

CHAPTER 5

China

Let China sleep, for when she wakes, the whole world will tremble.

—Napoleon

**Satellites Have Already Reached Heaven, but Democracy Is Still
Stuck in Hell!**

—Protest banner carried by researchers from Chinese Academy of
Sciences

It's anarchy, but it's organized anarchy.

—Dan Rather, CBS News, May 1989

CHRONOLOGY

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|-----------------------|---|
| April 15, 1989 | Party leader Hu Yaobang passes away; within an hour, workers gather in Tiananmen Square |
| April 18 | About two thousand students sit-in at Tiananmen Square; workers begin to discuss forming organization |
| April 19 | Autonomous student union forms at Beijing University; ten thousand students in Tiananmen Square |
| April 19 | 125 students sit-in at elite housing at Zhongnanhai for two days until dispersed by police |
| April 20 | Beijing Normal University Autonomous Union organized, calls for citywide student organization |
| April 21 | Boycott of classes begins in response to police clubs breaking up Zhongnanhai sit-in previous night |
| April 21 | Sixty thousand students gather in a soccer field, march to Tiananmen that night for Hu's funeral |

- April 22 At Hu's funeral, over a hundred thousand attend, chant "We Want Dialogue"; heavy protests in Xian April 22; after the funeral, students kneel, holding a petition; no one comes forward to accept it
- April 24 Autonomous Student Federation founded in Beijing
- April 26 People's Daily editorial condemns antistate turmoil and chaos
- April 27 Despite police blockades, more than a hundred thousand students march to Tiananmen Square
- April 27 Fourteen-hour march; over five hundred thousand citizens defy police in a carnival-like atmosphere
- April 29 Officially recognized student group meets with government
- May 4 Rally attracts over one million people for seventieth anniversary of 1919 student movement
- May 8 Some students return to class, others favor a boycott
- May 10 Over five thousand participate in bicycle-demonstration supporting journalists' call for press freedom
- May 11 Over the heads of the autonomous student unions, celebrity movement leaders plan action
- May 13 Hunger strike begins and soon is joined by about two thousand people
- May 14 Because televised talks were being prerecorded, not broadcast live, some hunger strikers disrupt them
- May 15 Gorbachev visits, but ceremony in Tiananmen replaced by airport ceremony
- May 16 Three hundred thousand people march in sympathy with hunger strikers, occupy Tiananmen Square
- May 16 On behalf of central committee, Zhao Ziyang calls protest "patriotic"; hunger strike continues
- May 17-18 More than three thousand hunger strikers, some dramatically fainting; more than a million people protest in support on both days; media reports sympathetically on hunger strikers; workers congregate in square; journalists demand, "No more lies"; people sing "We Shall Overcome" for the foreign press assembled for the Gorbachev visit; singer Cui Jian joins protests
- May 18 Li Peng sternly lectures hunger strikers in meeting in Great Hall of the People; Outside Secondary Schools Student Autonomous Federation formed
- May 19 Early morning visit by tearful Zhao to Tiananmen calls for compromise; martial law declared; army mobilized; Beijing Workers Autonomous Union calls for general strike against martial law
- May 20 Hundreds of thousands of Beijing citizens peacefully block

- the army for forty-eight hours and provide the troops with food, drink, and flowers; in more than eighty cities and at six hundred colleges and technical universities, protests involve more than 2.8 million people; "flying tigers" (citizens on motorcycles) report on troop movements; Zhao Ziyang out as Party general secretary; Premier Li Peng wins struggle; troops pull back
- May 21** Television broadcasts from Beijing are suspended; more troops arrive; people continue to block them
- May 23** Organization of all autonomous groups is formed; workers, students, intellectuals, and citizens meet at noon every day; unanimous decision to leave on May 30 (tenth day of martial law)
- May 27** Millions of dollars raised in Hong Kong racetrack benefit concert; Central Art Academy students erect "goddess of democracy"
- May 28** Attempted abduction of Chai Ling and Feng Congde (the "commanders") by other activists at 4:00 a.m.
- May 30** Only ten thousand students still occupy the square
- June 2** New hunger strike by four people has huge impact; square fills again
- June 3** Army again tries to empty Tiananmen Square; buses stopped by crowds
- June 4** At 2:00 a.m., army units begin fighting their way into the city; many soldiers killed; people gather at every intersection on Changan Avenue; disbelief that troops are using live ammunition; 4:45 a.m.: with the square surrounded, vote is taken and students leave square
- June 5–6** Shooting continues in Beijing; casualties mount
- June 8** Government spokesperson claims three hundred dead, seven thousand injured

IN 1989, STUDENT activists in China sparked a national uprising for democracy that was only brought to an end after a massacre in working-class suburbs around Beijing's Tiananmen Square.¹ Despite accounts linking it to reform-minded political leaders, the revolt in China originated outside the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Though it was widely portrayed as a student movement, workers were significantly involved—as was nearly the entire population of Beijing, especially after May 20, when hundreds of thousands of people successfully demobilized what seemed like an endless convoy of trucks bringing in army units to "sanitize" the protesters' base in Tiananmen Square. As we saw in 1980 in Gwangju, students initiated protests, but once dangers multiplied, they often took refuge in their homes and campuses, while working-class activists surged to the forefront of the movement and bore the brunt of the unleashed fury of the state.

Within the hallowed halls of the communist elite, as the global chain reaction of revolts against military dictatorships continued, significant support for reform emerged within the party. For sympathizing with protesting students, Hu Yaobang had been forced to step down as party general secretary in 1987, and two years later, Zhao Ziyang was similarly nudged from power. What distinguished the 1989 movement from previous episodes of dissent was the popular power wielded by spontaneously formed autonomous groups. No "commander-in-chief" or central committee controlled the whole movement, although several leaders claimed to do so. Rather, across the country, on university campuses and in workplaces, independent groups formed at the grassroots and united in action. Multiple and diverse tendencies simultaneously coexisted within the movement. While student leader Wuer Kaixi famously intoned his desire for Western consumerism and Nike shoes, the Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation (BAWF), along with a dozen other such formations, advocated more democracy within a socialist framework.

A significant difference between the Chinese movement and simultaneously occurring ones in Czechoslovakia and much of Eastern Europe was the near absence of calls for a market-based capitalism among Chinese dissidents. Beginning in 1978, Deng Xiaoping had initiated a whole series of such reforms from the top and encouraged the emergence of a market-Leninist system within the state controlled economy so carefully nurtured from the 1950s to the 1970s. In December 1978, when the Central Committee ordered the dismantling of collectivized farms and authorized family farms to sell some goods on the market, one of the great accomplishments of the Maoist revolution was undone—and locally based party officials quickly enriched themselves. By 1980, Chinese citizens, if of any one opinion, were worried about high inflation and erosion in their standard of living that the new market-based reforms brought with them. "To get rich is glorious," Deng insisted, yet many workers found themselves less secure, while managers and the party elite become spectacularly wealthy. One of the world's most egalitarian societies became so stratified that the party eventually stopped releasing data measuring inequality.

The 1989 revolt was not limited to Beijing. By the time the insurgency had been brought to a bloody end, more than eighty cities experienced mobilizations of one kind or another involving millions of people as an eros effect swept the country. Years later, people spoke of a "Hundred Million Heroes" in reference to those who acted in 1989. Even though that is an astonishing number, it includes only about 10 percent of the country. When we consider four million out of Nepal's population of thirty million mobilized on the final day of protests in 2006 (more than 13 percent), and compare both those numbers with 300,000 of Gwangju's 750,000 citizens who mobilized on May 21 (or about 42 percent), we get a sense of the relative intensity of these mobilizations. While China's potential for political change was thwarted by overwhelming force in 1989 and blunted over subsequent decades by economic reform, the trajectory for China's future—as revealed in the actions and aspirations that emerged in the heat of events in 1989—provides a significant glimpse of the changing character of freedom in China.

While prolific, Western media coverage of the occupation of Tiananmen Square and subsequent reports on the Chinese democracy movement are suspect.

Many Western observers have framed the events in China with synchronous risings in Eastern Europe that overthrew Soviet rule in 1989 rather than in the context of Confucian culture and Asian politico-economic developments. The imposition of anticommunist Western ideology—so destructive in shaping U.S. interventions in Korea and Vietnam as means to “contain” communism—distorts Chinese history in 1989.

For decades, the United States has waged war on Chinese communism, our erstwhile ally during World War II. After the defeat of Japan, President Harry Truman ordered fifty thousand U.S. Marines to China to work alongside Japanese soldiers and fight on Chiang’s side against communists. U.S. troops immediately looked askance at their officers for explanations about their mission. Around Christmas 1945, a U.S. lieutenant reported, “They ask me, too, why they’re here . . . but you can’t tell a man that he’s here to disarm the Japanese when he’s guarding the same railway with Japanese.”² More than a hundred thousand U.S. soldiers and sailors were stationed in China by 1946.

During the subsequent bloody civil war, the United States aided Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang (KMT) while Western media vilified Mao Zedong and the Communist Party. After Chiang suffered ignominious defeat in 1949, the U.S. forces massively intervened in neighboring Korea’s civil war the following year. As the war against communism intensified, McCarthyism polarized the United States, and U.S. planes repeatedly attacked China’s side of their border with Korea. Finally the CCP authorized its army to drive back the United States. So badly did American ground forces fare that without air superiority and chemical/biological warfare, U.S. troops in all probability would have been overrun. From January to March 1952, a substantial body of evidence proves U.S. germ warfare against China “spilled over” from Korea—including testimony from thirty-eight captured U.S. Air Force officers and men and a six-hundred-page report coauthored by scientists from Sweden, Italy, Brazil, the Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain.³ When the bloodletting ceased, Chinese casualties were estimated in the hundreds of thousands—including Mao’s eldest son—while millions of Koreans were killed. It is no accident that both the Korean and Vietnam Wars were fought on China’s borders.

Throughout the 1960s, U.S. forces aided Taiwan’s shelling of the Chinese islands of Quemoy and Matsu. As a boy, I lived in Taiwan, and at night, from our home on the outskirts of Taipei, we could see the sky light up if we walked in the dark near the remote bomb shelter adjacent to our house. My father explained it was long-range U.S. artillery. As a fifth-grade student in 1959, I remember when one of my friends did not return to our school. I asked my father what had happened to him. His father and mine were both U.S. officers providing artillery support to Chiang Kai-shek’s army. He told me my friend’s father had been killed during his monthly rotation to the islands.

This “ancient” history has modern counterparts: In 1999, the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was intentionally targeted and hit by U.S. fighter bombers during U.S.-led NATO attacks on Serbia. At least three Chinese people were killed and the building set on fire. Today, it is no secret that U.S. world strategy

continues to encircle China with American bases. Few if any of these dynamics have been reported in the U.S. media. At the same time, in one of his final books, Samuel Huntington calmly discussed the possibility of a future U.S.-China war.

The Cultural Revolution's Contribution to the Movement of 1989

Very often, the origins of social movements are understood retrospectively in unlikely and inauspicious events. This may well be the case of the seemingly insignificant appearance of people bringing white flowers to Tiananmen Square in April 1976, three months after the death of longtime leader Zhou Enlai. Within days of the first spontaneous commemoration of Zhou's life, thousands of people arrived to lay wreaths, leave poems, and otherwise mark the passing of a man whose significance the hard-line "Gang of Four" leaders sought to minimize. Mourning Zhou was perhaps the only permitted public means of expressing displeasure with the continuing marginalization of conservatives like Zhou's protégé, Deng Xiaoping.

On Sunday, April 4, an estimated two million people visited the square.⁴ The next day, police cleared away all the flowers and sanitized the memorial site, but people nonetheless returned. Ordered to disperse, the crowd fought back when police moved in with clubs, and in the ensuing scuffles, a police van was overturned. Soon a workers' militia arrived and broke up the assembly of mourners, but the damage had been done: the April 5 events were characterized as "counter-revolutionary." Deemed responsible for motivating the protests from behind the scenes, Deng Xiaoping was dismissed from all positions of responsibility, and Mao denounced Deng for a second time as an "unrepentant capitalist-roader." (The first time was in 1966 at the height of the Cultural Revolution, and Deng was banished for years to the countryside. Soon thereafter, radical Beijing University students incarcerated his eldest son. When Deng's son sought to escape by jumping from a fourth-floor dormitory window, he ended up paralyzed from the waist down—a tragedy for which Deng never forgave the student movement.)⁵

Western analysts have long assumed that Eastern European and Chinese activists may only have had experience with democracy before communist rule, that China has no civil society—or that it is born in the 1989 turmoil.⁶ In doing so, they posit specific European and the U.S. models as defining civil society and ignore cross-cultural realities.⁷ Chinese peasants' centuries of uprisings constituted a "dynastic cycle" (through which regimes came to power, increased their military budget to remain there, raised taxes to pay for the military, after which people revolted and overthrew the dynasty—leading to a reiteration of the cycle). Examples of more recent civil activities include the White Lotus rebellion from 1796 to 1801, the many public-minded literati networks in the late Ming dynasty, the Taiping rebellion of the 1860s, New Text Confucianism, the Reform Movement after the defeat by Japan, and the May Fourth uprising in 1919. Alongside this rich tradition, many examples of people's direct engagement with civil matters can be found since 1949. Through popular participation in movements of national political change—from the disastrous Great Leap Forward in 1957 to the Cultural Revolution a decade later—millions of Chinese people accumulated valuable experiences,

as they drew upon previous history as a resource to mobilize.⁸ The human costs were enormous, yet through these historical events, millions of people prepared themselves to take an active role in the country's political development.

In the Manichean world of U.S. anticommunism (including its Trotskyist wing that proved such a fertile recruiting grounds for neoconservatives in the Bush regime), the Cultural Revolution was purely an abomination. Mainstream historians in both China and the United States condemn it in no uncertain terms, yet it could also be viewed as "the history of Chinese youth gradually becoming enlightened about the nature of Chinese society."⁹ Evidence persists that as a form of direct democracy—of people taking power into their own hands—it built a culture of resistance and became a source of encouragement for speaking out from the grassroots.¹⁰ Mao's famous "Sixteen Points," the seminal document of the Cultural Revolution, promised more democracy. Mao advocated elections to replace officials, basing his ideas upon democratic currents in Marxism like the 1871 Paris Commune (where all elected delegates were subject to immediate popular recall). From this perspective, the Cultural Revolution was a mobilization of civil society against the state bureaucracy, and people's experiences during it became a resource to draw upon in the heated moments of 1989.

Since Mao's demobilization of the Red Guard in 1968 at the height of the Cultural Revolution, China's student movement slowly rebuilt itself. In both objective factors (number of students, their concentration on campuses, and the single-child policy of the government) as well as subjective factors (the quality of everyday experiences, legacy of past struggles, and desire for new forms of liberty), students were positioned for the leading role they would assume with great popular acclaim in 1989. In similar ways, the country's working class—officially acclaimed to be masters of the nation—was groomed to carry out a thorough and far-seeing transformation of the country.

In very specific ways, the Cultural Revolution schooled thousands of people in the ethics and etiquette of street protests. At one critical moment in 1989, only a day before the shooting began, soldiers and demonstrators who were locked in confrontation began a singing competition—a technique commonly used during the Cultural Revolution.¹¹ Another carryover came when workers issued a detailed expose of high officials' special privileges—from families' trips abroad to limousines and businesses—a direct descendent of antielitism and anticorruption campaigns during the Cultural Revolution. As one of their leaflets put it, "The bureaucratic cats get fat while the people starve."¹² Cultural Revolution experiences enriched centuries-old notions that the Emperor ruled through a mandate of heaven (which could be retracted if power was wielded in unjust ways), that the people have the right to petition for redress of grievances and officials a concomitant responsibility to respond intelligently, and that everyone has the right to rebel against unjust dictates.

Economic Reform

The month after Mao Zedong died on September 9, 1976, party conservatives moved quickly to remove from power the "Gang of Four" and hundreds of others

aligned with them. By November 1978, Deng Xiaoping had been restored to a high position, and the April 5, 1976, incident was reclassified as “revolutionary.”¹³ After the party recognized the righteousness of the 1976 events, the change in climate was immediate: wall posters began to appear in Beijing. The “Democracy Wall Movement”—as this spurt in spontaneous grassroots initiative became known in the Western media—was initially encouraged by top party leaders, but as it spread to other cities, many became worried they might again be targeted, especially since economic reforms began in earnest in December.

With the purge of the Gang of Four, hundreds of thousands of banished Red Guards returned to the cities after a “lost decade” in rural areas, and thousands of prisoners incarcerated during the Cultural Revolution were freed. Among those released from prison were three longtime democracy activists from Guangzhou known collectively as Li Yizhe, who had long advocated legal protection for individual rights. Radical factions from the Cultural Revolution that had been broken up in 1968 began to reconstitute themselves in the mid-1970s and organize against what they perceived as a restoration of capitalism by Deng and the new party elite. A legacy of the Cultural Revolution, this enduring culture of resistance appears to have been one of the key forces behind the 1978 movement, especially through groups like Hubei’s Big Dipper Study Group and Yangtze River Commentary, Beijing’s April 3rd Faction (which called for working people and not bureaucrats to be “masters of society”), and Hunan’s Provisional Revolutionary Great Alliance Committee.¹⁴

In those heady days, a young electrician and former Red Guard, Wei Jingsheng, signed his name to a poster attacking Deng (then a party leader) and calling for democracy (“the fifth modernization”). Wei helped found one of China’s first independent magazines, *Exploration*. Soon others published dissident poetry and essays in *Beijing Spring*, *Enlightenment*, and *Today*.¹⁵ That winter, rural people streamed into the capital in a torrent of dissent. A ragtag assortment of peasants camped outside government offices to protest rapes, thefts, and even murder at the hands of powerful local communist authorities. One rape victim organized one of the largest marches. Unemployed young people militantly sought entry into Zhongnanhai—the exclusive compound where many of the party elite lived. On March 25, Wei called Deng a “fascist dictator.” Having twice been purged in the past, Deng moved resolutely to prevent any new recurrence of his banishment. Within days, thirty activists had been arrested, and Democracy Wall was shut down.

In early 1979, as the official celebration of the April 5 Incident approached, Wang Xizhe (one of the three original Li Yizhe members) ended a rousing speech by calling on more than a hundred intellectuals and cadre to “grasp their pens and use them to struggle to bring real democratic rights to the masses.”¹⁶ Not one to let words alone speak, Wang helped organize a campaign against Deng’s plan to abolish constitutional protections of the “Four Greats” (free speech, full articulation of viewpoints, public debates, and large character posters). Wang publicly encouraged opposition leaders to protest the detention of other dissidents, and he participated in an underground activist conclave in Beijing in June

1980 to discuss the need for a Chinese Communist League (to function as a "newly organized proletarian party").¹⁷ In mid-1980, a national association of twenty-one autonomous magazines called for a mass democratic movement to counter the ensconced bureaucratic elite. Although Democracy Wall had been shut down, the current of resistance continued to flow.

Needless to say, the group soon drew the ire of Deng and top leaders. When the crackdown came in 1981, more than twenty activists were rounded up. Wang was subsequently sentenced to fourteen years in prison, and other leading advocates of democracy received similar rewards for their services to the people. Officials worried that if protesters in different parts of the country linked together, they might substitute themselves for the leading role of the party. In January 1981, party leader Hu Yaobang attacked the dissidents: "These illegal magazines and illegal organizations . . . have behind the scenes backers. . . . There are people within the party who . . . think some young people are so smart they can take over the country."¹⁸

No matter how much the government repressed small magazine publishers and isolated outspoken activists, democratic sentiments continued to be espoused. Within three years, calls for free expression were heard within the Party's Writers' Association, where some believed that "creation requires freedom."¹⁹ The technical intelligentsia articulated the notion that "freedom of discussion is a prerequisite of the pursuit of truth." In many places, the need for academic freedom was discussed. In May 1985, the government granted Hefei's University of Science and Technology (UST) a measure of autonomy in its experiment with educational reform. Soon thereafter, a new wave of protests appeared on campuses at the forefront of reforms, around issues such as permitting faculty to select department heads and students to sit on presidential advisory boards. In July 1986, Li Honglin, president of the Fujian Academy of Social Science, called for concrete regulations to safeguard constitutionally protected rights. That fall, a Shanghai-based magazine published an exposition on two concepts of freedom: "If socialist society cannot offer the individual more and greater freedom, how can it display its superiority? . . . democracy and freedom very easily become derogatory words, associated with the bourgeoisie, as if our proletarians and communists did not want democracy or freedom, only dictatorship and discipline."²⁰

On December 5, 1986, at Hefei's UST, students protested the closed process of nominations for the People's Congress. Within two weeks, protests in Hefei spread to more than a dozen other cities, bringing nearly a hundred thousand students into the streets of Shanghai.²¹ After five days of public turmoil, student representatives from fifteen universities negotiated their demands with city leaders.²² Wall posters at Beijing University read, "We want democracy, we want freedom, we support the university student movement in the University of Science and Technology." Among the list of complaints that arose across China were:

1. A ban on discussion of sexual liberation at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou
2. Beijing University's policy of lights out at 11:00 p.m.

3. Incompetent librarians who retained their positions only because of their connections to powerful party officials
4. Poor food service in campus cafeterias.

During six hours of negotiations with Shanghai Mayor Jiang Zemin, student representatives pressed four issues: democracy, recognition of their movement as benefiting China, no retribution against participants, and freedom to publish their own newspapers. Three years later, these would remain key issues for students who occupied Tiananmen Square.

Although the 1986 protests brought some reforms, especially electoral changes that opened the selection process for candidates to the People's Congress, the government again cracked down. The president of the Writers' Association lost his party membership. The president and vice president of UST were transferred to other posts and expelled from the party. Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang—who had opposed the 1980 upsurge—was linked to the new protests and forced to resign in early 1987—as were two other “leading lights of the party.”²³ Hu's dismissal made him a hero to students and democracy activists—despite the fact he had opposed them a decade earlier.

At the same time as grassroots demands for more rights were being articulated, the government moved away from central economic controls. From 1979 to 1988, state planning's control of output declined from 77 percent to 47 percent of steel, from 85 percent to 26 percent of timber, and from 59 percent to 43.5 percent of coal.²⁴ As private industry was encouraged, many workers in state-owned enterprises faced hardship. In the spring and summer of 1988, factory layoffs affected four hundred thousand people in seven hundred Shenyang plants alone. White-collar workers were not directly benefiting from economic liberalization. The educated elite saw the country as increasingly mismanaged and corrupt. Work stoppages increased in the same period, as did the crime rate.²⁵ In early June, some two thousand Beijing University students protested in Tiananmen Square after one of their fellow students was murdered. They wanted the government to protect them from local criminals.

To be sure, between 1979 and 1984, people's standard of living improved. From the onset of economic reforms in 1978 to 1987, more than 38 times as many citizens owned televisions, more than 131 times more refrigerators were in people's hands, and about 5.7 million washing machines were in use—up from only about 1,000.²⁶ Urban workers' total compensation more than doubled. Yet by 1988, troubling signs appeared. Rather than “trickling down,” wealth generated by new construction of hotels and capital investment schemes brought inflation. Almost unknown in previous decades, inflation grew from less than 3 percent before 1985 to more than 18 percent in 1988—some believed the actual rate was as high as 27 percent by the beginning of 1989.²⁷ With real wages stagnating, the cost of living rose, believed by many to be caused by officials who took their cut out of every transaction. In 1988, more than one in three urban families experienced a sharp decline in their earning power.²⁸ In the first four months of 1989, coal prices rose 100 percent, while food prices also rose significantly: vegetables went up 48.7 percent, for example.²⁹ A

TABLE 5.1 Rates of Real Growth and Inflation, 1983–1991

Year	Rate of Real Growth	Inflation of Consumer Prices
1983	10.9%	2.0%
1984	15.2%	2.7%
1985	13.5%	9.3%
1986	8.8%	6.5%
1987	11.6%	7.3%
1988	11.3%	18.8%
1989	4.1%	18.0%
1990	3.8%	3.1%
1991	9.2%	3.4%

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2002 as cited in China Institute for Reform and Development, ed., *Thirty Years of China's Reforms: Through Chinese and International Scholars' Eyes* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2008), 81.

populace used to decades of low and stable prices and nonexistent unemployment painfully experienced the insecurities of the “free” market.

To increase efficiency, the state implemented Taylorist production techniques and introduced piecework wages. When material incentives failed to provide the jump in labor productivity they sought, the party expanded management powers. A new 1987 law gave managers more power over workers without providing any simultaneous mechanism for workers to redress grievances. The new legislation also permitted layoffs that affected three hundred thousand workers by August 1988. Some fifteen to twenty million other workers classified as “underemployed” worried they, too, might be laid off. Suddenly, decades of rising expectations were dashed against the cold reality of insecurity and impotency—the very conditions sociologists identify as producing progressive social movements.

Simultaneously, the gap between elite and working people widened. For the elite, times had never been better. Party functionaries made huge profits on resale of commodities bought at low, state-mandated prices. They were able to buy luxury goods from abroad, send their families on foreign tours, and live in top housing. Party members received special consideration in courts if they were charged criminally.³⁰ Both Deng and Zhao's sons were thought to be engaged in corrupt practices. Last but not least, while all youth had to compete for scarce seats in higher education, top party members' children were granted special admissions.

The contradiction between the official ideology of equality and workers' subordination became unbearable. Nationalization of industry and property undermined economic equality—especially after the onset of Deng's reforms. Long nourished on a steady diet of government propaganda about the proletariat as the most advanced class, China's workers found that the reality of their everyday lives stood in sharp contrast to that of wealthy leaders whose slick suits and limousines were all too conspicuous signs of their rule over people who wore Mao suits and rode bicycles. China's economy was contained within social relations of a bygone era, the era of Maoist empowerment of peasants and proletarians. As workers took actions to improve their lot, strikes were increasingly their weapon of choice—officially counted at more than seven hundred in the first ten months of 1988—and

not necessarily peaceful ones. Between January and July of that year, more than 297 managers were injured during 276 incidents of beatings meted out by angry workers. In Shenyang (Liaoning) three city managers were killed by subordinates.³¹

Like the proverbial genie that can't be put back in the lamp, China's culture of protest continued to grow. While in the United States and Europe, consumerism had tamed avant-garde art's subversive appeal by transforming it into another commodity, Chinese artists continued the rebellious antiestablishment upsurge.³² Although many abandoned China when a campaign against "spiritual pollution" was waged, by the mid-1980s, a multifarious confluence of streams congealed as the New Tide movement. "Dada" performances were held in Xiamen and Beijing University in 1986. The new cultural opening included a television series, *River Elegy*, which emphasized the producers' desire to rid China of traditional civilization and become modern and westernized. A prominent magazine introduced a new series on "avant-garde art" in May 1988, and the opening of a "China/avant-garde" exhibition took place in early 1989. This "first modern art show" was brought to an early end after pistol shots were fired as part of a telephone booth installation piece. Officials punished the artists with a two-year ban on modern art, but the movement was about to emerge on a larger scale than anyone had dreamed possible.

The 1989 Crisis

On April 15, 1989, Hu Yaobang suddenly died from a heart attack. Within an hour, people began congregating near the revolutionary heroes' monument in Tiananmen Square, just as they had during the movement of April 5, 1976. That evening, as groups huddled together in animated discussions, many people decried inflation eating into their meager incomes. About 4:00 a.m., the first organized contingent marched in: twenty employees of the Ministry of Textiles placed a wreath at the base of the monument.³³ Not until more than twelve hours later did the first group of students arrive (late on the evening of April 16), when some three hundred from Beijing University brought eight wreaths to the growing altar dedicated to Hu. Thus, it was workers who initiated the autonomous commemoration of Hu and unleashed an escalating spiral of events that reached its bloody denouement forty-eight days later on June 4.

More than anyone else, students took the lead in provoking a confrontation with the government that would spark urban uprisings all over the country, but to characterize the movement of 1989 as a student movement fails to appreciate the popular character of the uprising. Chinese speak of "one hundred million heroes" when they describe the events, yet in 1988, the government counted only two million students (alongside 105 million workers—70 percent of the nonagricultural labor force).³⁴ Students first took decisive action on April 17, when more than a thousand people brought a petition criticizing officials' corruption to Zhongnanhai. During the next two days and two nights, no one would meet with students to accept their petition, so they remained sitting there.

At dusk on April 19, 1989, at Beijing University (*Beijing Daxue* or Beida, for short), hundreds of students shouted approval for formation of a planning committee to create an autonomous student union. Other campuses soon declared

their own autonomous unions, and activists at each university selected a standing committee of five to seven members—which linked with other standing committees into a citywide coordinating group. Without knowing it, students had thereby passed a line of no return. By forming autonomous student unions parallel to government ones, they had unwittingly sown the seeds of a coming conflagration. During the same night that some students at Beida were organizing a new union, hundreds of other students were miles away, sitting in at Zhongnanhai. All over the city, groups were mobilizing. Workers were huddled in Tiananmen Square, and intellectuals associated with the World Economic Forum and *New Observer* magazine organized an academic forum to discuss a reevaluation of Hu Yaobang and to reverse the government's inclination to oppose political liberalization.³⁵

The next morning at Beijing Normal University (*Beijing Shifan Daxue* or *BeiShida*), three activist friends resolved to create an autonomous union at their campus. Without elections, the three simply appointed themselves officers and called the dormitory residence of Wuer Kaixi their office.³⁶ Later that evening (April 20), police clubs put a brutal end to the two-day sit-in at Zhongnanhai, a drawing of first blood that propelled students at Beida to initiate a boycott of classes that would last for weeks and spread to many campuses.

The clusters of workers in Tiananmen Square were surprised to hear that students had been beaten at Zhongnanhai. They knew that students shared their frustration with officials, and their conversations quickly turned to the need for workers to form their own autonomous organization. Hearing about the bloody end to the students' peaceful sit-in, one worker among the two dozen people clustered in Tiananmen rose to his feet and roused the group with a fiery speech denouncing the violence. Two days earlier, the group had broached the idea of forming their own organization, and after the police action, they edged closer to it. The informal group published two leaflets exposing leaders' wealth, their families' corruption, and the shortsighted impact of their economic policies. How much money had one of Deng Xiaoping's sons bet at a Hong Kong racetrack? Did Zhao Ziyang pay for his golf excursions from his own pocket? How could he afford his fancy Western suits? How many villas did the party elite maintain for their private use? Alongside such questions, they provided their views of the problems caused by Deng's economic reforms—especially in the form of higher inflation. With these modest actions, the Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation (BAWF) was born. The autonomous form of both students' and workers' organizations is of no small significance. This central characteristic of contemporary freedom—people's aspirations for self-government—is evident everywhere in insurgencies.

In the weeks of upheaval that followed, BAWF slowly moved from periphery to center of the protests. On April 20, they were seventy or eighty people—none of whom had activist experience. As soon as the group issued its first handbills that day, new faces surged forward to join, one of whom, Han Dongfang, became their most articulate spokesperson. As a means to continue, they resolved to meet every day in the northwest corner of Tiananmen Square. By the final phase of the insurgency, that is, after martial law had been declared and students melted away, the Workers' Federation continued to grow by leaps and bounds.

Students Take the Initiative

With Hu Yaobang's funeral scheduled for April 22, government leaders wanted Tiananmen Square kept clear, and they thought it would be a simple matter to do so. They planned to close the square before the funeral, but autonomously organized students outsmarted them. On the night of April 21, about sixty thousand students gathered on a Shida soccer field and marched to Tiananmen. While underway, the march from Shida was joined by contingents from Beida and the University of Politics and Law. The first group to arrive was from Qinghua University. Without a plan to do something once they got there, they sat down and rested. Soon the soccer field assembly, tens of thousands strong, marched in singing the Internationale and chanting, "Long Live Freedom!" and "Down with Dictatorship!"³⁷ At dawn, a meeting of representatives from each school was convened, and to everyone's surprise, nineteen colleges were present. The group approved a petition that included:

- Reassessment of Hu Yaobang
- Punishment for those responsible for the beatings at Zhongnanhai
- Permission to publish autonomous newspapers
- Publication of government officials' incomes
- Discussion of national education policy and fees
- Reconsideration of the "anti-spiritual pollution campaign"
- Accurate media portrayal of the new student movement.

As party leaders exited Hu's funeral in the Great Hall of the People, only a few even bothered to glance at the assembled students. Trying to get officials to meet them, tens of thousands of students marched around the square, chanting "We want dialogue," but they were ignored. A trio of Beida students knelt on the steps of the Great Hall and held the seven-point petition above their heads for about forty minutes. When there was still no response, many students began weeping in frustration.³⁸

By themselves, the seven points were not revolutionary demands—indeed they were supplications to the government and recognized the power of the system. Yet by autonomously challenging the sole discretion of the party to make policy, students crossed a dangerous line. Furthermore, by honoring the long-standing Chinese tradition of petitioning authorities for redress of grievances, students acted within the set of values central to Chinese civil society. By ignoring them, officials' actions broke with people's expectations of proper behavior. Already enraged by a student sit-in at their elite housing complex, government leaders wanted nothing to do with upstart youngsters who dared reproach them. That same day, protests in Xian turned violent and many people were hurt. Some reports claimed eleven people were killed and hundreds injured amid a cluster of attacks on police.³⁹

As early as 542 BCE, even before China became Confucian, student protests had occurred.⁴⁰ Over ensuing centuries, Chinese students played central roles in stirring the nation to act, resisting corrupt authorities, and supporting rulers they considered kind and just. Central to China's civil society and governing

bureaucracy, scholars have long been held in high repute, and they have often reciprocated the public's esteem with concern for the well-being of ordinary people. A famous Song dynasty scholar, Fan Zhongya, is still remembered for his insight, "A scholar worries over the world before the world worries itself; a scholar is happy only after all of humanity has achieved happiness."

Seen in the best light, students acted in this tradition of generosity of spirit and high-minded fairness. They wanted an end to officials' corruption and greater opportunities for university graduates. Students felt excluded from positions they were most qualified to hold. One wall poster written in mid-April read, "The best and the brightest are refused party membership, while the dregs are admitted in droves. The party is being manipulated by a bunch of 'phonies.'"⁴¹ Another decried party members lack of formal education: "Of the 47 million members of this 'vanguard,' as many as 75 percent have no more than elementary school education."⁴²

Two days after Hu's funeral, about thirty-five students, including many of the activists who had stepped forward to formulate the seven-point petition, created the Autonomous Student Union of Beijing Universities and Colleges (ASU). With rotating delegates democratically selected from fifteen (and soon thereafter from forty-one) universities, the ASU reflected a bottom-up representative system. Not only did it have a much wider base of popular support than the government-sanctioned student union, it took actions mainstream organizations were afraid to undertake—or ones they thought were incorrect. At their first meeting, they elected Zhou Yongjun chairperson of the standing committee by a vote of nine to Wuer Kaixi's six. The ASU quickly became the "decision-making body that could work out an agenda and strategy for the movement as a whole."⁴³ Besides organizing demonstrations down to the finest details like slogans, times and places, it was viewed by student activists as their representative to the government.⁴⁴ The same night ASU was formally founded in Beijing, heavy protests turned into riots in Xian and Changsha, where shop windows were smashed and looting occurred.

For years, previous attempts to construct independent organizations were discovered and broken up before they could build a base. Within the newly liberated political space opened by the eros effect of 1989, many groups simultaneously mobilized, and the ASU was able to emerge as a major political player. During the next six weeks, much focus would be put upon obtaining government recognition of its right to exist. By the night of the group's second meeting on April 25, Central People's Radio read an editorial attacking autonomous unions as "illegal organizations" and promising to "stop any attempt to infringe on the right of legal organizations." Published the next day in *People's Daily*, this editorial became a major sore point for students—and an unveiled threat to them.

On April 25, Deng Xiaoping took to the airwaves and called for Chinese people to "prepare ourselves for a nationwide struggle and resolve to crush the turmoil." The following day, he warned Premier Li Peng that "this is not an ordinary student movement. . . . These persons have arisen to create turmoil after having been influenced and encouraged by liberalization elements in Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union. . . . The more the Poles gave in, the

greater the turmoil became."⁴⁵ Deng was not entirely wrong: students had discussed the idea of naming their new organization "Solidarity" in honor of the Polish workers' movement.⁴⁶ Moreover, the ouster of Marcos from the Philippines and capitulation of Chun Doo-hwan in South Korea inspired people, while the transformation of Taiwan from a martial law garrison state to protodemocracy (see the next chapter) gave people reason to believe the time had come for China to open its political system. As one observer described the scene in Tiananmen Square, "Many emulated the white headbands worn by South Korean dissidents and flashed the V sign favored by anti-Marcos activists who fought for people's power in the Philippines."⁴⁷ Chinese people had assimilated a new tactic in the arsenal of insurgency: the massive occupation of public space as a means of rallying the population. While this tactic first appeared in the eros effect of the global movement of 1968, Filipinos used it to overthrow Marcos in 1986, and in 1987, South Korea's June Uprising compelled the dictatorship to grant democratic reforms.

It would be wrong however, to attribute the Chinese movement simply to spillover or "snowballing" from other countries. The simultaneity of China's movement and a dozen more in 1989 speaks to an occurrence of the eros effect, to the intuitive and spontaneous awakening of need for freedom. China's protests erupted months before the Berlin Wall came down, before Poland's Solidarity came to power, and before the Czech "Velvet Revolution"—all of which transpired in a process of mutual amplification.⁴⁸

Chinese wall posters and placards drew inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, and Abraham Lincoln; they mentioned Kent State and Gorbachev.⁴⁹ Inspired by King's speech, a Nanjing University student composed a poem, "I Have a Dream," which became a big character poster. *Eyes on the Prize*, an award-winning television series on the U.S. civil rights movement, had been available at her university.⁵⁰ Someone photocopied the *People Power* book from the Philippines and plastered it on a prominent situated wall. In the context of a worldwide continuation of 1968, with protests spreading in Hungary, East Germany, and many other countries, an editorial in *China's People's Daily* on April 26 condemned "anti-state turmoil and chaos," branding both students and workers in unsavory terms—a "conspiracy by a handful of unlawful elements" who had even taken over the broadcasting facilities of colleges and universities.⁵¹ As in so many other revolts in this period—the media coverage in Gwangju and Thailand readily come to mind—protesters were deeply troubled by hostile and somewhat inaccurate media assessments of their movements and demanded retractions. The difference is that in China, they ultimately did receive a high-ranking leader's public praise as well as promises of no retaliation—but they came too late (on May 16) to change the trajectory of the protests.

Students Under Attack

Densely concentrated on campuses and afforded time and space to study, students mobilized quickly. Under attack on radio, television, and newspapers, students knew the state's iron fist was clenched and ready to strike. At their next

meeting, the ASU hotly debated what course of action to take. With the Standing Committee unable to decide, they called a general assembly to vote. Nearly all of the forty schools present agreed to organize a major protest on April 27. With a class boycott already in place, students overnight became a powerful force that rivaled the party for people's loyalty. With Zhao Ziyang on a trip to North Korea, Li and Deng's hardline position clumsily handled the burgeoning movement. They brought heavy pressure to bear on ASU leader Zhou Yongjun, who evidently could not withstand it. On the night of April 26, he unilaterally called off the demonstration, but it was too late for one person to change anything. The next day, more than 100,000 students converged on Tiananmen Square. As they circumvented police blockades and marched in contingents, they were cheered on by hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents. As the seemingly endless procession passed, more than half a million citizens watched from sidewalks. The government's ban on protests became meaningless, and more than 150,000 people defied police by marching to Tiananmen Square, where they remained for some fourteen hours in "a carnival-like atmosphere." Cardboard boxes were filled with donations, and many workers mingled among the throng. Later one student leader called it "one of the greatest events in history."⁵²

After witnessing the joyous civil disobedience of April 27, government leaders finally realized they needed to do something more creative than simply ignore or pressure protesters. On April 29, they held a widely publicized meeting primarily with members of the government-sanctioned student organization, thereby accomplishing two goals. The dialogue made it appear that the party was willing to talk and listen—which, it must be said, was remarkable when compared to dictators like Marcos in the Philippines, Ne Win in Burma, Chun Doo-hwan in Korea, King Gyanendra in Nepal, and Suchinda in Thailand—all of whom used bullets rather than words to respond to their youth.⁵³ Significant forces within the party's highest levels were listening, especially Zhao Ziyang, who sought to work with students in the reform process. The "dialogue" also split the ASU. Unable to reach a consensus on whether or not to attend, the group granted individuals autonomous discretion to decide whether or not to participate in the meeting.

After their successful mobilization on April 27, students reorganized themselves. Zhou Yongjun was forced to resign for his unilateral "cancellation" and Wuer Kaixi became the new president—but with a more limited set of powers. Two days later, Wuer failed to attend a meeting and was replaced by Feng Congde. Riding the enormous energy generated by the recent civil disobedience, the ASU decided to mount another protest on May 4, no easy task given the pressure on the newly formed organization. The government's official rally on May 4, the seventieth anniversary of the 1919 anti-Japanese protests, was dwarfed in size by the students' rally, which attracted 50,000 students and more than 250,000 others. More young workers than students were present. Once again, the autonomous marchers broke through police lines, this time while singing songs from the 1919 movement. The two dismissed former leaders of the ASU each made individual public statements as if they were still leaders: Zhou announced an end to class boycotts, and Wuer read a long declaration that few outside the media even heard.

Significantly, these individuals felt empowered to speak on behalf of the movement as a whole, and their words were taken by the media as representing the ASU. Such individualism would not be the last time organizations of the student movement were undermined by self-proclaimed leaders.

In the heady atmosphere following two successful massive protests, campus activists were uncertain how to proceed. On May 5, thousands of students at nearly all universities except Beida and Shida returned to classes. On many campuses, the ASU began to be viewed negatively—whether because of its internal power struggles or its changing positions on class boycotts. When campus representatives assembled on May 5, despair rather than optimism characterized the meeting. At least one standing committee member resigned, and many others were simply no-shows. The movement seemed stuck at a low point, and no one knew what to do next. By now, students' key demand was for dialogue with the government—a measure that carried within it implicit recognition of their autonomous organizations. To that end, they spun off a Dialogue Delegation and hoped to secure a positive response from the government.

While the ASU stagnated, students by the hundreds continued to hang wall posters, and other groups mobilized. On May 10, more than five thousand bicycle riders supported journalists' call for press freedom. Unlike 1960s movements in the United States, activist students had a core of older activists around them who could offer advice and provide insight into the character of the society they were attempting to change. Even more importantly, younger activists often listened to their elders. With experiences accumulated from years of struggle and analysis gleaned from study, a hundred flowers of ideas bloomed, some fragrant, others short-lived. One young teacher at People's University displayed a big character poster detailing continuity in the history of Chinese administrations by comparing the power structure in 1989 with that in China's feudal past. See TABLE 5.2. The political critique evident in the poster is incisive, but it does not represent growing public dissatisfaction with the deterioration of economic conditions.

The Hunger Strikers' Coup d'État

On May 11, a small group of celebrity activists including Wuer Kaixi and Wang Dan met at a restaurant to discuss the movement's impasse. Looking for a way to maintain momentum, they resolved to appeal to students to join a hunger strike without the approval of the autonomous student unions. None was a spokesperson for any organization, and they soon helped spawn a dynamic inside the movement through which the fruit of students' efforts—the autonomous unions for which they had so mightily sacrificed—was thrown to the wayside and replaced by the media appeal of leaders willing to “fast to the death”—as they insisted they would do.

On May 13, just before beginning their hunger strike, dozens of students gulped down a last lunch of beer and sausages. Gathering in Tiananmen Square before sympathetic media, they were quickly joined by hundreds more people. It was only two days before Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev's historic visit marking an end to three decades of Sino-Soviet animosity was to take place. The

TABLE 5.2 Comparison of the Present Power Structure and Feudal China's Power Structure

	Feudal System	Present System
Control of state power	By single emperor	By single person
Ideology	One only: Confucianism	One only: Communism
Doctrine regarding source of power	Mandate of Heaven	Class struggle
Power base	Army	Army
System of officials	Appointed posts	Appointed posts
Principles of organization	Ruler guides subjects	The organization [the party] directs the individual
	Father guides sons	Higher levels direct lower levels
	Husband guides wife	The central committee directs the entire party
Political tactics	Highly sophisticated	Highly sophisticated
Assumption about human nature	Doctrine of inherent virtue	Doctrine of the perfect proletariat
Status of the individual	None	Extremely low

Source: Han Minzhu, *Cries for Democracy*, 155.

strikers realized they occupied a key strategic position from which they might win their demands—which included including two additional measures: repeal of the April 26 edict banning protests and televised talks between students and the government. Around 5:00 p.m., a slender psychology graduate student named Chai Ling led the crowd in an oath: “I swear, that to promote democracy, for the prosperity of my country, I willingly go on a hunger strike. I will not give up until I realize our goals.”⁵⁴ Nearby, Wang Dan was using a bullhorn to hold a press conference. No organization existed to make decisions on behalf of the eight hundred hunger strikers milling around the Monument to the People’s Heroes. Working now as celebrity activists, leaders wore shirts with their names written in large characters on them and moved around the square inside a phalanx of bodyguards, signing autographs as they passed through the crowd.

Communist leaders continued to seek ways to hear students’ concerns—whether convinced by the sincerity of their hunger strike or troubled by the wide resonance and sympathetic media they enjoyed among citizens. Top leader Yan Mingfu, head of the CCP’s united front department, sat down to meet with students on May 14. He promised there would be no “settling the account after the autumn harvest”—that is, that the regime would not retaliate against the students once their movement had died down. In the midst of the talks, hunger strikers—wearing hospital clothing and some with intravenous feeds attached to their bodies—burst into the hall and disrupted the conversation. They were angered because the televised version was being prerecorded, not broadcast live. Putting an end to the dialogue, they demanded to read their “last words” to their parents. Amid cries and weeping heard in all corners of the room, they proceeded to do so.⁵⁵ This charade took place *one day* after the beginning of the fast!



Massive media presence in Beijing stimulated activists to compete for fame.
 Photographer unknown.

The hunger strike marked a turning point in the movement, a shift from righteous indignation to arrogant self-promotion. Among the public, the hunger strikers elicited great sympathy, but by undercutting students' autonomous organizations and seizing the center of attention for themselves, a few media stars emerged who drew the entire movement down the road to their stardom—and to the movement's demise. Later that day (May 14), twelve of China's most famous writers appealed to the hunger strikers to leave Tiananmen Square so that the grand ceremony honoring Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev's visit the next day (the first by a Russian party leader since 1959) would not have to be cancelled. The intellectuals also called for the regime to recognize the autonomous student organizations, to consider protesters a patriotic, democratic contribution to society, and to take no action against them after the matter was settled. Nevertheless, students refused to budge. Gorbachev was met at the airport by senior Chinese leaders—and was never able to visit Tiananmen Square.

By circumventing the organizations their movement had only recently created, the hunger strikers set a dangerous precedent, one that ultimately doomed the movement to fall short of its possibilities. The autonomous unions did not agree to the hunger strike, and according to some sources, hoped it would fail.⁵⁶ When the ASU did not suit their agenda, its more famous members simply circumvented it. From that moment, it was only a short hop to the creation of a "Headquarters of Tiananmen Square" with a "commander-in-chief," who led the entire movement willy-nilly down the path of "holier-than-thou" radicalism and straight into a bloody confrontation on June 4. The strategy of escalation

involved rejecting compromise, whether with Zhao and other moderates or with movement colleagues, and thereby doomed the movement in its arrogance to abject failure. The hunger strike was a great tactic in terms of gaining sympathy of people, in eliciting “an unprecedented outpouring of sympathy from the citizens of Beijing, young and old, rich and poor, highly educated and semi-literate,” but since it cut the movement from democratic organizations, it was a huge strategic error.⁵⁷

For three weeks, workers quietly organized and spread the word to large factories and offices. Only after hundreds of thousands of students occupied Tiananmen Square did the Workers' Federation (BAWF) feel safe enough to announce their presence publicly. On May 2, they had two thousand registered members. By May 13, when huge demonstrations were mounted almost every day, the clearly visible BAWF contingent marched prominently among many state-owned factories, which had also created their own autonomous worker federations.⁵⁸ Party leaders vainly sought to keep workers from joining the protests. In early May, the top party office in Beijing issued a directive to all factory managers instructing them to take all feasible steps to keep workers and students from coming together. On May 10, the Party Politburo received a report that a third of six thousands miners' families had taken part in the movement.⁵⁹ Three days later, both Premier Li Peng and Zhao Ziyang held special meetings with labor leaders, yet the outcome was not to their liking. On May 14, banners appeared in Tiananmen with the words one of the workers was rumored to have shouted during the meeting: “The party should sell off its Mercedes Benzes to pay off the national debt!”⁶⁰ On May 15, Beijing officials huddled in an emergency session devoted to the problem of how to “stabilize workers.”⁶¹

Although considered an illegal organization by the authorities, BAWF continued to grow, both in numbers and in their systematic critique. On May 17, as martial law approached, they announced, “The people will no longer believe the lies of the rulers. . . . There are only two classes: the rulers and the ruled.” In another public statement, they sounded a battle cry: “Ah, the Chinese! Such a lovable yet pathetic and tragic people. We have been deceived for thousands of years, and are still being deceived today. No! Instead we should become a great people; we should restore ourselves to our original greatness! Brother workers, if our generation is fated to carry out this humiliation into the twenty-first century, then it is better to die in battle in the twentieth!”⁶² On May 17 and 18, workers flooded into the city to join the protests, at whose symbolic center sat several hundred hunger-striking students. From state-owned enterprises to collectively managed and privately owned ones, from large factories like the Capital Steel Corporation and Yanshan Petrochemical to small shops, they arrived in columns of trucks, cars, and buses, singing, drumming, beating gongs, and carrying enormous red flags and portraits of Mao. On May 18, the *New York Times* reported, “The demonstration today was the realization of one of the government's worst nightmares—organized worker participation in what began as student protests.”

Unlike students, BAWF wanted a more democratic form of socialism. Their demands included price stabilization, the right to change jobs freely, and an end

to hiring that discriminated against women. One BAWF activist subsequently declared: "In the factory, the director is a dictator, what one man say goes. If you view the state through the factory, it's about the same: one-man rule. . . . A factory should have a system. If a worker wants to change jobs, they ought to have a system of rules to decide how to do it. Also, these rules should be decided upon by everybody." Here in nutshell is a vision for a higher form of socialism, not a desire for consumerism. While many students criticized their exclusion from elite circles and demanded entry to off-limit state stores where Western goods were sold, workers sought to abolish the elite entirely and developed a vision for improving everyone's lives. "New hotels have gone up and changed the city's face, but the people still lack decent housing space," they wrote. "There's a craze for banquets at the top," they complained. As they organized, they articulated the belief that their autonomous organization represented workers better than the official All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) that they felt was controlled by the party, not the workers. Although many ACFTU members (including some officials) hung out at the BAWF convergence point in Tiananmen, the ACFTU refused to endorse the BAWF, whose stridency and independence threatened their complacency.

During the 1989 insurgency, students found a mentor and advocate in Zhao Ziyang, and like Zhao, many sought to play the role of loyal opposition. Many workers, however, tired of Zhao's fancy Western suits and matching policies, often shouted "Down With Zhao Ziyang!"⁶³ As the movement developed and workers increased their presence, they called for ordinary citizens to oversee officials and challenged the special privileges enjoyed by the communist elite. They sought to curtail arbitrary power of managers in factories and to stimulate autonomous unions that could help to formulate national policy and to craft specific agreements governing workplace relations. Far from rejecting the communist revolution, they sought to reenergize it on the basis of Marx and Mao. One of their wall posters was quite explicit: "We have calculated carefully, based on Marx's *Capital*, the rate of exploitation of workers. We discovered that the 'servants of the people' swallow all the surplus value produced by the people's blood and sweat. . . . But history's final accounting has yet to be completed."⁶⁴

As the movement spread across China, preliminary assessments of the movement's scale indicated that of 434 big cities in China, 107 reported student protests, including thirty-two with participation of autonomous workers groups.⁶⁵ Years later, a more complete compilation counted demonstrations in 341 cities.⁶⁶ In Xian, one thousand hunger strikers sat down in New City Square.⁶⁷ Delegations traveled to nearby factories to gain support. As many as two thousand students rode trains to Beijing on May 18 and 19. In Chongqing, eighty-two students began a fast in front of City Hall on May 18, copying both the Beijing tactic and the demand for a dialogue with officials.⁶⁸ In Nanjing, tens of thousands of workers and students demonstrated, and some joined a hunger strike there.⁶⁹ A "Goddess of Democracy" was erected in Shanghai before art students did so in Beijing.

It appeared that everyone was pulled in by the "magnetic attraction" of the protests—even police officers, Foreign Ministry workers, bankers, and *People's*

Daily reporters.⁷⁰ One estimate said 10 percent of Beijing—about a million protesters—were in the streets every day during Gorbachev's three-day visit.⁷¹ The city was so jammed that Gorbachev never made it to the Great Hall of the People, the Forbidden City, or even to the opera. In this "urban Woodstock" there was room for everyone, and hundreds of thousands of people streamed into Beijing from all parts of China. The Beijing Military Command sent over one thousand quilts, and state-owned pharmaceutical companies contributed to the square's medical tents. More than twenty-five hunger strikers came from the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Some established artists sold pieces to raise money.⁷² Even the Communist Youth League sent over twenty cases of drinks. Modeling themselves on the Beijing scene, hunger strikers gathered in more than thirty other cities.⁷³ Beijing's festive "carnival" of protest remained peaceful, yet it had its downside. Walking through Tiananmen at 2:00 a.m. on May 19, Geremie Barmé observed, "The place stank, and there were piles of filth, decaying food, plastic and glass containers and all types of rubbish everywhere, with students huddled asleep all around the monument. Parents who had come to the square with their children had let them freely urinate around the place, and after some days of this, large parts of the plaza emanated a foul odour."⁷⁴

For some people, the hunger strike also emitted a strange aroma. Many hunger strikers were observed eating secretly by foreign journalists who, while sympathetic to them, nonetheless subsequently reported these facts. One student openly admitted he was eating sweetened yogurt—claiming, "Snacking is okay. It's not really food."⁷⁵ Furthermore, it appears many of the students were on a relay hunger strike, fasting a day at a time after which someone else replaced them. For some unknown reason, Chinese people believed that the hunger strikers might die after seven days on a water-only diet, when in fact Dick Gregory is only one of many people who have fasted for many times as long.⁷⁶ As a democracy activist before he became president of South Korea, Kim Young-sam fasted twenty-three days on a water-only diet beginning on May 18, 1983, to express his support for Gwangju citizens' continuing struggle against the Chun Doo-hwan dictatorship.

Students' dignified role in the China—a society in which everyone worked incessantly for the nation to recover its greatness—meant they lived on a pedestal for most of the time—a position they demanded the government also accord them. The cream of the crop of a single-child nation, Beida students who spearheaded the hunger strike considered themselves the future leaders of the nation—as did the public that supported them. On the first day of their fast, some forty-one of China's future elite collapsed. Such theatrics, when not amusing, disguised a great deception. Tibetans' circles of protest were recreated around the water strikers' "altar." Without comprehending its Tibetan roots, Barmé described how, "As the space was a circle it immediately encouraged a type of circumambulation. Crowds of observers and delegations edged their way around it. People often burst into tears as they moved past the young water strikers huddled in the seats of the bus, sometimes raising their hands or flashing the V sign."⁷⁷

"Commander-in-Chief of the Headquarters of Tiananmen Square"

On May 14, Chai Ling left the meeting with government officials due to "exhaustion," but at 8:00 a.m. the next morning, she announced the formation of a Hunger Strike Command with herself as chairperson. Her new position also brought her control of a broadcasting center in Tiananmen Square acquired with Hong Kong donations. Her husband and fellow activist, Feng Congde, personally refused to let ASU representatives have access to the station. Thus in a single evening, Chai Ling and her husband managed, in effect, a coup d'état that put her in the position she later called "Commander-in-Chief of the Headquarters for Defending Tiananmen Square." In her mind, the occupation of Tiananmen Square necessitated a new organization—the "Headquarters for Defending the Square" (HDS)—and it quickly constituted committees for finance, liaison, information, secretariat, and resources as well as action-teams for food and water distribution, medical care, picketing, and security.

Two of the original hunger strike conspirators, Wuer Kaixi and Wang Dan, were among the most upset by Chai Ling's ascendance to sole possession of such exalted status, particularly since they had not been present at that meeting. The next day, they insisted that leadership should be reconstituted. After a new standing committee again selected Chai Ling as chair, the first task they undertook was to set up a security perimeter. Activists cordoned off their inner circles, this time with transparent fishing line held by trusted students who kept even the most ardent citizen-supporters from reaching the increasingly isolated and arrogant leadership.

To counteract their marginalization, ASU representatives along with Qinghua University students set up a second broadcasting center (with its own security guards), "The Voice of the Student Movement." This new station's amplification was much more powerful and competed with HDS. Needless to say, the two had poor relations. More than \$100,000 in donations had been raised to support the student movement, but Chai Ling controlled much of it, as did Beida's ASU, which had come to act independently of the citywide ASU.

On May 16, speaking on behalf of the party's Central Committee, Zhao Ziyang sought compromise and publicly called student protests "positive" and "patriotic." He promised no prosecutions if they would simply leave. Despite the government's generous offer, no one accepted it. On that fourth day of the hunger strike, about 200 of the 3,100 participants fainted.⁷⁸ Demonstrations continued and more than 300,000 people marched in sympathy. On both May 17 and 18, more than a million people attended protests. Hunger strikers continually fainted despite being fed intravenously. Unconstrained by party directives, media reported sympathetically at the same time that journalists publicly insisted, "No more lies." A rising number of workers congregated in the square. People sang, "We Shall Overcome" for the assembled throng of foreign reporters—as many as a thousand strong—who were in Beijing for Gorbachev's visit but spent the bulk of their time covering the "story of their lives" in Tiananmen Square. Whether delirious from the hunger strike or inspired to speak his true motivations, it was at this juncture that leader Wuer Kaixi uttered his most famous lines: "We want

Nike shoes, lots of free time to take our girlfriends to a bar, the freedom to discuss an issue with someone, respect from society.”⁷⁹

While no doubt most hunger strikers were sincere, Wuer apparently was not. Television reports later revealed footage of him eating at a Beijing Hotel, and AP reporter John Pomfret claims to have shared a meal with him during the hunger strike. Andrew Higgins of England’s *Independent* saw him gulping down noodles in the back seat of a car, and Wuer told a friend he “needed to eat to conserve his strength because he was a leader and because he had a heart condition.”⁸⁰ Sincere or not, reading the Beida manifesto in light of students’ subsequent decisions to call off their strike leaves me skeptical of their commitment—if not their intentions: “We do not want to die; we want to live, for we are at life’s most promising age. We do not want to die; we want to study, to study diligently. Our motherland is so impoverished; it feels as if we are abandoning her to die. Yet death is not what we seek. But if the death of one or a few people can enable more to live better, and can make our motherland prosperous, then we have no right to cling to life. As we suffer from hunger, Papa and Mama, do not grieve; when we part from life, Aunts and Uncles, please do not be sad.”⁸¹ This plea was not written in blood, although other oaths were.

Already elite and expecting to become powerful as they grew older, Beijing students excluded from their ranks in Tiananmen anyone not part of their campuses. Workers in particular were chased off as soon as they sought entry to the inner circles of power. In Beijing, students marched with hands linked to prevent ordinary citizens from joining their “pure” protests. Once they occupied Tiananmen, concentric rings of security prevented their inner circles from being reached by workers and other nonstudents. The Construction Workers Union and BAWF both sought to send delegations for discussions but student marshals chased them off. According to one worker-activist, students looked down on “construction workers from the villages, saying they’re convict laborers.”⁸² To keep nonstudents out, students secretly told each other to wear sneakers or a black band or to pin a white flower and school emblem on their clothes.⁸³ They distanced themselves from any militant resistance—instead emphasizing non-violence and legality. Some observers took the separation of workers to be of their own choosing, but in fact, they tried to access students leaders and were continually rebuffed, at least until late May.⁸⁴ Tuned into elite discourse, students struggled to ensure their status within it—and reproduced it within the movement.

From the workers’ perspective, many of the same corrupt practices of the elite, such as secrecy, exclusivity, factionalism, struggles for power, and special privileges, could be found within the student movement, whose leaders reportedly had mattresses to sleep on and wads of cash from foreign donors in their tents. Student leaders took on absurd titles like “commander-in-chief” while workers remained opposed to hierarchy and let anyone join their meetings—including students. While workers considered themselves the “most advanced class,” they had little of the cockiness students exhibited, and they worked with collective leadership rather than under “commanders” who seemed to multiply in student circles.

Most workers of China supported the seven initial student demands. Railway workers reportedly permitted thousands of students to ride the trains to Beijing without money so they could join the movement. During the hunger strike, as many as two hundred thousand students may have flooded into the capital to check on the scene.⁸⁵ So well did the population of Beijing come together during this episode of the eros effect that students easily found places to stay and food to eat. It was rumored that even the city's thieves had agreed to a two-day strike in support of students' hunger strike.⁸⁶ Crime rates for all types of offenses plummeted from mid-April to mid-May in an unprecedented drop.⁸⁷ Vegetable vendors kept prices down, despite the opportunity to charge more, because, "At such a time, everybody must have a conscience."⁸⁸ As one observer wrote, "The self-organization of the Beijing citizens, the establishment of committees that organized incoming supplies and saw to the housing of thousands of students and others from out of town, removed garbage, wrote, printed and distributed publications, not only exploded the fashionable Western myth that improvements in the Chinese standard of living had suddenly depoliticized the population, but also disproved, to the permanent discomfiture of our masters everywhere, that the population of one of the largest cities on the planet can organize its affairs without the interference of the government, the state, and any of its institutions."⁸⁹

The students gave protests their start, and their courage inspired others to stand up, yet they were ultimately reform-minded. While students generally supported Deng's market liberalization and wished to see privatization proceed, workers opposed excessive marketization and worried they would lose their jobs and past gains from the planned economy. While people in the streets may have called for an overthrow of the bureaucracy, no major student organization did so. Rather, they wanted dialogue with and recognition from the government—which is why the designation student "rebellion" is appropriate. A rebel feels excluded from power and wants inside, while revolutionaries want to destroy the power structures themselves. Students wanted to be part of the reform process that Deng was leading, while workers marched with giant photos of Mao and wanted to oust Deng a third time. At best, students wanted reform; workers wanted revolution.

Farmers were never part of the movement in significant numbers—a reason why it cannot be said that the urban-based movement captured the overwhelming majority of Chinese citizens' loyalty. During the Great Leap Forward, farmers had resisted attempts at collectivization, resulting in severe shortages and famines that killed millions of people. In 1989, a material basis for farmers' political apathy can be found in benefits the countryside received during years of Maoist policy. While Deng's reforms would ultimately lead back to severe city-countryside economic disparities, in 1989 economic liberalization had yet to severely impact the countryside, and farmers did not rise up against Deng as workers did.

On May 17, believing Zhao's efforts at compromise had failed, Deng authorized martial law. Although Li Peng believed any further exhibition of regime weakness would have handed the country over to the students, he scheduled a meeting with students for May 18.⁹⁰ Only on that morning did students receive word that government officials would meet them at 11:00 a.m., and they hastily

assembled a delegation that included many celebrity leaders. Televised live, the meeting in the Great Hall of the People provided de facto recognition of student autonomous organizations since Li Peng, the top government official, met face-to-face with student leaders. Nonetheless, the encounter failed miserably. Li Peng sternly lectured the hunger strikers and insisted the party “would not stand idly by.” Although students finally got the nationally televised meeting they sought, Wuer Kaixi (who at that moment did not represent anyone but himself) took over the proceedings, castigated Li Peng for being late, and treated him with utmost contempt: “We don’t have much time to listen to you. Thousands of hunger strikers are waiting. Let’s get to the main point. It was we who invited you to talk, not you who invited us—and you were late.”⁹¹ Seconds later and plainly visible on camera, a medical team rushed in to rescue an apparently fainting Wuer as he grabbed his oxygen bag. Wuer apparently had a knack for “strategic fainting” in public, a talent he availed himself of more than once.⁹²

At 5:00 a.m. on May 19, Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang paid students an early morning visit. He tearfully called for students to evacuate Tiananmen, to no avail. That was the very last moment when a compromise could have been reached. After his visit, autograph hunters mobbed Zhao before he disappeared from public view. He did not comment on the events until his posthumous memoirs were published in 2009. Clearly a split in the party had occurred, but at the time, no one knew exactly why. In retrospect, Zhao Ziyang was forced to resign and Li Peng’s hard line was upheld. Within a year, Jiang Zemin (who, as mayor of Shanghai, had skillfully defused protests in 1986 and subsequently purged the newspaper *World Economic Herald*) replaced Zhao on the standing committee of the Politburo and as general secretary of the central secretariat. By March 1990, Jiang was also chairperson of the Central Military Commission of the National People’s Congress of the Central Committee.⁹³ The man who led the repression of the 1989 movement in Tibet, Hu Jintao, became general secretary in 2002.

From Martial Law to the Bloodshed of June 4

On the afternoon of May 19, as Beijing emptied of the foreign media that accompanied Gorbachev, word spread that a massive government crackdown was coming. Chai Ling called an emergency meeting of her headquarters in the command bus. While security prevented Wuer Kaixi from attending, the group voted to end the hunger strike, a message they broadcast without bothering to wait for hundreds of hunger strikers to discuss the matter. When hunger-striking students finally heard the announcement, they demanded reconsideration of the issue. Delegates from eighty schools gathered, and it took more than an hour for Chai Ling’s security force to check their credentials. Finally, when the meeting was allowed to commence, some 80 percent voted to continue the strike. By that time, the vote of representatives didn’t really make much difference. Chia Ling’s headquarters had already announced an end to the strike. The democratic gathering of delegates insisted the strike would continue. The BASU called for unity, while the student leaders were split into bitterly divided factions. So frustrated were students from campuses outside Beijing by being excluded from decision-making

in Tiananmen that they eventually called a meeting in front of the Museum of History and formed their own organization, the Outside-Beijing Autonomous Student Federation.

With martial law imminent, students began drifting away, but BAWF called for a one-day general strike to begin the next day. In a widely distributed handbill that first appeared at 9:30 on the morning of the May 19, BAWF exhorted workers to use "vehicles from every work unit to block main transportation arteries and subway exits, and to ensure the normal operations of the China Central Television and China Central Broadcasting stations."⁹⁴ Amazingly, they were able to persuade the All China Federation of Trade Unions, which had donated 100,000 yuan—about \$25,000—to the protests, to join in the call for a general strike for May 20.⁹⁵

On the evening of May 19, in a televised solo encore, Li Peng decried "chaos" in the capital and promised "resolute and decisive measures." The very next morning, with Zhao Ziyang unable to stop him, Li signed the martial law order and sent tens of thousands of troops into the city. It was one thing to declare martial law and another to enforce it. Party leaders ordered troops into Beijing, but the army refused to fire on mobilized citizens who peacefully blocked them with every available means. The army took over major media outlets like Central Television and Radio, *Xinhua* News Agency, and *People's Daily*, thereby ending mass media exhortation of people to resist martial law—and squelching reports of soldiers who promised not to use force. No more photos of conversing soldiers and citizens would be published in major media outlets. When soldiers tried to approach Tiananmen Square, however, they discovered that thousands of citizens had erected barricades all around its outskirts using everything from city buses and construction cranes to dumpsters and construction equipment. Responding to the call of BAWF, the people of Beijing had come to rescue their young people. As Jan Wong described the scene: "Elderly women lay down in front of tanks. Schoolchildren swarmed around convoys, stopping them in their tracks. After the first tense night, the soldiers began to retreat as the crowds cheered and applauded. Some bystanders flashed the V sign. Others wept, and so did some of the soldiers. One commander shouted, 'We are the people's soldiers. We will never suppress the people.'"⁹⁶ Subsequent reports told of the commanding general of the Thirty-Eighth Army refusing to obey orders to move on the capital, requiring Deng to summon the Twenty-Seventh Army from Hebei province.⁹⁷ Troops arrived in Beijing from Chengdu, Shenyang, and Jinan.

On May 20, popular forms of dual power emerged to contest the government's authority. Autonomously organized groups of protesters formed in factories and government work units, police precincts, hotels, law courts, CCP organs and youth groups, government ministries (including at least eight national government agencies), official media agencies, and university departments.⁹⁸ Contingents of "Flying Tigers" motorcyclists reported on troop movements. China's only two living Army Field Marshals praised publicly students' patriotism. Seven other generals—including a former minister of defense and a veteran of the Long March—circulated a statement that over one hundred senior officers



After preventing soldiers from reaching Tiananmen Square on June 3, Beijing citizens offered them food. Photo by Reuters/Bettman Newsphotos.

signed calling on the army not to open fire on people.⁹⁹ The National People's Congress Standing Committee circulated a petition for an emergency meeting to repeal martial law.¹⁰⁰ BAWF released a joint statement with hunger strikers and ASU that invoked the memory of the Paris Commune: "We members of the working class thank these students and think the Chinese nation should be proud of them. History will remember them. Tiananmen Square will be our battlefield. We will use our bodies to protect the students, hunger strikers, and sit-in protesters. We will build another Wall of the Communards with our life's blood."

For forty-eight hours, hundreds of thousands of Beijing citizens peacefully blocked the army. People fed the soldiers, passed them cases of liquid refreshments, sang songs for them, and bought them popsicles and flowers—as they implored them to be on the side of the people. A banner at the Chinese Academy of Social Science called on the government to resign and for an emergency session of the National People's Congress to be convened. In more than eighty cities at six hundred colleges and technical universities, protests involved more than 2.8 million students. In Shanghai, half a million people marched in support of the students, and in Xian some three hundred thousand people mobilized.¹⁰¹

With victory inspiring them and giving them new confidence, hundreds of thousands of Beijing's citizens remained at the barricades on May 21 and 22 and blocked renewed army attempts to reach Tiananmen Square. As Beijing held out, all over China, people mobilized, including four hundred thousand who marched in Hong Kong on May 21. TABLE 5.3 offers an indication of the national scope of the protests.

As people continued to block troops from entering the center of the city, BAWF distributed an open letter on May 21 calling for an indefinite general strike

TABLE 5.3 Number of Protests, May–June 1989

Date	Number of Cities with Protests
May 18	17
May 19	116
May 20	132
May 21–22	131
May 28	36
June 1	57
June 4	63
June 5–10	181

Source: Zhang, *Tiananmen Papers*, 214, 227, 243, 274, 316, 345, 392, and 398.

and insisting workers, “as the most advanced class,” should form the “backbone” of resistance. So popular was their growing leadership that in the two weeks from May 20 to June 3, some twenty thousand Beijing workers signed their names to membership rolls.¹⁰² With so many new recruits, the group spawned a new structure, with separate units for organization, logistics, and information (with daily broadcasts of news and a wildly popular evening free speech forum). They also set up an office to interface with factories, campuses, and grassroots groups. By the end of May, they had a printing press, broadcast station in the square, picket corps, four “dare-to-die” security brigades ready to fight police incursions, and a constitution specifying a general assembly, standing committee, and executive committee.

Beginning on May 20, they organized autonomous daily demonstrations and worked in tandem with the array of groups protesting martial law. They called for every work site to maintain its own self-organization, lest authorities invent a pretext to intervene by force. In Beijing, workers at Capital Steel Corporation, construction workers, Beijing Citizens Dare-to-Die Corps, and the Flying Tigers Motorcycle Brigade (with about three hundred members) formed. In China’s northeast, the Manchurian Tigers Dare-to-Die Corps and Mountain Dare-to-Die Corps were similarly organized along autonomous lines. Among writers, the Beijing Union of Intellectuals was established, attributed by one Western observer to be the “first such autonomous sign of a civil society since the 1940s.”¹⁰³

On May 23, BAWF helped form a new confederation of all autonomous groups, including workers, intellectuals, citizens, and several student groups. As the student movement receded, workers took the initiative to form autonomous federations across China—in Shanghai, Wuhan, Canton, Xian, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Cumming, Lanzhou, Guiyang, Changsha, and Xining.¹⁰⁴ In this period, many other organizations formed, but none more potentially important than one formed on May 23, which sought comprehensively to unify all opposition currents. They called themselves the Joint Conference of All Persons of All Circles in Beijing and included about forty representatives of workers, intellectuals, and students. A series of meetings beginning on May 20 included BASU activists, members of the Outside Beijing Autonomous Student Federation, individual activists like Wang Dan, BAWF members, older intellectual-activists from the 1976 and 1978

movements as well as representatives of the Federation of Intellectuals. The group grew rapidly in size. On May 22, even representatives from the Hong Kong Student Union attended, but Chai Ling refused to come. By bringing together representatives of all autonomous groups, a potential Commune was created. The next day, the group resolved to meet daily at noon.¹⁰⁵ They asserted that everyone should obey the decisions of the Joint Conference, but many students thought of them more as advisors than leaders.¹⁰⁶ While they attempted to create a central clearinghouse and decision-making body, others talked of multiple centers transferring power and parallel "command" structures. Acting independently, Chai Ling helped set up a "student parliament" with representatives from each campus—and herself as chair.

As movement leaders huddled in seemingly endless meetings, three citizens arrived from Hunan, Mao's home province. As soon as they had a chance, they threw bags of ink at the Chairman's giant portrait. The Dare-to-Die Squad immediately grabbed the trio (a schoolteacher, a factory worker, and a town newspaper editor) and turned them over to police. (They later received sentences ranging from sixteen years for the worker to life in prison for the schoolteacher. By 2006, all were released after serving from ten to more than sixteen years.) Here is just one example of betrayal of the incredible sense of community in the movement. Yesterday "even the thieves were on strike for the common good," but today, the student security team turned overly freshly arrived activists to the police. "Betrayal" and "sabotage" emerged as words employed to describe fellow activists. Some students went to the train station and recruited new arrivals as soldiers under the orders of self-appointed commanders. Three or four "coups" per day took place at the loudspeaker broadcasting stations; at least one kidnap attempt was made on Chai Ling and Feng Congde by other activists; one student and his cronies tried more than half a dozen times to seize power. Referring to her rivals, Chai Ling declared: "I am the commander in chief. I must resist compromise, resist these traitors." She called for overthrow of the government. As we will see in Thailand in 1992, a single individual, Chamlong, was also able to take leadership of the movement out of the hands of a more democratic committee of organizational representatives. Like Chai Ling, Chamlong used a hunger strike to propel himself into the center. Circumventing and marginalizing democratic tendencies, these demagogical politicians turned personal charisma into media attention and made stardom into power.

Still the citizens of Beijing blocked the streets. Unable to deploy its military to clear the streets, the government hesitated. For a moment, it seemed as if anything was possible. On May 25, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained that Zhao Ziyang was technically still general secretary of the Party's Central Committee. Some one hundred thousand workers and students in Tiananmen Square took to chanting, "Step down Li Peng!" That same day, the ASU completed its long process of reorganizing itself. Its massive student base had considerably dwindled, and the revived group worked in the shadows of the hunger strikers and media stars who made major decisions. For his part, Li Peng publicly predicted, "troops will successfully impose martial law."¹⁰⁷

On May 26, BAWF wrote to all Chinese abroad: "Our nation was created from the struggle and labor of we workers and all other mental and manual laborers. We are the rightful masters of this nation. We should be, indeed must be, heard in national affairs. We absolutely must not allow this small handful of degenerate scum of the nation and working class to usurp our name and suppress the students, murder democracy, and trample human rights." Another of their public statements exhorted Chinese people to "storm this twentieth-century Bastille, this last stronghold of Stalinism!"¹⁰⁸ Immediately, international networks mobilized. Organizers in Hong Kong threw a racetrack benefit concert and raised millions more dollars on May 27. Tents and supplies arrived that very night in Beijing, along with wads of cash. Almost immediately, a dispute broke out among student leaders about who should control the funds. Finally agreement was reached to share them, with Chai Ling openly insisting she should control the largest share.

Chai Ling finally joined the daily meetings of the Joint Conference. On May 27, after an especially long discussion from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., a unanimous decision was reached to leave Tiananmen on May 30, the tenth day of martial law. Delegates called a unified press conference and announced their decision to leave. Little did they know that Chai Ling's assembly of two to three hundred university representatives later voted at their nightly meeting by over 80 percent to stay. However painstakingly the Joint Conference decision had been made, it was overridden by Chai Ling's "student parliament." Once again, movement leaders released self-contradictory statements. While Wu'er and Wang announced people's intentions to leave, Chai Ling insisted she had changed her mind, that the hunger strikers would stay. While many people may have thought about it, no one seriously proposed that their group abandon their comrades illegally occupying the square. Many individuals, however, simply voted with their feet and left. On May 29, some thirty thousand students departed by rail from Beijing while only 180 entered; by the end of the month, many campuses had returned to quiet.¹⁰⁹

As the number of people remaining in Tiananmen dwindled, students sent outreach teams to recruit new constituencies. One of them went to Daxing County, where they were attacked and jailed by local police. Unable to get the arrestees released, students approached BAWF for help on May 28, and a contingent of workers consisting of at least six trucks and a motorcycle contingent was dispatched to Daxing. They confronted local officials, but were unable to get the students released, so they returned to Tiananmen. Two days later, police in Beijing responded to the incursion into Daxing by arresting three BAWF leaders, among them Shen Yinghan, and eleven Flying Tigers motorcyclists. Hearing the grim news, Han Dongfang and some thirty workers went to the Ministry of Public Security and demanded the prisoners be freed. Refusing to comply, the authorities insisted BAWF was an illegal organization and refused to negotiate with anyone other than students. Several thousand people gathered, yet officials would not relent. The next day, however, after BAWF organized a press conference for foreign media, a sit-in at the ministry, and a demonstration in Tiananmen, the police suddenly freed all the arrested. When we compare this treatment of

workers with the fact that no students were arrested in Tiananmen Square from April 15 to June 4, we begin to get an understanding of the widening gulf between the two groups.¹¹⁰

Not only did the authorities see students and workers in different lights, within the movement, the line dividing them may as well have been written in indelible ink. The same day workers had been asked to help in Daxing, the BAWF expressed their desire to call for a strike, but students told them, "This is our movement, and you have to obey us." Without the consensus needed for action, some workers felt, "By the end, after 28 May, we didn't advocate sympathy for the students anymore. . . . We demanded to participate in the dialogue with the government but the students wouldn't let us. They considered us workers to be crude, stupid, reckless, and unable to negotiate."¹¹¹ Many individual campus activists did, in fact, reach out to factory workers. Shida sent as many as five teams to Capital Steel to encourage autonomous workers organizations, and ASU gave some funds to BAWF.¹¹² Student leaders, on the other hand, were reluctant enough to share the spotlight with each other—let alone with common citizens. After the Daxing action, as BAWF grew distant and the number of students declined, student leaders finally eased their prohibition on workers entering the main part of the square—a ban initially enacted to keep students' democracy movement "pure."¹¹³

Comparing the organizations of students and workers, many observers concluded that students were far more developed: "In contrast to students, workers were by and large unable to build effective autonomous organizations within their own factories. The newly formed municipal federations were at best small and skeletal, involving a small minority of workers."¹¹⁴ Students enjoyed mobility facilitated by free train rides (courtesy of railroad workers) and they were also blessed with sympathetic media coverage that helped them spread their movement. Beijing students were sighted in universities and colleges in Harbin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, Xian, and Changsha. Students also adapted new technologies like fax machines faster than the regime's repressive apparatus could control.¹¹⁵ From 1978 to 1987, the number of urban telephone lines had more than doubled, and photocopy machines became widely available—at least to the strata of literati around universities.

Flush with funds, ASU members contacted students at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts and commissioned them to create a statue by the demonstration scheduled for May 30. About fifteen undergraduate art majors agreed in principle, but they insisted on reworking the ASU proposal for a larger version of the Statue of Liberty in New York—as had been unveiled in Shanghai a few days earlier. Such a copy seemed too "pro-American." An additional objection was raised that a mere copy of an existing work did not resonate with artists' notions of creativity, so they proposed a more difficult figure, a statue with two hands holding aloft a torch. One of the students had fortuitously been working on adapting such a model based upon one produced by Russian female artist Vera Mukhina, whose monumental sculpture "A Worker and a Collective Farm Woman" had adorned the top of the USSR's pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair.¹¹⁶

While the ASU worked on the statue as a means to draw people back to Tiananmen, Chai Ling scheduled a secret interview with journalist Philip Cunningham, during which she admitted, "What we actually hoped for was bloodshed. Only when the square is awash with blood will people open their eyes." Maintaining she "did not care if people say I'm selfish," Chai Ling called for people to "overthrow the illegal government of Li Peng."¹¹⁷ On May 28, the World Bank suspended negotiations with China for further loans.¹¹⁸ At dusk on May 29, fewer than ten thousand students remained in the square. No one could yet tell in which direction the country was headed. Some feared chaos, others authoritarianism.

On May 30, the arrival of the thirty-foot high Goddess of Democracy brought a fresh attraction to the square, enticing some three hundred thousand viewers to review the installation over the next forty-eight hours. Whether thought to be Guanyin, the Statue of Liberty, or a synthesis of the two, the sculpture enlivened the dismal scene and brought new hope to people. By Friday, June 2, the square seemed about to be abandoned, when a new hunger strike by four people, including rock star, Hou Dejian, had a huge impact, and Tiananmen again filled. The new hunger strikers released a statement that was highly critical of "internal chaos" of students' organizations. "Their theories call for democracy," they wrote, "but their handling of specific problems is not democratic."¹¹⁹ The end was near, and even injecting new celebrity energy could not hold it off much longer.

During the night of June 2, troops began to infiltrate Beijing. Before dawn, people blocked troops and overturned trucks. Hundreds of soldiers were surrounded, some beaten and others arrested by people. A little after noon on June 3, troops used tear gas on protesters who had captured an ammunition truck near the southwest corner of Zhongnanhai, but the crowd refused to disperse. The army again tried to enter Tiananmen Square from the Great Hall of the People. Some came out of tunnels under the Great Hall, and engaged in a singing contest with demonstrators using versions of "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China." At day's end, those troops went back into the Great Hall. While many people celebrated their victory, still believing that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would not fire on people, a full-scale military assault was underway.

Around 5:00 p.m., BAWF started to distribute weapons (steel chains, clubs, cleavers, and sharpened bamboo poles). They organized people to break down a wall at a construction site in Xidan to take beams and bricks to use for self-defense.¹²⁰ That evening in the working-class area of Muxidi, west of Tiananmen, huge crowds blocked lightly armed troops who tried to advance. As stones flew, breaking some of their fiberglass helmets, heavily armed soldiers of the Thirty-Eighth Army behind them opened up with their AK-47s. In the ensuing confusion of battle, many people were killed, including soldiers of the Thirty-Eighth Army who were crushed to death by armored units of the Twenty-Seventh Army.

Resistance was massive and militant. Assaults were reported on seven separate troop formations during the night of June 3. As army units began fighting their way into the center of the city, people gathered at intersections on Changan Avenue. Amid disbelief that troops were using live ammunition, pitched battles

involving barricades, stones, and Molotovs versus the armed military were fought all along Changan Avenue. Around 1:30 in the morning, fighting intensified as troops fired volley after volley. Ambulances raced to hospitals as quickly as they could, and pedicab drivers ferried many wounded as well. Around 2:30, someone tried to drive a bus into the assembled soldiers, only to be stopped by a volley of gunfire. Citizens swarmed hospitals to donate blood as soon as the call went out for donors.

As the soldiers reached Tiananmen Square, at least one report tells that their first assault was on the Western reviewing stand where the BAWF had its central meeting point.¹²¹ About five thousand students, many of them crying uncontrollably, other singing, remained crouched around the Monument to the People's Heroes. Workers grew angry with students who broke captured guns and knives on the monument rather than use them to fight the military. Chai Ling was nowhere in sight, having left around 3:00 a.m.¹²² At about 4:45 a.m., students took a vote and decided to leave. Twenty minutes later, they filed out peacefully along the southern side.

At dawn on June 4, Tiananmen was in the hands of the army. As the city awoke, outraged citizens took to the streets. Around 7:00 a.m., according to Beijing's mayor, "Rioters swarmed over military vehicles which had been halted at Liubukou and snatched machine guns and ammunition. From Jianguomen to Dongdan and in the Tianpiao area, martial law troops were cut off, surrounded, and beaten. On the Jianguomen flyover, some troops were stripped and others severely beaten."¹²³ The mayor went on to claim that soldiers were so badly beaten around Hufangqiao that some were blinded. "Mobs" attacked the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee, the Great Hall of the People, the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television, and two gates of Zhongnanhai, while the "Federation of Autonomous Workers' Unions" urged people to "take up arms and overthrow the government." The mayor's report details "bestial" attacks on soldiers and police in five different locations. He claims submachine guns were taken in Hugosi. A police ambulance was stopped and one of the eight injured soldiers inside was beaten to death. The intensity of the fighting resulted in arson and damage to 1,280 police cars, military vehicles (including 60 armored personnel carriers), and buses. At Shuangjing intersection, insurgents took twenty-three machine guns from armored cars the crowd had stopped.¹²⁴

Many reports of mutilations of soldiers' corpses were made, including to the east of Xidan intersection, where a soldier was killed and his body burned; in Fuchengmen, a soldier's corpse was hung in midair near where he was killed; in Chongwnemen, a soldier was burned alive and his corpse suspended from an overpass, while people cheered and described it as "lighting a heavenly lantern." Near the Capital Cinema on West Chang-an Avenue, platoon leader Liu Guogeng shot four people. The crowd beat him to death, burned and disemboweled his corpse, and hung him on a burning bus.

In many cities, people fought the military takeover. Despite the media blackout, reports filtered out of Beijing. Faxes from Hong Kong portraying the massacre were posted in several cities, including Shenyang and Shanghai.¹²⁵ In Chengdu,



Burning military vehicles reveal the intensity of the fighting in Beijing. Photographer unknown.

violent resistance was crushed. In Hangzhou at 2:00 p.m. on June 4, throngs attacked the railroad station and tied up traffic. Fighting there continued until June 7 as people put wood, rocks, and steel on the tracks to block traffic. Sit-ins at major intersections blocked traffic, and a contingent of art students lowered the national flag on the provincial government building.¹²⁶ Acts of heroism abounded, most famously by Beijing's anonymous "tank man"—a citizen who stared down a tank column and held them off on June 5. In Nanjing, ten thousand people marched to mourn the killings in Beijing. In Shanghai, after a train ran over protesters occupying the tracks, killing six people and wounding others, people set fire to train cars and tied up railway traffic for hours.

Overall, the army remained firmly under the control of the government, although in an unknown number of cases, soldiers refused to obey orders.¹²⁷ General Xu Qinxian, Commander of the Chinese Thirty-Eighth Army, was subsequently court-martialed for a failure to carry out martial law orders; on June 4, Beijing's deputy military commander was relieved of authority. On June 6 and 7, army units reportedly fought each other, but the government's forces overwhelmed and crushed all opposition.¹²⁸ More than one hundred PLA officers were later charged with having "breached discipline in a serious manner," and 1,400 enlisted men were found to have thrown their weapons and run away in the final hours.¹²⁹

The Aftermath of the Uprising

Initial government reports about the crackdown maintained that a total of 300 soldiers and civilians were killed and seven thousand injured, yet over the years, estimates of the number of people killed ranged to 1,000 or more.¹³⁰ On behalf of the government, Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong counted several dozen soldiers and police killed and 6,000 wounded. Among civilians, he tabulated 200



Mutilated corpse of soldier Liu Guogeng. Photographer unknown.

killed—including 36 college students—and 3,000 wounded.¹³¹ One of the mothers who lost her son to the violence, Professor Ding Zilin, spent years locating the closest relatives of deceased people. By mid-1995, her list included more than 130 names. At the end of June 2006, Ding and a group of relatives of the deceased named 186 people who had been killed. Although the government has yet to compensate the dead, Ding passed on financial help from abroad to bereaved families.

Hundreds of known activists were arrested in major cities as the crackdown proceeded step-by-step. By June 11, more than one thousand people had been taken into custody. Two days later, a wanted list for student leaders was released, yet for all the difficulties endured by student activists, the brunt of the state's repressive power came down on workers. On June 15, three workers convicted of damaging tools in Shanghai received death sentences, and on June 21, three who burned train cars were executed.¹³² By July 5, the number of arrested reached 2,500. Two "rioters" in Chengdu were sentenced to death. Estimates were as high as ten thousand people being detained.

In video testimony from Hong Kong, Chai Ling told of tanks running over students sleeping in their tents in Tiananmen Square, after which troops doused them with gasoline and set them afire. The story was false.¹³³ Contrary to continual Western media reports, careful examination of video and eyewitness

testimony reveals that no students were killed in Tiananmen Square.¹³⁴ Most of the killings took place in the working-class suburbs on the outskirts of Beijing. While many people blamed Li Peng, in a subsequent posthumous memoir, Zhao Ziyang maintained Deng Xiaoping ordered the crackdown on protesters without even taking a leadership vote.¹³⁵

In the fall of 1989, a new law mandated that all Beijing University students must undergo one year of military training before entering college, and the entering class was cut from two thousand to eight hundred. All together in the country, some thirty thousand enrollments in humanities and social sciences were axed before the end of 1990.

One of the few surviving vehicles for public expression of protest sentiment was modern art, whose surge continued after 1989. With the success of Deng's market oriented reforms, commercialization tamed the art scene. Late in 1992, with market opportunities in Hong Kong, a third wave emerged.¹³⁶ Ironically appropriating socialist realist images and slogans, artists were able to subvert serious state art.¹³⁷ Mixing Cultural Revolution images with Western consumer script, Wang Guangyi created "political pop" art with Coca-Cola—fawning tribute to the accomplishments of the 1989 uprising.

China's Prosperity amid Repression

With the retrospective space of more than two decades, we can today appreciate how close China was to a revolutionary situation in 1989. No one applauds the application of state violence on citizens, yet the government has yet to apologize for its overwhelming use of force. Repression was its line of first defense, but the main thrust of government's two decade long response to the challenges posed by the uprising has been to provide unparalleled opportunities for prosperity and economic growth. Since 1989, evidence abounds of an increasing number of state-enterprise workers and university students becoming members of the CCP.¹³⁸ In the decade after the crackdown, ten times as many students joined the party as in the previous decade; in 2001, as many as one-third of all students applied for membership, only slightly less than the 28 percent of graduate students who were already members. More than 8 percent of all students were party members in 2007, compared with less than 1 percent in 1989.

Multiparty democracy and expansion of civil liberties are not yet on the horizon, yet the Chinese system has undergone significant reforms. Within academia, more room has opened for debate and airing of unpopular opinions.¹³⁹ Repression has certainly continued. In 2008, Wang Dan—by then a Harvard alumnus—counted three hundred thousand political prisoners in reeducation camps.¹⁴⁰ Compared with more than two million Americans who languish behind bars, China's poor human rights performance in the eyes of U.S. citizens is strongly indicative of the power of the mass media.

Many reforms have been made to soften the system. By the Sixteenth Party Congress in 2002, more than half of the Central Committee retired, and an important transition occurred. Officials are now rotated in an attempt to reduce corruption, mandatory retirement by age has been implemented for government

TABLE 5.4 Rates of Real Growth and Inflation, 1997–2006

Year	Rate of Real Growth	Inflation of Consumer Prices
1997	9.3%	2.8%
1998	7.8%	-0.8%
1999	7.6%	-1.4%
2000	8.4%	0.4%
2001	8.3%	0.7%
2002	9.1%	-0.8%
2003	10.0%	1.2%
2004	10.1%	3.9%
2005	10.4%	1.8%
2006	11.1%	1.5%

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2007 as cited in *Thirty Years of China's Reforms*, 91.

authorities, permission was given for entrepreneurs to join the party (resulting in one-third of China's richest citizens being CCP members), and professionals and intellectuals have been integrated into positions of power to provide expert advice to top officials. Despite efforts to curb it, corruption increased after 1989.¹⁴¹ Consumer goods and travel options are more widely available, and the scope of political intervention and arbitrary intrusions in everyday life has decreased. In the 1980s, official clearance from work unit leaders was required to get married; travel privileges required approval from authorities; and even theater tickets were centrally allocated.

Of all the changes since 1989, the most significant may well be China's astonishingly constant economic growth rate. From 1980 to 1996, it was 9.6 percent, and even amid the IMF crisis of 1997, it remained robust at 9.3 percent.¹⁴² As shown in TABLE 5.4, China's double-digit expansion from 2003 to 2006 has continued to propel the country forward. Now the world's second-largest economy, it is expected to reach the same level of output as the United States in 2035.

China is today regarded as another "miracle" in a string of Asian economic miracles. With WTO membership since 2001, the spectacular rise in living standards is due in no small part to export-oriented production for the U.S. market. From 2002 to the first half of 2006, China's foreign reserves increased by \$654.7 billion.¹⁴³ From less than \$17 billion in 1987, by June 2010 they approached \$2.5 trillion.¹⁴⁴ So much money has flown into the country that real estate investment in Shanghai rose from \$100 million annually in 1990 to \$7.5 billion in 1996—a rise of 7,500 percent in just six years—before climbing to \$11 billion in 2002.¹⁴⁵ In the country's 70 largest cities from December 2007 to April 2008, housing prices rose more than 10 percent *every month* before slowly decreasing to only a 5.3 percent rise in August 2008.¹⁴⁶

In the process of this phenomenal growth, seven billionaires and more than three hundred thousand millionaires have been created—most either party members or government officials, or with close ties to them. By 2005, inequality has increased so rapidly that the government stopped releasing its calculation of the Gini Coefficient (a measure of inequality), but it did note that it was higher

than for all developed countries and nearly all developing countries.¹⁴⁷ Before the reform, it stood at 0.20 in cities and slightly higher in rural areas, at 0.21–0.24. By 2002, the national figure had reached 0.454—one of the world's highest.¹⁴⁸ In 2002, the top 20 percent of the population held 59.3 percent of the country's wealth, while the bottom 20 percent possessed only 2.8 percent.¹⁴⁹ No significant middle class has yet to be built: the bottom 50 percent of economic strata held only 14.4 percent of wealth, and the bottom 70 percent less than 29 percent.

China's reputation as the "world's workshop" was built on the backs of a reserve army of labor of tens of millions—a floating population of more than a hundred million that brought tens of billions of dollars in investments by transnational firms bringing labor-intensive operations with workers paid the "China price."¹⁵⁰ With working conditions still rivaling those of any underdeveloped country, Chinese laborers suffered 14,675 workers killed on the job in 2003.¹⁵¹ By contrast, only 1,456 workers were counted as killed on the job in the first nine months of 2008. Unskilled industrial laborers in China make a pittance. Even India paid 50 percent more to its workers than Chinese employers did in 1998—and the United States paid 47.8 times as much, South Korea 12.9 times as much.¹⁵² While white-collar employees in large cities recorded significant gains in income, the unskilled suffered as the economy grew. Of all the secrets behind the Chinese miracle, the country's exploitation of her vast pool of semiskilled rural emigrants is at the top of the list. Others include imperial exploitation of Xinjiang and Tibet's vast mineral and oil deposits and their people's labor; state intervention in currency exchange, which limits international speculators' power; and an ideology of manufacturing's primacy, which orients all to production. By guiding investments, China provides another example of East Asian "developmental states"—precisely the kind of government dismantled by the United States in South Korea after the Gwangju Uprising. Finally, a unique feature of China's demographic transition from 1985 to 2007 was the decline in the number of young people, from a ratio of forty-five children (fifteen years old and younger) per hundred workers in 1985 to only fifteen youths per hundred workers in 2005.¹⁵³ The consequent freeing up of financial resources provides a boost to savings and capital outflows. Despite the small number of entry job seekers, in 2009, only half of all graduating college seniors were able to sign contracts for employment by May—meaning at least three million people remained looking for work after finishing college.

Continuing Resistance and State Incorporation

Alongside economic growth came a mushrooming of NGOs—or what should be called GONGOs (government-organized NGOs) because of funds received from and links to the state.¹⁵⁴ In 1994, the party granted legal status to private citizens' groups, and environment groups are one key focal point of those initially formed. While the national government formally calls on local groups to report environmental problems, local authorities are encouraged to accomplish high growth rates—a disincentive to maintain high standards for environmental protection.¹⁵⁵ From 1992 to 2007, more than three hundred thousand NGOs were registered. Unofficially, as many as two million may exist.¹⁵⁶

Chinese people's culture of direct action and resistance to unjust authority remains a significant feature of the political landscape. TABLE 5.5 illustrates the increasing scope of unrest.

Other estimates of the number of protests are even higher.¹⁵⁷ Land is routinely usurped for development, whether for golf courses or power plants, a problem so glaring that the government acknowledges that the vast majority of grassroots conflicts involve land enclosures.¹⁵⁸ In 2006, police opened fire in Dongzhou (a coastal town outside Shanwei) and killed as many as thirty people—the bloodiest confrontation since 1989. This was the second time Dongzhou lands were taken, the first time for construction of a coal plant and the second for a wind power plant.¹⁵⁹

Can China's central planning and control of finance capital keep its economy from the cycle of booms and busts that Western capitalism compels us to endure? That may well be the critical question determining the character of modern China. As economic prosperity quieted many voices from 1989, a major economic downturn could spark another movement for change. Some in the West delude themselves that China is close to collapse, a fate they similarly project onto North Korea. In 2002, for example, Gordon Chang predicted in *The Coming Collapse of China* that the "People's Republic has five years, perhaps ten, before it falls."¹⁶⁰ In 2008, it was Western capitalism that nearly collapsed.

China's Tibetan and Uighur minorities are also sources of instability, although in both cases, the overwhelming sentiment among the vast majority of Han Chinese favors the government's claim to these lands. The 1989 crackdown in Tibet began China's march toward repression and was many steps backward

TABLE 5.5 Incidents of Social Unrest, 1993–2005

Year	Number of Protests
1993	8,700
1994	10,000
1995	11,500
1996	12,500
1997	15,000
1998	24,500
1999	32,500
2000	40,000
2002	50,400
2003	58,000
2004	74,000
2005	87,000
2006	90,000
2008	100,000

Source: China Ministry of Public Security as reported in Andrew Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 153. *Outlook Weekly* (Xinhua state news agency, January 2009) as quoted in "Chinese Question Police Absence in Ethnic Riots," *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/18/world/asia/18xinjiang.html?_r=1&ref=global-home; Yang Jianli, "Anti-Government Protests Every Day," <http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/02/chinas-new-rebels/?hp>.

on a path to democracy, but their hard lines also catapulted Tibet Governor Hu Jintao and Shanghai Mayor Jiang Zemin into positions of central importance by the beginning of 1990. (Jiang became general secretary of the CCP in June 1989 and Hu succeeded him in 2002.)

A different dynamic in the political relationship between Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the mainland may prove to be a future stimulus to progressive change. Both Taiwanese and Hong Kong activists played minor roles in the mainland's 1989 movement. Former National Taiwan University Professor Chen Ku-ying and legislative candidates Huang Hsun-hsin and Chang Chun-nan all found homes in China but left after the debacle of Tiananmen Square. Along with the Hong Kong representative to the People's Congress in Beijing, Huang was the only other representative to oppose the use of troops on students.

In 1989, repression was the result of the uprising inside China, but in neighboring Taiwan, Bangladesh, and Nepal, the next acts in the unfolding drama of regional democratic movements were sparked by people's resistance.

NOTES

- 1 Although the government claims far fewer, as many as seven hundred people may have been killed.
- 2 Blum, *Killing Hope*, 22.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 4 Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 303.
- 5 Jan Wong, *Red China Blues* (New York: Anchor Books, 1997), 44.
- 6 See Mark Seldon, "Limits of the Democratic Movement," in *Chinese Democracy and the Crisis of 1989*, eds. Roger Des Forges, Luo Ning, and Wu Yen-bo (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 112.
- 7 A good counterexample can be found in Jack Goody, "Civil Society in an Extra-European Perspective," in *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, eds., Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Besides pointing out the importance of guilds in medieval China and other specific examples of civil society, Goody also argues that "the rapacity and the despotism of Eastern rulers has often been exaggerated while that of the West has been underplayed" (155).
- 8 Frederic Wakeman insists these events left residues that persisted in the Cultural Revolution. "Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998).
- 9 Stanley Rosen, "Guangzhou's Democracy Movement in Cultural Revolution Perspective," *The China Quarterly* 101 (March 1985): 28.
- 10 Apparently even in China, the backlash against the Cultural Revolution was severe as well. Ten years after it ended, Shaoguang Wang interviewed eighty-five people in Wuhan and asked them if they would participate in another Cultural Revolution. All said no, but when he asked the same question about a movement against corrupt officials, all said yes. Shaoguang Wang, "From a Pillar of the Community to a Force for Change: Chinese Workers in the Movement," in *Chinese Democracy and the Crisis of 1989*, eds. Roger Des Forges, Luo Ning, and Wu Yen-bo (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 177.
- 11 Geremie Barmé, "Beijing Days, Beijing Nights," in *The Pro-Democracy Protests in China: Reports from the Provinces*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 39.

- 12 Quoted in Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 29 (January 1993): 2, 19. Also available at <http://www.tsquare.tv/links/Walder.html>.
- 13 In a society where family honor is important, what is considered "just" and "unjust" are particularly significant. In the United States, such civil continuity is practically nonexistent. Few Americans know of the Bush's family's collaboration with Nazi Germany during World War II, a family legacy that would be politically disastrous if honor mattered.
- 14 Rosen, "Guangzhou's Democracy," 2.
- 15 Wong, *Red China Blues*, 188–89.
- 16 Rosen, "Guangzhou's Democracy," 14.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 18 *Freedom at Issue* 63 (November–December 1981): 24, as quoted in *ibid.*, 31.
- 19 David A. Kelly, "The Chinese Student Movement of December 1986 and Its Intellectual Antecedents," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 17 (January 1987): 132.
- 20 Quoted in *ibid.*, 139.
- 21 Teresa Wright, *The Perils of Protest: State Repression and Student Activism in China and Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 24.
- 22 Julia Kwong, "The 1986 Student Demonstrations in China: A Democratic Movement?" *Asian Survey* 28, no. 9 (September 1988): 970–72.
- 23 Kelly, "Chinese Student Movement," 127.
- 24 David Bachman, "Planning and Politics Since the Massacre," in *The Aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Crisis in Mainland China*, ed., Bih-jaw Lin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 301, 305, 308.
- 25 Richard Baum, "The Road to Tiananmen: Chinese Politics in the 1980s," in *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 420–21.
- 26 Andrew G. Walder, "Political Sociology of the Beijing Upheaval," *Problems of Communism* 38 (September–October 1989), 33–34.
- 27 Inflation slowly rose from less than 1 percent from 1951 through 1978, to less than 3 percent from 1979 to 1984, to between 6 percent and 8.8 percent from 1985 to 1987, before jumping to an official rate of 18.5 percent in 1988. See Calla Wiemer, "Price Reform Stalled: An Inherent Obstacle, A Missed Opportunity," *Journal of Asian Economics* 1, no. 2 (1990): 371.
- 28 Wang, "Pillar of Community," 184.
- 29 Bachman, "Planning and Politics," 303; Baum, "Road to Tiananmen," 420–21.
- 30 Han, *Cries for Democracy*.
- 31 Wang, "Pillar of Community," 186.
- 32 Ralph Crozier, "The Avant-Garde and the Democracy Movement: Reflections on Late Communism in the USSR and China," *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 3 (1999): 483–513.
- 33 Walder and Xiaoxia, "Workers," 2.
- 34 Quoted in des Forges et al., *Chinese Democracy*, 180. Thompson, *Democratic Revolutions*, 145.
- 35 Orville Schell and David Shambaugh, eds., *The China Reader: The Reform Era* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 82.
- 36 Wright, *Perils of Protest*, 35–36.
- 37 Wong, *Red China Blues*, 227–28.
- 38 Wright, *Perils of Protest*, 38.
- 39 For details on events in Xian, see Joseph W. Esherick, "Xi'an Spring," in *Pro-Democracy Protests*, 83–91, and Han, *Cries for Democracy*, 100–101.

- 40 Karen Eggleston, "‘You Are Dead, the Square Is Dead’: The 1989 Chinese Pro-Democracy Movement," *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society* 64 (1989): 39.
- 41 Han, *Cries for Democracy* 37.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 43 Corinna-Barbara Francis, "The Progress of Protest in China: The Spring of 1989," *Asian Survey* 29, no. 9 (September 1989): 904.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 903. The ASU was officially founded on April 26. The group's "highest platform" was the seven demands of the sit-in at the gated Zhongnanhai district (including freedom of the press and assembly, more funds for education, crackdown on corruption, release of income reports of high officials, and fair reappraisal of Hu Yaobang).
- 45 Lawrence Sullivan, "The Chinese Democracy Movement of 1989," *Orbis* 33 (Fall 1989): 565–66, as quoted in Eggleston, "Kwangju 1980 and Beijing 1989," 54–55.
- 46 Tang Tsou, "The Tiananmen Tragedy: The State-Society Relationship, Choices, and Mechanisms in Historical Perspective," in *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism*, eds. Jon Elster (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 221.
- 47 Walder, "Political Sociology," 32; Selden, "Limits," 127.
- 48 At the end of August 1989, a Solidarity-led coalition government was formed in Poland; the Berlin Wall was broken down on November 9, 1989; and Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution began three days later. Also see Rudolf Wagner, "Political Institutions, Discourse and Imagination in China at Tiananmen," in James Manor, ed., *Rethinking Third World Politics* (New York: Longman, 1991).
- 49 Walder, "Political Sociology," 32.
- 50 Han, *Cries for Democracy*, 318–20.
- 51 Tsou, "Tiananmen Tragedy," 216.
- 52 Wright, *Perils of Protest*, 48.
- 53 For a far-reaching and visionary explanation of the tendency of Marxist regimes to be open to reform, see Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958). Given their own self-understanding as products of revolution, communist regimes proved themselves particularly pliant in dealing with protest movements arrayed against them in comparison to their counterparts in the West or the South. In the USSR, the system was effectively overthrown in part because of the regime's ideology embracing social transformation and change as part of the historical process.
- 54 Wong, *Red China Blues*, 231.
- 55 Tsou, "Tiananmen Tragedy," 224.
- 56 Wright, *Perils of Protest*, 60.
- 57 Tsou, "Tiananmen Tragedy," 223–24.
- 58 See Teresa Wright, "Disincentives for Democratic Change in China," *Asia Pacific Issues* 82 (February 2007): 4.
- 59 Zhang Liang, *The Tiananmen Papers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 133.
- 60 Barmé, "Beijing Days," 37.
- 61 Wang, "Pillar of Community," 178.
- 62 "Letter to Workers of the Entire Nation," quoted in Walder and Xiaoxia, "Workers," 8. Note here the call to "return to original greatness"—still a key part of Chinese Middle Kingdom identity, that is, that China is the center of the world.
- 63 Wang, "Pillar of Community," 179.
- 64 Dated May 17, as quoted in Walder and Xiaoxia, "Workers," 8.
- 65 Pik Wan Wong, "The Pro-Chinese Democracy Movement in Hong Kong," in *The Dynamics of Social Movement in Hong Kong*, eds., Stephen Wing Kai Chiu and Tai Lok Lui (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2000), 58.
- 66 Zhang, *Tiananmen Papers*, viii.
- 67 Esherick, "Xi'an Spring," 92.