Chinese newspapers in New York.⁸⁴ When the government ignored the letter, the students felt helpless and angry. The fate of Yang Wei cast doubts in the minds of many as to whether to return to China upon graduation.

The student demonstration of 1986 was also the outcome of the Chinese political milieu. What had stirred up the student interests in protest was again the party's own call for political reform. To a degree, the students saw themselves as spearheading the drive to push the political reform to help the liberals including Deng to accomplish their purposes. As students who participated in the demonstration of 1986 later said when asked why they had taken to the streets:

We were responding to the call last July by Deng Xiaoping for political reform. It seemed that the top leadership favored the political reform and we were encouraged by the press which carried articles on the reform almost everyday. The students had hoped that their demands and demonstration would help Deng's reform. The relaxed political climate that saw famous intellectuals criticizing the Party also gave students the impression that dissent would be tolerated by the government.⁶⁵

It was true that the party called for political changes, but not the changes demanded by Fang Lizhi and the students. It was hard to tell whether the party would accept the requests made by the intellectuals and the students in the future, but what the party and Deng wanted now were the gradual and slow changes. The party wanted the country to go in one direction in its way, at a slow pace, and the students wanted the country to go in the same direction, but in their way and at a much faster pace. Both had good intentions, both had legitimate arguments. Nonetheless, their disputes seemed to be impossible to

solve.

The reassertion of political control after the demonstrations in 1986 posed a problem for the leadership in that it was still committed to rapid economic modernization. The party vowed to continue the open door policy and economic reform. Unlike the crude phantom of arrest and imprisonment with which students were threatened when each crackdown took place, this one ended with the dismissal of several liberal reformers and intellectuals. The party did not want to alienate further those who were essential to economic reform. The continuation of the economic reform in the country and curricular changes that would hold promises for economic reform in higher education institutions evinced more political storms ahead.

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CHAPTER V

THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION OF 1989

The political climate after 1986 took yet another shift. Soon after the suppression of the 1986 student demonstration, the party began to loosen its hardline stance, attempting to curb the crusade against liberalization for fear of a backlash on China's economic reform. The student demonstration of 1989, the biggest in the history of modern China, was once again the consequence of the party's own call for political restructuring to carry on the much needed yet problem laden economic reform.

The Political Situation After 1986

Since March 1987, the tendency toward continuing reform in the economic and even the political domain placed the trend toward conservatism. The political regrouping after the student demonstration of 1986 had one blessing in disguise. Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese premier who replaced Hu Yaobang as general secretary of the Central Committee, was himself a liberal reformer. Beginning with a speech on January 29, Zhao sought to restrict the campaign against bourgeois liberalization. He emphasized that opposition to

bourgeois liberalization would be confined to the party, handled mainly in the political and ideological fields, and would not halt the ongoing reform.¹ The Fifth Session of the Sixth National People's Congress, the highest organ of state power in China, was held in March and April 1987. The meeting confirmed Zhao Ziyang's position on various issues. Zhao wrote a report entitled On the Work of the Government. While taking into account the importance of political stability and unity, Zhao emphasized that

without democracy there will be no modernization, that democracy must be institutionalized and legalized and that conscientious efforts should be made to promote democratization in the political life of the Party and the state, in economic management and in social activities as a whole.²

None of these could have happened without Deng Xiaoping's change of heart. Deng remained the only person who could wield power in the party after Mao's death. Deng's dilemma between economic reform, his brain child, and political restructuring, was profound. Since 1979, his policy repeated a cycle of advance and retreat. This time, Deng, annoyed by the conservatives' over-zealousness in the participation in severe attacks on liberalization and bourgeois influences, concluded that the campaign should not go too far.³ In January 1987 right after the student demonstration, he declared that the tendency of rightism was a greater danger than leftism. "Leftism" was defined as rigid ways of thinking and a lack of understanding of the

reforms and opening to the outside world, while "rightism" meant the tendency to reject the four cardinal principles of the party.⁴ Evidently, Deng in January was fearful of those liberals who favored political reform more than those who were against it. By April he had reverted to the view that leftism or the conservative's were more dangerous to his economic reform.⁵ This was similar to the stand he had taken during 1983 when the movement of Spiritual Pollution launched by the conservatives went too far. The reversal of his position on this occasion underscored a strong resolve to get on with the task of economic reform.⁶

Deng's viewpoint was further manifested when talking with a member of the central Presidium of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on June 12. During the talk, Deng said his reform was comprehensive, including the economic and political fields. The political reform was to rejuvenate the party, government at all levels and other organs, to get rid of bureaucracy, and give power to the people.⁷ The tone of his talk reflected the position he took before the crackdown in 1986.

Several other events manifested the changing political tone of the party. Fang Lizhi, after being expelled from the party and his vice-presidential post in CUST, was transferred to Beijing from Hefei. He continued as a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and was made a research fellow at the Beijing Astronomical Observatory. A similar

situation happened to Guan Weiyan, Fang's associate, and writers, such as Wang Ruowang and Liu Binyan.⁹ This led the Chinese news media to conclude that "the struggle against bourgeois liberalization will not affect the party's policy of respecting knowledge and talented people," and the policy of "letting a hundred schools of thought contend" will not change."⁹ These incidents sent a message to the public that this political movement by no means resembled the one during the Cultural Revolution when all intellectuals who held opinions different from the government were victimized. These occurrences also evidenced the party's unwillingness to distance further the people it needed most for the development of the country and the effort to eradicate the damage caused by the crackdown in 1986.

The political climate came to parallel that of 1986. Several key newspapers and journals carried Deng's old articles on political democracy. The media coverage of Deng's earlier speeches on political reform revealed that the leadership meant what they said in 1986 about political restructuring, and after a temporary setback, the political reform would go on after all. On July 1, the 66th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, the major Chinese newspapers republished a 1980 speech by Deng Xiaoping entitled "On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership."¹⁰ In a commentary, Ren Min Rei Bao described the republication of the speech "as an important

ideological preparation for the 13th National Congress of the Party."¹¹ Many people expected that an overall plan for the reform of China's political set-up would be formulated at this meeting, which would open in October.¹² A few days before the opening of the 13th National Congress, Premier Zhao Ziyang was interviewed by NBC news anchorman Tom Brokaw in Beijing. Zhao reaffirmed that the pace of reform would be expedited, that the success of the reforms depended on the leadership's ability to get rid of the interference from conservative thinking, that the intellectuals who had been expelled from the party would continue to be respected and that they would use their talents in their respective fields.¹³

The 13th Party Congress of October 25, 1987 was a milestone in the course of reform. Zhao Ziyang made a report to the congress on behalf of the Central Committee. To justify the economic reform that deviated from the Communist doctrine, Zhao came up with an official ideological justification. He defined China as being in the primary stage of socialism. Because China was in this stage of development, it should accomplish industrialization and commercialization, socialization, and modernization of production, which many countries had achieved under capitalist conditions.¹⁴ As the fundamental aim of the primary stage of socialism was to develop the economy, China should engage in reform, adhere to an open door policy,

strive for a market economy, and encourage democracy that was essential to economic reform.¹⁵

The deepening of the ongoing reform of the economic structure makes reform of the political structure increasingly urgent. The process of developing a socialist commodity economy should also involve the building of a socialist democracy. Without reform of the political structure, reform of the economic structure can not succeed in the end.¹⁶

This meeting was significant to Chinese political reform. In the report, Zhao also called for separating party and government functions, delegating power that was over-concentrated to lower levels, reforming government organs to solve the unwieldy administrative structure, reforming the personnel system, strengthening the socialist legal system, and establishing a system of consultation and dialogue.¹⁷ Zhao's report reflected Deng's position prior to the 1980's election. As in the past, the general public believed that meetings as such were signs of which line the party took. The tone of Zhao's reports told them that China was once again heading for more and speedier reforms in the political and economic fields, which would in turn help its modernization efforts.

Zhao Ziyang took several measures to reinforce the directives of the 13th People's Congress. To eliminate possible resistance from the propaganda organs where the conservatives had entrenched themselves and to let his theory of the primary stage of socialism go without

opposition, he forced several conservatives to retire, closed the major propaganda magazine, Red Flag, and replaced it by Seeking Truth from Facts.¹⁸ In addition, it was officially decided that the portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin would not be publicly exhibited in Tiananmen Square after the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1989.¹⁹ With all these changes, the political situation of 1987 returned to the way it was before the crackdown in 1986.

The reformers, under the leadership of Zhao Ziyang, entered 1988 in an offensive position. At the beginning of the year, Communist Party leader Hu Qili stressed the importance of emancipating the mind, saying the primary ideological task for 1988 should be to achieve a deeper understanding of Zhao Ziyang's report to the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.²⁰ The 7th National People's Congress was held in April of 1988 in Beijing. This Congress was even more open and democratic than the one a year earlier. Reform was stressed as the most important job, and non-party deputies attended the meeting. More than four hundred Chinese and foreign reporters covered the meeting; there were many news briefings and live TV broadcasts and some foreign news media commented that this meeting showed that China was making steps toward democracy.²¹ The representatives voiced their

opinions of nominees, and the result had been that few nominees were elected unanimously, which broke the tradition of Chinese congress meetings where everybody would raise hands and agree with everything the leaders proposed.²²

Zhao Ziyang in this meeting repeated his call for democracy in party and state work so as to maintain a sense of continuing reform momentum. He called for greater openness in party and state affairs, recommending the early establishment of a spokesman system for dialogue and consultation to solicit opinions of people from all walks of life on important draft laws and plans for major reforms such as price readjustment. He said people should know the truth about major events affecting social stability and policies, and things must be explained through extensive dialogue so as to enlist people's support and cooperation.²³ The meeting was full of debate and even dissent. The future for political reform looked as bright as it did in 1986.

The meeting was followed by the boldest economic reform since 1978, price reform. Price of commercial goods had always been controlled and regulated by the government, which hindered the progress of Deng's economic reform. Liberal reformers believed that price reform, the market control of price, had to be instituted to provide a situation conducive to other economic reforms. Chinese economic reform needed a boost, and some believed this was the key. At the end of May, reformers pushed their boldest

move, price reform, supported by Deng. But the price reform proved to be premature, and inflation and corruption ran rampant as a result. Political attempts to deal with the situation had gone in two directions. The dominant one had been one of restriction and recentralization advocated by conservatives, and the other was to support the continuing effort to maintain the momentum of reform from liberals. After experiencing some setbacks in economic reform, particularly this price reform, Zhao and other liberal leaders became convinced that political reform must take higher priority. Organizational reform should precede price reform. To introduce price reform, it was necessary to restrict the power of the government to intervene in enterprise. It was also imperative to have the system of checks and balances to "formulate laws and regulations to make government more "transparent" and guarantee the honesty of officials."²⁴

The Chinese economy before Deng had been socialist centrally planned economy. The problems caused by this central planning were many such as continuous shortages of wanted goods, massive waste, old technology and lack of incentives.²⁵ To solve these problems and realize the goal of Four Modernizations, the government began partially marketize, privatize the institutions, and partially break down the institutions of central planning. But the government did not intend to go all the way to the market

system but only to a socialism with Chinese characteristics.²⁶

The government believed this socialism with Chinese characteristics would be most beneficial to China. The consequences of a complete capitalist market system would be as devastating as the consequences of a rapid political reform. But the reluctance to go all the way resulted in inflation, as the price reform indicated, unemployment and income disparities while the half-way market system did not provide means to counteract these deficiencies.²⁷ The essential cause of the economic failure after 1984 "has been the disjointedness and incompleteness as well as hesitant pace of the changes resulting in the emergence of a nonsystem that has unintegrated often incompatible, and internally inconsistent and unrelated parts of market and plan."²⁸ "The only answer is for the reforms to go all the way to the market system at both the levels of institution and ideas."²⁹

China entered 1989 facing two realities. The relaxed political climate ironically coexisted with deepening problems of economic reform, corruption, and public dissatisfaction. On the one hand, the anti-liberalization crusade, which started after 1986, faded, and political control was slackened. The party was politically tolerant, and its tolerant attitude permitted intellectuals and students once again to stand up and speak out as in 1986.

On the other hand, the failure of price reform, the uncertain prospect of political reform, widespread corruption, and inflation put China into a state of unrest. The loosened political climate made it possible for liberals, intellectuals, and students to test the limits of constraints and to push for more reforms, while the failure of economic reform gave conservatives an opportunity to reclaim control.

The mood of the general public, particularly intellectuals and students, was that of disappointment and distrust. The battle between liberals and conservatives as to how to chart the course of the country became fiercer than ever. People perceived the party as divided into two groups of leaders who wanted to pull China in two different directions, while Deng sat on the throne, waving his flag one day toward one group and another day toward the other. What was most discouraging was that the failure of price reform demonstrated that further economic reform would not be possible unless political reform was attempted; yet the conservative group hampered every endeavor to achieve that reform, because it feared the rapid political reform would throw China into utter chaos. There was a deep admiration of Russia which, under the leadership of Gorbachev, was conducting the kind of political reform the Chinese people, particularly intellectuals and students, had hoped for, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of

election, and freedom of democracy. There was a sense of chaos, chaos of ideas. No one could explain how China could proceed along the road of communism to a market economy, and no one could validate that the freedom of democracy would come from following the four basic principles explicated by Deng. There was widespread cynicism and despair, and the people seemed increasingly immune to the government's verbal pledges and promises of China's future.

Higher Education Institutions

The changes in higher education institutions reflected the Chinese political milieu. Immediately after the 1986 demonstrations, the government's tone was stern and threatening. The college and university campuses were shrouded by an anti-liberalization atmosphere. When Zhao Ziyang and the liberals came to salvage the potential political disaster by curbing the spread of the anti-liberalization crusade, they saved the higher education institutions from catastrophe as well. Along with the thaw in the political realm, the gloom that had spilled over the campuses began to disappear.

Certain changes took place in higher education after the demonstrations in 1986. The party attributed the student demonstration to the bad influence of certain intellectuals and to the immaturity of students who came

right out of high school and understood little of Chinese society. Consequently, the government sought to provide students with more opportunities to experience real life so that they could maintain the correct political orientation. Several practices were implemented such as increasing political and ideological education for students, introducing physical labor and military training, using political behavior as a criterion in admitting students to college, and urging students to participate in community service.³⁰ The party called community service a second classroom during which the students carried out extensive social studies.³¹

In some higher education institutions, the party tried to improve communication between students and administrators. In Beijing University, lectures were sponsored by the school to address the problems that concerned the students, such as student protests, economic reform and western democratic ideas as applied to China's modernization. In Fudan, similar lectures were held.³² All these efforts displayed the government's attempts to orient students toward what it deemed "correct thinking." However, these measures were mild and cautious in nature, drastically different from those used during the Cultural Revolution. Students would not be barred from entering the university if they declared that they would adhere to the four cardinal principles. This procedure had much latitude,

for declaring one's belief in the four cardinal principles to be recruited was different from saying what one really believed in. Community service was largely voluntary while lectures and political education classes were more superficial than real. In all, the police campus created during the Cultural Revolution was evident at this time, and the government tried to avoid further alienating and inflaming the students.

The government's approach in dealing with several intellectuals, especially Fang Lizhi, sent a clear signal to students that the party did not want to distance itself from the people who were essential to economic reform. When interviewed by a Beijing Review correspondent, the new president of the Chinese Academy of Science, Zhou Guangzhao, parroted Zhao's words that combating bourgeois liberalization was strictly an inner-party matter that would not affect academic debate. He further stated that, in the field of science, the academy would stick to the policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" and encouraged scientists to do research and think for themselves. Science and accomplished scientists would be held in high esteem, and the new president used Fang Lizhi as an example.³³

The fact that Fang Lizhi and other intellectuals who supported the demonstration did not face persecution as they would have earlier was a relief to the students. In 1988,

Beijing Review carried an article on Fang Lizhi's academic achievements, which indicated that even though ostracized from the party, Fang continued his research work and the government recognized his contributions. Fang was also sent by the government to visit foreign countries to attend lectures and meetings. When asked about the 1986 unrest and the anti-bourgeois liberalization campaign, Fang boldly said: "I just spoke my own mind."³⁴ Students sensed that Zhao Ziyang and "his liberal gang" were making a comeback. In the meantime, the government tried to ensure that the policy of sending students abroad would remain unchanged.³⁵ This deliberate effort underscored the attempt by the party to assure students at home as well as abroad that the government would carry on its open door policy.

Higher education institutions after 1986 resembled that of society at large. Politically, the liberals went from being on the defensive to the offensive; society went from a repressive one to a open one and so did higher education. By 1988, higher education institutions were as open as they were in 1986. At this time, Chinese higher education institutions had 1.96 million students, 120,000 graduate students, and ten thousand foreign students from more than one hundred and ten countries. These institutions had sent fifty thousand students to study in seventy-six countries and regions.³⁶

Students

The students after the 1986 demonstration were a disillusioned group. Although the political climate was not repressive, students were largely dismayed by the crackdown on the student demonstration in 1986 and by the inability of the government to bring about needed political structural changes. The political reality was tragic for these young men and women. They had tried once in 1980 to attempt changes, but they were suppressed. They tried again in 1986, sincerely believing that the party was serious about political reform and genuinely trusting that their efforts would determine the course of the nation, but the same fate greeted them. What seemed to be more puzzling and ironic was that each time they took to the streets and protested, they did so under the encouragement from leaders above, and each time they were repressed by those same leaders who spurred them to action in the first place. The suppression of the 1986 demonstration, though mild in nature, left the students disenchanted with those who were leading the nation. In spite of a relaxed political climate, a feeling of hopelessness and sometimes despair enveloped students and campuses.

Students of this time became more thoughtful and mature after what they had witnessed and weathered. Only two years elapsed between the end of 1986 and the beginning of 1989.

Many students who demonstrated in 1986 were in their final years of college, and many who were high school seniors in 1986 were now freshmen and sophomores. Contrary to the common belief that college students were a bunch of kids, fiery, idealistic, but nevertheless naive and immature, Chinese students of this time, as a result of the unique social background, were more mature and sophisticated than people in China or foreigners were willing to admit. The students were the products of Chinese political reality. They witnessed what had transpired in China since 1979, and many of them actually participated and experienced the political upheaval. Young as they were, they were the best of the country and equipped with brilliant minds. Students, especially those in the fields of social science, had read widely before entering the universities, absorbing ideas at very fast pace.

Students of this time were burdened. The reality of economic reform had taught them that China would not progress, and economic reform would not be carried out to its fullest extent without attempting some kind of fundamental political reform. They read about the dynamic political processes of other countries and felt trapped by the autocratic one in which they lived. The Cultural Revolution, which was experienced by their parents and grandparents, bore bitter memories. The crackdown of the 1980 and the 1986 student patriotic demonstrations and the

repeated failure of attempts at political change left them disoriented. The expectation for meaningful life and freedom, which was brought about by Deng's economic reform and open door policy, was evaporating. In addition, Russia, under the leadership of Gorbachev, was undergoing rapid political restructuring. The political freedom, which was felt strongly by the Russian intellectuals, was envied by the Chinese students and intellectuals alike. If Russia could do it, why not China? If political freedom and democracy in western countries seemed too far to reach, Russia, a communist country after which China patterned its political structure, was not an illusion. Students wanted freedom, freedom to think and speak. They wanted some balance of power, so that the fate of a nation would not be determined by the will of one person. They did not advocate the abolition of the party or the government. They might have wished to put an end to the communist regime, but they knew better that political change in China should be a process, not a revolution. They were also determined that this political process should start somewhere, and paying lip service was not enough. The question was how to begin this process without being defeated again by the system that would resist to the end.

There was an atmosphere of crisis. In spite of efforts on the part of liberals such as Zhao to gear China toward more reforms, the situation toward the end of 1988 was

dissatisfying to say the least. The troubled economy, rampant bureaucracy, and corruption affected China like a plague. When Li Shuxian, the wife of Fang Lizhi was invited to speak to Beijing University students at a self-styled "Democracy Salon" in 1988, she lectured on the topic of Chinese democracy. When she asked students for opinions after her talk, one student said: "It is not so much fear that I feel. It is just hopelessness. Our leaders do not listen to the people. They never will."³⁷ This, perhaps, represented the feeling of the majority of students at that time.

The Student Demonstration of 1989

China was bound for something unique in 1989. The co-existence of the loosened political climate and public dissatisfaction signalled a crisis for China entering 1989. What made the situation more ominous was the fact that China would embrace three expected important events this year. Nineteen eighty-nine was the 70th anniversary of the 1919 May Fourth student demonstration, the 200 anniversary of the French Revolution, and the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. These three big events beckoned three big celebrations. But what was there to celebrate? Had China achieved the goals of science and democracy for which the students on May 4, 1919 fought? Had China followed the

French Revolution's motto--liberty, fraternity, and equality? What had the Communist Party accomplished during these forty years of control that deserved commemoration? These three events caused agitation among Chinese intellectuals and students. Finally, with Hu Yaobang's unexpected death in early April, China wrote a rare page of history.

Several other unique events preceded the 1989 demonstration, one of which was Fang Lizhi's and other intellectuals' letters to Deng. In February 1989, Fang Lizhi wrote a letter to Deng Xiaoping, hoping that he would release Wei Jinsheng, who was sentenced to prison for ten years for advocating Chinese democracy. Following Fang's letter, thirty-three intellectuals wrote an open letter to the Central Committee and the State Council, asking them to release Wei.³⁸ Following this, a second open letter appeared. Forty-two prominent scientists and social scientists signed the letter. This was followed by a third open letter, signed by young writers and scholars, making more extensive demands for democracy.³⁹

These incidents greatly affected and encouraged the students who were frustrated with the regime and were looking for an outlet to express their dissatisfaction. They had planned a demonstration on May 4th to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the movement, but the death of Hu sparked off the earlier planning. The authorities had

anticipated protests from dissident intellectuals and students on May 4th and were prepared to cope with it, but what they did not expect and prepare for were the death of Hu Yaobang and the overwhelming student reaction to his death.⁴⁰

Hu Yaobang, who helped to navigate China away from orthodox Marxism, who led the world's largest Communist Party for six years, and who supported the student demonstration of 1986 and who was forced to resign in disgrace in January 1987, died in April, 1989.⁴¹ Hu became increasingly popular among intellectuals and students and came to be seen as a symbol of democracy and change, while his resignation was viewed as a major example of the tenacious allegiance to Marxist orthodoxy and communism that existed among some elderly leaders and conservatives. A student said that since the 1986 student movement that led to the downfall of Hu, university students in Beijing had been expressing their feelings of dissatisfaction, and this time, their anger came to an explosive point.⁴² Thus the death of Hu was the prelude to one of the largest and most significant demonstrations in the history of China.

The Mourning and the Demonstration

Hu died on April 15, 1989, and his death caused spontaneous mourning by the students. It was not an

ordinary mourning. The evening after Hu's death was announced, Beijing University students mourned and commemorated Hu in sadness and anger. Wearing black armbands, the Chinese way to mourn death, students covered campus walls with poems and couplets, essays, and posters. These contained not only their sorrow for having lost a respected leader who supported political reform and the student demonstration of 1986, but also anger at the government, which ousted him for tolerating intellectual dissidents and students, and which stifled the hopeful political restructuring process in late 1986. Hu's death finally served as an outlet for the students' pent-up grievances and disappointments. One elegiac poem was probably the embodiment of the students' feelings:

Those who should have died live,
 Those who should have lived have died.
 A sincere and honest man has died,
 But the hypocritical and false live on.
 A warm-hearted man has died,
 Indifference buried him.

A star of hope has fallen--China meets with calamity;
 The ordinary people are angry; if they were not angry,
 What would be the way out?
 What a shame, what a shame?

One man who cared for all under heaven;
 For one man all under heaven mourn.

Seeking self-governance for the people, attempting to
 make the country strong and prosperous
 What faults were these?
 Upon hearing of the untimely death of an outstanding
 hero,
 Upon seeing that the universe remains the same as
 before,
 Who can remain unmoved? Yaobang, rest in peace.⁴³

The mourning intensified. Following the poems, posters, and wreaths, students of Beijing University, Qinhua University, People's University, and another dozen universities simultaneously held sessions on campuses criticizing the way the government had treated Hu and expressing their deep discontent over the party. In addition, students voiced their dissatisfaction about the obituary of Hu by the Party Central Committee, which did not clarify the reasons Hu was deposed in 1987, and demanded a fair evaluation of his work.⁴⁴ On April 16, several hundred students went to Tiananmen Square to place wreaths around the massive Monument of the People's Heroes and under the portrait of Hu. On April 18, thousands of students marched from Beijing University to Tiananmen Square in the morning, holding banners and shouting slogans along the way: "Long live democracy! Long live freedom!" "Down with corrupt officials!" They sang patriotic songs, hoping that they would not be stopped by authorities. Demonstrations had been banned since 1987, but the Chinese constitution permitted ceremonies of mourning. Consequently, the demonstration, which was partially mourning, was unobstructed by police and followed by foreign reporters.⁴⁵

Shortly, the spontaneous mourning and demonstration developed into organized protests. In the past, the student protests were largely spontaneous with a little or sometimes

no organization and strategy, which, to a degree, contributed to the failure of the demonstrations. This time, the students wanted to do better. Many students felt that the official student unions in various schools, which were controlled by school authorities, could not represent the majority of students or provide leadership to this student movement. Therefore, they proposed independent student unions be established to organize and coordinate protests, unify strength, and win victory.⁴⁶ The leaders of the organizations would be elected by students, representing students and linking students with the citizens. These organizations would represent the movement to the government while leaders served as official student spokesmen on important policy and strategy.⁴⁷ This endeavour marked the first time in the history of the People's Republic that students openly united in forms of organization to protest against the government.⁴⁸ Consequently, students in several universities in Beijing established their own organizations. The Preparatory Committee of Beijing University Solidarity Student Union was established on April 19, and the next day, the Student Association of Beijing Universities, which later changed its name to the Autonomous Student Association of Beijing University was formed.⁴⁹ Several other organizations of different forms were organized later on by students from other universities. In the course of the movement, the union of these organizations played a critical

role in planning the demonstrations and coordinating students.

Under the leadership of the student organizations, the students launched a sit-in in front of the Great Hall of the People, and initiated their first attempt to communicate with the government. The student representatives presented a seven-point petition to the government, demanding that the party acknowledge the legitimacy of Hu Yaobang and the students' pro-liberalization position in 1986, revoke the anti-spiritual pollution campaign, which was launched after the demonstration, make public the leadership's private possessions, allow the publication of independent newspapers, raise the educational budget, abolish regulations which prohibited demonstrations, and recognize demonstrations and the current movement as patriotic in nature.⁵⁰ Students intended to hand the petition to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, but nobody from the committee came to receive it. Instead one staff member came out and received the petition. The leadership's indifferent attitude toward the students' sincere request further displeased and frustrated them.⁵¹

For five straight days, beginning the day after Hu's death was announced, April 16 to April 20, Tiananmen Square was the site of students mourning the death and peacefully demonstrating for democracy. Students, first spontaneously then organized poured out their repressed feelings, and

student organizations conducted a public relations crusade attempting to involve citizens in support of students and their demonstration.⁵² Demonstrations were not confined to Beijing. More than a thousand students in Shanghai took to the streets on the evening of April 18.⁵³ Students also held demonstrations in many other cities, smaller in scale, but signifying the prevailing discontentment.

Government's Reaction

Chinese officials did not take the students seriously until students declared a boycott of classes. Unable to get any response from the government, students decided to boycott classes.⁵⁴ Grossly underestimating the reason behind these demonstrations, the government conjectured that student momentum would run out and quietly fade away with the waning of mourning. When the boycott of classes was declared, and an increasing number of students continued mourning and protest, the government decided to have an official memorial service for Hu Yaobang, to be held on April 22, one week after his death, to calm students and avoid further upheaval. On April 20, fearing that the students would once again assemble in Tiananmen Square, the Beijing municipal government announced that the square would be closed on April 22 during Hu's memorial service. However, the students outsmarted the authorities by going to

the square on the night before April 22. Consequently, by the next morning, there were a huge number of students, making it simply impossible for security forces to clear the square.⁵⁵

While Hu's memorial was held in the Great Hall of the People, the students assembled outside in Tiananmen Square listened to the live broadcast of the service and prepared to submit a petition. After the service finished, three student representatives were allowed to cross the police line to present the petition to the government demanding dialogue and discussion of problems.⁵⁶ Utilizing a gesture conjuring up memories of the custom in which petitions were tendered to Chinese emperors in the past, three student representatives knelt on the step to present the students' petition. The three remained on the steps for about forty minutes and withdrew when it became clear that neither Li Peng nor any other high official would come out to receive the petition.⁵⁷ Once again, the government officials disregarded the students and their requests. Angered and humiliated, the students were determined to carry their demonstration further than they had originally planned.

Deng Xiaoping and the conservatives observed the student movement with a growing sense of alarm and decided to use force to put the discord to an end. On April 24, meeting in a special session to discuss the unrest, the Standing Committee of the Politburo resolved to take

decisive action to prevent further student demonstrations. Premier Li Peng and Yang Shangkun, President of the Republic and Vice Chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission, the Central Committee's group in charge of military affairs, conferred with an angry Deng, who ordered army troops mobilized to suppress any additional demonstrations. Deng said: "This is no ordinary student movement, but an episode of turmoil. We must take a firm stand and take effective measures in opposing and ending this turmoil. We can not allow their objectives to be achieved."⁵⁸ Zhao Ziyang, the party liberal, was away on a state visit to North Korea at this time.

Deng's intentions were reflected by a front page editorial in the People's Daily. For several days while university students took to the streets after the death of Hu, the People's Daily avoided the issue of the demonstrations, mentioning only the mourning activities of the Chinese people, including the students. After Deng and the conservatives spoke out, the twenty-six editorials by People's Daily mirrored their views, calling the demonstration "a planned conspiracy, a political rebellion."⁵⁹

Under the banner of democracy, they were trying to destroy the democratic legal system. Their goal was to poison people's minds, to create turmoil throughout the country, to destroy political stability and unity. This was a planned conspiracy, a riot, whose real nature was to fundamentally negate the leadership of the Communist Party and to negate the socialist

system.⁶⁰

The editorial's harsh condemnation of the movement and intimidation infuriated the students and provoked a massive march in defiance. Many students felt distressed and grieved on reading this editorial, which clearly defined the nature of the student movement as rioting and counter-revolution. For students, the editorial vilified the patriotic movement as a planned conspiracy, and the language used in the editorial was harsh, reflecting the language used during the Cultural Revolution, which was threatening and condemning.⁶¹ In spite of the ominous warnings from Beijing authorities that the mourning period for Hu had ended and that further demonstrations were illegal and forbidden, on April 26 the Provisional Students' Federation announced a mass student march in protest of the People's Daily editorial. On the morning of April 27, several hundred thousand students from more than fifty Beijing universities marched along the major streets of the capital in one of the biggest displays of dissatisfaction in forty years of Communist rule.⁶² People in Beijing swarmed into the streets to support the students. Crowds of cheering workers and civilians lined the entire route and hailed student marchers. An estimated half million people took part in the protest one way or another.⁶³ The march was a huge success for the students and citizens, and a

humiliation for the government. The support of the populace was a needed moral boost for the students.

From the beginning of the demonstration, the students expected dialogue with the government. Two petitions had been presented but both of them were disregarded. These petitions presented to the National Committee were an epitome of their demands. Their goal was to accelerate the progress of democracy, and their demonstrations, with the support of the people, were peaceful and organized. Instead of meeting students half way, the government added insult to injury by calling the students rioters and counter-revolutionaries. The twenty-six editorials with their harsh condemnation from the top leadership pushed the student movement one step further.

Demonstration on May Fourth

The student demonstration continued into May 4, the 70th anniversary of the 1919 Student Movement, as a result of the failure on the part of the government to meet the students' requests. The government leaders did make some gestures of reconciliation on April 29 and 30 by holding two dialogues, but both were manipulative and turned into lectures." On May 2, student representatives delivered a detailed twelve-point petition to the National People's Congress and the Party Central Committee, demanding an

agreement within twenty-four hours to meetings "on an equal basis" between representatives of independent student unions and top government leaders. On May 3, when the government rejected the students' ultimatum, The Beijing Student Autonomous Union planned to stage a bigger demonstration on May 4 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the famous May Fourth Movement.⁶⁵

The May Fourth Movement, the first large-scale student demonstration in the modern history of China, which marked the awakening of Chinese students and intellectuals as a political force, was celebrating its 70th anniversary that year. On May 4, 1919, gathering in Tiananmen square, Beijing University students and intellectuals protested the government's acquiescence in the Versailles Treaty, and demanded more democratic rights for the people. Seventy years later, on this May 4, Beijing students again demonstrated in Tiananmen Square, "but now it was from the Communist Party that they were demanding more democratic rights."⁶⁶

On May 4, 1989, nearly two hundred thousand protesters and other citizens packed Beijing's Tiananmen Square to press the government for democracy and freedom. In their own way, the students were celebrating the 70th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement of 1919, so it was unlikely that the government would instigate a crackdown on students on this particular day. Security forces made only half hearted

attempts to stop the students as they marched through the streets of Beijing for more than twelve hours. Students encircled the Square and rallied at the Monument to the People's Heroes at its center.⁶⁷ Inspired by the example of students on May Fourth, 1919, student protesters of this time appealed to patriotism to justify their defiance of the law. "To be patriotic is not a crime," cried students as they marched.⁶⁸

The New May Fourth Manifesto, read by a student leader in the Square, called the students to carry forward the May Fourth spirit of science and democracy. The manifesto declared that science and democracy advocated by students in 1919 meant "the collective wisdom of the people, the true development of each individual's ability and the protection of each individual's interests." The tasks of students were put forth as follows:

First, to take the lead in carrying out experiments in democratic reform at the birthplace of the student movement--the university campus, democratizing and systematizing campus life; second, to participate actively in politics, to persist in our request for a dialogue with the government, to push democratic reforms of our political system, to oppose graft and corruption and to work for a press law.⁶⁹

Students from other parts of China also participated in the May Fourth Demonstration. After the demonstration began, independent student unions were in contact with universities through out the nation, and student activists from schools outside Beijing followed the agenda set up by

Beijing students. On May 4, demonstrations took place in many cities throughout the country.⁷⁰

Liberals vs. Conservatives

Zhao Ziyang returned to China from his official visit to North Korea, and his attitude toward the student demonstration, which had been going on for days, was different from that of conservatives and Deng Xiaoping. Zhao was a liberal who had advocated economic reform and who had been supportive of steps toward political reform. He came back from Korea facing, on one hand, angry students who were determined to push forward their protests and on the other hand, the conservatives who were resolved to use military force to quell further demonstrations. As the general secretary of the Communist party, Zhao had some power and influence, which gave hope and encouragement to the demonstrating students. On May 4, the day the students demonstrated, Zhao Ziyang remarked to delegates of the Asian Development Bank that the student movement was patriotic and that the students' grievances deserved to be deliberated seriously. He told the delegates:

I believe that they (the students) are by no means opposed to our basic system. What they want is that we eliminate the defects in our work. They are very satisfied with the accomplishments of the past ten years of reconstruction and reform, and with the progress and development of our country. But they are very dissatisfied with the mistakes we have made in our work. They want us to correct

our mistakes and improve our work, which happens to be the stand of the Party and government as well."⁷¹

Zhao's speech was apparently a contrast to the People's Daily editorial eight days before, which branded the student movement "turmoil," and his speech sent out a signal that he would take a more conciliatory line to deal with the students.⁷² Zhao's stance toward the student demonstration was immediately reflected by the media. After Zhao's speech, and after studiously ignoring pro-democracy protests for the last two weeks, China's official newspapers began to display a new openness in their reports of a mass demonstration held on Thursday. On the day of the May Fourth Movement commemoration, The People's Daily devoted almost the whole page to stories concerning the student demonstrations, and it also printed the whole text of the student petition. The English-language newspaper, China Daily, used a cross-page headline which read, "Hi, Mr. Democracy!" All the television stations broadcast the student demonstrations as their first news item for the evening programs on May 4. In all, the media tried to portray the demonstrators as patriotic citizens commemorating a historic occasion.⁷³ This was heartening to students because more accurate reporting had been one of the students' principal demands, and that day's articles and photos seemed to be a move to satisfy the demand.⁷⁴

During the week after May 4, the moderate faction,

under the leadership of Zhao, attempted to find some common ground for a dialogue, but there was a growing schism in the party. The inevitable disagreement on how to deal with the student demonstration between Zhao and his moderate faction and hard-liners, which included Deng, Li Peng, and a group of elders, was escalating. Dismayed by Zhao's remarks on the May 4 demonstration and similar approaches to students during other public appearances, the conservatives were exasperated with Zhao and refused to repudiate the twenty-six editorial. Liberals and conservatives were at their most serious and challenging battleground.

The situation remains extremely unsettled, as the debate over recent student demonstrations continues to reverberate through the leadership and exacerbate the power struggle here.⁷⁵

The demonstrators persevered. Although the boycott of classes was officially called off by the Autonomous Student Association of Beijing Universities as a result of Zhao's speech on May 4, many students did not return to class because they thought the government had not met their requests. On May 6, several hundred students demonstrated on the campus of Beijing University, calling on others to continue class boycotts until the government agreed to a dialogue with the "true representative" of the students, namely representatives of the independent student union. On the same day, student representatives issued another petition to the Party Central Committee calling for

substantive dialogue and demanding a satisfactory answer from the authorities. However, the internal discord in the party made a timely government response to students impossible.⁷⁶

May 18--Hunger Strike

The Student Autonomous Union decided to start a hunger strike on May 13 in an attempt to put more pressure on the government to talk to students. If the leaders would not listen to reason, maybe they would listen to their hearts. Hunger strikes appealed to the emotion of those who held power as well as to citizens of the country. A hunger strike was a serious matter. It required tremendous sacrifice on the part of the students. Reluctant to abandon the protests without achieving any tangible results, students and their union leaders felt a hunger strike was their only and last resort.⁷⁷

A hunger strike began, and the students' heroic endeavor touched the people of Beijing. On May 14, more than two thousand students staged a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square, with many citizens gathering around the Monument to the People's Heroes to support them.⁷⁸ The next day, supporters of the student hunger strike increased. Rallying in Tiananmen Square on May 15, the citizens showed their solidarity with the students. It was estimated that

the number of people had reached half a million at one time. Professors, journalists, workers, civilians, and even monks and nuns had joined the marchers. The students on the hunger strike felt positively that they would win because they had the support from the people.⁷⁹

The next day, the demonstration was joined by organized groups of people. It "turned the center of the capital into near-pandemonium in one of the biggest displays of popular dissatisfaction the capital has seen since the Communist revolution in 1949."⁸⁰ The crowd was significant not only for its size, but also because it marked the first time that intellectuals and workers organized themselves to join the students in a demonstration. A group of well-known intellectuals and professors marched to the Square under a big banner of "Chinese Intellectual Circle," and their contingent was several miles long. Also marching on the streets were journalists from The Science and Technology Daily, The People's Daily, China News Service and many other news organizations. They were holding posters which demanded freedom of the press.⁸¹ Among the thousands of "work units" that paraded through the capital were organized groups representing some of China's most respected and sensitive institutions like the People's Liberation Army, the Foreign Ministry, the Central People's Broadcasting Station, and even the cadre school of the Communist Party Central Committee.⁸²

Meanwhile, students from nearby cities like Tianjin rushed to Beijing overnight to join their fellow students." Huge demonstrations also took place in Hong Kong and Macao. Some Hong Kong students also initiated hunger strikes in front of the Xinhua News Agency, Hong Kong Bureau. About one hundred thousand people in Shanghai held a demonstration to support Beijing students. Demonstrations also broke out in more than twenty other major cities, such as Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Shenyang, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Wuhan, Chengdu, Harbing, and Shenzhen."

Gorbachev's visit to China

It so happened that the Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, was scheduled to visit Beijing from May 15 to 18 for a summit meeting with Chinese leaders to improve relationships between two countries. For thirty years, since Mao split with the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in the 1959 summit in Beijing, China and the Soviet Union had undergone a long hostility which led to bitter ideological clashes and border skirmishes. When China was undergoing its economic reform, Mikhail Gorbachev decided to carry out reforms in the political and economic systems of the Soviet Union. Under his programs -- glasnost and perestroika--the Soviet Union had witnessed a lot of changes in its political affairs. By then, both of the Communist giants desired to

mend the rift which existed between the two for thirty years in order to conserve more energy to improve their respective economies. When Gorbachev offered to go to Beijing for a summit talk, China's senior leader, Deng, naturally opened his welcome hands. To Deng's dismay, this significant event, which was scheduled for May 15-18, was overshadowed by the student movement, particularly the hunger strike, which coincided with the timetable. Because it was a world event, it had attracted many reporters from different international news organizations.

The demonstrating students, who had long regarded Gorbachev as a champion of democracy, took this opportunity to push their call for dialogue. They regarded Gorbachev as a hero and reformer, and hoped that he would bring some fresh experiences of political reform in Communist systems to China. On May 15, when Gorbachev arrived in Beijing, the officials of the Chinese government hastily relocated a welcoming ceremony that had been planned for Tiananmen Square because thousands of student demonstrators and several thousand hunger strikers camping out in the square refused to end their vigil for greater democracy.⁵ The students who occupied the Square said they would hold their own welcoming ceremony for Gorbachev. Some students displayed portraits of Gorbachev, and others held aloft a banner which read "Welcome, Mr Gorbachev, the true reformer" in a rebuke to China's own leadership. The demonstrating

students went to the Soviet embassy to deliver a letter to Gorbachev, inviting him to give a lecture at Beijing University during his visit. They appreciated Gorbachev's reform of the Soviet political system, because they believed it was the fundamental way of removing the malignant tumor of the society. Therefore, the students wanted to hear Gorbachev talk about the political reform in the Soviet Union so they might draw some encouragement and experience from it."

Mikhail S. Gorbachev's comment about the student demonstration was cautious but forceful. He portrayed the popular uprising that had engulfed the Chinese capital as part of a painful but healthy worldwide upheaval in Communist countries. Gorbachev cautiously praised the students who began the huge vigil for greater democracy and repeatedly declared that economic change was impossible without political reform. "I am convinced that we are participating in a very serious turning point in the development of world socialism," the Soviet leader said at a news conference when asked to assess the unrest here and in his own country.⁶⁷ "All Communist countries are heading at different paces toward greater freedom of expression, democracy and individual rights. These processes are painful, but they are necessary."⁶⁸

Dialogue Failed and Martial Law Declared

The student hunger strike supported by civilians continued, and Zhao's moderate wing made another attempt to alleviate the tension. The students on hunger strike demanded direct talks between their delegates and government leaders and insisted that these talks be broadcast live. Zhao Ziyang sent a message to the students calling on them to end their hunger strike and declared that the highest levels of the government and the Communist Party affirmed the students' patriotic spirit in calling for democracy and law and opposing corruption and striving for further reform.⁸⁹ This was a retreat from the party's previous position that the demonstrators were trying to cause trouble and sabotage the economy. Zhao also promised that the authorities would not punish them after calm was restored.⁹⁰ Unfortunately, the message sent by Zhao only represented the wish of the moderate gang, not the powerful conservative one.

Premier Li Peng, who represented the conservative wing of the government, did not have any direct dialogue with the students until May 18, the sixth day of the student hunger strike, when over three thousand students were rushed to hospitals for treatment. To defuse the situation, Li Peng had a meeting with the student representatives.⁹¹ However, the meeting was abortive because Li refused to accept any of the students' demands; instead he lectured them on the

importance of maintaining the political situation of unity and stability, refused to discuss issues raised by the students, and hinted at a crackdown if the disorder continued. As a result, students continued their hunger strike."²²

The student movement, which started on April 15, took a drastic turn when the government declared martial law. Since the beginning of the student movement, the political climate had experienced many fluctuations caused by the inner conflicts between liberal and conservative wings. Students had hoped that the liberal group would prevail, and the conservative one would give in under pressure by not only students who demonstrated and those who went on a hunger strike, but also by the millions of people who supported them. Inauspiciously, the conservative hard-liners inside the Communist Party took the upper hand when Deng explicitly expressed his view of using military force to suppress the democratic movement.²³ Li Peng delivered a hard-line speech at a meeting attended by all top party, army, and government officials on the evening of May 19, which soon turned out to be the order of martial law. Li said in his speech that "we must adopt firm and resolute measures to end the turmoil swiftly and maintain the leadership of the party as well as the socialist system."²⁴

After Li's harsh speech, martial law was enforced. In the subsequent days, military troops were gradually

dispatched into the capital. Stories following the party line and covering government announcements began to outnumber those of the student movement. The martial law order signed by Premier Li Peng, the letter to the Beijing civilians by the martial law troop headquarters, and three orders by Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong, which banned all forms of demonstration, parade, and petition, and forbade foreign journalists to interview Chinese nationals or to take pictures of the demonstrations, inundated the media.⁹⁵

General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, who refused to attend the meeting where martial law was declared, lost power in the battle. The day the meeting was held, instead of attending the meeting, he visited the students on strike in Tiananmen Square. He pleaded with them to end their hunger strike by assuring them that the problems they raised would eventually be solved. Zhao said, "I feel very sorry that we have come too late. You have every right to blame and criticize us." Zhao told the students that "you have good intentions. You want our country to become better.... But things are complicated, and there must be a process to resolve these problems."⁹⁶ On May 26, Zhao was deprived of power and placed under house arrest. Hu Yaobang, who was ousted for his role in the 1986 student demonstration, Zhao Ziyang, who had been a strong supporter of Chinese economic and political reform and had been sympathetic toward the student demonstration, both met the same destiny.

Students and civilians were angered and openly defied the government order. On May 21, the Beijing University Student Autonomous Union announced an end to the hunger strike that had started on May 13. Nearly three thousand hunger strikers gave up their nine-day fast, saying they needed to preserve their strength to fight the government. They added that the government was too brutal to be sensitive to the pressure of a hunger strike.⁹⁷ After the martial law order was issued, the masses of Beijing civilians set up road blocks in some main traffic intersections leading to the suburbs, for fear of possible bloodshed when the People's Liberation Army came into the city. By evening, large crowds gathered around the traffic intersections where blocks were set up with all kinds of large vehicles and other objects. On Sunday, May 21, the peacefully demonstrating Beijing students sat together in Tiananmen Square with students from other parts of the country, and the endless stream of people on Changan Avenue moved about day and night. The demonstrations drew hundreds of thousands of people who called for the cancellation of martial law and withdrawal of the military troops.⁹⁸ Students rushed from all parts of the capital to the central square and vowed they would continue their fight for democracy.⁹⁹

Many people took to the streets to defy martial law, and people from all over the world demonstrated to denounce the

government and show support for the students. Troops approaching Beijing on at least five major roads were halted or turned back by large crowds.¹⁰⁰ Since the students' hunger strike and the government's order for martial law, the protesters' rage seemed increasingly directed at the nation's leaders, especially the senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, and Prime Minister Li Peng. A popular slogan now was, "Xiaoping, Step down! Li Peng, Resign!"¹⁰¹ The support of the students from people in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao, as well as from Chinese students studying abroad, against a possible crackdown was tremendous.¹⁰²

The occupation of Tiananmen Square continued. By the end of May, students had held Tiananmen Square for more than two weeks. Even though the hunger strike was called off, thousands of students resolved to maintain pressure on the government by continuing their round-the-clock occupation of the Square.

The Goddess of Democracy and Massacre

After Premier Li Peng ordered martial law in Beijing, hundreds of thousands of Beijing civilians left their homes to set up blockades against the army troops in the Beijing suburbs. The party's control of the news media became tighter than ever before, and army soldiers were sent into some major news organizations such as People's Daily, Xinhua

News Agency, and the Central Broadcasting and Television Administration. News stories, filled with political propaganda began to appear in People's Daily again, and foreign journalists were warned not to interview or take pictures of the student demonstrators. Later, Chinese authorities even ordered the cutoff of satellite transmissions of some major international news media, such as CNN and CBS. Military suppression was imminent.

At this critical moment, the students, defying the government warning and vowing to sacrifice their lives for China's democracy, put up a statue of the Goddess of Democracy in the center of Tiananmen Square to encourage the exhausted demonstrators to carry on their struggles. This action further angered the government. Reacting to the erection of the Goddess of Democracy in Tiananmen Square, People's Daily printed a statement by the Tiananmen Administrative Bureau on its front page May 31, calling the statue "an insult to our national dignity and a mockery to the nation's image."¹⁰³

By now, the government had made the final decision to crackdown on the students who had occupied Tiananmen and gripped the attention of the world for nearly two months. The statue of the Goddess of Democracy was crashed into pieces by martial law troops amid the deafening gunfire and heartbreaking human screams in the early morning of June 4, when the army troops took control of Tiananmen Square.

Relentlessly, the regime utilized automatic weapons, which filled the air on Changan Avenue, the main thoroughfare going through Tiananmen Square, and crushed the unarmed students and civilians.

The Communist regime started its frenzied military crackdown in the early morning of June 4. About 20,000 troops broke through the blockade put up by the civilians under the cover of armored vehicles and heavy machine gunfire, and finally occupied Tiananmen Square. The troops fired indiscriminately at the crowds on both sides of the streets all the way during their advance toward Tiananmen, leaving countless corpses on the streets which were flooded by human blood. By 4 a.m., about 3,000 students and civilians were slaughtered, and countless were wounded.¹⁰⁴

Describing the Communist troops as "frantic beasts" who lost all human senses and conscience, The Central Daily News reported that they used the tanks to crush dozens of students and civilians, stabbed women and children with bayonets, shot at medical personnel and ambulances, and burned corpses in Tiananmen Square to eliminate the evidence. Yet on June 5, the Chinese media hailed troops for "victoriously crushing this counterrevolutionary rebellion."¹⁰⁵ Sure enough, the party was triumphant in shattering the dreams and hopes of millions of its people, and it accomplished the task by employing Chinese army tanks and soldiers.

The massacre was only the first step toward total suppression of dissent and elimination of all that would pose a threat to the government. The purge following the June 4 massacre was petrifying. There were massive arrests,

tortures, executions of those who had been involved in the demonstration. The student leaders and intellectuals were once again the target of the purge. Unlike the campaign against bourgeois liberation after the 1986 student demonstration, which was cautious and mild in nature, the measures taken by the government this time were black terror. Many who were active in the demonstration sought ways to escape China, but only a few were successful. Following the arrests and executions, the party began a massive crusade of thought control and ideological rectification. Official documents came down and everybody was required to study the speech by Deng Xiaoping. All urban work units required their employees to engage in intensive political studies.¹⁰⁶

What happened in China in the months of May and June 1989 shocked the world. Ousted as general secretary for supporting earlier political reforms, Hu Yaobang's death led to an unparalleled political earthquake which had not taken place since the founding of the People's Republic. Rallying at the historical center Tiananmen Square, thousands of college students, with many of them on hunger strike, expressed the inexpressible, a longing for freedom and democracy. Inspired and encouraged, one million Beijing citizens joined the students. The demonstration spread to many other Chinese cities with students swarming to Beijing to show their support. Confronted by these serious and

eager students and the public, the Communist Party faced its most serious challenge in its forty year existence. After weeks of hesitation, the regime took action. The military massacred Chinese youth and people, and turned the peaceful dream for democracy into a horrible nightmare. Many were killed or wounded and others were arrested as counter-revolutionaries. By using force to suppress the unarmed students and other civilians, the Communist Party leaders shattered the legitimacy of the regime.

The student movement, which sprang up after the death of Hu Yaobang on April 15, 1989, was the most dramatic and bloody demonstration of all, writing a significant page in the history of the Chinese student democratic movement. Hu's death triggered this unprecedented student demonstration. His advocacy of political reform and tolerance of student demonstrations led to his disgrace in 1986 and won widespread sympathy among students and intellectuals. The students' spontaneous mourning activities quickly turned into demonstrations for freedom and democracy. Hu Yaobang was not the underlying cause of the demonstration. His death was merely the catalyst, the spark. Hu's death provided an outlet for pent-up anger and dissatisfaction. What the students said throughout the demonstration was what they wanted to say in the 1980 students' election, the very beginning of the student movement after Deng came into power.

The significance of the 1989 student demonstration will be determined by its impact on China's future. Although it did not succeed in its immediate goals, it did awake the Chinese people both in China and abroad to their political consciousness. The government, by refusing to confront change and by wielding the military power to crush those who demanded change, lost its legitimacy. It is true that the Chinese government did not intend to kill as many people as they did. The government might have felt genuinely that order had to be restored and the suppression was necessary. Nonetheless, the crackdown brought the irreversible alienation of intellectuals, students, urban workers, and people from other segments of Chinese society. The student demonstration won the sympathy of millions of people from all over the world, and it united the overseas Chinese in the endeavour to strive for a democratic China. In addition, China estranged thousands of its students who were studying abroad. These students, who are the brightest group of China and who are in their final stages of finishing their advanced education, are unlikely to return home. Whether they would remain in foreign countries to carry on the movement or not, China had lost valuable personnel for its economic construction.

The student demonstration of 1989 followed the pattern of the previous demonstrations. It was the result of the success of the party in slackening the political control,

but failure to carry out political reforms, the success in experimenting with economic reform, but failure to create systems to check the abuses in the market economy, which brought rampant corruption in 1988, the success in raising the standard of living, but failure to fulfil the higher expectations. The contradiction and dilemma of the Chinese political reform were further manifested. The leadership might indeed have intended on changes that could result in the political structure reform. But the official reaction made it clear that both the time and the scope of change had decided by the party that resolved to maintain a firm grip and order of the society. To call for limited democratic reform to enliven the country's economic life was one thing, but to implement it was quite another. The top leadership did not discern that democracy did not lend itself well to partial application, because it had a predictable way of raising expectations, particularly among Chinese students and intellectuals. The Communist Party could not expect to achieve democracy or political modernization without relinquishing some of its power, neither could it dictate what people should and should not do according to its own will. To a certain degree, the leadership's vision and understanding of China and its people were limited. There was no doubt the Chinese people wanted to have better material things and the leadership should do its best to fulfill these needs. Nonetheless, the Chinese people did

not live on bread alone. The basic needs for material things were soon superseded by higher needs such as political freedom. It was incongruous that the leadership would release some of its political grip over the intellectuals and students, and nonetheless expect them to be submissive and mute.

When Deng laid out the four cardinal principals for China, he drew a clear demarcation line between what was acceptable and what was not. If Deng had not initiated his economic reform, perhaps it would be all right not to talk about the political reform. The paradox was that without political reform, Deng could not reach his grand plan for bringing China to catch up or surpass the developed countries. Yet with political reform, he might lose his control over the entire nation; his fear for the nation's disunity and anarchy might occur. On one hand, the party needed desperately to gratify the intellectuals and students, on whom the government pinned its greatest hopes of turning China into an economically advance country; on the other, it repeatedly offended and purged the intellectuals and the students who challenged its power and pushed political reform. These two realities have haunted Deng and the party ever since Mao's death. The contradiction and dilemma would continue as long as China prepared to open up to the outside world for its economic development. The pendulum would always oscillate between

those who wanted more reform and those who desired more stability and power.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The tension between the Chinese government and the students and the impact of the government on the student movements from 1978-1989 was evident. The zigzag course of the political reforms and the zigzag course of the student democratic movements over these ten years revealed the fundamental tension and conflicts between the government and the students as to how to run China. The 1980, 1986, and 1989 student movements flourished during the time when the Chinese leadership loosened control and encouraged political reform, while the student movements retreated when leadership retracted the freedom it had offered earlier. The student movements during these ten years had been spurred by the government's own call for political freedom and intensified by the unprecedented academic openness. However, unprepared for serious political challenges, the leadership was fearful of the force it released and finally stifled every movement as it occurred.

This phenomenon also revealed a fundamental dilemma of the Chinese leadership. On one hand; it needed to institute political reforms so as to carry on the necessary economic

reforms, on the other hand, the political reform would, in the party's mind, not only threaten the power and foundations of Communism but also the stability and unity of China. Consequently, the political reforms were half-hearted and failed to satisfy the students and intellectuals, who believed that the ills of China could be resolved only through the fundamental political changes and that these changes should take place sooner rather than later. The students perceived the leadership as fearful of losing power. As for the leadership's concern for the country's stability and unity, the students and intellectuals did not think their demands would create chaos and anarchy; instead, they were convinced that what they advocated was to safeguard the unity and stability of the country.

Mao's death in 1978 ushered in new Chinese political leadership. Facing the consequences of Mao's policies, China had opened up and assimilated Western technology to save its devastated economy and to reintegrate itself into global economic development. The Chinese Communist Party called on its people to work for the modernization of agriculture, industry, defense, and technology. With the improvement of the economy and through the influence of Western technology and ideas, there was an increasing need for changes in the political structure of the Communist Party. Unlike Gorbachev, whose gradual loosening of

Communist strictures brought Russians some democratic air to breathe, the Chinese leadership refused to countenance serious political openness. Their fear was for China's stability and unity. Thus the crisis between the transformation required by economic reform and the resistance of a cautious political leadership became inevitable. Under the pressure of economic development, the party had attempted several political reforms to improve the political structure, but each time the reform was carried further by the students than the party had intended, and met the opposition from the leadership that initiated the attempt.

This phenomenon seemed to exert a significant impact on higher education institutions and the student movements from 1978 to 1989. Following the oscillations of the leadership's temperament, higher education institutions carried out very aggressive reforms and in the meantime the institutions retreated as well. This was also true of the student movements. Since 1919 when Chinese students and intellectuals first participated in the demonstration for science and democracy, students had been active participants of Chinese revolutionary, patriotic, and democratic movements. Students, who were always the conscious of China, became active advocates for Chinese political freedom from 1978 to 1989 too. Their enthusiasm and yearning for political autonomy led to several significant student

movements, noticeably the one in 1989. However, the student movements in those ten years also weathered several setbacks following the political changes of the party. There were many long intervals when student movements were in retreat and students inactive.

The students weathered experience and trauma of historical significance. They were the products of the higher education institutions under Deng's leadership. The relatively free and open academic environment prepared them to accept new challenges. Being led to believe that their demonstrations were in support of the party and its endeavour for political reforms, the students participated with vigor and courage; yet each of their protests was suppressed by the leadership who encouraged them in the first place. All in all, each of the student movements represented a significant struggle on the part of the students for political freedom and democracy, and was an effort that would not have been possible without initial support from the political leadership.

The Chinese political scenario of those ten years, which was dominated by the tension between the students and the government and which followed the pattern of advance and retreat, was finally over. Deng and his party, tenaciously clinging to his beliefs about how to administer China and refusing to yield to the student demands of political reform, eventually brought about bloodshed. Brutal and

tragic as the carnage of 1989 was, the party still believed it did the right thing, considering how powerful the force it released, and how dangerous it would be if the students were triumphant. However, the crackdown did not reduce the tension between the students and the government, neither did it rid the government of the quandary it had been facing for ten years ever since Deng took power. How could the party effectively use the intellectuals and students in its endeavour to develop China economically without involving them too much politically? Should it stop its open door policy and halt the economic reform, which was the cause of raised expectations, bourgeois liberalization, and demonstrations? If it did, China would face economic bankruptcy, which would make the government lose the support of the base of Chinese society, the peasantry. If that happened, eventually the government would lose its power, and the country would be thrown into disarray.

After the June demonstrations, the government vacillated between total withdrawal and continuation of economic reform. Finally it realized it really had no choice but to go on with its open door policy and economic reform, for it could not afford an economic catastrophe. The government still believed it was working for the well-being of the nation and China, under its leadership, would eventually surpass the world in the economic development.

Present China is under military dominion. The

government is leading a dispirited populace with the support from the military and using the coercive power to keep its people silent, which it believes to be necessary for China's stability. However, is not a government that has to resort to the military to control its people a desperate one? How productive can a person be under the threat of a gun? How can human potential be used to its fullest capacity with the threat of persecution? How can the government regain trust through suppression? How well can the economy fare in a situation of control and intimidation? Above all, how long can a country maintain unity and stability through military menace?

China today is facing a deeper crisis. To a certain extent, the leadership today is no different from the leadership before the massacre in that it still faces the same dilemma. It has no choice but to go ahead with economic reform. But the leadership today faces one new problem. The military force it unleashed in June 1989 destroyed the credibility of the party. The "stability and unity" China has on the surface today does not represent the true stability and unity a democratic nation should have. It is conceivable that the leadership will gradually loosen its control, militarily, as well as politically; it is also conceivable that it will sometime later encourage some sort of political reforms. The question however is: Will the public in general and students in particular still believe

them? Will they answer the leadership's call as they used to? Will the confidence in the party lost during the massacre return? The answer is probably no. The present regime this time completely lost moral leadership, which is vital to Chinese society.

Throughout Chinese history, the commoners' belief and trust in leadership had always been considered important. Confucius urged rulers to be good examples of virtuous conduct to enlist people to have faith in them. When Mao took over in 1949, people had faith in him, believing that he would lead them toward a no class, no oppression and only happiness society. This faith was damaged by the Cultural Revolution. By the time of Mao's death, the Communist regime had already faced a serious legitimacy crisis. The confidence of major segments of society in the system had been shaken. When Deng launched his reform program, promising the reform of the economy first and political reform later, the confidence of the society in the leadership began to rebuild. This could explain why the students and intellectuals responded actively to the party's call for political reforms. Even though each student demonstration before 1989 was quelled, the treatment of the dissents was moderate in contrast to the treatment the students and intellectuals underwent in the cultural revolution. Consequently, the students still kept their belief in the leadership, assuming there were conflicts

within the party and that Deng would eventually prevail and side with the liberals. But the bloody crackdown of 1989 changed perhaps the people's perception of and faith in the party. Consequently, it changed the course of the student movements.

The massacre can be considered as a turning point in the student movement of these ten years. The cruelty of the military force in suppressing peaceful students and civilians has shattered the faith, however little the people, particularly students and intellectuals had in them. To use a Chinese saying: it has lost the "mandate of heaven." The demonstration and protest in the future of China is unlikely to resemble those in the past. When the new demonstration and protests do take place in the future, they will be the ones that will change the course of Chinese history, not the ones to be suppressed by the present leadership.

The open door policy, economic reform, cultural pluralism, ideological relaxation, political reforms, student demonstrations over these few years, and the massacre of 1989 have compounded the tension between the students and the government. China can not be what it used to be when Mao was alive; nor can it be what it wants to be in a short time. The reality in the years to come will not only be the visible battle over economic development and political control but also over the invincible battle

between legitimacy and faith. The tension between the government and the students is bound to accumulate, and the danger lies ahead. Under the eerie calm surface of China, there is suppressed anger and dissent, and when there is an outlet to discharge this wrath, it is bound to be spectacular and different from the past.

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