PROPAGANDA AND RESISTANCE:
A NEOCULTURALIST ANALYSIS OF THE CRISIS OF LEGITIMATION MANIFESTED AT TIANANMEN IN 1989

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores contemporary Chinese political culture from the angle of conflict between the regimes' propaganda and people's resistance. It argues that the escalation of this conflict contributed to the Tiananmen events and their tragic ending.

The thesis analyzes how the propaganda-oriented news reporting exhausted meanings and contributed to the collapse of the moral order. It shows how people resisted the party's propaganda and how the party took serious measures to deal with people's resistance. This ongoing conflict resulted in a legitimation crisis which surfaced during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

The thesis analyses biographies of two student leaders of the 1989 protest movement. It points out that socialization of the student participants took place during the legitimation crisis. These students built their own identities while differentiating themselves from what the regime wanted them to be. Their identities were characterized by independent thinking and judgement, and a sense of self-importance and self-centredness. Therefore, there was a strong will to maintain individual dignity in the newly revived student activism. Hard-liners insisted that the student activism must be repressed; moderate leaders tended to tolerate student activism; and the students' criticism resonated with the people's discontent.

In this context, the thesis argues, the student movement of 1989 can be understood as a manifestation of the awakening of convictions regarding individual needs, rights, and dignity among students. Though student protesters often adopted traditional forms of protest which have an elitist quality, the support of participants from other social groups eventually turned the student movement into a people's movement. The escalation of the conflict between people whose thinking deviated from official propaganda and hard-liners who fell back upon patterns of traditional political culture led to the tragic end of the movement.

The thesis describes a trend of demoralization that has not changed since the Tiananmen events. Both the propaganda-oriented news reporting and people's resistance still exist. Thus it comes to the conclusion that the legitimation crisis will continue while China's political culture undergoes a transformation. People will tend to identify themselves in opposition to the party-state and will continue the quest for self expression.

Mao sought to do something the Chinese emperors and mandarins were far too prudent to try. He sought to use the legitimacy of the moral order to mobilize people for material advancement, especially during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. When these efforts failed, the legitimacy of the new moral order eroded, and there was a crisis of faith. For a brief time Deng Xiaoping reestablished a sense of legitimacy by providing immediate material payoffs from his reforms. When economic problems began to emerge after 1985, however, the government had neither a moral order nor the benefits of a political process to provide legitimacy. The only immediate alternative was repression. Tiananmen has become the universally acknowledged code word for repression in the search for legitimacy.

Lucia W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics,
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.239.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before 1949 there was an intellectual tradition of Chinese cultural studies. But during the period from 1949 to 1980, because of the domination of the reductionist and determinist side of Marxist thought as official ideology, there was a general ignorance of the cultural dimension in the areas of communication studies, Since the mid 1980's, students of communication studies in China have paid more and more attention to the cultural dimension. I am indebted to all of my teachers and colleagues who inspired me to become involved in this trend.

Since I became a Masters candidate in the Department of Communication at Simon Fraser University, I have received great help from my professors. Martin Laba directed my attention to the relations between changes in culture, changes in communication structure and changes in social structure; Bob Anderson suggested that I should pay more attention to the change from below in the communication network. Claude-Yues Charron suggested I read Lippman and Habermas, who represented two schools of understanding of the concept of public opinion. Pat and Roger Howard suggested I look into the question of how the Tiananmen events connected with the rise of civil society in China. And Jan Walls suggested I trace the transmission of the concept of democracy from the West to China. I am greatly indebted to these people for their help in forming my understanding of these issues.

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PREFACE

As a witness, I was deeply impressed by the character of the confrontations in the political upheaval of 1989, a character very different from the confrontations I had experienced in the Cultural Revolution. At the time of the Cultural Revolution people often resorted to violence; mass organizations attacked each other; sometimes the army was involved, acting as mediator or backing one organization against another. But each side in the confrontation sought support from the central authority, and support from the central authority was considered as a source of legitimacy for a mass organization. Whoever publicly expressed an opinion against or even merely doubted Mao Zedong, then Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, would immediately be persecuted. For the same reason many people were sentenced and even executed in the name of "exercising proletarian dictatorship in the ideological sphere" (sixiang lingyu de wuchanjieji zhuanzheng).

In contrast to the masses' allegiance to central authority in the Cultural Revolution, the character of conflict in 1989 was fundamentally different. Within two decades, it seemed that the public attitudes of the urban populace toward central authority shifted from one extreme to the other. In the Cultural Revolution a kind of fanatical enthusiasm for following and protecting the supreme leader, Chairman Mao and his faction prevailed; however in the movement of 1989 a deep feeling of grievance, anger and hatred toward the central government was revealed. In the Cultural

Revolution, no matter how chaotic the situation was, Mao's authority was not shaken, while in 1989, the central authority of the communist regime was challenged and shaken by the people's movement.

The confrontation which I saw on the night of June 3 and the morning of June 4, the time during which events occurred that the Western media called the Tiananmen massacre, clearly reflected this dramatic change of attitudes by the urban people. On that night I was at Gongzhufen, a major intersection on the western continuation of Changan Avenue. At about 9 clock that night, the intersection at Gongzhufen was filled with four lines of military trucks and antagonistic citizens. Around 9:30 I heard a shot, followed by sporadic firing nearby. A few seconds later, a young man ran past me into a small park. I noticed his hand was grasping his blood-soaked arm. Standing within a group of people, I was told that the man had thrown a stone at a military truck. I was also told that another young man who had tried to block a military truck had been severely wounded in the leg and carried to a nearby hospital. People said that this was the first blood shed that night.

As the conflict escalated, especially after the army started shooting, I could feel a growing anger and hatred toward the central authority of the communist regime among people around me. Some people in the crowd were shouting, "Fascists! Fascists!" when the army slowly passed us. The army was shooting wildly and proceeding eastward along Changan Avenue toward Tiananmen. People were constantly returning from the "battle zone" to the east, and

were immediately surrounded by hunters of news, who then spread the news to others. Through the night I was kept informed by them and tried to imagine how the army was shooting their way through the length of Changan Avenue jammed with civilians trying to halt them.

Later, walking Changan Avenue on the morning of June 4, I hurriedly wrote down in my notebook what I saw. There were bloodstains here and there on the pavement. There were trails of blood leading into the depths of narrow alleyways and further into closed doors of courtyards. I saw shell holes in walls and shopping windows. Stones and broken bricks were spread everywhere. Some of the bus barricades were still smouldering. About a hundred military tanks and trucks were set on fire; some of them were still blazing. There were intensive and loud explosions with shells whistling sharply through the air. Thick smoke drifted in the sky. Thousands of soldiers, some of them on military trucks, were stationed on the Avenue. They were surrounded by a sea of citizens. In contrast to the soldiers' silence, many people were emotionally discussing the situation with each other, condemning the regime, and berating the soldiers. Helicopters equipped with loudspeakers making announcements flew over. The citizens waved their fists and shouted toward the helicopters: "Go away! Go away!"

The number of casualties reported on posters varied from hundreds to five thousand. On Xidan Street, dark red slogans on walls and windows reminded people that they were written with blood, saying "Blood debt must be repaid with blood!" "Down with the Li Peng - Yang Shangkun fascist plot!" The

burned body of a soldier was dangling from a burned bus, hanging from a wire around the neck. The body was disembowelled. Passing the body, I followed other people eastward to approach Liubukou where we were chased by tanks and soldiers with tear-gas grenades.

The vastness and depth of the legitimation crisis of the Chinese regime was revealed by the Tiananmen events. In China, some of the most important institutions have been named after the people. For example, the country is called the People's Republic of China; the army, the People's Liberation Army; and the media, the People's Daily, the People's Broadcasting Station and the People's Television Station. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has claimed to be the vanguard of the Chinese working class and also has claimed to represent nothing but the people's interests. At least at the symbolic level, the people in China, like peoples in other republics, are regarded as the most important, if not the whole source of power. Nevertheless, in 1989 the Chinese regime, which based its legitimacy on the claim to be ruling in the name of the people, failed to deal with the people's movement peacefully. The regime exercised force to demonstrate its ability to govern. It ordered the People's Liberation Army to deal with the demonstrators and subsequently the army opened fire on innocent people on June 3 - 4. After June 4 the army kept on intimidating people by using force in Beijing - the political and cultural centre of the People's Republic of China.

In the spring of 1989, I was in charge of a research program, "The Role of News Media in the Supervision of the Government by

Public Opinion." I realized that the movement was a unique opportunity for me to do this research. Thus, during the movement of 1989 I investigated the attitudes of journalists and surveyed Beijing urban citizens' attitudes toward the People's Daily April 26 editorial condemning students.[1] I found that the overwhelming majority of the Beijing residents surveyed - workers, students, intellectuals, cadres and other residents - supported the student movement and strongly disagreed with the major themes of the editorial. I also found that the change in attitudes of journalists paralleled the change in attitudes of the city's people. This change eventually led to the demand for freedom of the press during the movement of 1989. Several reports of this research were drafted, but none of them were allowed to be published. Furthermore the research project was labelled by the authorities of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences as a political case under special investigation after the Tiananmen events. Discussion of issues raised by the Tiananmen events became taboo. It is also now impossible to study people's attitudes toward the social order. After I came to Canada, I decided to continue my research and analysis of these issues. This thesis is the result of my inquiry.

[1]Beijing municipality includes peasants living in the rural suburbs surrounding the city proper.

Introduction

No one expected that the 1989 protest movement in China would grow to the extent it did. No one anticipated that the regime would use so much force and pay such a high price to put it down. China specialists were also flabbergasted by the Tiananmen events. Why is this the case? One of the key reasons is that, as Andrew Nathan points out, "a focus on policy studies and bureaucratic politics drew attention away from civil society, where Chinese bureaucrats themselves were often out of touch with what was happening."[1]

When we look into China's civil society, in order to understand how communication contributed to the movement and its tragic end, we need to answer the following questions: why and how

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[1]Andrew J. Nathan, China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p.17-19. Here civil society refers to an independent sphere outside direct state control. As John Keane defines it, "in the most abstract sense, civil society can be conceived as an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities - economic and cultural production, household life and voluntary associations - and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions." Democracy and Civil Society, (London; New York: Verso, 1988), p.14. Before the reform, all important organizations in China had been penetrated and controlled by the party. In the reform era, some organizations were set up outside the party's penetration, and some have gained power to make decisions independently. Nathan refers to China's civil society as these independent social forces outside direct party control. p.122.

did people's attitudes change from allegiance to challenge of central authority? How did different social groups communicate with each other to build their own identity which was in opposition to the regime? What is the dynamic of communication which made millions of people believe that they belonged to an imagined unity? Why and how did the Chinese people withdraw their moral support for the regime? Why did the regime exercise coercive force to deal with the people whom the party-state claimed to represent? What is the mechanism whereby people's values and attitudes toward the social order are shaped and changed?

Among China specialists, one of the key questions inspired by the events of 1989 has been to understand what are Chinese people's values and attitudes regarding democracy? Here "attitudes" refers to people's position regarding concrete things, and "values" refers to beliefs regarding abstract principles. Historically there has been no direct Chinese equivalent for the notion of democracy. Only in the last century was democracy introduced to China as an idea. Nathan traces how the concept of democracy was introduced to China and spread among the elite, and how this elite tried to realise the idea according to their own understanding of the concept.[2] However, the question of how ordinary people in China accept the idea remains untouched. Does this mean that the core values of the 1989 people's movement were traditional? Was the movement of 1989 merely a manifestation of the continuity of the

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[2]Andrew J. Nathan, Chinese Democracy, (New York: Random House, 1985).

student protest tradition?[3]

In searching for an answer for these questions, I have found that the lack of a comprehensive understanding of public attitudes, especially an understanding of the attitudes of different social groups based on their daily experiences, is a common problem among China specialists. This problem might lead to a failure to anticipate the behaviour of people and further to an inability to anticipate the likely future direction of China.

I will try to approach this problem through an analysis of the Tiananmen events and their origin and impact. I will focus my analysis on the changes in communication and the changes in people's attitudes toward the communist regime in the period of time from the Cultural Revolution to the present. In this period of time Chinese society changed dramatically. There have been comparatively detailed accounts of economic and political changes within Chinese society, but not of changes in communication processes and culture. To a large extent the study of the political culture in contemporary China is a vast, uncharted area. My inquiry will focus on this area.

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[3]This kind of argument can be seen in the arguments in some of Lucian W. Pye's works. See his article "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture: The Escalation of Confrontation", The Broken Mirror: China After Tiananmen, ed. George Hicks, (London: St. James Press, 1990), p.162-179. See also Pye's book The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). At the end of the book, Pye states, "as the society changes so will the foundation of the political culture, and the result will be a new spirit of Chinese politics." However, throughout this book Pye fails to point out what new spirit of Chinese politics emerges as a result of the dramatic changes in Chinese society in recent years.

In this thesis I follow the neoculturalist approach of some sinologists.[4] This approach is located in a new convergence of cultural studies. According to Raymond Williams, there are two main positions in cultural studies. Both of them analyze cultural practice and cultural production in language, styles of art and kinds of intellectual work. One position emphasizes the "informing spirit" of a whole way of life, holding that culture constitutes all other activities. The other emphasizes "a whole social order" within which a specifiable culture is seen as the direct or indirect product of an order primarily constituted by other social activities. The new convergence of cultural studies in contemporary works shares many elements with the latter. It emphasizes a whole social order, but differs from it in its insistence that "cultural practice" and "cultural production" are not simply derived from an otherwise constituted social order. It also shares some elements with the former, in its emphasis on cultural practices themselves as major elements in its constitution. But it sees culture as the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is

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[4]According to Elizabeth Perry, some of these sinologists of what she refers as "neoculturalist" analysis include herself, Earnest Young, Joseph Esherick, Jeffrey Wasserstrom, James Watson, John Israel, Vera Schwarcz, Timothy Cheek, Lee Feigon, Ann Anagnost and Stephen Mackinnon. Elizabeth J.Perry, "Introduction: Chinese Political Culture Revisited", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp.4-9.

communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored.[5] The neoculturalist approach that this thesis follows belongs to this new convergence of cultural studies.

In the study of China, this neoculturalist approach emerged in response to the challenges posed by important events in the history of contemporary China. According to Elizabeth Perry, after World War II, the first generation of China specialists was schooled in a sinological tradition that stressed China's unique cultural continuity. This notion was challenged by a rupture with the past: the communist revolution of 1949. The second generation of China specialists fashioned the comparative communism perspective that identified increasing similarities between Chinese communism and Soviet and East European counterparts.[6] This perspective was challenged by the Cultural Revolution. In response to the Cultural Revolution, modernization theorists challenged the comparative model by stressing the role of political culture in fashioning China's unorthodox and uncertain development path.[7] In the post-

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[5]Raymond Williams, Culture, (UK Glasgon: William Collius Son & Co. Ltd, 1981), pp.10-13.

[6]According to Elizabeth Perry, examples of such work are found in Donald W. Treadgold, ed., Soviet and Chinese Communism: Similarities and Differences, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967); and Chalmers Johnson, ed., Change in Communist Systems, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977). Elizabeth J.Perry, "Introduction: Chinese Political Culture Revisited", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p.11.

[7]According to Elizabeth Perry, examples of such work include Lucian W. Pye' The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), Dynamics of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge:

Mao era, since reform programs resembled many aspects of the experiences of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, comparisons with other communist systems regained currency. All of these perspectives were challenged by the events of 1989.[8] On the one hand, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union directed scholars' attention to the problems of legitimacy, while many of them barely know how to study moral perception and legitimacy.[9] On the other hand, the tragic end of the people's

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Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain, 1981) and The Mandarin and the Cadre, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1988); Richard Soloman, Mao's revolution and Chinese Political Culture, (Berkeley: University of California press, 1977); Robert J. Lifton's Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, (New York: Vintage, 1968); and Thomas A. Metzger's Escape from Predicament: Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977). Ibid, p.11.

[8]Elizabeth J.Perry, "Introduction: Chinese Political Culture Revisited", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp.1-4. Here political culture refers to "attitudes, beliefs, values and skills which are current in an entire population, as well as those special propensities and patterns which may be found within separate parts of that population." p.11.

[9]Daniel Chirot, "What Happened in Eastern Europe in 1989?" Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992). In this article, Chirot attributes the disintegration of communist systems in Eastern Europe to the growth of a more urban, more educated, more aware population. He calls this population a large middle class, which was produced by economic modernization, and stresses that he calls it middle class not in the sense of bourgeois ownership but in the cultural and educational sense, as well as in its style of life. He emphasizes two factors which led to the collapse of the socialist systems in Eastern Europe. One was the flaws of economic management which made socialist countries in Eastern Europe remain poorer than their Western European counterparts and even seemed to cause them to fall further behind by the 1980s. The other one was more important, that was people's awareness of the moral decay of these societies: the Stalinist

movement of 1989 in China has once again directed scholars' attention to the uniqueness of Chinese culture.

Neoculturalists emerged from this pondering of cultural elements contributing to the tragic end of the 1989 movement. They are historians, anthropologists, political scientists and other social scientists. They focus their analyses on the language, symbol and ritual which were employed in the movement by different parties and which reflected the ways of thinking of these parties. According to Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, this school emphasizes two crucially important issues. First, they suggest that each of the Chinese revolutions subtly changed the rule of Chinese politics. "Each of them has transformed the ideological concerns of both the powerful and powerless and even the relationship between these two groups." Second, "they tend to treat culture as a more fluid and less deterministic force."[10] Rather than seeing Chinese politics as endlessly repetitive patterns, according to Elizabeth Perry, this new school looks into transformation in the political culture.

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model had created tyranny and petty tyranny at every level, and tyrannies exercise power in a way which is necessarily deeply corrupt. And the endless corruption and lies led to the collapse of elementary social trust. From the combination of these two factors emerged "the whole movement toward the creation of alternative social institutions, free of the corruption and dishonesty of the official structures." (p.223) And this "was the great ideological innovation of what began to emerge in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s as the movement toward the creation of a 'civil society'." (p.223) This movement decisively contributed to the collapse of the socialist systems in Eastern Europe.

[10]Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Afterward: History, Myth, and the Tales of Tiananmen", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p.272.

However in dealing with "traditional" culture, this school emphasizes its great temporal and regional variation and realizes that "differences in time period, social status, and geographic location were characterized by important distinctions in belief and behaviour." This "recognition of the fluidity and flexibility of cultural practice alerts the analysts to the possibility of innovation and originality."[11]

Following this neoculturalist approach, I will emphasize the conflict between official propaganda and urban citizens's perception of reality arising from the fact that the change of the former was much slower than that of the latter. When I analyze the transformation of China's political culture, I will emphasize the change within continuity as well as continuity within change.

I have some advantages in dealing with this topic. I was a witness of the Cultural Revolution as a student and a resident labouring in the countryside. I became a worker and intellectual in the reform era. Compared to most China specialists from the West, as a native speaker of Chinese who grew up in China, I had more opportunities to participate in the meaning world of Chinese people. At the same time, I am aware that both my experiences and the available data are limited. In the case of the Tiananmen events, on the one hand, not all Beijing citizens participated in the movement, and the population of the city is atypical of China.

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[11]Elizabeth J.Perry, "Introduction: Chinese Political Culture Revisited", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp.4-5.

Therefore, what I observed in Beijing reflected particular characteristics of the political culture of that region. On the other hand, since the movement of 1989 spread almost spontaneously to most of the major cities and many smaller cities of China utilizing similar slogans and symbolism, I assume that the populace of other major cities share with Beijing a certain degree of change in values and attitudes indicating a trend toward transformation of the political culture. What I intend to do in this thesis is to try to grasp the character of this general trend.

I will try to study in depth two aspects of China's political culture: the regime's propaganda and people's resistance. I will explore the conflict as revealed by the people's resistance to the regime's propaganda and its impact on China's political culture. My central argument is that the escalation of this conflict led to a legitimation crisis and contributed to the tragic end of the movement. I will illustrate the legitimation crisis in China in chapter 1, the growing self-awareness among students in chapter 2, and social interaction between students and other social groups in chapter 3. Then I will describe the Tiananmen events as an escalation of the conflict between the regime and the people in chapters 4 and 5. In chapter 6 I will argue that the Tiananmen events have not changed the general trend of transformation in China's political culture.

The thesis is intended to contribute to communication studies in several ways. First, China specialists usually focus on the roles of the state and the news media when they study news

communication in China, while ignoring the role of audiences. The framework set up in my thesis combines these three aspects with an emphasis on the role of audiences. Second, within that framework, the thesis perceives political culture as producing and being reproduced by people's resistance to official propaganda. It explores how this conflict contributes to a legitimation crisis in China. Third, from this perspective the thesis argues that cultural change, especially the growth of independent thinking is, in part, the outcome of the disastrous consequences of propaganda. Fourth, the thesis opens a door for further empirical examination of the interaction between the state, the news media and audiences in the Chinese context.

CHAPTER 1

The Origin of the Legitimation Crisis: The Party's Propaganda and the People's Resistance

As I have pointed out in the preface, the events of 1989 revealed a vast and deep legitimation crisis in China. In this chapter I will trace the origin of the crisis in the history of China under the Communist Party. I will argue that this crisis resulted from people's disillusionment with the party's monopolistic control of the news media and is reflected in people's resistance to this control. I will investigate a journalistic format - reporting of behaviour models - to explore how propaganda-oriented news reporting exhausted symbols and meanings and contributed to the collapse of the moral order. I will argue that this kind of propaganda is rooted in the one-party political system. I will also argue that people's resistance to the party's propaganda is, at the same time, a resistance to the system. The party took serious measures to deal with people's resistance. This ongoing conflict resulted in a legitimation crisis which surfaced during the Cultural Revolution.

The Monopolistic Control of News Media by the Party

Pye points out that historically Chinese politics have been elitist and hierarchical in organization, closed and monopolistic in spirit.[1] The politics of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is no exception. When Chinese communists established the CCP, they adjusted Marxist-Leninist principles to fit Chinese society. These communists were influenced by certain Chinese cultural predispositions. Within the party a few top party leaders exercise highly centralized power. This makes the paternalistic style of the party leaders' role possible. The personal power of party leaders, especially top leaders, is reinforced through this power structure.

Lin Yusheng argues that the views of Chen Duxiu, the first head of the CCP, were profoundly affected by certain deeply embedded Chinese cultural predispositions. According to Benjamin Schwartz, these predispositions include "the notion of the integral wholeness of culture, the notion that every aspect of society and culture could somehow be controlled through the political order, and the notion that conscious ideas could play a decisive role in transforming human life."[2] It can be observed that both Mao

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[1]Lucian W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.13.

[2]Benjamin I. Schwartz, "Foreword", in Lin Yu-Sheng, The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, Ltd. 1979), p.x-xi. For a detailed analysis see Lin's book, pp.3-81.

Zedong and Deng Xiaoping were also affected by some of these predispositions. Mao tried to transform Chinese people's lives through the power of conscious ideas - he valued "above all else the power of human spirit".[3] Both Mao and Deng emphasize the party's monopolistic control of the political order, and the notion of the supreme authority of both of them is crucial for sustaining the political order. Deng has skilfully manipulated events from behind the scenes, which is a kind of mystery to most Chinese people. Deng's image of superior leadership capacities has been built on this mystery. As Pye points out, "Chinese political culture traditionally operated on the premise that omnipotence lies in the mystery".[4] Chen, Mao and Deng are the most important leaders in the CCP's history. All three of them share the patriarchal feature of silencing competitive voices within the party.

Under these leaders' patriarchal rule, no competitive voices and no loyal opposition have been allowed within the party, and there is always tension between consensus and factionalism. In this regard, the politics of the CCP bears the deep imprint of traditional Chinese politics. The communication system established by the party reflected these characteristics.

After the CCP took over power in China in 1949, it substituted

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[3]Lucian W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.122.

[4]Lucian W. Pye, "An Introductory Profile: Deng Xiaoping and China's Political Culture", The China Quarterly, September, 1993, p.415.

the party's organized news media for the independent press and broadcast media. The news system organized by the party has three characteristics: it is under the monopolistic control of the party, it is censored by the party, and it is the vehicle of the party's propaganda.

This news system has been legitimated by the assumption of the party's vanguard role and by the "mouthpiece theory" of journalism. By definition, the party is the vanguard of the proletarian class and represents nothing but the people's interests. It is the party's responsibility to teach its advanced consciousness to other people. Mao developed a mass line by which the party is supposed to enlighten the masses through two-way communication: introducing the party's policies to the masses through mass media, testing the policies in people's practice, and further summarizing the experiences of people to improve and adjust its policies. In this process, the news media serve as a mouthpiece of the party. Theoretically the party-controlled news media should present people's criticisms of party policy. But in practice it is always difficult, if not impossible, for the people to express their criticism regarding the current party policies through the news media.

The party's monopolistic control of the news media made it possible to create and maintain a fictional account of the party and its leader as being great and infallible. Although during the reform era the official function of the news media shifted from

class struggle to modernization,[5] there has been no fundamental change of these three characteristics of the news system mentioned above. These characteristics can be observed on three levels: the internal reference news system (neican xitong), the public news media and other forms of organized news dissemination by the party.

The Internal Reference News System

The internal reference news system is the most privileged and stable layer of officially organized communication. Fox Butterfield describes this system as a four-layer information system. At the bottom comes the Reference News (cankao xiaoxi), a four-page tabloid-sized paper which the ordinary people can access. At the second level is the Reference Materials (cankao ziliao). It is circulated among the party members and cadres through the work unit (danwei). At the third level is the Internal Reference (neican) which "are distributed to officials above grade 12 on the ladder of twenty-four ranks". At the top level, "there is a special digest called Cable News only for members of the Central

[5]In the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee held in December 1978, the party officially repudiated the use of class-struggle methods in mass campaigns and made "socialist modernization" the central task of the party. After the plenum, there was a recurrence of using news media as tools of class-struggle in the 1983 campaign to combat bourgeois pollution, the 1985 campaign against bourgeois liberalization and the 1989 campaign against bourgeois peaceful transformation. But these campaigns were restricted within a small sphere compared with the Cultural Revolution. These campaigns were short-lived, and even during the campaigns news reporting about economic development still occupied the most important position in the news media.

Committee and commanders of the large military regions."[6] The internal news system that will be discussed here refers to all but the lowest and most accessible layer. This system serves the party-state bureaucrats exclusively.

Internal reference news covers both international and domestic news. Party propagandists believe it is not suitable for ordinary people to read these reports containing criticism of China's current policies appearing in Western media, Chinese people's complaints about problems with current policies, strikes, officials' abuse of power and so on. Fear that enemies of the party might make use of this negative news regarding the party is behind this restriction.[7] Unlike the public news media, the internal reference system has not changed much since the economic reform started.

The Public News Media[8]

Compared with the internal reference system, the public news

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[6]Fox Butterfield, China Alive in the Bitter Sea, (New York: Time Books, 1982), pp.389-391.

[7]For example, in 1956, Liu Shaoqi, then general secretary of the party, instructed a group of correspondents, if it seemed likely that publication would benefit the enemy more than the party, "don't report it publicly; you can write something for the Internal Reference News." See Andrew J. Nathan, Chinese Democracy, (Berkeley, Los Angles: University of California Press, 1985), p.155.

[8]Brantly Womack presents a general introduction to the development and structure of news media in China. See Media and the Chinese Public: A Survey of the Beijing Media Audience, (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc Publisher, 1986), pp.6-29. His source of data up to 1984 regarding the growth of China's news media was Chinese Statistical Yearbook (zhongguo tongji nianjian).

media have undergone more changes. More people have access to these news media. After the party came to control all public news media, the newspapers, the major news system before television became popular, were financed by the party-state. Most subscriptions were in the name of local party organisations. Since the reform started, newspapers have become more diversified in types and functions. Circulation has also increased.[9]

Radio broadcasting has also developed since 1949. By 1965, it was estimated that radio broadcasting reached every citizen through wired networks. In 1978, the Chinese government stopped jamming transmission of Western broadcasting. As Nathan observes, the monopoly of control over information by the party has been broken to a certain degree since then.[10]

Since the 1980s, television has experienced a rapid development. On April 1 of 1980, international news began to be transmitted from Vis News and United Press Independent Television News (UPIT) to Beijing via satellite. These news items are edited and broadcast to the Chinese audience.[11]

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[9]For example, half of China's 1,776 newspapers in 1986 were established during the period from 1980 to 1986. See Chen Chong-shan et el., "A Basic Survey of Chinese Newspapers" (zhongguo baoye jiben qingkuang diaocha), Journalism Journal (xinwen yanjiou), No. 2, 1986, pp.40-43.

[10]Andrew J. Nathan, Chinese Democracy, (Berkeley Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p.159, p.163-165, p.173, p.177, p.198.

[11]For a comparatively detailed account of the development of Chinese television, see Guo Zhenzhi, The History of Chinese Television (zhongguo dianshi shi), (Beijing: Chinese People's University Publishing House, 1991).

In the reform, along with the shift of function from class struggle to modernization, news media are no longer totally financed by the party-state. Instead they are partially supported by advertising income. Meanwhile, corruption within news media institutions has increased. A typical phenomenon is the "non-gratuitous news" (youchang xinwen).[12]

I will not describe in detail the development of the Chinese news media and corruption among journalists. What I want to emphasize here is that there is no change in the essential character of the monopolistic control over the news media by the party, neither is there a fundamental change of the basic principles of news control.[13] The party continues to exercise its influence through "propaganda guidelines" (xuanchuan koujing) for news media. Journalists decide what and how to report according to their understanding of current propaganda guidelines. Through a

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[12]"Non-gratuitous news", according to the People's Daily, refers to the phenomena whereby "if you pay me, I will report you and say good about you no matter how bad you are." See "Non-gratuitous News Must be Banned" (youshang xinwen bixu jinzhi), People's Daily, Aug. 5, 1993, front page.

[13]Here neither do I intend to assert that the party always has complete control of the news media, nor do I intend to say that journalists are merely tools of official propaganda. The whole picture is much more complex than this, especially in the reform era. I intend to focus on the propaganda side of the news media. For some insight into this complicity see Frank Tan's article "The People's Daily: Politics and Popular Will - Journalistic Defiance in China During the Spring of 1989", Pacific Affairs, Summer 90, Vol. 63, No. 2. Also see Shi Tongyu, "On the Fifth Generation of Chinese Journalists" (lun diwudai xinwenjizhe), and Yu Guoming, "The Status Quo and an Analysis of Ideological Renewal among Chinese Journalists" (zhongguo xinwenjizhi yishixingtai gengxin de xianzhuang he fenxi), in the collection Ten Years of Journalism Research 1978-1988 (xinwenxue yanjiu shinian 1979-1988), (Beijing: Institute of Journalism, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1989).

hierarchical structure, each news medium is put under direct control of a relevant party committee. This hierarchy consists of four levels - national, provincial, municipal and county. The party's committees at these levels are subordinate to the Central Committee. At present, news reporting is still mainly regulated by the party's discipline. The principle that news media cannot criticize the members of the party committee at the same administrative leaves the media no way to disclose corruption of top leaders of the party[14]. Control over news media falls under the party's Central Committee, the Committee's Secretariat and Propaganda Bureau. The party's documents containing current propaganda guidelines are transmitted through the party organizations to individual journalists.

Journalists have to exercise self-censorship according to these guidelines, since journalists are recruited, rewarded, promoted, demoted or punished according to how well they follow or promulgate these guidelines. In other words, the economic and political security of the Chinese journalists and, in most cases, their family members' security depends on how they perform their

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[14]Basically there are two types of news media in China, party and non-party. The party's news media have been organized into four levels: central, provincial, city and county. The news media at each level are controlled by the propaganda department of the CCP Committee at the same level. The members of the Party Committee collectively decide whom in the lower rank of the party hierarchy should be criticized by the news media. Almost all non-party news media have been organized into the same hierarchical system, and the party committees play a leading role in these non-party media. On the matter of criticism of the party authorities, the non-party news media strictly follow the same principles as the party's news media.

designated role.[15]

Through the above mechanisms of control, news reporting is transformed into "news-propaganda" (xinwen xuanchuan), a means for propagating the policies of the party-state. For example, international television news is basically from Western sources, and it might be thought that it would be difficult to transform foreign news clips into China's official propaganda. But through selective use of images and editing, translation of news commentary, and additional background introductions, this news becomes to a large degree a reflection of the foreign policies of the Chinese government.[16]

Other Forms of Officially Organized Communication

In contrast to the dramatic development of public news media,

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[15]Kathleen Hartford analyzes work units (danwei) and political campaigns as the main means of control over ordinary citizens during the Maoist era. She points out that the work unit controlled wages and bonuses, housing, education, medical benefits, distribution of certain consumer goods and foodstuffs, travel permits, and even marriage and divorce. Under normal circumstances, work units' leaders manipulated their control over such resources to extract compliance from their members. In extraordinary circumstances, the campaign method was trotted out to achieve results rapidly or break through bureaucratic obstacles. See "Summer 1988 - Spring 1989 The Ferment before the 'turmoil' Economic Crisis, Social Change, Cultural Disintegration, and Political Stagnation," China's Search for Democracy, ed., Suzanne Ogden et al., (New York, London: M.E. Sharp, Inc., 1992), p.9. I agree with Hartford that both mechanisms of control have declined in the reform era, but it seems to me that they have declined to different degrees in different work units and occupations. It is my impression that news media are among those sites where such controls have declined the least.

[16]Guo Zhenzhi, The History of Chinese Television (Zhongguo dianshishi) (Beijing, Chinese People's University Publishing House, 1991), p.155.

most other forms of formally organized news communication, such as wall newspapers and study groups, reached their peak at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution and have gradually declined since. For example, to organize newspaper reading groups was part of the job of the mass work department (qungongbu) of newspapers. The party organizations or other organizations controlled by the party were also required to do this job. To organize people to read newspapers had been a routine political activity in each work unit which I knew until the end of the Cultural Revolution.[17] This form has declined in the era of the reform. Other forms of officially organized news dissemination, such as wall newspapers and study groups, have also declined. One of the reasons why these forms have declined is people's resistance to the party's propaganda.

The Party's Propaganda and People's Resistance

People's resistance to the party's propaganda can be traced back to the Yan'an base area, an area under the party's control in the thirties and forties before the party achieved national power. The party took serious measures to repress such resistance. As early as 1942 in the Yan'an base area, Wang Shiwai, an intellectual, was decapitated because he openly criticized party

[17]For a brief history of newspaper reading groups, see Lynn T. White III, "Local Newspapers and Community Change, 1949-1969", Moving A Mountain: Cultural Change in China, ed. Godwin C. Chu and Francis L. K. Hsu, (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), pp.94-97.

leaders. After 1949, millions of outspoken intellectuals were persecuted. But as the resistance among people grows, this approach becomes ineffective.

The party treats ordinary people as passive and vulnerable audiences. It restricts people's access to only that news which the party believes they should know. The boundaries defining such "news" change from time to time. Though the news media may be able to reinforce the party's legitimacy for a certain period of time, as people's counterfactual experiences increase, so does their resistance to the official propaganda. It is from this resistance that the legitimation crisis has arisen. Here I will take the decline of reporting of "behaviour models" as an example to elaborate this point.

The Decline of Reporting of Behavioral Models

Reporting of behavioral models (dianxing baodao) can be also translated as reporting of model heroes/heroines. It refers to a process of reporting whereby a person, a work unit or an event are described as a manifestation of certain virtues to serve the party's current policy goals. This process includes four steps: to find a model, to foster the model, to report the model and to organize people to learn from the model. The party controls the whole process. This kind of reporting used to be the most important form of news reporting in the party's newspapers.

Reporting of behavioral models originated from both the European socialist movement and traditional Chinese culture. Its

early instances could be traced to the nineteenth century. The early utopian socialists set up some types of factories and communities as examples to demonstrate their ideas. They reported these cases in journals and newspapers to promote their ideas. Engels once reported such cases in some newspapers. Later, he and Marx criticized both utopian ideas and practice. In the Soviet Union, after 1917, Lenin attempted to transform the country into a communist society within one or two decades. He initiated behavioral model reporting as a means to promote the transformation. But Lenin recognized the error of trying to enter communism in a short period of time. In 1935, Stalin initiated the model worker movement and instructed the mass media to report those models. Russian model heroes and heroines were also reported in the Second World War. These origins of Chinese behavioral model reporting has been recognized by scholars and journalists in China.[18]

Another origin of Chinese behavioral model reporting is not discussed by scholars and journalists in China. This origin can be found in China's historical and cultural context.[19] In Chinese historical records, there are records of reports of the deeds of "officials loyal to their sovereign" (zhongchen) and

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[18]Lidan Chen, "My view on Reporting of Behavioral Models," (dianxing baodao zhi wojian), Journalism Journal, (xinwen yanjiu), 1(1987), pp.24-26.

[19]Godwin C. Chu, "Cultural Process in China: Continuity and Change", Moving A Mountain: Cultural Change in China, ed. Godwin C Chu and Francis L. K. Hsu, (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), p.238-242.

"dutiful sons" (xiaozi). They were widely recognized as behavioral models, and their virtues were generally appreciated by both Chinese rulers and the governed.

In the history of the CCP's journalism, the first case of reporting of a behavioral model was the story of Wu Manyou, a peasant labour model. The story was published in 1942 in the Liberation Daily (jiefang ribao), the CCP's official organ. From April to May of 1942, Liberation Daily published news, correspondence and editorials about Wu Manyao calling on people to learn from him. In the meantime, news about foreign cities, at one time the major content of the front page of Liberation Daily, was replaced by the news of the liberated base area. The "Movement to Learn from Wu Manyou" and movements to learn from other models were launched from 1942 to 1946. The stories of behavioral models and the reports on these movements occupied a major place in base area news. During the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the following Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), many behavioral models were created and promulgated, and the CCP's journalism tradition of reporting on behavioral models was formed.

In 1949, the CCP took over China and brought the Yan'an experiences, especially the experience in ideological work, to the whole nation. Reporting of behavioral models became a nation-wide practice. Through the party-controlled news media, a set of behavioral models were created during the 1950s. In the War to Resist the U.S. and Aid Korea (1950-1953), soldier heroes, such as Huang Jiguang and Qiu Shaoyun, were promulgated as role models.

Both of them died in Korea. Huang threw himself against the firing hole in the wall of the enemy's blockhouse. Qiu would rather burn to death during a military operation than give away his position. In order to mobilize the population for national reconstruction, model workers, such as Hao Jianxiu and Ni Zhifu, were promoted for emulation. Hao was an ordinary female worker who did a good job in a textile factory. Ni was a worker who invented an advanced drill bit. From 1957 to 1961, a period of political repression and economic distress, discontent was growing among people. One way that the party Chairman Mao Zedong used to deal with people's discontent was to stress the class struggle and to tighten ideological control. Reporting of behavioral models was used as a tool for this control. As a result, there were peak times for this kind of reporting.

In 1963, the top leaders in China called on people to learn from Lei Feng, a twenty-four-year old soldier who had died in an accident. Many people, especially students, enthusiastically participated in the movement. In the movement to Learn from Lei Feng, waves of stories about him and the movement flooded the Chinese newspapers. Like other models, Lei was portrayed as a person who was totally dedicated to the party's leader, the party and the people without concern for his own welfare. The most famous collective models were promulgated in 1964. In that year, Chairman Mao instructed the people, "In industry, learn from Daqing. In agriculture, learn from Dazhai." Daqing Oilfield in Northeast China was reported to have been built through the self-

reliance of workers. Dazhai Brigade, in Shanxi province, was reported to have turned a barren gully into a granary. Both of them were reported as doing an outstanding job in all kinds of campaigns in the Cultural Revolution.

Two kinds of models were reported during the Cultural Revolution. One was the model of those who studied Mao's thought well, like Jin Xunhua. According to the reports, Jin was a Shanghai youth who settled in Heilongjiang province in 1968. In 1969 he drowned in a flood trying to save a log. In 1970, Jin was portrayed as a model youth. Another was the model rebel who fought against "bourgeois" authorities who were accused of countering Mao's thought. Such was Zhang Tiesheng. Zhang was a production brigade leader. In taking a university entrance exam, he did not answer the questions; instead he wrote an article to criticize the authorities who organized the exam and set questions on the exam sheet. In many cases, the virtues of studying Mao's thought were combined with the virtues of a rebellious spirit. There was a long list of such models during the Cultural Revolution. The most ironic model was Lin Biao, who was second in rank to Mao from 1966 to 1971. He was eulogized as the best student of Mao and designated by Mao as his successor. But according to CCP official documents, Lin planned to assassinate Mao in 1971.[20] When news of

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[20]According to the official documents and propaganda, Mao Zedong chose Lin Biao as his heir at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Lin's position as Mao's "close comrade-in-arms and successor" was written into the party's constitution adopted on April 14, 1969. Also according to the official documents and propaganda, Lin died in an air crash in the People's Republic of Mongolia on September 12, 1971. Lin was said to have tried to

the event was released, Chinese were shocked.

After the Lin Biao event, behavioral model reporting gradually declined. In the era of reform after Mao's death, fewer and fewer behavioral models were presented by the news media. All model reformers were controversial. For example, in 1984 Bu Xinsheng, a director of a small factory, was promulgated as a good manager by almost all the news media in China. In January 1988, the major news media in China released the news that Bu's factory had gone bankrupt in November 1987. The party's propagandists tried several times to revive the movement to Learn from Lei Feng, but people responded to it cynically.[21] After the Tiananmen events, party ideologues tried to promulgate model soldiers, but people paid little attention to them.

The decline of behavioral model reporting can be explored from three aspects: the virtues exemplified by behavioral models, the power structure through which behavioral models were created and promulgated, and the social consequences of the reporting.

Since the party's policies, to which the virtues exemplified by behavioral models were linked, changed from time to time, the virtues emphasised in different periods were somewhat different. But under the party's control of news media, behavioral models were

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escape to the former Soviet Union after an abortive coup d'etat. How the Chinese official documents and propaganda regarding Lin Biao changed from eulogy to denouncement is documented in Michael.M.Y. Kau, ed., The Lin Biao Affair: Power Politics and Military Coup, (New York: International Arts and Science Press, 1975).

[21]See Orville Schell, Discos and Democracy: China in the Throes of Reform, (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), pp.188-195.

described in accord with the same matrix of core values. All models shared underlying virtues - selflessness, no independence of thought, no self-expression of individual interests, subordination of the individual to an assumed collectivity and loyalty to the party. This ideal is captured in a famous quotation from Lei Feng's diary, which many Chinese who participated in the movement to learn from Lei Feng could recite: "I would like to be a revolutionary screw, I should be shining my light at the place where the party tightens me up."

At the peak of reporting on behavioral models, behavioral models were everywhere - on a national level, provincial level, county level and in each work unit. Behavioral models formed a hierarchy. Behavioral models might derive political benefits from their model status. The model worker hero Ni Zhifu and heroine Hao Jianxiu in 1950 were both promoted to ministerial posts. Chen Yonggui, the head of Dazhai brigade, was later promoted to the post of Vice Premier. Although there were more behavioral models drawn from the People's Liberation Army than the other sectors of society, no model soldier has been promoted to the top leadership of the military, which plays a key role in Chinese politics.

It was always hard for people to follow the example of behavioral models. Sometimes common sense would stop most people from following these examples. After Jin Xunhua was promulgated as a model youth, I personally knew of other youth who died while emulating him. They simply ran into the wildfire on the grassland hopelessly trying to extinguish the flames or jumped into rivers to

save something or somebody even though they did not know how to swim. After they died, they too became models. But most people would not take this kind of action. Furthermore, there were so many models among people, it was easy for people to know some models personally and discover they were unable to live up to their reputations.

The power structure at work in the model creation process also widened the gap between people's perception of reality and official propaganda about behavioral models. The opportunities to create models - to find, to foster, to report models and to call on people to learn from models - were limited. Journalists, the party's leaders of different ranks and correspondents (tongxinyuan) all tried to seize any such opportunity. The correspondents were at the lowest rank of the CCP's journalism hierarchy. They were appointed by the local authority of the party committee. They were not professional journalists but wanted to be. A correspondent might be rewarded with a promotion because s/he initiated a model promulgation process. Journalists and party leaders, especially party propagandists, were motivated to do the same thing. The usual way for them to win limited newspaper space and radio time was to report more and more models. When A found a model B, C had to find a model D that was better than B. Eventually another model would be even better than D.

This competition put stronger and stronger pressure on behavioral models. S/he became merely a sign, a symbol, an image, and was forced to do what a model was supposed to do. They were

controlled by their own public images. They had to live in a "perfect" selfless way as their images required. They had lost their privacy; their diaries and personal letters became textbooks for other people's education. Other people felt similar pressure. They had also had to suppress their own interests. Reporting of behavioral models served as tools to homogenize people's consciousness and convey the value of submission to the party's authority. To a large extent, the reporting served the party successfully from the mid to the late sixties. At least superficially there was no competitive voice; what the party's top leader said was reinforced as model thinking for everybody. No matter what kind of mistakes the leadership made, there was no way to correct it promptly. With people's thought being thereby standardized, what kinds of social consequences would derive from this?

The social consequence of behavioral model reporting was tragic. Not only did the model creation process shape the thinking of the models, but it also shaped the thinking of the whole nation. As a historical process in China, the practice began in Yan'an in 1942, became more prevalent after 1963, and reached its peak in the Cultural Revolution. This process made the engagement of millions of people in political campaigns possible and contributed to the tragedies in China. In 1958 the whole nation was mobilized to join the Great Leap Forward. As a result more than twenty million

people died.[22] After this tragedy, the Learn from Lei Feng movement started in 1964. People had to follow behavioral models to study Mao's works and eliminate selfish thought. Then Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

During the Cultural Revolution, the competition to create more and better models made model reporting more and more superficial. The model creation process became a drama, a tragedy and then a farce. During this peak time of reporting of behavioral models, it was a common phenomenon that when a tragic incident occurred, correspondents and journalists vied with other to report not the casualties and survivors, not the cause of the incident, but the heroic spirit of the people who died in the incident. As more and more tragic incidents occurred, and more people lost their lives, more and more heroes and heroines were discovered and their deeds reported. However, the channels of the news media were always limited and narrow, and the competition was always fierce. After the Lin Biao affair, there was no way to develop a better model, because the most perfect model, Lin Biao, had already been created and shattered. Reporting of behavioral models has inevitably

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[22]I was a witness of the mass starvation. When it took place, I was living in the countryside of Shandong province, many people I personally knew starved to death. I also visited Xinyang area in Henan province, and I was told that about three million people died of starvation after the Great Leap Forward in that area. After the Cultural Revolution I also read different internal reference news about Xinyang at that time, the estimated number of people who died of starvation was the same. Based on these experiences it is my judgement that the estimate by Western authors of about twenty to thirty million people who starved to death is reasonable.

declined.[23] The process of the decline can be observed in people's daily life.

The Collapse of Moral Order and the Legitimation Crisis

People's acquiescence to the party's call to learn from behavioral models was gradually undermined by their daily struggle. In conformity with the selflessness of behavioral models, individuals had to submit entirely to party authorities, otherwise their behaviour would be deemed morally incorrect and shameful. Fear of such social ostracism contributed greatly to the people's conformity to the party and a fanatical enthusiasm for communism in the first half of the 1950s when there was a boom in the economy. But the prosperity lasted just a few years, ending with the tragedies of the 1957 Anti-Rightist Campaign, the 1958 Great Leap Forward, and the "three hard years" (1959-1961) of mass starvation. In contrast to the people's suffering, the privileges of the party

[23]Lidan Chen perceives the inevitability of the decline from a perspective of political economy. He points out that the existence of behavioral model reporting needs certain social conditions. These conditions include the small-scale peasant economy and political consciousness of peasants who desire the control of administrative power over the society, and lower educational levels of the people and their incapacity for independent thinking. As urbanization progressed and educational levels rose, there was more independent thinking and reporting of behavioral models has inevitably declined. "My view on Behavioral Model Reporting," (dianxing baodao zhi waojian), Journalism Journal, 1(1987), pp.24-26.

and its top leaders increased.[24] Restricted access to information became one of the most important means of protecting these privileges.

After the mass starvation, the way the party dealt with the tragedies was not to look into them but to cover them up.[25] At the same time the party further promoted the cult of Mao Zedong and promulgated more models of selflessness and honesty through the news media. But more and more people learned to lie whenever they spoke in public. The loyalty to the party was built more on people's fear than on a voluntary commitment. This fear of repression of critics of the party and its policies was deeply entrenched into people's psyches through political campaigns.

As a result, more and more people had conflicting notions of reality. One expressed ideas conforming to official propaganda in

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[24]For example, according to a recent news report, in the 1960s a villa known as the "Western Cave" was built for Mao Zedong in a scenic spot near his hometown Shaoshan. See People's Daily, overseas edition, Sept. 20, 1993, p.3. It is common knowledge that many villas were built at that time for Mao's personal use.

[25]There are reasons to believe there was scepticism among party elites at the time regarding Mao's infallibility. At the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee, convened in August 1959 at Lushan, then Minister of Defence Peng Dehui spoke up to criticize the Great Leap Forward. He was removed from his post. In 1961, Mao made a self-criticism regarding the policies of the Great Leap Forward. but few ordinary party members. to say nothing of citizens who were not party members, knew what was going on within party elites circles. In public, Mao's authority could not be challenged. I am not suggesting that the factionalist struggle of party elites and the scepticism did not contribute to the challenging and overthrow of individual powerholders in the Cultural Revolution, they certainly did. However, it seems to me that this struggle and scepticism did not challenge the fundamental assumption of the party's mandate to rule China. With no challenge to this basic principle, the party's propaganda contributed greatly to the popular consciousness that enable the Cultural Revolution to occur.

public, while expressing different notions elsewhere. Here we can see what Vladimir E. Shlapatokh, in analyzing public opinion in the Soviet context, calls compartmentalization of ideas and feelings which are in conflict with each other. He calls opinion which conforms to official interpretations of reality the mythological level of opinion and opinion reflecting the interests of the person who voices the opinion the pragmatic level.[26] Discussing the interaction between these two levels of opinion, he points out:

> Due to the pressures to conform with official interpretations of reality, facts and feelings which are in contradiction with the official view tend to be suppressed, at least from immediate consciousness, into the lower, pragmatic level of mentality. Here they accumulate, increasing pressure on the upper, mythological level, awaiting an opportunity for a release.
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> When...the power of the state weakens and control over the people becomes slack, the pressure of the accumulated irritation becomes increasingly insistent, and the difference between the two levels decreases. In other words, all of the stored grievances which, for reasons of expediency and survival, have been suppressed come to the surface.[27]

This interaction between these two levels of opinion can be used to explain how the legitimation crisis surfaced in China.

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[26]Vladimir E. Shlapentokh, "Two Levels of Public Opinion: The Soviet Case", Public Opinion Quarterly, Winter 1985, p.449. He recognizes two types of values: the pragmatic level of values "regulates 'material behaviour' and shapes individual decisions in concrete situations"; and the mythological level of values "accounts for the psychological adaptation of the individual to the social environment and the dominant ideology and influences verbal activity and communication with other people." People form two levels of opinion based on these two types of values. p.448.

[27]Vladimir E. Shlapentokh, "Two Levels of Public Opinion: The Soviet Case", Public Opinion Quarterly, Winter 1985, p.453.

Prior to the Cultural Revolution, ideas and feelings which contradicted the official view accumulated, awaiting an opportunity for a release. People were divided into different factions in different organizations according to their pragmatic opinions. A superior often created factions among subordinates to reinforce his own domination. People within a faction usually held information damaging to other people. This information not only served as the means of political struggle against people of opposite factions, but also as the means of pulling a faction together. Disclosing pragmatic opinion could often damage one's political and economic security. Thus, people's pragmatic opinion remained hidden.

When the Cultural Revolution started in 1966, there was a fanatical enthusiasm for the revolution and Mao on a mythological level. The cult of Mao and his control over the army gave Mao strength to defeat his rivals. When the central leaders engaged in the power struggle, they lost control over people to a certain degree. People saw an opportunity to give vent to their grievances regarding official privilege. As soon as they started to express their pragmatic opinion, hidden factionalist conflict surfaced. To express loyalty to Mao became a legitimate means for people to survive the conflict. This in turn reinforced the cult of Mao. People spied on and fought each other in order to show their loyalty to Mao. At no time before in China's history had such a level of political repression been seen.

In these circumstances it was too risky for most people to talk about their critical views to anyone. Most people simply kept

silent. But despite the egalitarian revolutionary rhetoric, it could be observed that more and more people were trying to grasp wealth as well as power. Officials as well as ordinary people were already accustomed to the duplicity. Saying one thing in public while doing things differently in private was no longer viewed as shameful behaviour. The Lin Biao incident of 1971 was an important turning point in this process. After the event, a great number of officials who were dismissed in the Cultural Revolution returned to their previous posts. Many of them made use of their regained power to obtain good jobs for their children, better housing for themselves, and retaliation against those who had fought against them. Ordinary people in their day-to-day life had to fight for their share of scarce resources and property. When they bribed authorities or used their connections (guanxi)[28] to get groceries, housing or jobs, they justified their behaviours by saying that the party cadres were doing the same. The news media were still filled with reports about selfless behavioral models. But people started to make fun of those who followed behavioral models. The models themselves were more often than not treated like fools.

The reporting of behavioral models served as a means to propel cultural change, but not the change intended. The values exemplified by models, such as loyalty to the party and revolution,

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[28]Lucian W. Pye believes there is no exact counterpart of the Chinese concept "guanxi" in other cultures, though one can think of acquaintanceship networks in American society as an analogy of "guanxi". He examines this Chinese cultural phenomenon in detail in The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp.212-217.

love of socialism, hatred of the class enemy, replacement of family love with class love, remembrance of one's class background, were contradicted by people's daily struggle. The traditional values had been called into question by the imposition of new values, while the new values were destroyed by the actions of those who intended to impose them. As limited resources, these symbols and meanings have been exhausted. The collapse of basic moral order could be observed in daily life.

The significance of people's resistance to reporting of behavioral models goes beyond the moral realm. This kind of reporting was one of many propaganda formats in the party's journalism history. These propaganda devices are rooted in the one-party political system. As long as the party's monopolistic control over news media exists, propaganda-oriented reporting will persist, and people's resistance to this kind of reporting will also continue.

By 1976 when the end of the Cultural Revolution was officially announced, because of the collapse of moral order, the claim that the party represented a high standard of morality had been exposed as a fiction. It was difficult for the party to find a new source of meanings to justify its domination. It was also difficult for people to find ground to judge the party.

This legitimacy problem has not been solved in the post-Mao era. Immediately after the Cultural Revolution, a struggle emerged between reformers and the "Two Whatevers" faction, which advocated whatever Mao had said and done. The "whatever" faction soon lost

mainly due to the lack of support from the army. The reformers' argument that "practice is the sole criterion of truth" provided a theoretical base for the economic reform. But as Pye points out, this argument

> provided far too risky a base for state legitimacy. No society has been so foolish as to make successful policies the basis of the legitimacy of its government, since the very essence of legitimacy is that it should sustain the government regardless of how partisan policies are working out.[29]

In the reform, indifference toward politics became prevalent on the surface. But deep in many people's hearts there was a contradictory feeling. Those individuals who had hurt others in political campaigns, who achieved promotion at the expense of others' interests and even lives, could not find a justification for their past behaviour. Those who had been hurt by others found it difficult to have their grievances redressed. They could not really find social justice. One might hurt others today and be hurt by others tomorrow. The fear and insecurity created by political uncertainty were reinforced within this historical context.

Wherever I went, I found the majority of people either hurt others or were hurt by others. Some hurt others in one campaign and were hurt by others in another campaign. There was deep trauma in these people's hearts. They were attempting to justify something unjustifiable. They were trying to forget something

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[29]Lucian, W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.240.

unforgettable. They were trying to bury the past but couldn't. They were trying to avoid talking about it but couldn't remain silent. When they tried to define the situation based on their own experiences, they felt confused. They found it too difficult to interpret their experiences within the choices offered. They doubted how long economic reform could last because past policy shifts had been unanticipated and arbitrary.

There was also a similar crisis of confidence in the news media. In the reform, there has been an ongoing debate over press reform. Kenneth Starck and Yu Xu provide an account of the debate. According to them, the underlying assumption of the press reform is the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism. "A change in societal material relations calls for necessary corresponding changes in the press." They recognize two schools of thought. "One advocates major reform. The second approach calls for minor change, that is, relatively modest adjustments in the press' present operation."[30] What Starck and Yu do not mention is the central inquiry of the first school. Since the official explanation of the destructive consequences of propaganda during the Cultural Revolution was that a handful of people had controlled and manipulated the news media, logically the first school raised the question: how could a handful of people control the news media to manipulate the people to become involved in a political movement that was ultimately against the interests of the people themselves.

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[30]Kenneth Starck & Yu Xu, "Loud thunder, small raindrops: The reform movement and the press in China", Gazette, 42:143-159 (1988).

This inquiry is to a certain degree similar to the central question raised by members of the Frankfurt School when they investigated fascist propaganda. Searching for an answer to the question, some Chinese media analysts realized that the party's monopolistic control over the news media was the underlying cause. Thus some of them proposed to allow a privately-owned press.

The changes in readers' and audiences' attitudes made the improvement of the credibility of the news media difficult.[31] In the reform, as the cult of Mao declined, people's independent thinking developed. This development would lead to diversity in people's opinions. The party's hard-liners perceived this development as a threat to the party's monopoly of power and forbade diversified voices in the news media. The stagnation of political reform made it possible for these hard-liners to exercise monopolistic power over news media. Thus, the gap between the party's propaganda and people's perception continued to develop. On the one hand, I agree with Nathan's observation that this news control has limited the resistance of readers and audiences. He points out,

> no matter how alienated they thought they were, they accepted many of the values and goals defined by the government. And after they had sifted through the facts presented by the press, their picture of the world was still made up largely of the material that remained. In this sense even those who were least persuaded were still

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[31]For discussion of the news media's credibility, see Brantly Womack, Media and the Chinese Public: A Survey of the Beijing Media Audience, (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc. Publisher, 1986), pp.40-42.

captives of their information environment.[32]

On the other hand, this news control consistently produces problems of credibility for the news media as well as for the party itself. The stagnation of the news media's reform has contributed to the unaccountability of the party's top leaders. The news media fail to counter a growing corruption within the party ranks. The campaigns against corruption initiated by the party one after another have not reversed the seemingly irreversible trend of growing corruption. The corruption of the party during the reform has developed to the point that if the scope of the corruption were publicly reported, confidence in the party would be totally destroyed. In this case, monopolistic control over news media is not only a condition for the party to legitimate its policies, but also an imperative condition for the continued existence of the party itself. Thus the party continued to portray a bright future through news media. When people found this imaginary future dashed by inflation and rampant corruption, the eruption of the conflict between the regime and people was inevitable sooner or later.

Prior to the Tiananmen events, the collapse of moral order and the crisis of confidence were considered by many as the most serious problem in China. Liu Binyan, a famous investigative journalist, expresses such an opinion:

> But to my mind the most serious problem is the widespread spiritual malaise among people from all walks

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[32]Andrew J. Nathan, Chinese Democracy, (Berkeley, Los Angles: University of California Press, 1985), p.189.

> of life, a growing mood of depression, even despair, a loss of hope for the future and of any sense of social responsibility, as if China were no longer their country and society owed them something. I have never seen this sort of attitude before, at least not in the past forty years. And there is no solution in sight.[33]

This disturbance of social norms was an important element contributing to the demonstrations in 1989. And it was, to a certain extent, independently developed and cannot be reduced to political and economic elements. I will further clarify this point in the following chapter.

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[33]Liu Binyan, China's Crisis, China's Hope, tran. Howard Goldblatt, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) p.24. This book is a collection of lectures given by Liu in a number of U.S. universities before the 1989 events.

CHAPTER 2

THE AWAKENING OF NOTIONS OF SELF REALIZATION AMONG STUDENTS AND NEWLY REVIVED STUDENT ACTIVISM

Most student participants of the people's movement of 1989 were born in the late sixties, around the time when the Cultural Revolution erupted. Their early socialization took place when the legitimation crisis was surfacing. In their childhood and adolescence, when they were keen to learn new ideas, the party-state was increasingly incapable of enforcing official ideology. In the meantime, they encountered a conflict between Chinese cultures and Western cultures. There was a growing self-awareness among them as a part of a general trend towards emphasizing individual interests in China. In this context, they built their identities by differentiating themselves from what the regime wanted them to be, in other words, by asserting their individuality. Beneath their claims of fighting for the collective well-being, there was a strong will to assert and maintain individual dignity in the newly revived student activism. In this chapter I will analyze the awakening of notions of self realization among these students, and briefly describe the general background in which the new generation of students grew up. I will further explore the growth of individualism by analyzing two autobiographies of student leaders of 1989.

Awakening of Self-Awareness: the Identity of Students

Orville Schell observed various forms of Chinese popular culture from 1986 to 1987. These included bodybuilding, cosmetic surgery, fashion, popular tabloids, publication and underground distribution of banned books, private bookstalls, popular music etc. They were booming in those years. From his observation he perceives a general trend towards a growing emphasis on individual interests among urban residents. Schell points out that "people had begun to redirect the focus of their lives from society as a whole to their individual selves" as China was beginning to merge into a global pop-based consumerism.[1] My impression is that, as I have pointed out in the first chapter, people redirected the focus of their lives when the legitimation crisis surfaced in the Cultural Revolution. The pop-based consumerism reinforced this trend. The growth of self-awareness among the new generation of students who were born in the late sixties was part of this trend. This point can be clarified by a comparison between this new generation of students and the Red Guard generation.[2]

Compared with the Red Guard generation, this new generation of students grew up in a different environment and had different

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[1]See Orville Schell, Discos and Democracy China in the Throes of Reform, (New York: Anchor Books, 1989) p.71-116. His account touches an interesting topic which I explore in this thesis: how the general trend of growing individuality emerged from and contributed to the legitimation crisis.

[2]I belong to the Red Guard generation. The following comparison is based on my own observation and personal experiences.

characteristics. In their childhood and adolescence, Red Guards experienced the height of the cult of Mao. They were taught to follow Mao's teaching unconditionally. Their vision was restricted by the cult of Mao and the comparative isolation of China from the rest of the world. When individual Red Guards expressed opinions that conflicted with Mao's thought, they would be persecuted. Given this higher level of political repression, Red Guards tended to suppress feelings and opinions which were in contradiction with the official views. Their attitudes toward Mao were fanatical, and they tended to resort to violence. Though the early childhood of the new generation of students was still shadowed by the cult of Mao, they experienced the decline of Mao's influence in their late childhood and adolescence. They suffered a comparatively lower level of political repression. They were in a new information environment because of China's openness to the rest of the world. They encountered a conflict between Western and Chinese cultural values. Their vision was widened. They doubted official interpretations of reality. They were more independent thinkers and tended to more freely express their opinions.

Under the cult of Mao the Red Guards were educated and encouraged to submit themselves entirely to the collective well-being. They were taught it was selfish and shameful for them to claim their individual interests and rights. When their interests and rights were violated, they usually did not know how to protect themselves. But in the reform era, it was no longer shameful for an individual to claim her/his own interests and rights. The new

generation of students was encouraged to pursue their own interests. When they felt that their interests and rights were violated, they tended to fight openly against the problems which they considered to cause the violation.

Compared to the Red Guard generation, this new generation of students gained a stronger sense of independence, self-affirmation and self-importance. Though the regime still wanted to educate them to submit themselves to the authorities of the party-state, they built their identities by differentiating themselves from what the regime wanted them to be. Student activists wanted to have more independent voices in the decision-making process. In the newly revived student movements, these activists not only made claims of fighting for the collective well-being, they also had a strong will to assert and maintain individual dignity and independence. Since we can observe the same characteristics in the 1989 student movement, this new student activism can be seen as a prologue to the 1989 student movement.

Exploring why students were motivated to participate in the 1989 movement, in his autobiography Li Lu states:

> Each of us who came to Tiananmen had their own intensely felt reasons for being there. Each of us who became hunger strikers had their own story. But in every one of us, there was a deep conviction that the individual must affirm their humanity against despotism in all its many forms and that each individual is of central importance.[3]

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[3]Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.5.

Commenting on Li's book, John Simpson believes that the students' demonstration on Tiananmen Square "was a celebration of the true individuality of young men and women who rejected the old system as empty, cynical and corrupt."[4] It seems to me that in the Chinese context which I have described above, this "celebration of true individuality" can be viewed as students' indentity which was characterized by independent thinking, free expression of opinion, pursuing individual interests and rights, a sense of self-protection, self-affirmation, self-importance and self-management. In order to understand this growing individualism among the new generation of students, we need to look further into the general background in which these students grew up.

The Socio-political Context

This new generation of students who later participated in the 1989 movement were born in the years when, because of the cult of Mao Zedong, there was a popular saying - "a billion people have one brain." This meant that people had to express themselves in the way Mao taught them; it appeared that people were all brain-washed by Mao Zedong Thought. In their early childhoods, this new generation of students were surrounded by a "red sea." People treated Mao Zedong's small red book as Christian fundamentalists treat the Bible; red flags were everywhere; many walls were

[4]John Simpson, "Introduction", in Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.4.

covered with Mao's words written in red. All people were called to learn from the People's Liberation Army whose members had red stars on their caps. The "red sea" symbolized that China was the red base area of world revolution, and Mao was the red sun over both China and the world. The prevailing ethnocentrism isolated China from the rest of the world, and the cult of Mao limited people's vision.

Although Mao's political line of class struggle in the Cultural Revolution emphasized the conflict between "the masses" and "capitalist roaders within the party,"[5] in practice not only did the masses fight against accused "capitalist roaders," but also the masses fought against one another (qunzhong dou qunzhong). A great number of people were labelled as "capitalist roaders" or as one of the "five black types of people" (heiwulei, refering to landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and rightists). These people were denounced as enemies and were tortured and persecuted. They were deprived of political rights as well as basic human rights. In the meantime great numbers of people were mobilized to engage in these dehumanizing activities.

A kind of "revolutionary rebel spirit" among people, especially among young students, was encouraged by Mao. People's

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[5]According to Mao Zedong's perspective during the Cultural Revolution, the major contradiction in China's socialist society was the one between the masses and the "capitalist roaders within the party," and a major task of the Cultural Revolution was to eliminate those "capitalist elements" within the party. "Capitalist roaders within the party" mainly referred to a faction led by Liu Shaoqi, then president of China and Deng Xiaoping, the party's general secretary.

aggression was relished. Hatred and revenge were forged. Even in primary school and kindergarten some teachers and children discriminated against children whose parents had been labelled enemies. The turbulent circumstances and dehumanization traumatized the childhoods of many students who would later participate in the events of 1989.

In those turbulent years, some students of this new generation discovered the cruel aspects of Mao's class struggle and the harsh life of ordinary people. So from early childhood their perception of reality started to differ from that portrayed by official propaganda, which only reported the bright side of life.

In 1971 when many of them were around five to six years old, the Lin Biao incident occurred. The fanatical enthusiasm for following Mao faded; the myth of the infallibility of Mao's Thought was diminished. The demoralization could be observed everywhere. More and more people did not feel ashamed when they said one thing in public and acted totally differently in their private lives. More and more people tried by any means to grasp wealth and power. Although on the surface the cult of Mao remained in effect, more and more people deviated from the official line. The legitimation crisis was surfacing.

In 1976 when this new generation of students was around ten years old, the end of the Cultural Revolution was officially announced. Two years later, the reform movement started. China's doors opened to Western technology and investment. People had opportunities to compare their lives with the lives of people in

other countries. The general environment encouraged a spirit of independent thinking. Although there was still political repression of dissent, the repression declined to a comparatively lower level for ordinary citizens. While their parents were still afraid to make trouble by speaking up, the younger generation had much less fear when they discussed issues which people had not been allowed to raise before.

The discussions among this young generation of students touched the events whose explanations were contradictory. Mao's wife and three other members of the Politburo were arrested. Deng Xiaoping was denounced as one of the top "capitalist roaders within the party" in the Cultural Revolution, but he became the paramount leader of the party-state in the reform era. Democracy advocates like Wei Jingsheng were put in prison. When these students were pre-schoolers, the American imperialists were devils. In 1971 when they were still playing anti-American war games on the streets, they learned the American devils had "surrendered" because of Nixon's visit to China. No more than five years later when they were in high school, the U.S. became a dream land of democracy and prosperity for many of them.

One of the most contradictory topics discussed among this new generation of students, as among other sectors of the society, is the assessment of the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was officially negated. Rethinking the Cultural Revolution, more and more people realized the horrible results of the violation of individual rights. There was an increasing awareness that

individual rights must be protected by law. But when the discussion touched the problems of the one-party system, the authorities tried to put an end to the discussion.[6] Under the official restrictions of discussion, there was a growth of cynicism among people. A popular saying at that time was "who trusts whom?" implying that nobody could be trusted.

In the reform era more importance has been attached to science and technology. Many people put lots of hope in university students who have the opportunity to study science and technology. Since only a very small percentage of youth have the opportunity to go to university, it is a privilege to be a university student. The university entrance exams are very competitive. Family members often make great efforts to support a son or daughter to pass the exams. When Shen Tong, a student leader of the people's movement of 1989, went to take the national exam in 1985, he was accompanied by all his family members, his parents, grandmother, sister and his sister's boyfriend. They were waiting for him outside the classroom until he finished the exam. This was common in many families. When a student was struggling for an admission to

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[6]An example is the reassessment of Zhang Zhixin. Zhang, a low-ranking cadre, criticized Mao's political line after the Cultural Revolution broke out. She was persecuted and executed. Before the execution, her windpipe was cut in order to prevent her from shouting slogans. Her case was reassessed in 1979. The discussion generated criticism which touched on problems in the prison system and occasionally the political system as a whole. Li Honglin, a teacher at Nanjing University, criticized the persecution as being more fascist than fascism in an article published in the People's Daily. Because of this criticism, he was deprived of the right to teach at Nanjing University by the authorities. The authorities also ordered the news media to refuse to publish any article by him.

university, he or she was often treated as a centre of the family. This usually nurtured a feeling of self-importance in the student. Many people also perceive them as a self-centred generation.

There is not a single factor that has stimulated the awakening of individualities among university students. All the elements mentioned above came into play: less political repression, less restriction put on discussion of political issues, the growth of independent thinking among people, people's wider vision of the world, the greater importance attached to economic development and science and technology. In some cases, traumatic experiences in childhood also contributed to this process.

In order to further elaborate the growth of self-awareness among students, we need to look into concrete cases. Therefore, I will analyze the autobiographies of both Li Lu and Shen Tong who were important student leaders of the 1989 movement.[7] Li led the movement to the very end. After the June 4 massacre, Li considered resorting to violence to counter the regime's repression. Shen was a moderate student leader who insisted on solving the dispute through dialogue. Most student protestors' attitudes fell between these two extremes. I will start my analysis with the change in the role of the family in socialization.

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[7]Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990). Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990).

The Changing Role of Family in Socialization

Pye attaches such an importance to the role of family in Chinese people's socialization that he believes, "in the last analysis, however, the acuteness of the authority crisis stems from disruptions in the prime socializing institution of the society, the family."[8] Pye argues that Chinese children are taught abiding sentiments and concepts about authority in their family, and these sentiments constitute a peculiarly important element of the individual's personality. He believes that even when the Chinese family becomes weakened as a social and economic unit, "the family does not necessarily lose any of its potency in socializing the offspring." "The very weakening of the family as a social institution tends frequently to increase the sense of dependency of the young."[9] The most intimate processes of learning within the family can continue to produce people who expect more of authority than reality permits, and who cannot easily adjust to a political system with weakened forms of authority, and who even may have problems governing their own behaviour, "for in the process of modelling his personality many of the mechanisms for controlling his emotions are inevitably tied to his ideals of authority and order."[10]

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[8]Lucian W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.6.

[9]Ibid, p.6.

[10]Ibid, p.7.

The family role in socialization described by both Li and Shen does not support Pye's arguments. In Li's case, his family obviously lost some potency in socializing Li. Li Lu was born in 1966. He recalls that when he was in kindergarten, he was told that he had a "terrible family background" because his mother was from a landowner family and his father was accused of being a spy for listening to a foreign broadcast. His grandfather was denounced as a rightist and died in prison. Shortly after he was born, his parents had to send him to a foster family where he stayed until he was nine years old. His foster parents had six children and had little time to take care of Li. Li became quite independent as a child. In Li's case, the weakening of his family ties did not increase his sense of dependency. Pye's argument about unrealistic expectations of authority forged by a sense of dependency seems not to fit Li's case.

Unlike Li Lu who experienced loose family connections in his childhood, Shen had strong family ties. According to Shen, he was born on an army base in 1968, two years later than Li Lu. His father was a graduate of Beijing University. His mother also received a college education. Both of Shen's parents worked for the People's Libration Army. Compared to Li, Shen was born with a much better "family background,"[11] a factor which often determined one's fate at that time. Shen had a comparatively happy childhood.

But Shen's family history has its unhappy side. According to

[11]Here good family background includes "five red types" - revolutionary cadre, revolutionary soldier, worker, poor peasant and poor-middle peasant.

Shen, his father was abandoned soon after he was born because of poverty. A poor postman adopted Shen's father. His real grandparents contacted the postman in the year Shen Tong was born. In the same year his step grandparents committed suicide one day before they were to be paraded wearing dunce caps and humiliating placards. Shen's maternal grandparents belonged to a scholar-official class. His maternal grandfather died disappointed with the communist regime. Right after Shen was born, his parents returned to civilian life. His father was given a job in a factory and was lectured weekly by the head of the factory. His father suffered many indignities. It is my observation that this kind of frustration often undermined people's self-confidence. Shen's intimate family relationship, however, seems not to have increased his sense of dependency.

According to Shen's account, his father was the most significant person in his childhood. As a child he also respected his father most. His father always encouraged him to think independently. He developed a relationship with his son based on respect and understanding and never forced Shen to do anything. It was his father who influenced Shen to involve himself in China's protest movement. When Shen was eight years old, the Tiananmen Incident of 1976 occurred. On January 8, 1976, Premier Zhou Enlai died. In the days following, people in Beijing spontaneously gathered in Tiananmen Square to pay tribute to Zhou and to vent their anger at the radicals whom people believed to be responsible for the Cultural Revolution. His father enthusiastically copied

poems posted on Tiananmen Square. He often took Shen with him when he went there. Shen recalls that on the night of April 5, his mother and grandmother went to Tiananmen Square with him. When the People's Militia approached them, they started running to get home. The following night, Shen saw that his parents destroyed all the notebooks of the writings they had copied from Tiananmen Square. His parents faced arrest if their actions were found out because the regime had denounced these writings as subversive. Shen kept this family secret without needing to be told.

It was also his father who brought him to the Democracy Wall in Xidan. Shen recalls that in 1978 when he was ten years old, the Democracy Wall appeared at a bus stop about a five-minute walk from his home. The movement lasted from the fall of 1978 to the spring of 1979. His father became an enthusiastic audience again. He took Shen to the Democracy Wall whenever he went.

Shen describes how when he made mistakes as a child, his father did not force him to confess. Instead, he left time for Shen to think about the mistakes and to draw conclusions himself. In 1979 his father left the family to go to Korea to work. Three years after his father left, when he was fourteen years old, he stole a box of drinking glasses in a local store. He wanted to sell them to pay back a debt incurred to increase his stamp collection. The next year his father returned home. Shen confessed his wrongdoing and resolved to behave himself.

When Shen was seventeen years old, according to his account, he was going through a rebellious stage, arguing with his father

about Wei Jingsheng, questioning his father's loyalty to the party. But the argument between them was reasonable and peaceful. In the debate their mutual respect remained. In this atmosphere, Shen seemed smoothly to pass through this rebellious stage. When his father sensed that Shen would be in danger if he continued to be involved in the student movement, he suggested Shen should withdraw, but he could not change Shen's mind. Now Shen decided independently to further engage himself in the movement.

The question might be asked, to what extent are the families of Li and Shen typical in the Chinese context? In traditional China, people were taught to show inordinate awe of parental authority. This pattern has been undergoing a fundamental change. In this sense, according to the accounts by Li and Shen, the changes in their family life are typical. Shen's family relationship, especially his relationship with his father, is fundamentally different from that of a traditional Chinese family in which children were forced unconditionally to obey their parents. Li's case is typical in the sense that during the Cultural Revolution turbulent events disturbed the lives of almost all families in China, and these experiences usually reduced people's awe of parental authority. Growing up in different families, Shen was more influenced by his father and had a more peaceful childhood. Li was less influenced by his parents, and his childhood involved more elements of hatred and revenge.

Aggression, Hatred, and Revenge

Pye argues that a basic problem of Chinese political culture is rooted in socialization practices which severely repress the expression of aggression.[12] It is interesting to observe the extent to which this norm was changed during the Cultural Revolution. At that time under the slogan that "Rebelling is Justifiable," many people were involved in aggressive activities. Li's childhood was profoundly influenced by these activities. He describes how his hatred and revenge were stimulated by these activities.

Li recalls that because of his family background he experienced discrimination by some nurses and children in kindergarten. There was a child with the nickname "White Face." He came from a privileged family and often bullied Li. One day Li put quite a few lizards into White Face's quilt. And later Li destroyed his position as number one leader by knocking him to the ground. Not only did Li hate people who bullied him, but also he hated those who damaged other people's dignity. Li recalls when he

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[12]Lucian Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, p.x. Also see his article "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture", Asian Survey, Vol. xxx, No.4, April 1990. In this article Pye argues that the story of the Tiananmen events "points to a host of well-established conclusions about Chinese political culture. These include such themes as the sensitivity of authority to matters of 'face', the need for authority to pretend to omnipotence, the legitimacy of bewailing grievances, the urge to monopolize virtue and to claim the high ground of morality, the drive to try to shame others, an obsession with revenge, the inability to compromise publicly, and so on and on. All of which seems to come down to a basic problem in Chinese political culture, the management of aggression."

lived in a mine area with his foster family, he found that the head of the neighbourhood committee "was like a spy poking her nose into other people's business and then reporting to the leadership in order to win favour and promotion."[13] Li perceived this woman, who was well-connected with the leadership and the police, as being a truly evil person. Li identified himself with ordinary people whom he saw as still possessing some of the traditional virtues - loyalty to friends and honesty in a harsh life.

According to Li's description, his hatred toward people who bullied others sometimes led him to acts of violence. Once on a street, he saw a boy called by the nickname Fatty bullying a girl. Fatty's father held an influential post in the local area. When he tried to help the girl, Fatty and his followers turned to hit him. Li seized a stone and hit Fatty on the head. When he had to go to apologize to Fatty, he felt repressed anger and hatred. He said to himself, "Wait till I grow up, Fatty, see how I will settle accounts with you."[14]

Living in a mine area, Li had a chance to live among workers and observe their lives during the Cultural Revolution. He seemed to obtain a strong sense of justice from these experiences and tended to fight against people whom he thought were repressing others. In doing so, Li seemed not to exclude the possibility of

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[13]Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.26.

[14]Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.40.

resorting to violence.

Education

According to Li's account, during the Cultural Revolution, his parents were persecuted. They had to send him to a foster family. Li's foster parents, illiterate and parents of six children, had little time to take care of Li. There seemed to be an absence of family education in Li's childhood. But Li's life was dramatically changed in the reform. His parents were redressed. He came back to live together with them. Inspired by his father's words that "we need science," he started to study hard. He was admitted by a good middle school where he was astonished to see so many books in the library. Many of the books were volumes that the Red Guards had confiscated during the Cultural Revolution. He started to read works written by masters, such as Victor Hugo, Gorky, Tolstoy, Lermontov, Sholokhov, and Balzac.

Compared with Li, Shen received a much better family education in his childhood. Shen recalls that when he was three years old, his maternal grandmother, an artist who did good Chinese paintings, started teaching him China's history and literature.

At the same time he learned lots of revolutionary songs, such as "Learn from Lei Feng's good example, loyal to the revolution, loyal to the party." Shen's school education started after the Cultural Revolution. At the end of his first grade, Shen became a Young Pioneer, an organization founded by the CCP for well-behaved

children aged from seven to fourteen. In the next year, Shen recalls, he was quite excited to be chosen to be a representative to view Mao Zedong's body in the mausoleum in Tiananmen Square. With his father's encouragement, he started reading translations of Byron, Shelley, Tagore and Kahlil Gibran when he entered middle school. He also started taking drawing classes, sketching the sculptures of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. At his father's suggestion, he read biographies of Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin and Albert Einstein. He decided to study science.

Both Li and Shen passed the national entrance exams and entered university. Li enrolled in Nanjing University in 1985; Shen entered Beijing University in 1986. There was a newly revived student activism in Chinese universities in the reform era. Both of them were participants in this activism.

Newly Revived Student Activism

According to the accounts by both Li and Shen, they were involved in student activism prior to their university life. In senior middle school, Li was active in organizing student activities. At that time the Cultural Revolution was under attack. Li and several other top students of the school, who also desired change in school life, organized a study group. Li recalls that members of this group were critical of communism:

> mostly we discussed our own generation. We all thought the political education given to us, like religious doctrine, had lost its credibility. We doubted that we were really marching toward communism - and what were

communism and Marxism, anyway?[15]

Li recalls, when the members of the group were invited to organize a school congress and to run a school broadcasting station, they tried to put their ideas into practice. They proposed that through the congress "students should organize everything themselves, make their own decisions on matters concerning themselves and conduct their own election."[16] The idea of an autonomous student union was embodied in this proposal, and this idea was developed later as Li became further involved in student activism.

According to Li, in 1985, a few months after he had been at Nanjing University, he joined the Communist Party. Though Li was not a believer in communism, he "believed that in China it was essential to try to reform the Communist Party from within."[17] At that point in time, he considered himself a reformer. He started his reform by setting up a supervisory committee to oversee the work of the executive committee of the students' union. Li recalls that through an investigation he discovered bribery during the election campaign for the student union. Later he learned that the people who offered the bribe and who helped to cover it up were promoted.

Li recalls that in the summer of 1986, he journeyed around

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[15]Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.80.

[16]Ibid, p.82.

[17]Ibid, p.93.

China and visited various colleges and universities. He felt that a sense of alienation permeated college students, while at same time, he recalls that he

> sensed a central characteristic of my generation: the concept of the individual standing up against an autocratic system that sought to eliminate individuality. Many did not know how to develop as individuals but had a strong desire to rebel against convention and society; they did not want to be slaves like their fathers.[18]

After this journey, he changed his major from physics to economics in order to better understand Chinese society. He came to believe that without a reform of China's political system, technology and science could not be developed.

Li describes how in 1986 during the second year of his university studies, he was elected vice-chairman of the School Oratory Association and the Association for Social Investigation. After the 1987 student movement ended, he and his colleagues formed an organization, the Thinkers' Club, and opened a coffee-house they called Heart Bridge. Every weekend they met there and talked about different issues, mainly China's social problems. The discussion attracted increasing numbers of students, and discussion gradually turned into criticism of the social system.

Li recalls that in the summer of 1988, he was warned that he might be expelled from the party. The coffee house was closed down by the government. But discussions between Li and his friends continued. They analyzed problems such as official speculation,

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[18]Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.98.

rampant corruption, inflation and social injustice. These social problems later became the major target of the people's movement of 1989.

According to Li, with the death of Hu Yaobang, he and his friends opened these discussions to the public. Li became one of the organizers of the Nanjing student movement. After the People's Daily April 26 editorial was published, the student movement in Nanjing declined. Li left Nanjing and went to Beijing.

Li recalls that in Beijing he contacted Beijing student leaders and made suggestions for the strategy of the student movement. On May 13 he joined the hunger strike. He soon emerged as the only student leader from outside of Beijing in the Headquarters to Safeguard Tiananmen Square. On May 22, he was elected by representatives from eighty-nine universities as deputy commander of the Headquarters. He was in charge of daily affairs.

Like other members of the Headquarters, Li also declared his intention to stick to the principle of non-violence. But after the June 4 massacre, in order to spread the news about the events, Li tried to organize students to occupy one of the central broadcasting stations. He also tried to hold a news conference with the help of members of the dare-to-die brigade, whose members were mainly private businessmen of Beijing.

Like Li, Shen was also involved in the newly revived student activism before he entered university. Shen recalls that in the summer of 1984 when he was sixteen, he lived on the campus of Beijing University (Beida) with his sister and her boyfriend. Both

of them were students at Beida. There he became enamoured with the poetry of "the Misty poets" (menglong shiren), who often expressed their suffering during the Cultural Revolution. Shen also sat in on student discussion groups. During the time when he was staying on campus, he witnessed a Beida student movement against "Japan's economic invasion of China" (Riben jingji qinlue Zhongguo) and corruption of the Chinese government. The movement was crushed by the government and two friends of his sister's boyfriend were arrested.

Shen recalls that when he was seventeen years old, he realized that he knew little about China. After school he walked around Beijing talking with people about their lives. His girlfriend brought him some illegal magazines published in Hong Kong. He thought that some of the news reported in these magazines was more reliable than mainland sources. From reading the magazines he encountered for the first time the term "princes' party" (taizidang). The "princes and princesses" are the children of high-ranking party officials who have used their family ties to achieve unfair political and financial advantage. Now he was going through a rebellious stage. He started thinking that communism as ideology was not the only answer for the future of China. Searching for an alternative, he was drawn to Gandhi's ideas of nonviolent resistance. He tried to read everything he could find about the man. From reading Gandhi he became convinced that one must change oneself before changing a society.

In 1986 he became, after his father and his sister, the third

member of his family to be a student at Beida. Shen was assigned to a dormitory on one corner of the Triangle where student activists would gather, hold debates and put up big- and small-character posters during upsurges of the student movement.

The roads of both Shen Tong's and Li Lu's lives were beginning to converge. Like Li, when Shen started to engage in the student movement as a university student, he also considered himself a reformer and hoped to reform the system from within. Shen also felt disappointed, as did Li, when student protests were repressed by the regime. Shen's attitudes toward the regime also became more critical. Unlike Li, who does not mention his own fear of repression, Shen often probes contradictions in his own mind and his hesitation caused by fear of political persecution.

Shen recalls that a few months into his first semester, the large student movement of 1986, which eventually spread to more than twenty provinces, broke out. Hesitating at first, he decided that he should take part in the movement. Even after his father told him there was a newly installed video surveillance system on Changan Avenue, and knowing that police were ready to put down the demonstration, he still insisted on going to Tiananmen Square to join the student gathering. But when he was actually there, seeing the soldiers blocking the Square, he thought "I really should not get too involved."[19] Later, when a group of students broke through the police barrier to enter the Square, he followed them without

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[19]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.117.

pondering over why.

On January 25, 1987, Hu Yaobang, the CCP's general secretary, was ousted for his sympathy for the students' movement. Shen recalls that he used to hope that a real change could come from the government, but now he felt disappointed. He felt the same feeling prevailed among most students. More and more students turned their eyes to their own business, studying English to prepare for going abroad, making quick cash and so on. After a short period of buying and selling, Shen started his outside reading again. He came across a story about Martin Luther King, Jr. and believed that a comparable civil rights movement could be organized in China.

In 1988, he became a member of the official Beida Student Association in charge of public affairs and liaison. He organized a successful fashion show and met visiting students from other parts of China and abroad. But this position did not prevent him from being involved in the student movement.

According to Shen's account, on the night of June 2, 1988, a Beida graduate student was killed by hooligans. The incident triggered a series of gatherings in the Beida Triangle. Shen made a speech at one gathering, suggesting they organize an independent student association. After the gathering, he met Feng Congde. Feng was a graduate student of Beida and had connections with dissidents. Feng later became one of the most important student leaders of the 1989 movement. On the night of June 4, they founded the Committee of Action, which they described as a human rights organization. The committee scheduled a rally at Tiananmen Square

for June 8 and drafted a list of demands[20]. One day before the rally, the campus loudspeakers warned that there was a clique of people manipulating students to create chaos. Every member of the Committee was under surveillance. They decided that the scheduled demonstration was not important enough and that it was too dangerous for them to continue the work of the Committee. They disbanded the Committee and cancelled the rally. Afterwards, Shen was forced to write a self-criticism saying that he was used by some "black hands," and he was expelled from the Beida Student Association. Everyone he knew said that he had been a fool. All of these events of 1988 were merely a prologue to the 1989 movement.

Shen's junior year began in the fall semester of 1988. Shen recalls that he made a new girlfriend, a foreign student who bought him the latest Hong Kong political magazines. He shared these magazines with his six roommates; they had formed a study group they called the Olympic Institute with the focus on sciences. In a meeting with the Democracy Salon, he met Wang Dan.[21] During the meeting Wang predicted that "things will happen this year".[22] Shen

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[20]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.136.

[21]Wang Dan was the organizer of the Democracy Salon, he later became one of the most important student leaders of 1989 movement. After the 1989 events, he was put into prison by the Chinese authorities. He has been a freelance writer for Western media since he was released in 1993. Now he is the one of the most famous dissidents who have stayed in China.

[22]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.152.

and two other members of the Olympic Institute agreed to support the activities of the Democracy Salon. After this meeting, Li Shuxian was invited to have an informal talk about human rights in China with the members of the Olympic Institute. Li Shuxian was a member of the local People's Congress and a physics professor. She became well-known because of her candid criticism of the Chinese regime. Both she and her famous husband Fang Lizhi were reported as dissidents by the Western media.

Shen recalls that shortly afterward Wang Dan introduced him to a man from Anhui province. The man had been working for democracy reform since the Democracy Wall movement and secretly organizing workers and journalists in Anhui. The man explained why he thought it was time for students to mount a massive movement; he discussed how to design a new government and to replace Deng Xiaoping. Shen agreed that Hu Yaobang probably was a better choice than Zhao Ziyang to replace Deng. The man also suggested the students start a hunger strike on April 5 as a means of mobilizing people. Later pursued by a Public Security Bureau agent, the man asked to stay in Shen's dormitory for one night. Shen decided that it was too dangerous for himself and his roommates to allow him to stay. From this incident, Shen realized the fear in his heart instilled by the government.

Shen describes how this fear and other calculations always tore him apart. He applied to study in the United States, but he really did not want to leave China. He saw no significant result was accomplished by previous student movements and wanted to keep

away from these movements, but he always jumped in when there was an upsurge.

Shen recalls that because of these doubts and fears, he did not participate in the student movement of 1989 until April 18. He wanted to uphold the agreement that the Olympic Institute should support Wang Dan's Democracy Salon, which now became the core of the movement. But he was not sure how far he should get involved. When he heard what had been happening in Tiananmen Square, he became active again. On April 20, knowing that about four thousand armed police were ready to deal with student demonstrators, he promised his friends that he would stay on campus. But he felt guilty doing nothing when he knew the demonstrators could be in danger. He describes how he changed his mind at the last moment, "in the split second when the marchers disappeared from my sight, I decided that I had to join them."[23] Even after he joined the marchers and became the organizer of the demonstration, he was still telling himself, "you have got to stop now",[24] but he realized that he couldn't.

Shen recalls that he often wondered whether he should withdraw from the movement. On April 25, he was elected as a member of the Preparatory Committee by representatives from twenty-nine departments of Beida. He organized the news centre and worked there. In another election held on May 2, he lost his position on

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[23]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.178.

[24]Ibid, p.180.

the Committee. Accepting Feng Congde's suggestion, Shen organized an independent dialogue group. He remained as a head of the dialogue group and continued his work in the news centre till the end of the movement.

Li and Shen's accounts indicate the complexity and richness of the elements which influenced them. We cannot discuss in detail the endless list of these influences within the limitations of this thesis. For example, who are the two girlfriends of Shen? Why and how did they deliver illegal Hong Kong publications to him? Who published these magazines? What were their contents? Why did Shen believe they were a more reliable source about China? While we cannot explore all these questions, we can compare the life experiences and personalities of Shen and Li, try to find any similarities they shared, and examine whether these similarities reflect any general trend among university students.

There are many differences between Li and Shen in terms of life experiences and personality. Shen had intimate ties with his family, and his father was a most significant influence when he was a child. No such influential person shaped Li's childhood. Li was discriminated against by others because of his family background when he was a little boy; Shen enjoyed a comparatively happy childhood. Li vividly describes the feelings of hatred and revenge that accumulated in his early years, while there was no such account in Shen's autobiography. Li resorted to violence in a few situations when he or some innocent persons were attacked, while Shen seemed not to have even experienced such situations. Li

describes himself as a decisive person, while Shen always feels his own hesitation at crucial moments. Shen was among the central leadership of the movement when it started, but he was voted out on May 2, while Li was originally in a marginalized position as a student movement leader from outside of Beijing, but he became a central leader after May 13 and played a crucial leading role at the final stage of the movement.

Though there were many differences between them, they shared many similarities. Both of them were born into intellectual families. Both had family members who had been associated with the tradition of student protest movement. Li's grandfather died for his protest, Shen's father was a Beida graduate and an enthusiastic audience of protesters in the 1976 Tiananmen Incident and the Democracy Wall Movement of 1979. Both Li and Shen had some personal ties with the working class and tried hard to understand Chinese society. Both of them liked to read works by masters and vividly describe their feelings when they read these works. As student activists, both of them considered themselves reformers and experienced disillusionment with the reform process. Being involved in student movements before the Tiananmen events, both of them were warned by university authorities. Both of them gained rich experiences and became skilled strategists of the student movement as they developed organizational and communicative skills. It was not difficult for them to discern the similarities between the political despotism of Mao's era and Deng's era. Both linked the absolute power of the CCP with other social problems. Both Li

Lu and Shen Tong were disgusted by the government's effort to control people's consciousness and intervene in private lives. Li and his friends expressed cynical attitudes toward the required political education class, while Shen and his fellow students resisted the military training imposed on them. These attitudes were also shared by many other students. Both Li and Shen had wide personal ties with fellow students. When they engaged in the newly revived student activism, they showed a strong will to assert and maintain individual dignity. Already in a senior middle school, Li and his friends had proposed an independent student congress. In the 1986 student movement, Shen suggested establishing an autonomous student organization. These similarities shared by Li and Shen reflected a general trend among university students who grew up during the legitimation crisis. They used different cultural elements to build their own identities based on their own life experiences. These distinct identities were forged in a context of concern for the human rights of individuals and a conviction regarding the need for greater individuality within Chinese society. Thus, the newly revived student activism can be seen as a manifestation of this sort of notions of self realization among students. People had different attitudes toward this activism. This new individualistic orientation contributed to the escalation of the social conflict in a new information environment. I will clarify this point in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND STUDENT ACTIVISM IN A NEW INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

From Summer 1988 to April 15, 1989

As student activism was developing on campuses, in the summer of 1988, Chinese society fell into social, political and economic crisis. The conflicting attitudes of different groups toward the student activism aggravated this crisis. Hard-liners wanted to repress the student activism; moderate leaders tended to tolerate student activism; liberal intellectuals encouraged students' critical attitudes toward the regime; and the students' criticisms resonated with the people's discontent. Scholars analyze this conflict of different attitudes from different perspectives, notably a political economy approach, a cultural studies approach and a power structure analysis approach. The official opinion of the Chinese government has been that the student activism was a conspiracy plotted by both international and domestic counterrevolutionary forces. In this chapter I will examine both the scholars' and the government's perspectives and explore how the escalation of the conflict between groups having different attitudes contributed to the development of the student movement of 1989.

The Political Economy Approach

Kathleen Hartford perceives two entangled dilemmas underlying the crisis of China's development in the reform era. Concerning the first dilemma, Hartford points out that in making the transition from a centrally planned command economy to a mixed-ownership economy responding to market signals, measures taken by the government to further relax central controls of prices "merely expand the opportunities - and incentives - for bureaucratic deals, speculation, and corruption and exacerbate the distortionary forces," as well as exacerbating the two-digit inflation.[1] Almost every author who explores the situation during the period of time from the summer of 1988 to the spring of 1989 emphasizes this problem.

The second dilemma Hartford points out is that by the late eighties it seemed that every measure of the economic development strategy was fatally undermining state legitimacy.[2] It seemed that

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[1]Kathleen Hartford, "The Political Economy Behind Beijing Spring", The Chinese People's Movement, ed., Tony Saich, (New York: M. E. Sharp Inc. 1990), p.76.

[2]Kathleen Hartford, "The Political Economy Behind Beijing Spring", The Chinese People's Movement, ed., Tony Saich, (New York: M. E. Sharp Inc. 1990) pp.50-82. She points out there is a rich literature on the first dilemma based mostly on East European reform experience; she provides a list of studies of this aspect. She also mentions two books on the second dilemma: Bruce F. Johnston and William C. Clark, Redesigning Rural Development: A Strategic Perspective, (Baltimore: Johns Hokins University Press, 1982); and Marilee Grindle, State and Countryside: Development policy and Agrian Politics in Lartin America, (Baltimore: Johns Hokins University Press, 1986). In an article published in 1992, Hartford analyses more elements contributing to the ferment of the 1989 movement, including not only development strategy, but also

the improvement in the economic performance of the early phase of the reform, up to 1984, produced only greater legitimacy. Therefore she asks, "how from its high point in 1984, could the party's legitimacy, authority, and prestige have fallen so far and so fast?"[3] It is because, she argues, the economic development strategy undermined the basis of the party's old social contract with old client groups, especially with urban bureaucrats and rural cadres above production-team level and with urban workers as a whole. The strategy threatened the social and economic survival of these old client groups.

I agree with Hartford's argument. However, it leaves unanswered another question worth exploring: how the already existing legitimation crisis contributed to the problems of legitimacy generated by the dilemmas in the reform era. As I have pointed out, people's resistance to the party's propaganda is an indication of a legitimation crisis that surfaced during the Cultural Revolution. The newly revived student activism in the reform era reinforced people's resistance. In order to understand why, we need to explore two aspects of the issue. One is how

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social change, cultural disintegration and political stagnation. See "Summer 1988-Spring 1989: the Ferment Before the 'turmoil'", China's Search for Democracy, ed., Suzanne Ogden, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 1992), pp.3-25.

[3]Ibid, p.77. There is an absence of analysis of the impacts of the reform on the army in Hartford's arguments. Chu-Yuan Cheng analyzes how the reform undermined the old social contract between the party-state and the army's officials and soldiers whose income and job security were threatened by the reform. See Chu-yuan Cheng, Behind the Tiananmen Massacre: Social, Political and Economic Ferment in China, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1990) pp.111-114.

student activists interacted with other social groups in a new information environment. The other is how the conflicting attitudes of different groups toward the student activists aggravated the crisis which emerged in the summer of 1988.

Like Hartford, seeking the cause of the crisis in mid 1988, Chu-yuan Cheng also explores the contradictions and consequences of the economic reform policy and the open-door policy. But unlike Hartford, Cheng approaches the crisis from different angles - social, economic, political, intellectual and military. He suggests that the interplay of these factors contributed to the eruption of the 1989 movement. This multi-elements approach avoids overemphasizing one factor. Cheng's analysis of the Chinese intellectual tradition is especially relevant to the theme of this thesis.

A Cultural Studies Approach: The Tradition of Student Protest

Discussing the origins of the 1989 movement, Cheng, like many other China specialists, focuses his analysis of the intellectual tradition on Chinese student protest movements. As Lin Yutang points out, China has a long history of student protest movements. Due to the lack of constitutional protection of individuals' right to protest, these movements usually ended in tragedy.[4] After briefly tracing the history from the first student protest movement

[4]Lin Yutang, A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China, (New York, Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968).

in 153 A.D. to the 1989 movement, Jonathan D. Spence raises a question: "Why was it the case that all these political protesters, of whatever age and in whatever period, risked their lives each time they spoke out?" Spence believes that an attempt to answer the question probes at the heart of the Chinese state. Spence emphasizes one aspect of the answer, that there was an "absence of any concept of 'loyal opposition' in Chinese political life."[5] Because of this absence, protesters' fate depended on whether rulers wanted to listen to them. If rulers did not wish to listen, they could arbitrarily accuse and repress any student protest movement.

Chu-yuan Chen describes the student protest tradition as rooted in a particular social relation between students and other social groups. According to him, this tradition is rooted in people's perception of student protest movements:

> traditionally, Chinese people have regarded scholars and university students as members of a social elite whose responsibility was the articulation of the grievances of the people and the formulation of better alternatives for society.[6]

Chen does not question this notion that students have a responsibility to articulate grievances and alternatives for the people, while Lee Feigon questions it. Historically students were a major source of state officials. The usual way for them to climb

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[5]Jonathan D. Spence, "Introduction", Cries for Democracy, ed., Han Minzhu, (New Jersey: Princeten University Press, 1990), p.xi-xxi.

[6]Chu-yuan Cheng, Behind the Tiananmen Massacre: Social, Political and Economic Ferment in China, (Colorado: Westview Press, Inc. 1990), p.68.

the ladders of the bureaucracy was through the civil service examination. To become state officials through the examination often became the major motivation for students to study. In the sense that this system was used to staff the state bureaucracy, students can be viewed as apprentice officials. In the People's Republic of China, Mao tried to change this exam system. It is arguable the degree to which this system has been changed. The fact is that university graduates have been the major source for state officials in the reform era. Pye argues that Chinese politics has been confined to a world of officials and apprentice officials.[7] To a large degree Pye's perspective appears valid.

Because of this characteristic of Chinese politics, Feigon points out that in China there has always been a significant gap between students and ordinary citizens. Feigon discusses student unrest during biannual or triannual civil service examinations to elaborate this point. According to him, at these times when large numbers of privileged members of the elites were suddenly brought together in urban areas, "unscrupulous examination candidates often took advantage of their numbers and their status to rob and extort local merchants, seduce women, and generally flout the authorities."[8] Under these circumstances, how could people really expect such students to articulate their grievances? Feigon describes a neglected aspect of the interaction between students

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[7]Lucian W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.13.

[8]Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.2.

and ordinary people as described by Cheng.

Both Feigon and Cheng recognize the important roles that prominent students played in the student protest movement. Cheng calls these prominent students prominent intellectuals and attributes the innovation of ideas to them:

> to a large extent, student demonstrations have reflected prominent intellectuals' ideas about the need for change in society and the state. By challenging the political establishment, leading writers, philosophers, and theoreticians, primarily in the social sciences, have catalysed student activism. These intellectuals, therefore, are the real masterminds behind the student unrest.[9]

Feigon points out that some prominent students turned to unorthodox ideas at times of political and social unrest.[10] In the contemporary history of China these unorthodox ideas included liberalism, nationalism, communism and anarchism. In some cases these unorthodox ideas were spread to other students and stimulated debates among them. Some students would apply these ideas to practice and appeal to people for support. Student movements were launched by such appeals. In this way new concepts would be redefined in the Chinese context through debates and practice. This kind of interaction between prominent students and other students was often the catalyst for social change. From this interaction, Feigon points out, a radical Chinese student culture began to form in the last half of the nineteenth century when China

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[9]Chu-yuan Cheng, Behind the Tiananmen Massacre Social, Political and Economic Ferment in China, (Colorado: Westview Press, Inc. 1990), p.68.

[10]Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.2.

fell into unrest. This radical culture is still a model for students today.[11]

From Spence's point of view, "the ideology of moral protest was integrated with Western strains of thought and constitutional government and democracy, and in some cases also linked to armed insurrection."[12] This integration of democratic ideas with the concept of moral protest has continued to the present. It has often confused people who have tried to determine to what extent student movements in China have been democratic. If we define democracy as the people's self-management and self-determination within a legal framework which protects the human rights of individuals, China lacks such a democratic tradition. In Spence's view, the traditional notion in China was that education was supposed to impart moral wisdom, therefore the educated had a responsibility to speak out against injustice and the abuse of power by government authorities.[13] This elitist notion of moral protest by the educated is incompatible with democratic notions of the rights of all citizens to protest injustice and abuse of delegated authority. However, one can argue that some Chinese student movements have articulated ideas about democracy and their vision of a democratic China and struggled to realise this aspiration through a series of protest movements. In this sense

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[11]Ibid, p.8.

[12]Jonathan D. Spence, "Introduction", Cries for Democracy, ed., Hun Minzhu, (New Jersey: Princeten University Press, 1990), p.xii.

[13]Ibid.

many Chinese student movements have been democratic. Nevertheless, Chinese students' notions of democracy have been influenced by the traditional concept of moral protest. Instead of decontextualizing the discussion of the degree to which the 1989 student movement was democratic, it is essential to analyze the continuity of the integration of commitment to democratic ideas and institutions with the traditional elitist notion of moral protest by the scholar elite.

Jefferey W. Wasserstrom points out the strong continuity of the dual nature of this radical student culture among major student movements in this century in terms of protest tactics, propaganda techniques and organizational strategy.[14] The student movements Wasserstrom studies include the May 4th Movement in 1919, the May 30 Movement in 1925, the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and the student protests of the 1980s.

Since the May 4th Movement was the first one among these most important student movements, Wasserstrom calls this radical student culture the May 4th tradition. He points out that people have attached many meanings to the symbolism of this tradition, the most notable one is the championship of science and democracy. The official view of the CCP is that the May 4th Movement led directly to the founding of the party. Thus 1919 is acclaimed the beginning of the "New Democratic Revolution" that eventually brought the party to power in 1949. To be inheritors of the May 4th tradition

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[14]Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, "Student Protests and Chinese Tradition", The Chinese People's Movement, ed. Tony Saich, (Armonk, New York: M.E.Sharpe, Inc., 1990), pp.3-8.

has been one of the party's most basic claims to legitimacy. This myth was challenged by the Democracy Wall protest of 1979 and successive student demonstrations when activists implied that participants in these movements were the only true inheritors of the May 4th tradition.[15]

Like Wasserstrom, Lee Feigon also identifies continuities between the Red Guard movement and the 1989 student movement in terms of the demand for the elimination of bureaucratic abuses and corruption - a central focus of both movements. Feigon considers that the organizational skills of small groups and sceptical attitudes toward authority forged during the Cultural Revolution were important elements of the 1989 movement. But neither he nor Wasserstrom explain how the continuities developed.[16]

The continuity of the radical student culture is not self-evident. The influences of the Cultural Revolution on the 1989 movement cannot be narrowly explained within the student protest tradition. An individual student was influenced by the Red Guard movement not only through what he or she saw, read and heard, but

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[15]Jeffery N. Wasserstrom, "Student Protests and Chinese Tradition", The Chinese People's Movement, ed. Tony Saich, (Armonk, New York: M.E.Sharpe, Inc., 1990), pp.13-15. Wasserstrom points out, it is a common misunderstanding among Western readers that the May 4th Movement was the only really significant one of its sort to take place before 1949. Actually beside the four movements mentioned above, there were many other student-led struggles that took place in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

[16]Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.44. Feigon seems to imply that students of 1989 movement inherited the theme through their direct learning. He says, "Chinese students of the 1980s looked back to the Cultural Revolution with a well-trained eye....They saw that..., they felt.." Ibid.

also through the limited choices he or she faced when he or she was involved in a student movement. The Red Guard movement and people's perception of it might have contributed to those choices. The "big democracy"[17] practice of the Red Guard movement to a large extent altered the meaning of democracy in the Chinese context. After the Red Guard movement, in order to redefine "democracy," students had to deal with the legacy of the Red Guard movement. But there was an absence of discussion about the Red Guard movement in particular and the student protest tradition in general among student activists. There seemed to be no consensus about the achievements and limitations of the Red Guard movement among students. Student activists focused their criticism on the party-state and its policies. They seldom turned a critical eye on themselves and the student protest tradition that preceded them.

"Conspiracy" Analysis

Among China specialists, compared with discussions about other factors contributing to the Tiananmen events, the discussion about the newly revived student activism, especially about the interaction between student activists and other social groups, is more contentious. One of the controversial issues China specialists have to deal with is the hard-liners' view that the interaction between student activists and other social groups was

[17]"Big democracy" refers to speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates and writing big-character posters under the absolute authority of Mao Zedong and his Thought.

conspiratorial.

The hard-line authorities of the party-state perceived the newly revived student activism as the outcome of a conspiracy plotted by a handful of people at home and abroad. Chen Xitong, the mayor of Beijing, states that people involved in this conspiracy brewed and premeditated the Tiananmen events for a long time. Chen blames these perceived conspirators for "creating public opinion, distorting facts and spreading rumours."[18]

Four kinds of evidence are presented by Chen. The first is news reporting regarding factionalist conflicts among top leaders. This kind of evidence includes news reports about Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang's meeting with Milton Friedman, an American Nobel Prize winner in economics, on September 18, 1988; some Hong Kong magazines' commentary advocating that Zhao Ziyang should replace Deng Xiaoping as China's supreme man; and reports about Yan Jiaqi's criticism of "nonprocedural change of power."[19] Chen

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[18]Chen Xitong, "Report to NPC on Quelling the Counter-Revolutionary Rebellion", Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict, ed., Michael Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan and Marc Lambert, (Amonk, New York: M.E.Sharp, Inc., 1990), p.57.

[19]Chen Xitong, "Report to NPC on Quelling the Counter-Revolutionary Rebellion", Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict, ed., Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan and Marc Lambert, (Amonk, New York: M.E.Sharp, Inc., 1990), pp.57-58. Yan Jiaqi, research fellow of the Institute of Political Science under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, argues that one of important lessons of the Cultural Revolution is the disastrous consequence of nonprocedural change of power. His argument reflects a common view among intellectuals whom I know. At the time when Yan made his argument there was an attempt to replace Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang initiated by several members of the old guard of the party. Although they did not hold official positions with the authority to make such a decision legitimately, due to their privilege and their personal ties, they actually could

implied that this kind of evidence indicates that Zhao, Yan and Hong Kong journalists were all involved in this assumed conspiracy.

The second kind of evidence presented by Chen is a series of seminars conducted by liberal intellectuals and students and news coverage about these activities. According to him, on January 28, 1989, Su Shaozhi, former director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Fang Lizhi and other prominent intellectuals organized a neo-enlightenment salon in Beijing, "which was attended by more than 100 people, among them Beijing-based American, French, and Italian correspondents as well as Chinese."[20] Fang was reported as having said that the gathering was "taking a completely critical attitude to the authority" and that after holding three sessions like this gathering, people would "take to the streets."[21] Another

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nevertheless exercise considerable influence for such a change. In Chen Xitong's view, because Yan had close ties with Zhao Ziyang's former secretary, Bao Tong, Yan's argument actually was a criticism of this attempt.

[20]Chen Xitong, "Report to NPC on Quelling the Counter-Revolutionary Rebellion", Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict, ed., Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan and Marc Lambert, (Amonk, New York: M.E.Sharp, Inc., 1990), p.58.

[21]Chen Xitong, "Report to NPC on Quelling the Counter-Revolutionary Rebellion", Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict, ed., Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan and Marc Lambert, (Amonk, New York: M.E.Sharp, Inc., 1990), p.58. Fang Lizhi was considered to be a representative of liberal intellectuals and was portrayed by Chen Xitong as a key figure of a tiny handful of people who "created turmoil." Like many intellectual protestors, it took about 30 years for Fang to turn himself from a communist to a bitter critic of communism. It took less than 10 years for some student leaders to go through the same process. Fang joined the party before 1956 and was expelled from the party in the 1957 Anti-Rightist Campaign because he advocated reform of China's education system. He continued to believe in

example Chen gives is the democratic salon presided over by Beijing University student leader, Wang Dan.[22] The salon later became the core of the student movement at its beginning stage. In Chen's view, conducting seminars, talking about "taking to the streets," and taking a completely critical attitude toward the authorities can be considered as counter-revolutionary activities.

The third kind of evidence Chen presents is the intellectuals' petition campaign and news reporting about it. One example he gives is Fang Lizhi's petition on January 6, 1989 to Deng Xiaoping suggesting the release of all political prisoners including Wei Jingsheng[23]. This petition was handed to foreign correspondents

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communism until he started to realize the deceptive nature of official propaganda. The turning point was the Cultural Revolution. As he recalled in an interview, "after the Cultural Revolution started, everything became much clearer. I realized that they (the party leaders) had in fact been deceiving people and that I should not believe them any more. You see, a sense of duty, responsibility, and loyalty to the country had been inculcated within me as a youth, but what I saw around me now made me feel that the leaders were not similarly concerned about the country and were not shouldering responsibility for the people." After 1978 when Fang was fully rehabilitated, he travelled abroad as a highly respected astrophysicist. He was promoted to the position of vice-president of the University of Science and Technology in 1984. The promotion did not change his outspoken character. Being expelled from the party again in 1987 did not silence him either. During this period of time, he emphasized again and again that he was motivated by a sense of social responsibility for the country and for the people to speak out, because the official propaganda did not tell the truth. And he advocated the May 4th tradition based on the same belief.

[22]Ibid., p.60.

[23]According to news reporting, Wei Jingsheng was finally released on September 14, 1993. People's Daily, Overseas Edition, September 15, 1993. p.1. In the spring of 1994 he was incarcerated once again.

at a press conference on February 16, 1989.[24]

The fourth kind of evidence presented by Chen Xitong is a vast number of big-and small-character posters on the campuses in March. Chen describes these posters as "attacking the Communist Party and the socialist system."[25] At that time, I was in Beijing. People who went to campuses to read posters told me that among a vast number of posters only very few posters and few sentences directly criticised the party's monopoly of power. But the Beijing government compiled a collection which only selected those few posters and sentences containing challenges to the party. After reading a copy of the collection, my impression at that time was that the Beijing government distorted the student protest movement by highly selective quotation and quotation out of context of those posters. This kind of practice of distortion brought back my memory of the Cultural Revolution and other political movements. In these political movements, in order to denounce some people as enemies, they were quoted out of context to produce evidence of their counter-revolutionary intentions.

By presenting these four kinds of evidence, Chen Xitong conveys some important messages. No news reporting about factionalist conflict in the party is allowed. No seminars and petitions which are not officially sanctioned are allowed. No big or small character posters are allowed. Finally, such activities and news reporting about them can be considered as counter-

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[24]Chen Xitong, pp.58-59.

[25]Ibid., pp.59-60.

revolutionary activities, which are severely punished crimes under the current Chinese criminal code.

Here the issue of the role of the news media is worth further exploring. How did the implementation of the open-door policy bring a new information environment to China? How did the coverage of ongoing events and the fear or the hope of being covered influence people's actions? Since the late 1970s, more and more Hong Kong and Western journalists have worked in China. These journalists have three favourite topics: the latest development of factionalist struggle among top leaders, debates over current policy issues and human rights abuses. Chinese news media are not allowed to report these issues. Sometimes intellectuals, especially well-known intellectuals, express their views on these issues through the Hong Kong or Western media. Student activism is also an attractive subject for Western journalists.

In this context, the "conspiracy" story reflects the hard-liners' antagonism toward the students' activism in this new information environment. This explanation was used to cover up the party-state's crisis of legitimacy. The roles of a few intellectual activists were exaggerated. Once again the hard-liners intended to make intellectuals scapegoats. This is why Chen Xitong did not mention ordinary people's response to the student activism.

As I have argued in the previous chapters, the recurrence of student activism should be understood in the context of the legitimation crisis. One of the most observable aspects of this

crisis was the ever growing expression of grievances among people. Prior to the confrontation of June 1989, people's anger had already become explosive, and student activism resonated with people's frustration over accumulated grievances. Many people considered the students' protests as evidence of the party's loss of its mandate from the people. This was what the party hard-liners feared most.

This fear was due to the weakness of the party's claim to a legitimate right to rule. The party claims to be the real inheritor of the May 4th tradition, therefore it claims its ideology is democratic, and popular sovereignty has been affirmed by all four constitutions enacted in the communist era. As Nathan points out, this rhetoric makes it possible for student and intellectual activists to push the party to put these ideas into practice and therefore to reform the system from within. For this reason, protestors considered themselves as remonstrators rather than an opposition prepared to exercise authority themselves.[26] They argued that since the party made many mistakes, including the Cultural Revolution, which the party itself also recognized as a disaster, they had a responsibility to initiate a movement to stop the party from making similar mistakes.

But hard-liners believed, like Chinese dynastic rulers did, that the only legitimate remonstration was that sanctioned by the party. Deng himself never allowed remonstration without sanction

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[26]Andrew J. Nathan, China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy, (New York: Columbia University, 1990), p.173.

from the party or from himself. This is why Deng crushed the Democracy Wall movement in the spring of 1978, why he still insists that the anti-rightist campaign was necessary, and why he requires the upholding of the four cardinal principles - Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought, the leadership of the CCP, the socialist road, and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

When intellectuals signed petitions and students organized salons, they considered their activities to be within the boundaries of the ideological requirements of the party. The party hard-liners and Deng disagreed. They believed that unless they put an end to the movement quickly, the party's legitimacy would be challenged, hostile public opinion would be created, and people would be mobilized to end the party's domination.

As Nathan points out, this fear of the hard-liners reflected a feudal mentality. After making a lengthy comparison of the situation in the former Soviet Union, Taiwan and China in 1989, Nathan points out that Deng could push political reform forward by taking smaller risks. He did not do so because he and other hard-liners viewed China as their own possession and could not imagine sharing power with any independent political forces.[27] Although Nathan's critique is based on analysis of the 1989 events, this mentality existed long before 1989. Therefore his critique can be applied to the situation before 1989. This mentality can also be observed in the factionalist struggle within the power structure of

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[27]Andrew J. Nathan, China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy, (New York: Columbia University, 1990), p.204.

the party.

Factionalism Analysis

In sharp contrast to Chen Xitong, Chen Yizi believes that between the end of 1988 and the spring of 1989 the party hard-liners plotted their own conspiracy. He suggests that the immediate goal of the conspiracy was Zhao Ziyang's downfall; and their ultimate goal was the abolition of the reform program.[28] Chen Yizi is the former director of the Economic Structural Reform Research Institute of the State Council, one of Zhao Ziyang's brain trusts. He focuses his analysis on the factionalist conflicts among the top leaders of the party.

Chen's viewpoint can be supported by two articles published in the Hong Kong magazine, Zhengming on March 1, 1989. The story in these articles about top leaders' power struggles sounds like a traditional Chinese family dispute. Deng Xiaoping is described as acting like an unchallengeable patriarch. Zhao, as a junior member of the ruling family, is presented as pretending to be obedient while challenging the authority of the patriarch subtly. According to these sources, several privileged old veterans of the party submitted letters to Deng and the Central Committee and went to talk with Deng aiming to overthrow Zhao Ziyang. Two Politburo

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[28]Chu-yuan Cheng, Behind the Tiananmen Massacre, (Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1990), p.7.

members, Li Peng and Yao Yilin joined the party veterans. Much of the evidence used to accuse Zhao in their appeal to Deng is the same as that presented by Chen Xitong to the People's Congress.[29] One aspect of the factionalist conflict among the party elite was Zhao's lenient attitude toward the protesters on the one side and the hard-liners' criticism of Zhao's tolerance on the other side.

Like Chen Yizi, seeking to explain the genesis of the Tiananmen events, Ruan Ming also believes there was a conspiracy plotted by hard-liners.[30] He assumes that the conspiracy could have been defeated if there had been an alliance between the democratic forces in society and the pro-reform forces within the party. He believes that only through the dynamic of active interaction between party and non-party democratic forces can China make democratic progress. He makes a comparison between the Democracy Wall movement and the 1989 movement to illustrate this point. According to his view, the Democracy Wall movement from 1977 autumn to 1978 spring played an important if not decisive role to defeat the "Two Whatevers" faction, the most conservative faction within the party at that time. He points out that the pro-reform forces within the party and the democratic forces in society

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[29]Lo Ping, "Three Attacks Aimed at Overthrowing Zhao", "Li Xiannian Urges Changing the General Secretary", Beijing Spring 1989, Confrontation and Conflict, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1990), pp.173-179, pp.180-188. This evidence, later confirmed by Chen Xitong, includes Su Shaozhi's speech published in the World Economic Herald (shijie jingji daobao), Yan Jiaqi's speech, the intellectuals' petitions, Fang Lizhi's liberal activities, and so forth.

[30]Liu Binyan with Ruan Ming and Xu Gang, "Tell the World" What Happened in China and Why, (New York: Random House, 1989) p.107.

were indirectly supporting each other. He argues that it was this dynamic "which unleashed the various forces that augmented the most progressive aspects of the reform that followed."[31] Compared with the Democracy Wall movement, he argues:

> The democratic movement in 1989 ultimately lacked this basic dynamic. The link between inner and outer remained broken. And this, as we shall see, provides a key into understanding its brutal ending. For China is still a Party-ruled state: there is no political power but the Communist Party. But the party is not monolithic; its conflicting currents are of enormous importance to any popular force developing in Chinese society. If democratic forces outside the Party cannot receive effective support from those within, they can hardly realize any political change.[32]

Ruan attaches such importance to the conflicting currents within the party that his analysis of the genesis of the Tiananmen

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[31].Liu Binyan with Ruan Ming and Xu Gang, "Tell the World" What Happened in China and Why, p.85.

[32]Ibid, p.85 Ruan's argument can be supported by Tony Saich's view about social movements in a state-socialist context. Saich points out, "the example of Solidarity in Poland in the early 1980s suggests that mass support for change in the absence of support within the top party leadership will not result in change." Talking about the strategy for a movement to ally with sections of the political elite who also desire change, Saich points out, "the chance of this strategy's success are greater when the 'revolutionary' generation has passed from the scene." "Of prime importance is the attitude of the supreme leader in any particular state-socialist system." See Tony Saich, "When Worlds Collide: The Beijing People's Movement of 1989", The Chinese People's Movement, ed, Tony Saich, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, Inc, 1990), pp. 28-29. Prior to the Tiananmen events, people identified at least eight members of the "revolutionary generation" who still remained active within the circle of the political elites. This certainly reduced the chance of success of the strategy. And China's supreme leader Deng Xiaoping, as Liu Binyan told Michael S. Duke, was basically opposed to democracy and the rule of law. See Micheal S. Duke, Iron House, (Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 1990) p.27.

events focuses on the factionalist struggles within the party during the period of time from 1978 to 1989. According to him, after the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in December 1978, three party factions emerged - one, headed by Hu Yaobang, that held that economic reform had to be combined with democratic change; one, headed by Zhao Ziyang, that advocated a combination of autocratic political rule and a free economy; and one, whose chief representative was Chen Yun, that advocated all-out Stalinism in both politics and economy. Deng Xiaoping exercised uneasy control of these factions and in many ways became the ultimate arbitrator among them.

According to Ruan's story, Hu's faction won when Deng swore to back it, but under the influence of the anti-reform faction, Hu lost Deng's support and was defeated step by step. After the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization in 1981 and 1982, the anti-reform faction took over all the major organs of theory and propaganda except the People's Daily headed by Hu Jiwei and the Association of Writers and Artists headed by Zhou Yang. In 1983, the Campaign to Combat Spiritual Pollution was launched, and Hu's faction was further marginalized. The stagnation of political reform "further aided the rise of an economy in which bureaucrats lived on the basis of a combination of corrupt power and a semicommodity economy."[33] From 1985 on, the circumstances for Hu's faction went from bad to worse. In 1985 reformers in different

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[33]Liu Binyan with Ruan Ming and Xu Gang, "Tell the World" What Happened in China and Why, p.93.

ranks were persecuted. The student movement burst out in late 1986, for which Hu Yaobang was blamed and removed in January 1987.

It seems to Ruan that the ouster of Hu marked the end of the era of reform.[34] After Hu's fall, Zhao's autocratic view of political reform made it impossible to set up any direct or indirect alliance between his faction and reform-minded intellectuals and student protesters. And the anti-reform faction certainly did not allow such an alliance to take shape. If Ruan's argument that only such an alliance can bring real democratic change to China is correct, then the tragedy of the 1989 movement has its roots in the ascendence of an autocratic notion of politics within the party around 1987.[35] Zhao's notion of politics was complex and should not be simplified as purely autocratic. However, because of his advocating "neo-authoritarianism" in 1988 and early 1989,[36] it is safe to say that autocratic notions have been at least an important part of his political consciousness. These notions, which had formed long before 1989, prevented him from sponsoring democratic change before the protest movement began. It appeared too late once the movement broke out.

Since there are too many unpredictable elements contributing to the outcome of factionalist conflict, it is always problematic

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[34]Ibid, p.98.

[35]Ruan has a different opinion on this point. He believes that the possibility of an alliance still existed during the 1989 movement. See pp.104-109.

[36]See Michel Oksenberg etc., ed., Beijing Spring, 1989, pp.123-126.

to put too much hope of democratic change on the factionalist struggle within the top leaders of the party.[37] The power game played by a handful of party elites was rather personalized in what Ruan Ming calls "byzantine court politics." These elites' personalities, personal ties, personal feelings of gratitude and resentment, hatred and revenge, fear of slander and desire for flattery have often played pivotal roles at crucial moments. It is not easy to judge the extent to which Hu Yaobang's openness, guilelessness and kindness contributed to his fall.[38] Neither is it easy to judge the extent to which Deng Xiaoping's ruthlessness and contempt for people's dignity made him the arbitrator of different factions.

In his investigation of the hidden context of the Tiananmen events, Salisbury examines the personalities and personal experiences of some of these elites. He was told that Deng was a man who had been in too much of a hurry, a man whose anger knew no

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[37]From this point of view, I doubt Nathan's prediction of faction-sponsored democratic change in the future of China. Nathan predicts that "given the existence of a strong social demand for liberalization, factionalism at least makes it probable that some groups within the regime will see sponsoring change in the direction of democracy as a way of improving their power position against other factions,...from now on democratic reform will always present itself as a possible tactic to factions seeking to improve their power position." See Andrew J. Nathan, China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy, (New York: Columbia University, 1990), p.207.

[38]For example, Hu told other people, "Right now, the CCP is more corrupt that the Kuomintang was when we made the revolution." (Nathan, China's Crisis, p.14) And one reason why Hu was ousted was that he was too candid about his views. See Liu Binyan, et al., "Tell the World" What Happened and Why, p.98.

limit if he knew that someone he trusted had turned against him; and Mao said that Deng had one great fault - subjectivism. And he was also told in the autumn of 1988 that Deng's health had deteriorated and that Deng was quite isolated, and no one around him dared to say "no" to him.[39] Considering the enormous personal power that Deng had, these characteristics of Deng's personality and health as well as the party elites's perception of them must have played a large part in the power game. These accounts might be considered as without "expert" credentials.[40] However they can still be valuable for indicating the fatal weakness of a political structure that needed to be fundamentally changed. Such could not be easy since a huge network with similar factionalism, personal ties, favouritism and resentment stretched from the top of this pyramid-like structure to each of the most important institutions of the country. The army was tightly controlled by Deng; the arbitrator was prepared to play the card of the army if and when he thought it was necessary.

Prior to the Tiananmen events some intellectuals and students demanded that the political reform be speeded up, while the party hard-liners already felt that the critics had gone too far in what they labelled as bourgeois liberalization. Hard-liners were ready

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[39]Harrisam E. Salisbury, Tiananmen Diary, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), pp.124-127.

[40]Judy Polumboum considers that Salisbury's Tiananmen Diary belongs to a category of books that "are displays of conceit or ignorance that one trusts would never have been published had China not been a 'sexy' and bankable topic after June 4." "Making Sense of June 4, 1989: Analysis of the Tiananmen Tragedy", The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No. 26, July 1991, p.179.

to crush the protest movement. Talking about the intellectuals' criticisms, Chen Yun, who was considered the head of the anti-reform faction by many people I knew, was quoted as saying: "A regime can be subverted because of the failure to do public opinion, ideological and theoretical work properly."[41] He warned that the party would face a new, critical life-and-death juncture when the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the PRC came in 1989.[42] Wang Dan also was quoted as saying in the spring of 1989, "things will happen this year."[43]

Each side assumed that they were shouldering the responsibility for upholding the people's interests, and the other side was not. Both sides expressed moral indignation regarding the actions of the other side. By doing so, protestors claimed the most important source of legitimacy, while hard-liners believed they could not afford to relinquish it. To a large extent, prior to the Tiananmen events, these mutually exclusive assumptions had already pressed both sides into a confrontation.[44] When Hu Yaobang died on April 15, the student movement surged into action.

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[41]Lo Ping, "Three Attacks Aimed at Overthrowing Zhao", Beijing Spring, 1989, p.174.

[42]Lo Ping, "Li Xiannian Urges Changing the General Secretary", Beijing Spring, 1989, p.182.

[43]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.152.

[44]Melanie Manion, "Introduction", Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict, the Basic Documents, ed. Michel Oksenberg, (New York: M.E.Sharp, Inc.1990) p.xii. She suggests that "the logic of the 1989 protests and massacre is one of players pressed into duel." It seemed to me this logic emerged much early than Manion suggests.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN AN EMERGING AUTONOMOUS POLITICAL FORCE AND THE REGIME: From Student Movement to People's Movement (April 15 - May 6)

As soon as the news of Hu's death reached students, campuses came alive. A nation-wide student movement surged into action. The movement can be understood as a manifestation of the developing autonomous thinking and behaviour of university students. From the very beginning the movement appeared as an autonomous political force. The different factions of the party had different attitudes toward the movement and tried to contain people's resistance by different means. The hard-liners threatened to take harsh measures to repress the movement. While the moderate faction adopted a conciliatory approach. Though students often adopted traditional forms of moral protest which had an elitist quality, participants of the movement from other social groups identified with the spirit behind the independent thinking and self organization of the students. People's support gave the student movement strength and turned it into a people's movement. This stage of the movement ended approximately on May 6. In this chapter I will examine the many facets of the escalation of the conflict during this stage.

The Funeral Ritual and the Symbolic Significance of Hu Yiaobang's Death

Hu Yaobang, the party general secretary from 1980 to 1987, died at 7:53 a.m. on April 15 1989.[1] Student activists used the funeral ritual for Hu's death to launch the protest movement. There were several reasons why they did so. First, they imitated what the protesters did in the April 5th movement of 1976 in memory of former premier Zhou Enlai. They knew for sure that their activities would cause people to recall that movement. Deng's regime had declared the April 5th movement to have been a people's revolutionary movement and denounced the Gang of Four as enemies of the people who had repressed the movement. If the current government hindered students from mourning Hu, people would perceive the government as being repressive and illegitimate like the Gang of Four. The second reason for students to initiate the movement when Hu died was that many people perceived Hu as a liberal leader. Many people knew that Hu had advocated political reform and done lots of work to rehabilitate wrongly denounced intellectuals. His sympathy for the student movement was one of the major reasons leading to his fall. Some students at that time still felt regret that they had not done anything to support Hu when he was ousted. They had hoped that one day Hu could return to his previous position and push the political reform forward. The

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[1] According to Shen Tong, Hu died at 7:45 a.m. See Shen's book Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.166.

funeral ritual was a legitimate opportunity for them to express their gratitude to Hu, their regret at not supporting him and their grief over losing him. The third reason why students initiated the movement when Hu died was that people perceived Hu as the only person among the top leaders of the party who was not corrupt. This perception rendered Hu considerable moral authority. To mourn Hu, therefore, reflected people's wish to have better leaders and a better government. Therefore student activists could make use of the symbolic significance of his death to address a wide range of social issues.

The Emergence of a Nation-Wide Beijing-Centred Autonomous Student Movement

On April 15, as soon as the news of the death of Hu Yaobang reached campuses, no matter whether through personal channels or the news media, the campuses came alive. A nation-wide Beijing-centred student movement was born. Like the Red Guards, the student protesters of 1989 also demanded elimination of bureaucratic abuses and corruption. But unlike the Red Guards, the students of 1989 did not follow the supreme leader of the party-state. They claimed to fight for collective well-being, at the same time they expressed a strong desire for autonomy and a strong will to assert and maintain individual dignity. These conspicuous features can be observed from the very beginning of the movement.

Students in 1989 initiated the movement spontaneously. Within

hours after Hu's death, before the official announcement about his death had been made, the news quickly spread among university students in Beijing. Shen Tong recalls that on the afternoon of April 15, he read a big-character poster about Hu's death in the Triangle of Beijing University. And he was told by Hong Kong journalists that the news had already appeared in Hong Kong newspapers. Soon after this, Shen and his friends also put posters up in the Triangle.[2] Similar things happened on other campuses in Beijing.

The Beijing student movement emerged as the centre of the movement for at least three reasons. First, because Beijing is the political, cultural and diplomatic centre of China, the student movement in Beijing was more influential, and to crush the movement in Beijing would have diplomatic costs for the country. Second, the political climate in Beijing was comparatively relaxed, as indicated in a popular saying at that time, "Beijing people dare to say anything." Third, there are many universities and students in Beijing. The close proximity of many campuses in Northeast Beijing makes horizontal communication much easier.

Horizontal communication also took place between universities in Beijing and universities in other areas of China. At the time when Hu died, Anne Gunn was living at Liaoning University, which is located in Shenyang City in Liaoning province of Northeast China. According to Gunn's account, a day after Hu's death was announced,

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[2]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.166.

half a dozen funeral wreaths appeared, and a small number of posters were put on the campus walls. She was told that some of these posters were copied from posters in Beijing and brought to Shenyang.[3] Another eye witness, Joseph W. Esherick, reported that almost immediately after Hu's death had been announced, students in Xian's three major universities began gathering in small groups and putting posters on campus walls.[4] At Nanjing University in Jiangsu province on the central east coast of China, as Li Lu recalls, a day after Hu's death when he and his friends went to put up elegiac couplets praising Hu and big-character posters on the campus, there were already many there, and more and more soon appeared. Li Lu recalls that as soon as the movement began, his friends kept contact with students in Beijing via telephone, fax and computer. Thus Li and his friends in Nanjing were informed about the latest developments in the movement in Beijing.[5] Given these and other reports from distant cities, Lee Feigon's assertion that after Hu's death was officially announced on the night of April 15, within hours, wall posters appeared on all the major campuses in China

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[3] Anne Guun, "'Tell the World About Us': The Student Movement in Shenyang, 1989", The Pro-Democracy Protests in China, ed., Jonathan Unger, (New York: M.E.Sharp, 1991), pp.64-65.

[4] Joseph W. Esherick, "Xi'an Spring", The Pro-Democracy Protests in China, ed., Jonathan Unger, (New York: M.E.Sharp, 1991), p.81. Xian is located in Shanxi province in midwest China.

[5] Li Lu, Moving the Mountain: My Life in China - From the Cultural Revolution to Tiananmen Square, (London: Macmillian, 1990), p.107.

appears credible.[6]

Though the 1989 student movement broke out almost simultaneously on all the major campuses in China, there was no one coordinating the movement at the beginning. Prior to the Tiananmen events, some groups of student activists were only loosely connected, such as Shen Tong's Olympic Institute and Wang Dan's Democracy Salon, while many other groups were isolated from each other. Little effort had been made to bring such groups scattered throughout the country together. When the movement started, there was no organization to coordinate students on different campuses in different cities. There was no call to protest from any central authority. No public news media were allowed to report these student activities. Communication between students on different campuses within and between cities was weak. Students in different parts of China made decisions mainly based on their own judgement of the situation. This raises the question as to how students at different places decided to initiate the movement at almost the same time.

Developing an Independent Political Force: Strategy and Reasoning

One explanation emphasizes the continuities between past and contemporary Chinese student protest movements. It can be observed

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[6]Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.126.

that students at different places all learned of this tradition through common experiences including their history courses, the annual official celebration of the May 4th Movement, their reading, small group discussions and earlier student movements in the 1980s in which they themselves participated. Thus these students shared some common knowledge of this tradition. They knew that 1989 was the seventieth anniversary of the May 4th Movement. They understood the May 4th Movement's advocacy of science and democracy. Many of them also believed that science and democracy were the key to resolution of current problems. They could feel that not only students' but also the general population's discontent had already accumulated to an explosive point in the spring of 1989. Therefore some of them had already prepared to initiate a student demonstration on May Fourth in 1989. They advanced the demonstration to the earlier date because of Hu's death.

Student activists interpreted the protest tradition based on their own life experiences. Though the regime wanted students to subordinate themselves to the authority of the party-state, by redefining the protest tradition, students built their individual and collective identities by differentiating themselves from what the regime wanted them to be. Their identities were, as I have argued in the second chapter, characterized by independent thinking and a sense of self-importance and self-centredness. These characteristics were manifested by previous student movements in the 1980s as well as the 1989 movement. Students intended to keep

the movement independent from the power struggle within the party. Thus, the movement developed into an independent political force. This point can be further elaborated by looking into students' strategies and reasoning.

In Niming's view, the strategies and reasoning of the Chinese student movement derive from a process of learning. He points out that from their experiences of earlier student movements in the 1980s, student activists knew that they faced two critical strategic problems. First, in order to avoid an immediate government crackdown on the student movement, students had to keep their movement independent from the factionalist struggle of the top leaders of the party and to avoid criticizing the political system as a whole. Second, in order to mobilize the mass of the urban population, they had to address ordinary people's concerns.[7]

As soon as the 1989 movement started, the majority of student participants immediately adopted these two strategies. They insisted on making decisions independently and refused to accept the regime's notion of the situation. They intended to show that their movement was an independent political force. In the meantime, students adopted the traditional protest forms of remonstration. There were very few students who consciously voiced opinion negating the political system as a whole. One student told me in the spring of 1989 that it was a proper time for the Chinese people to overthrow the communist regime. But, so far as I knew,

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[7] Frank Niming, "Learning How to Protest", The Chinese People's Movement: Perspective on Spring 1989, ed., Tony Saich, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1990), p.86.

before June 1989 there were very few students, if any, who would have agreed with him.

Through talking with students and reading their posters, my impression at that time was that an overwhelming majority of students wanted to reform the system from within. They believed that to maintain the autonomy of the student movement was the best way to reach this goal. They felt that the political reform process was too slow to match the economic reforms, and they wanted to speed up the political reform. They believed that by their actions they were inheriting and enhancing the May 4th tradition. They also believed that the leaders' obligation was to listen to them. Their notion of citizens' rights went beyond the moral obligations of an educated elite. They repeatedly told others that what they were doing was merely exercising their democratic rights protected by the current Chinese constitution. Therefore, they argued, their demonstrations were legal, and what they were doing was for the improvement of the ruling party rather than its destruction. They saw no reason for the party to repress their activities.[8]

The protestors' strategies and reasoning worked well for three

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[8] Today we can still clearly see this reasoning in most of the documents and posters selected and published by different authors. See Han Minzhu, ed., Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990). Michael Oksenberg, Lawrence R.Sullivan and Marc Lambert, ed., Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict, the Basic Documents, (New York: M.E.Sharp, 1990). Suzanne Ogden, Kathleen Hartford, Lawrence Sullivan and David Zweig, ed., China's Search for Democracy: the Student and the Mass Movement of 1989, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1992).

reasons. First, they convinced increasing numbers of student spectators and people of other social groups who were attracted to the movement and engaged themselves in the movement. Second, the strategies taken by students caused further conflicts within the top leadership of the party and caused the regime to first hesitate to respond to the student movement and then to send contradictory messages to the public. Third, the strategies worked well to increase the self confidence of the student activists themselves. They felt confident enough to take to the streets. This was why the general mood among the majority of students was relaxed, sometimes joyful, and sometimes full of cynicism. On April 18 in the evening, Niming was on Tiananmen Square, watching several thousand students gathering around the Monument to the People's Heroes. He felt "the atmosphere is more like a game of soccer during a warm summer evening than of excited political action."[9] The conflict and apparent paralysis among the party leadership and the engagement of increasing numbers of people in the movement in turn enhanced students' confidence in developing their organizations.

Development of Student Organizations and Demands

In the first several days of the 1989 movement, when a large number of students spontaneously sent elegiac couplets and memorial wreaths to Tiananmen Square and put big- and small-character

[9]Frank Niming, "Learning How to Protest", The Chinese People's Movement: Perspective on Spring 1989, ed., Tony Saich, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1990), p.86.

posters on campuses, activists emerged as organizers of these student activities. These activists had wide connections with a great number of other students; they knew the frustration and demands of students well. They also knew how far a great number of students had already deviated from the official ideology and that therefore the puppet official student unions could not play a leading role. From their experiences of earlier student movements, they had learned organizational skills, and they were clearly aware that the strength of a student movement largely relied on how well the movement was organized.

As soon as the movement broke out, these activists began to set up their own organizations to replace the official student unions. They organized democratic elections which took place on different campuses in Beijing on April 18. According to Lee Feigon's observations, at these elections individual students put themselves forward as potential leaders, then the list was reduced by a vote of all those who happened to have heard about the vote, which had been poorly communicated. Shen Tong provides a record of one of these elections at Beida on April 18. His account of electoral procedures is similar to that of Lee Feigon.[10] In Feigon's view, "these poorly advertised and attended forums showed that many of the students who were leading the fight for democracy had little understanding of how it worked in practice."[11]

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[10]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.172-175.

[11] Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.138.

Nan Lin argues that the criticism that student participants lacked an understanding of democracy is unfair. He points out that the conceptualization of democracy came years later after the European and North American revolutions. In his view, it is unfair to say that students in the 1989 movement had less of an understanding of democracy than the participants in the European and North American revolutions.[12]

In my view, three kinds of constraints should be taken into account in assessing these elections. The first was a time constraint. After the movement erupted, it was urgent for participants in the movement to produce a leadership to coordinate student activities. The second is the constraint on communication among student protesters. When the movement broke out, these protesters did not control any newspaper or broadcasting station. Their major means of communication were posters, rallies and speeches; to a large extent these limited means restricted the breadth and speed of communication among students. The third constraint was the fear that student leaders would be punished. It was common knowledge among students that when a student movement was over, only student leaders would be punished by the regime, and to be ordinary followers would be much safer. Therefore, at the beginning of the movement only a very few students were willing to put themselves forward as candidates. The fact that student elections at this stage were poorly advertised and attended can be

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[12]Nan Lin, The Struggle for Tiananmen: Anatomy of the 1989 Mass Movement, (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1992), p.154.

partially explained by these constraints.

On April 20, under the same kinds of constraints, student leaders from different universities of Beijing formed the first inter-college organization, the Beijing Students Autonomous Preparatory Federation (Beijing gaoxiao zizhi choubei lianhehui). On April 23, the Provisional Beijing Colleges Autonomous Association (BCAA, Beijing gaoxiao linshi zizhi lianhehui) was formed. On April 28 the Provisional Beijing Colleges Autonomous Association was renamed Beijing Colleges Autonomous Association (BCAA, Beijing gaoxiao zizhi lianhehui). On May 5, a representative Student Dialogue Delegation (xuesheng duihuatuan) was formed. Most members of the Delegation were self selected. On the surface, the Delegation kept its independence from the BCAA, while there was a tacit understanding between leaders of both organizations that they would inform and cooperate with each other.

In most cases leaders of the BCAA only played a liaison role. Each university, student group or individual kept their own autonomy and made the most important decisions for themselves. They decided when they would start boycotting classes or organizing demonstrations. Student organizations that developed during this period of time on different campuses also kept their autonomy and worked efficiently. For example, Shen Tong recalls that he and his fellow students set up a News Centre within one day. The centre included a radio station, a printing room, and a reception room. It had its own reporters, editors, announcers and technicians. To

a large extent, the News Centre worked independently.[13] At Qinghua university, students also set up their own radio stations. During this stage, autonomous student organizations replaced official student unions to function as responsible bodies of student representatives.

The 1989 student organizations resembled the Red Guard organizations in numerous ways. In both movements, student organizations developed rapidly; students adopted a form of democratic election as they understood it; and the new student organizations replaced official student unions.

But there were fundamental differences between these two movements. The Red Guards were deeply affected by the cult of Mao and they declared that their organizations submitted to Mao's faction. In no sense could they function as a check and balance against Mao's faction. In contrast to the Red Guards, student organizations of 1989 were fully autonomous. They consciously refused to attach themselves to any faction of the party. To a certain degree their organizations functioned as a check and balance against the central authorities.

These differences were reflected in the names of their organizations. The Red Guards usually took two kinds of names for their organizations. One type of name was "Safeguard the Headquarters of Mao" or "Fighting Team for Mao's Thought". The other was to take terms from Mao's teaching to name their

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[13]Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.187-190.

organizations, such as the "East Wind Fighting Brigade." Here "East Wind" comes from Mao's famous assertion that, "The East Wind Prevails over the West Wind." The "East Wind" refers to communism, while the "West Wind" refers to capitalism. Unlike the Red Guards, all of the students of 1989 called their organizations "autonomous associations."

Students' demands also reflected their intention of building a competitive politics. On April 18, students demanded open dialogue with the authorities about a seven-point petition: 1) reassessment of Hu's contribution, 2) calling off the campaigns against spiritual pollution and bourgeois liberalization, 3) increases in the educational budget and better treatment of intellectuals, 4) publication of the incomes of top leaders and their children, 5) permission for a private press, 6) the lifting of restrictions on media and fair reporting of current student demonstrations, 7) abolishing of the demonstration law passed by the People's Congress. From April 18 to April 22, students repeatedly presented this seven-point petition and requested a meeting with authorities. On April 24 the newly established Provisional Beijing Colleges Autonomous Association raised these demands again. After April 24, the demands regarding the reassessment of Hu and treatment of intellectuals disappeared. After the People's Daily April 26 editorial was published, students' demands shifted to open dialogue and reevaluation of the movement. The key to both demands was recognition of the autonomous student organizations.

The Regime's Intransigence and the Involvement of the Majority of Students

Faced with the rapid development of the student organizations, the party leaders tried to contain the students' protest. But the top leaders had different attitudes toward the movement. The hard-liners threatened to take harsh measures to repress the movement, while the moderate faction adopted a conciliatory approach. The split overlapped the pre-existing struggle over who would succeed the aging Deng. Two factions within the regime repeatedly sent contradictory messages to the students and the public. From April 15 to May 6 there were three turning points of the movement that brought increasing numbers of people into the movement. All three turning points were related to the regime's response to the movement. Before April 22, the regime refused to talk with students about political reform. The stonewalling of the regime enraged a majority of students, and they joined the movement. On April 26, a People's Daily editorial finally conveyed the hard-liners response denouncing "a handful of people" creating turmoil. This message enraged a majority of Beijing citizens, and they began to participate in the movement. On May 4, Zhao Ziyang's conciliatory speech marked a change in the tone of official propaganda, and the movement declined.

Before the movement started, many students were apolitical. But in the face of the rapid development of the movement, a

majority of them changed these attitudes of indifference some time between April 15 to April 22. On April 17, about four thousand students marched to Tiananmen Square and submitted a petition to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, requesting open dialogue with the authorities. The next day, thousands of students demonstrated in front of the Great Hall of the People, presenting a seven-point petition. They demanded to talk with high-ranking officials of the National People's Congress, but there was no response. There were increasing numbers of memorial wreaths placed by various individuals and organizations around the Memorial to the People's Heroes on the Square. The number of people who came to Tiananmen Square increased each day. The atmosphere at the Square reminded people of the April 5 movement of 1976. The students were encouraged by the people's response. It appeared that they had the backing of these crowds as well as of bystanders who also brought wreaths to the square.

On the morning of April 19, about five thousand students marched to Xinhuamen (New China Gate) in front of Zhongnanhai, the headquarters and residential compound of the top leaders of the party, to present a petition. Some Beijing citizens joined them. A low-ranking official took their petition. About two thousand protesters remained at the gate waiting for a response. A violent encounter occurred between protesters and about two thousand riot police. The news about the "April 19 Tragedy" rapidly spread in Beijing. Students viewed the violence as analogous to the May 4th Tragedy of 1919 in which the warlord government beat and arrested

a score of student protesters. On April 20, a second violent encounter occurred between protesters and police in the front of Zhongnanhai. Like student protesters in 1919, student participants in the 1989 movement also began boycotting classes around April 20.

On April 20, the Beijing Municipal Government announced that Tiananmen Square would be closed to the public on April 22 during the funeral service for Hu Yaobang. At midnight of April 21, about fifty thousand students marched to Tiananmen Square and spent the night there. This action preempted the government's plan to close the Square on April 22. On April 22 while the memorial ceremony was being held for Hu in the Great Hall of the People, a crowd of about two hundred thousand demonstrated outside, including several hundred students from Shanghai and two hundred from Nankai University in Tianjin. In the early afternoon, three student representatives knelt with arms outstretched holding a petition for more than half an hour, requesting a meeting with Premier Li Peng. A low-ranking official came out to take the petition. As the news of this incident spread, the majority of students were enraged by the intransigence of the government. Shen recalls what happened on April 22, "I noticed that many students who had never cared about politics and protest before were now raising their fists in the air. That day was one of the turning points of the movement."[14]

After the funeral ceremony, students continued to demonstrate and to boycott classes. They went to the streets to explain the

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[14] Shen Tong, Almost A Revolution, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p.187.

goals of the movement to the people. Beijing citizens showed increasing sympathy and support for the students. Bystanders cheered the demonstrators, supplied food and drink and donated money for the movement. In order to break through censorship of news about the movement, student representatives went to other large cities to describe and explain the movement.

In the face of the rapid development of the movement, the regime appeared to be incapable of dealing with the movement. Police appeared unable or unwilling to block the streets and to stop unarmed student demonstrators. Police also failed to clear away the crowds from Tiananmen Square by daybreak on April 22 as the Beijing government had ordered. The news media had been tightly controlled by the party, and yet, the Science and Technology Daily (keji ribao) in Beijing and the World Economic Herald (shijie jingji daobao) in Shanghai defied the ban and broke the story of the growing protest in Beijing.[15]

The regime had not anticipated that the student movement could develop to such a large scale within such a short period of time with such well-organized and determined demonstrations. The police were not sufficiently equipped and trained to deal with such a movement. Some events, unrelated to the movement, also restricted the government's action. The annual meeting of the Asian Bank opened in Beijing on May 4. Because at this meeting for the first time since 1949, an official Taiwan delegation would be present,

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[15]Seth Faison, "The Changing Role of the Chinese Media." The Chinese People's Movement: Perspective on Spring 1989, ed., Tony Saich, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1990), pp.145-155.

many foreign journalists were in Beijing for this event. To crush the movement in front of the Taiwan delegation and the cameras of foreign journalists would make the reunification of China and Taiwan more difficult. It could only be done at great diplomatic cost to the country.

The factionalist conflicts among the party's top leaders created a more significant constraint on the government's ability to take action. Before the movement, the Zhao Ziyang faction had already gradually lost power in the successional struggle within the party. At the beginning of the movement, many leaders urged Zhao to call an emergency meeting of the Party Politburo to discuss the situation and the ways to deal with it. But Zhao did not do so. Many people believed that Zhao's strategy was to avoid taking responsibility for putting down the movement. He kicked the ball to Li Peng, his major rival, waiting for a chance to regain his power if Li was tripped by the movement. On April 23, Zhao left for North Korea to pay a state visit. While Zhao was away, Li Peng was temporarily in charge of the daily work of the Politburo. Backed by other hard-liners, Li promptly took actions to counter the movement.

The People's Daily April 26 Editorial and People's Response

From the very beginning of the movement, Li Peng was considered by students as a representative of the "princes' party," the offspring of high-ranking officials of the party-state who took

advantage of their parents' position to grasp power. Li was said to be the adopted son of former premier Zhou Enlai after Li's father, an early communist, died in the 1920s. When students requested to have dialogue with him, he refused. Li was portrayed in rumours as a leader who was incompetent and politically conservative. Li soon became the major target of the movement. His political survival was tied to putting down the movement. As soon as he was in charge of the Politburo when Zhao Ziyang left China to visit North Korea, he actively took action to crush the movement. On the evening of April 24, Li presided over an emergency meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. The meeting determined that the movement was opposed to the party and to socialism. Next morning, an expanded meeting of the Politburo was held. Deng Xiaoping joined this meeting and agreed with the assessment. He ordered the prompt suppression of the movement by any means. On April 26, a People's Daily editorial based on Deng's speech of the day before was drafted. It referred to the movement as "turmoil stirred up by a handful of people whose purpose was to overthrow the party and socialism." The editorial blamed these people without providing any evidence.

The editorial was broadcast before it was published. While it was being broadcast, editors of the People's Daily received irate phone calls from listeners. Enraged audiences called the People's Daily a fascist newspaper, and its chief editor Goebbels, the chief propagandist of fascist Germany during the Second World War. Wherever I went I could hear similar comments. People felt enraged

by the language and the logic of the editorial. It brought back people's memory of the persecution of innocent people through propaganda during the Cultural Revolution.

People's reaction to the People's Daily April 26 editorial indicates how the conceptions of the Cultural Revolution influenced their perception of the 1989 movement. People generally perceived the Cultural Revolution as a turmoil. They related the turmoil with social disaster. They also agreed that political campaigns like the Cultural Revolution must not be repeated. This consensus reflects a profound fear of disorder among Chinese citizens. From the very beginning of the movement, both the protestors and the hard-liners tried to associate the other side with the wrongdoing of the Cultural Revolution and appealed for people's judgement. The party hard-liners argued that unless they took decisive measures to control the movement, its uncontrolled spontaneity would disturb stability and social order. Students rebutted that historically it was the party who again and again created the turmoil. They took the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and the Cultural Revolution as examples and argued that now it was the regime's intransigent attitude toward students' demands that provoked the further development of the movement. Students emphasized that the 1989 movement was a grassroots movement, while the Red Guard movement was initiated and manipulated from above. They also pointed out that the movement of 1989 was peaceful and reasonable, while the Red Guard movement was violent.

The People's Daily April 26 editorial accused a handful of

people of manipulating the students. Enraged students emphasized that it was they themselves who made the decision to join the movement, not others. To put up posters, to demonstrate, to request dialogue with the authorities were their constitutional rights. Only when people could exercise their constitutional rights, could the country achieve stability. Thus it was those who violated these constitutional rights who were creating turmoil.

A majority of Beijing urban citizens also clearly associated the hard-liners with the turmoil. There were at least two reasons why they did so. First, they were only too aware that stating that "a small number of people stir up turmoil aiming to overthrow the party and socialism" was reiterating a threatening discourse used repeatedly in the Cultural Revolution. Each time the authorities used this language to rationalize the persecution of targeted groups of people. Whenever there was social unrest, the party always tried to find scapegoats whom the party referred to as "a small number of people." Second, students in 1989 did not persecute people, while the Red Guards did. The arguments presented by the students in 1989 also convinced many people that the students sincerely wanted to help the party, that they were different from the fanatical Red Guards chanting that "to rebel is justified." Because of this collective memory, people did not believe the editorial's accusation that there was "a small number of people" stirring up turmoil aiming to overthrow the party and socialism."

In this context, increasing numbers of people reacted with

anger and fear to the editorial and identified themselves as in opposition to those who would bring back the terror of the Cultural Revolution era. They also identified themselves with the new values and ideals upheld by the student movement: independent thinking, peaceful protest and constitutional protection of individual rights. This shift in people's consciousness brought new strength to the movement and eventually turned it into a people's movement.

The autonomous student association reacted to the editorial by calling for a protest march the next morning. On April 27, Beijing citizens played an important, if not a decisive role, in breaking through police blockades. With the assistance of Beijing citizens, about two hundred thousand students marched to Tiananmen Square. The total crowd was estimated as one million strong. In the following days, students demanded dialogue with the government on an equal basis and reassessment of their movement. On May 1, students sent petitions to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the State Council and the Party's Central Committee. They announced that unless a direct dialogue regarding the student demands commenced within three days, they would mount a massive demonstration on May 4. On May 3, a government spokesman refused students' demands for dialogue. On May 4, a massive demonstration took place on Changan Avenue and in Tiananmen Square. The estimated number of participants and bystanders was more than half a million. For the first time since 1949 a group of several hundred journalists joined the students.

On the same day, Zhao Ziyang, who had returned from North Korea on April 30, addressed the meeting of the Asian Bank, sending a conciliatory message to protestors. Zhao referred to the movement as supporting the party and the constitution and socialism. Although he also mentioned that a tiny number of people intended to use the movement against the system, he did not say the movement was stirred up by these people. In this way his speech already fundamentally differed from the assessment of the movement in the April 26 People's Daily editorial.

Zhao's speech was welcomed by many students. A majority of students gradually returned to classes. Only Beijing University and Beijing Normal University students continued boycotting classes. Some members of the Student Autonomous Federation also believed that the movement had achieved great success and that it was time for students to return to class to rethink the movement and to consolidate the student organizations. But other student leaders did not think so. They doubted the government's promise to have dialogue with students and not to punish student leaders if the students retreated.

Different sides in the conflict were waiting. On the regime's side, there was no response from Deng about Zhao's speech; it would be too risky for cadres to take action without knowing Deng's attitude. Cadres of different ranks were waiting for Deng's evaluation of the situation. There was a temporary power balance within the top leaders of the party. Students were waiting for dialogue with the party-state leaders in order to reach a clearer

assessment of the movement. The student movement became quiet from May 6 to May 11.

CHAPTER 5

POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTY MONOPOLY: The Movement From May 7 to June 4

Zhao's May 4 speech created a relaxed atmosphere. Some students believed that it was time to call an end to the movement. Some insisted that the movement should continue. Conflict developed among the students about what to do next. As a measure to protest the government's delay in opening dialogue and also as a way out of their own internal conflict, the students started a hunger strike on May 13. The hunger strike made use of the traditional notion that "a case involving human life is to be treated with the utmost care." (renming guantian) The people responded to the students' hunger strike by pouring out their accumulated frustration and anger. Millions of Beijing citizens took to the streets. In the meantime the hard-liners won the power struggle in the Politburo. On May 19, martial law was imposed on major areas of Beijing. The army was ordered to move into the city. But it was stopped by the resistance of Beijing's citizens. In the confrontation the hard-liners insisted on the party's monopoly of authority to govern society, while protesters intended to share power. The confrontation ended with the tragedy of the massacre of June 3-4.

Spontaneity and Fragmentation of the Movement

The student movement was more fragmented than most observers have described. The effective leadership of Beijing students, especially the students of Beijing University (Beida) and a few student leaders, was overestimated. For example, Nan Lin was told that "the Beida campus is beyond the usual roles and norms; events and statements not tolerated anywhere else in Beijing or China can usually occur safely on the Beida campus..."[1] Han Minzhu believes that "the most active and vocal students were those at Beijing University, China's most prestigious university".[2] Tony Saich also highlights the active role played by Beida students in the first several days of the movement.[3]

In contrast to the authors who emphasize the role of Beida students, Lee Feigon highlights the leading role played by a small group of graduate students in the Department of Chinese Party History at the People's University. Feigon believes that the tactics provided by this group of students preserved the momentum of the movement. He gives three examples. At three a.m. on April 16, these students placed the first wreath mourning the death of Hu

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[1]Nan Lin, The Struggle for Tiananmen: Anatomy of the 1989 Mass Movement, (Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 1992), p.124.

[2]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.9.

[3]Tony Saich, "When Worlds Collide: The Beijing People's Movement of 1989", The Chinese People' Movement, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, Inc., 1990), p.33, p.35.

Yaobang on the Monument to the Heroes of the Revolution in Tiananmen Square.[4] On April 17, these students first started boycotting classes, and several days later the idea had spread to nearby Beida; the media usually credited the initiative in the class boycott to Beida students. On April 21, the same People's University graduate students suggested the strategy of entering Tiananmen Square in the middle of the night in order to prevent the police from stopping students from being present during the next day's memorial service for Hu. This strategy effectively cut off the government's planned preemptive action.[5] According to Lee Feigon, this group of students took action based on a deep understanding of Chinese history and politics. They had connections with the highest leadership of the party-state. They also understood well the current political struggle within the party and current reform and development in China.[6] These students seemed to be better informed than the student leaders whom the Western media championed as the movement's heroes.

Feigon's account leads to an interesting question as to why these students, who he believes played a leading role in the movement, were not highlighted by the news media? One reason, as Feigon observes, is that this group of students refused to take the

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[4]Han Minzhu, however, recalls that the first mourning wreath appeared on the Square at 4:30 pm of April 15. See Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.6.

[5]Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.147, p.145.

[6]Ibid, pp.127-131.

limelight, and many other student leaders were more shrill and fit to the foreign press's need to make them out to be "Western democrats."[7]

A more important reason is the paradox that the real leadership was often not in the position of greatest visibility. This was why during the struggle for Tiananmen student leaders were often led rather than leading.[8] Many individual students and groups played the leading role in their own departments or universities. Wang Dan's Democracy Salon and Shen Tong's Olympic Institute were two well-known examples. Different authors observe the movement from different angles. From one angle they may give Beida students credit for their initiation. From another angle, they may emphasize the leading role of other students. Lee Feigon happened to have a chance to observe the student movement in depth in the Department of Party History at People's University, and he found the small group of graduate students playing the leading role. It was my impression that there were many similar groups or individuals playing similar roles in different departments and universities. All these groups and individuals actively initiated activities. The whole movement was a convergence of many such activities initiated by many groups and individuals.

This spontaneity in the movement can be explained in the following way. Students usually obtain a sense of belonging from

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[7]Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1990), p.130.

[8]Nan Lin, The Struggle for Tiananmen: Anatomy of the 1989 Mass Movement, (Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 1992), p.168.

their connections and personal ties. Before the movement, individual students usually built such connections within their own departments or universities. In most cases these connections were informal ones. Communication between departments and universities was weak. After the autonomous associations formed and well-known student leaders emerged in the movement, previous connections and personal ties still existed. Students still relied on previous connections to maintain their sense of belonging. In these cases, opinion leaders in their own department or universities still played leading roles in opinion-forming processes. Outside of their own circles, these leading groups and individuals were still ill-connected and did not communicate well with each other. The attraction of student leaders might be enhanced by the news media, but this might not reduce the influence of opinion leaders in their own circles. When the opinion of student leaders conflicted with the opinion of the majority of people within a circle, people in that circle usually followed the latter, unless they wanted to detach themselves from their previous connections. It would be difficult for most Chinese people to do so. Thus, each group and individual could take the lead in one way or another. Since almost all of these individuals and groups acknowledged the language, symbolism and rituals of the Chinese student movement, many of these groups and individuals often initiated similar actions, such as laying mourning wreaths for Hu, class strikes and demonstrations, at similar times. Thus the movement became a convergence of many spontaneous actions.

After May 4, the fragmentation of the student movement became apparent. Student groups held different opinions regarding what should be done next, there was little common ground between them.[9] Student leaders lacked authority to pull the movement together. Students started the hunger strike not only as a measure to protest the government's delay in opening dialogue with students but also as a way out of this internal conflict among themselves. By doing so the hunger strikers tried to build a new consensus. In this sense the hunger strike was an outcome of tension between factionalism and consensus among students. This tension is recognized by Pye as being "in large measure the most basic dynamic of Chinese politics."[10] This tension had developed since the hunger strike started, though on the surface the movement developed into a new stage based on a new consensus. The process of building this new consensus fully reflected the strength of the combination of student self-defined autonomy and the symbolism of the Chinese student protest movement.

The Strength of the Combination of Patriotic Symbolism and Student Self-defined Autonomy

The hunger strike was stimulated by the combination of several

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[9]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.197.

[10]Lucian W. Pye, The Dynamics of Chinese Politics, (Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, Publisher, 1981), p.xi.

factors: the frustration resulting from the fragmentation of the student movement, the indignation toward the government's delaying of the opening dialogue with students, the fear that the government would settle scores with student leaders if the movement ended without clear negation of the April 26 editorial, the hope that the hunger strike as an ultimately moral test of the leadership would finally expose the real face of the government, and the awareness that Gorbachev's visit would bring world media attention to China.

Two significant themes were played out by the hunger strikers. First, they announced that they had rights to negotiate with the government on an equal basis, and they so cherished these rights that they would be willing to sacrifice their lives in order to obtain them. Second, they stated that they took the action not only for the well-being of the country and the people, or in other words for the well-being of the collectivity, but also for their own dignity. They used traditional language and the symbolism of heroism and tragedy to express these themes.

The images of the hunger strike revolved around the Chinese traditional notions of heroism and tragedy; the hunger strikers appeared to be honest, noble, clear-minded, peaceful and weak. They were in a highly moral position in appealing to the regime and the people. The regime was portrayed by the protesters as being corrupt, confused and powerful, and on the way to total moral decay. Thus, the meaning of the hunger strike was to show the illegitimacy of the party's monopoly of power on the one hand and to justify students' demand for autonomy on the other. This point

can be further clarified by an analysis of Chai Ling's declaration of the hunger strike.

Initiating the hunger strike, Chai Ling, the general secretary of the Provisional Beijing College Autonomous Association, (BCAA) emerged as the most important leader of the hunger strike. Initially it was some graduate students of Beida who proposed that a hunger strike should start on May 15, the day of Gorbachev's arrival in Beijing. This proposal was supported by some representatives of the BCAA like Wang Dan, Wuer Kaixi and Xun Yan. Posters calling for volunteers appeared on many campuses of Beijing universities on May 12. On May 13, Chai's declaration of the hunger strike was aired at Beida, announcing that the strike would start that afternoon at Tiananmen Square. Both Shen Tong and Li Lu recalled that they were deeply moved and enlightened by Chai's speech. More than a thousand tapes of Chai's speech were made.

Chai's statement was, perhaps, the most important and sophisticated document of the hunger strike. Therefore the statement is worth lengthy analysis. In her statement, Chai used plain language to convey sophisticated ideas and combined Chinese traditional patriotism with students' notion of self-defined individuality. The strength of her appeal came not only from her ability to use language but also from the stimulating effect resulting from this combination.

Chai started her appeal with an expression of a feeling of sadness:

> In this bright, sunny month of May, we are hunger

striking. In this moment of most beautiful and happy youth, we must firmly leave all of life's happiness behind us. We do this so unwillingly, ever so unhappily![11]

The underlying assumption of Chai's statement was that individuals had their rights to pursue happiness, that this right could not be deprived by others, and that individual happiness could not be reduced to the well-being of the collectivity. When individuals decided to sacrifice themselves, they were unwilling and unhappy to do so. They felt so because they cherished their own invaluable lives.

In contrast to the sadness of Chai's declaration, my impression is that when the Red Guards stated that they would fight to the death, their statements were filled with brave and proud words. They always declared that they were so willing and so happy to sacrifice themselves for the Great Leader, the country or the people, or in other words, for the well-being of the collectivity. The Red Guards assumed that individuals should be entirely subordinate to the collectivity, no matter what kind of sacrifice an individual might make.

Though the underlying assumption of Chai's declaration is fundamentally different from that of the Red Guards, like the Red Guards, Chai also showed that she was worried about the deterioration of the nation's well-being and felt that she had to make this sacrifice to fulfil her patriotic duties. Thus, after

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[11]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.200.

describing the deterioration of the situation in China, Chai continued her appeal:

> This country is our country,
> Its people are our people,
> The government is our government,
> If we do not cry out, who will?
> If we do not act, who will?[12]

The above sentences were quoted from Mao Zedong's writing in the May Fourth movement, but with a change. Mao's original writing did not say "the government is our government." Even with this change, the patriotic tone remains the same. Mao's writing reflected what Pye calls the "Middle Kingdom complex": China used to have one of the greatest civilizations in world history, but today China is not what it ought to be, therefore intellectuals must cry and act to regain its greatness.[13] This mentality prevailed among Chinese intellectuals, including the Red Guard generation. We can hear a similar Chinese "patriotic tone" in Chai's statement.

Chai portrayed patriotic images of hunger strikers and their frustration: they put too-weighty death on their soft and tender shoulders; they had the purest feeling of patriotism; they were simple and innocent; and they pursued truth. But the government labelled the student movement as "turmoil," claimed that students

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[12]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.200.

[13]Lucian W. Pye, The Spirit of Chinese Politics, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.51.

had "ulterior motives," and had been "exploited by a small handful of people." The army and police even maliciously beat students. The student representatives' petition on their knees had been ignored, and students' demands for a dialogue of equals had been put off repeatedly. Student leaders faced danger. Chai links these common experiences of students with democracy and the notion of heroism and tragedy:

> What are we to do?
> Democracy is the highest aspiration of human existence; freedom is the innate right of all human beings. But they require that we exchange our young lives for them. How can the Chinese people be proud of this? We have gone on a hunger strike because we do not know what else we can do; but in this we will continue.
> In the spirit of sacrificing our lives, we fight for life. But we are children, we are still children! Mother China, look earnestly upon your sons and daughters; as hunger mercilessly destroys their youth, as death closes in on them, can you remain indifferent?
> We do not want to die; we want to live, to live fully, 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 go 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.[14]

Here democracy and freedom are not empty concepts. They are linked with the past, present and future, with the experiences of people, especially students, on one hand, and the sense of traditional heroism and tragedy on the other. The sense of heroism gave moral authority to the student movement in general and the hunger strikers in particular. But the moralization here differs

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[14]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.201.

from the suicidal action taken by Boyi and Shuqi, and also differs from Qu Yuan's suicide. Boyi and Shuqi were willing to die in demonstrating their loyalty to the past dynasty. Qu Yuan was willing to die for His Majesty.[15] In both cases, the heroes were well aware of the irreversible tragic end of their dynasties to whom they were loyal. They were in too much despair to go on living. Their individuality was almost entirely subordinated to the symbolism of their loyalty. In this sense, the heroism of the Red Guards inherited the core values of the traditional protest movement. But in Chai's statement, she repeatedly declares "we fight for life," "we want to live, to live fully." She expresses the hope of the hunger strikers, which was not merely moralistic: "we have only one hope, which is simply that we may live better." Later in an interview she put this hope in a more clear way: "we were striving for a share of power," she said, and she emphasized that in the share of power for which students were working so hard there was also a share for "every worker, Beijing resident,

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[15]Boyi and Shuqi lived in the late Shang dynasty (1711 B.C. - 1066 B.C.). When a new dynasty, Zhou (1066 B.C. - 256 B.C.), replaced Shang, both of them refused to eat food produced in the new dynasty and starved to death. They were considered to represent the highest morality of Chinese literati and officialdom. Pye suggests that the idea of the hunger strike can be traced back to Boyi and Shuqi. See Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture: The Escalation of Confrontation", The Broken Mirror: China After Tiananmen, ed, George Hicks, (Chicago and London: St. James Press, 1990), p.173. Qu Yuan was a minister of the state of Chu in the period of Warring States (475 B.C. - 221 B.C.). He committed suicide by jumping into the Guluo river when the emperor was captured by Qin. Qu Yuan was also considered to represent the highest morality of Chinese literati and officialdom. Nathan suggests that the hunger strike can be traced to Qu Yuan's suicide.

intellectual, even the plain clothesmen and soldiers."[16] Chai employed the language of the traditional protest movement, but the core values manifested by her speech were fundamentally different from those of traditional protesters.

Facing the military and police forces that the party controlled and the fragmentation of the student movement, Chai must have sensed how hard it would be for the students to realize their hope of gaining a share of power, so she declared, "democracy is not the affair of a few individuals, and the course of democracy absolutely cannot be accomplished by a single generation." The sadness of the tone of the declaration was real and moving; it was also in accordance with traditional tactics, as embodied in the saying "an army burning with righteous indignation is bound to win." Thus, Chai quoted the Chinese maxim, "he will be gone, his words good and wise; the horse will be gone, its neighs sorrowful."

Chai was a 23-year-old graduate student. She used to wish to have a peaceful life and to be surrounded with children and pets. The strength of her declaration transformed her into a charismatic leader of the movement. The declaration touched Chinese patriotism, heroism and notions of tragedy - the deepest layer of Chinese political culture. It redefined these concepts in a new situation and combined them with concepts of democracy and freedom as she understood them. It is in this combination that the meaning of the hunger strike is revealed.

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[16]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.197.

The hunger strike was started by about two thousand students on the afternoon of May 13 at Tiananmen Square. People made use of the traditional notion that "a case involving human life is to be treated with the utmost care" to pour out their long accumulated grievances. As the news of the hunger strike travelled across the country, the people's movement grew to an even larger scale than before. More students, journalists, intellectuals and city residents were mobilized to participate in the movement.

The Hunger Strike and Social Interaction

After the mass hunger strike began at Tiananmen Square on May 13, students in other major cities responded by taking to the streets in huge numbers. More than 100,000 students from more than one hundred colleges engaged in demonstrations in more than twenty cities on May 16. Next day, the estimated number of student participants increased to 300,000 from more than 170 colleges in twenty-seven cities. Students focused on two demands: negation of the April 26 People's Daily editorial and opening dialogue with student representatives of the autonomous student association on an equal basis. More and more students took trains to Beijing. As the number of students from outside of Beijing increased, they played an increasingly important role in occupying Tiananmen Square. There was also an increase in the number of participants from other social sectors in cities throughout China.

At the height of the movement, the news media became

unprecedentedly open, and journalists of China's major news media tried to report the movement as objectively as possible. The news media changed their role by reporting the different voices of the people. This change, in turn, sent a message about the extent to which some forces within the power centre would tolerate the movement. Such a message encouraged more people to take actions to support the movement. From the very beginning of the movement, an increasing number of journalists, especially young journalists, put tremendous pressure on the leadership of new media to report the movement and seized any possible opportunity to break through the news censorship. Despite the Shanghai government's order to the World Economic Herald not to publish its April 24 issue, on April 23 the journalists of the newspaper began to disseminate its April 24 issue. This issue contained reports about scholars' demands for reassessment of Hu Yaobang and criticism of the campaign against bourgeois liberalization. Also on April 23, the Science and Technology Daily in Beijing published the first positive report about the student movement. Before May 4, a group of young journalists started to meet regularly. They coordinated the May 4 journalists' demonstration. Many journalists took Zhao's May 4 speech as a signal that the student movement was no longer considered a turmoil and concluded that it could therefore be covered. After May 4, the news media reported student activities virtually everyday. This group of young journalists also organized a May 9 petition signed by more than a thousand journalists, requesting a dialogue with high-level officials responsible for

propaganda. This group of journalists also coordinated demonstrations of journalists afterward. From May 11 through May 13, some high-ranking party officials visited a number of news organizations to engage in dialogues with journalists. Hu Qili, a member of the Politburo and currently in charge of propaganda work, was among these officials. Hu affirmed that press reform was now inevitable. For the next few days, news media covered the hunger strike with a neutral tone. After May 13, another group of journalists started to meet regularly under the name of the Beijing Journalists Dialogue Delegation.[17] But dialogue never occurred.

Like journalists, increasing numbers of intellectuals had also engaged in the movement. As soon as the student movement started, some intellectuals like Yan Jiaqi and Bao Zunxin, famous scholars of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, threw in their support. But most intellectuals, though feeling sympathy for the movement, still held back to some degree. The hunger strike changed their hesitant attitudes. On May 14, a group of fourteen of China's prominent intellectuals came to Tiananmen Square, appealing to the government to meet students' demands and at the same time trying to persuade students to stop the hunger strike. On May 15, several tens of thousands of intellectuals marched on Chang'an Avenue to support the hunger strikers. The next day, more than one thousand intellectuals signed the May 16 Declaration urging the leadership to grant the students' main demands. Yan Jiaqi and Bao Zunxin

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[17]I was one of the elected representatives of this delegation. So far as I know no Western author has mentioned this organization.

organized a May 17 Declaration signed by twelve intellectuals, directly criticizing the dictatorship of Deng Xiaoping and the "old-men" of the regime. On May 23 some intellectuals organized the Beijing Independent Intellectuals Association headed by Yan Jiaqi. The opinions of intellectuals, especially prominent ones, were widely reported by both domestic and international news media.

The attitudes of many Beijing citizens also changed dramatically once the hunger strike started. Perhaps every Chinese has experienced the frustration caused by the indifference and inhumanity of bureaucrats, and had moments when one felt too humiliated and frustrated to live. So, although the mass hunger strike was a new thing for people, the idea of risking one's life to release one's frustration and clean up one's name was not new for many people. It was easier for them to understand from their own experiences why students were willing to risk their lives. Behind the cries for "saving our children" was the long accumulated frustration and anger of Beijing citizens. Thus, increasing numbers of Beijing citizens showed their sympathy for the strikers and went to Tiananmen Square to donate money, food and clothes. On May 16, more than one million people visited the Square.

Among Beijing citizens, young workers were the most active. Like university students, young workers grew up during the legitimation crisis and also had doubts about the party and socialism. Compared with students, young workers experienced more directly the pressures of inflation and the feelings of insecurity caused by the reform. Their interests were more directly damaged

by the incompetence of the leadership and the corruption of officials. They also sought ways to have their voices heard and to deal with these problems. As a result of worker activism, the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation (gongzilian) was set up early in the movement. According to Walder and Gong's account, in late April some young workers started activities under the name of Gongzilian. These workers were in their twenties and thirties. They had little education and no movement experience. When the number of core activists grew to around 150, its inauguration was announced on May 18. Some university students also participated in the activities of the Workers' Federation. Walder and Gong point out that the membership grew in the last days of May when the number of students in the Square declined. Walder and Gong also observed the high profile of the Workers' Autonomous Federation in organizing resistance to martial law. Worker members of the Federation recalled that they just wanted to get things done when they participated in the movement. They did not consider personal power and fame. According to Walder and Gong's analysis, on the one hand, the workers' organization and activities "does not fit the mould of worker activism in the Cultural Revolution or the mid-1970s."[18] On the other hand, "like certain strains of mass radicalism during the Cultural Revolution," the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation "was profoundly anti-elitist and anti-

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[18]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, No.29, January 1993, pp.3-4.

bureaucrat."[19]

It is my impression that, like the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, autonomous organizations among journalists and intellectuals were formed without preparation before the movement. They did not have enough time to generate authority to pull the social section which they tried to represent together. Like the student movement, there was also a fragmentation among activists from these social sections. So no one could really assume the leadership of the movement. The movement continued to developed spontaneously.

As the hunger strike lasted day after day, people showed stronger indignation toward the leadership of the party-state. Gorbchev's visit brought the world's electronic eyes to Beijing, which provided a protective shell for the movement. The engagement of people was beyond the expectation and control of student leaders. When Chai Ling appealed to people, she certainly expected that more people would engage in the movement. Nevertheless, as people of other social sections stepped in, Chai was the one who most firmly insisted on denying people from other social groups, especially workers, the right to participate in the decision-making process of the movement. This elitist attitude was shared by many other student leaders. Attributing this kind of attitude to the influences of deeply-rooted traditional elitism among Chinese students, many authors have tried to determine the extent to which the past remains alive in the present.

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[19]Ibid, p.28.

The Past Alive in the Present in an Arbitrary Way

Ernest P. Young detects the influence of the past from rhetorical choices which not only served immediate purposes but also provided clues to important thought processes. Young believes that revolutionaries "characteristically construct an image of a rather static and unattractive society, ascribe it to their predecessor regime, and commit themselves to changing it."[20] In Young's opinion, like revolutionaries, reformists also construct such images of ancient regimes. There were several layers of unattractive images constructed in Deng's era. The image of almost two decades of Mao's radical regime - especially the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution - was the primary rationale for Deng's ascendancy. The image of a Kuomintang regime that subordinated itself to the West, the image of the chaotic warlord era, and the image of the backward peasant society of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) were used to symbolize traditional society in general.[21]

In Young's opinion, Deng and his gerontocrats perceived the reform programs as aiming at changing these images, while the 1989 movement interrupted the reform. They viewed the demonstrators as unwitting Maoists; the student movement was another Red Guard

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[20]Ernest P. Young, "Imagining the Ancien Regime", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press), p.16.

[21]Ibid, pp.17-20.

movement which would lead China into another Cultural Revolution. The call for democracy indicated the revisionist bourgeois liberalism of the movement, which would lead to a bourgeois republic like the Kuomintang regime. The anarchy created by the movement would provoke an immediate danger of civil war, which would not only resemble the chaotic situation in the Cultural Revolution, but also the chaotic warlord era.[22]

According to Young's analysis, the bedrock argument of hard-liners against power-sharing was the "national condition." According to an article in the People's Daily quoted by Young, the "national condition" included the backwardness of economy and culture, the lack of democratic tradition, the profound influence of feudal thought, and the dim consciousness of democracy and legality among many people.[23] But the discussion about the "national condition" challenged the legitimacy of Deng's regime. If Maoism and the party were responsible for these problems, how could Deng's cardinal principle to uphold Mao Zedong thought and to uphold the party's leadership be justified? The hard-liners' justification of these principles seemed to rely on the following logic. The problems of the forty years of party monopoly of power became the very reasons for its continuing domination. The hard-liners made the past alive in the present in an arbitrary way.

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[22]Ibid, p.21.

[23]Ernest P. Young, "Imagining the Ancien Regime", Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, (Boulder: Westview Press), p.21.

Li Peng's May 19 speech can be taken as an example to illustrate this point. In this speech Li Peng asserts that "an extremely small number of people want to achieve through turmoil their political goals" and "if they should achieve their goals... China would undergo a reversal of history." He claims that these people "spread masses of rumours, and attack, slander, and insult the principal leaders of the Party and government," and "they are concentrating their attack on Comrade Deng Xiaoping....They stir up trouble everywhere, secretly link up with others, encourage the establishment of all sorts of illegal organizations."[24] These accusations were based on an arbitrary judgement.

Why were there masses of rumours? It is because there is censorship of news imposed by the party. Under this censorship people were already accustomed to reading between the lines of the newspapers and to looking for "little road news" (xiaodao xiaoxi) through personal ties. When people are concerned about an issue, while the news media are not allowed to report it, rumours about that issue naturally spread. In the history of the People's Republic of China there have always been many rumours when society falls into crisis. This also occurred during the spring of 1989. Even during the few days when the news media became unprecedentedly open, the issue of the factionalist conflicts among top leaders was still tightly censored. Therefore many relevant rumours spread

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[24]"Speech of Premier Li Peng at Special Meeting of Central and Beijing Municipal Party, Government, and Army Cadres on May 19, 1989", Cries for Democracy, ed. Han Minzhu, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.257.

among people. The rumours are due to the news censorship imposed by the party. But Li Peng blames "an extremely small number of people" as responsible for the rumours.

In the same manner, Li Peng assumes that people have no right to criticize top party leaders. Therefore he labels criticism of these leaders as attack, slander and insult. In Li's view, Deng Xiaoping was one of these privileged leaders. The privilege of these leaders becomes the very reason to silence people's criticism of these leaders. Whoever criticises these leaders might be categorized as "an extremely small number of people." Thus, the privilege of these leaders further becomes the reason to insult people. In the same way, Li assumes that people had no right to establish organizations, thus, establishment of autonomous organizations was treated as illegal. This was why when students and workers tried to register their own organizations, they never received approval from the government.

Li Peng's accusations were more based on people's assumed intentions rather than their actions. They intended to negate the leadership of the Communist Party, the socialist system, and opposition to bourgeois liberalization. They intended to achieve an absolute freedom which opposes the Four Cardinal Principles. They also intended to "undermine organizationally the leadership of the Communist Party of China, overthrow the government....and totally negate the people's democratic dictatorship." And they intended to lay "a foundation for the establishment in China of

opposition factions and an opposition party."[25] Chinese people who went through the political campaigns of the Maoist era also knew this device well. The intention often served as the most important criteria to determine who were "the extremely small number of people." Only those who had the monopoly of power could judge what kind of intention and whose intention was bad. Based on this kind of logic, the hard-liners made the past alive in the present in an arbitrary way.

The "Old Men's" Politics and the Tragic End of the Movement

When Li Peng met the student leaders on the morning of May 19, the gulf between them appeared unbridgeable. The meeting was televised nationally that evening as the government's final gesture to solve the crisis through a dialogue. On the evening of May 19, Li Peng read the declaration of imposition of martial law at a special meeting. His speech was broadcast over radio and television nationally at midnight of the same day. The troops were ordered to move into the centre of Beijing, but they met unexpected resistance from Beijing citizens. The conflict escalated to the stage that no major party involved was willing to retreat. Dialogue and compromise became impossible.

On May 24, Yang Shangkun, the president of China and vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, clearly stated that

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[25]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.257.

the hard-liners were unwilling and unable to retreat. At an emergency meeting of the Central Military Commission, he said, "if we changed our opinion on the nature [of the student movement], it would be the end for all of us."[26] The fear of "the end for all of us" would drive hard-liners to take more drastic action. Like the regimes of Mao, the Guomingtang, the warlords and the Qing dynasty, the hard-liners of Deng's regime were also prepared to maintain their monopoly of power at any expense. The core of the hard-liners was made up of a group of octogenarians. As Yang told the meeting, seven senior persons who were highly respected had met recently. They were Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Deng Xiaoping, Wang Zhen, Deng Yingchao and himself. They came to the conclusion that the movement was rooted in the party itself. Because there were two voices in the Standing Committee of the Politburo, Yang declared, "it is the same as having two headquarters," and "the spirit of the [People's Daily] editorial of the 26th was one of resolute opposition to turmoil."[27] Then he informed the meeting:

> [On this matter] we all feel that there is no path for retreat, that retreat would mean defeat for us all, defeat for the People's Republic of China, the restoration of capitalism, just as that American, [John Foster] Dulles, wished, after a few generations, our

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[26]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.305. Army officers passed copies of Yang's speech to the students.

[27]Han Minzhu, Cries for Democracy: Writing and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.304.

socialism would become liberalism.[28]

This discourse was repeatedly used in previous political campaigns, especially in the Cultural Revolution. Two voices are the same as having two headquarters. Retreat means defeat and restoration of capitalism. There is no legitimate position for loyal opposition within or without the party. Problems occur in society, while their roots are in the party. There is no way to compromise for the party vanguard to share power with other social groups. This discourse was used to provide the political logic for "class stuggle" in Mao's era. Now this small group of octogenarians was employing it once again. They played a leading role in justifying the repression of the movement. As Deng later pointed out, without those old people even the nature of the student movement could not be determined.[29] In other words, it was these old veterans who refused to compromise, who finally determined to take drastic action to counter the movement.

Zhao's faction also clearly showed that they were unwilling to retreat. After Zhao Ziyang indicated that he was unwilling to go along with the hard-liners, he was relieved of his post on May 17. About this time, some individuals and organizations associated with Zhao directly sought support from the people's movement. They made public the rupture between Zhao and the hard-liners and contacted

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[28]Ibid, p.306.

[29]Deng Xiaoping, "June 9 Speech to Martial Law Units", Beijing Spring, 1989, Confrontation and Conflict: the Basic Documents, ed. Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan and Jarc Lambert, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, Inc., 1990), p.377.

student leaders. On May 19, they leaked the news about the imminent imposition of martial law. They proposed to immediately convene an urgent meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to dismiss Li Peng and to end martial law. These proposals were immediately accepted as the major demands of the movement. By taking these actions, Zhao's faction clearly showed that they were willing to fight to win or die in the political struggle.

Beijing citizens showed that they were also unwilling to withdraw. The declaration of martial law further provoked Beijing citizens. After listening to Li Peng's speech at midnight on May 19, the condemnation of the government for opposing the will of Beijing's people could be frequently heard from people's conversations and read on the wall posters and leaflets. In the following days, the martial law troops were blocked. Despite the martial law order forbidding demonstrations, marches and demonstrations continued. The extent to which Beijing citizens and students maintained the social order impressed many observers, especially during the time from May 20 to 23 when traffic police disappeared from the city. The crime rate was reported to have dropped to the lowest point in recent years. The Beijing government tried several times to mobilize workers to join a government-organized demonstration to counter the people's movement; special caps and arm bands were distributed in factories. But all these efforts failed, and no such demonstration was launched in the urban area of Beijing. Only in rural Daxing county

on the south side of Beijing on May 31 was the government able to "mobilize" four thousand peasants to take part in such a demonstration. Beijing citizens, especially young workers, played a crucial role in the final stage of the movement. The people and organizations who publicly defied the martial law order by taking to the streets were now more deeply committed to the movement. But the number of participants in the movement declined.

The decline in the numbers of participants was partially due to the hard-liners' strategy to arouse people's fear of political repression. When the hard-liners declared martial law, they must have calculated that the factors which had acted as constraints on their ability to repress the movement had now disappeared. Gorbachev's visit was over, and Zhao Ziyang's power to prevent the repression had been eliminated. Finally, the military forces had been assembled. The movements of the military forces, no matter whether moving toward Tiananmen or withdrawing, were actually a demonstration of the might of the hard-liners meant to stimulate people's fear of repression. This fear had been deeply built into Chinese people's psyche during the past decades of experience of repression.

The hard-liners' strategy worked. In the face of the demonstration of the hard-liners' military might, the weaknesses of the student movement - remnants of traditional elitist attitudes toward other social groups, self-centred tendencies and anarchist denial of all authority - came to the fore. As a result, there was a further fragmentation of the student movement.

After students terminated the hunger strike on May 19, the debate over whether to remain or leave the square further splintered the student movement. Most student leaders were either exhausted or collapsed in the hunger strike or demonstrations. Under tremendous pressure in an extremely complex situation, some of them became irascible. On May 21, student leader Wuer Kaixi broadcast a demand that students evacuate Tiananmen Square. He was immediately stripped of his post. On the same day, student representatives from fifty campuses voted in favour of evacuation of Tiananmen Square, but the Standing Committee of the BCAA did not give the recommendation final approval. On May 23, in another vote, the BCAA decided the association would withdraw from Tiananmen Square, and the Safeguard Tiananmen Square Headquarters would take charge of the movement. Chai Ling was elected general commander. Li Lu and Feng Congde were elected deputy commanders. Li's identity was repeatedly questioned by some of the Beijing students. At midnight on May 26, a group of students intruded into the camp where Chai Ling and her husband Feng Congde were sleeping. Chai and Feng were interrogated.

The authority of both the BCAA and the Safeguard Tiananmen Square Headquarters was challenged by students from outside of Beijing whose number continued to increase in the first several days of the imposition of the martial law. Unlike the exhausted Beijing students, students from outside of Beijing were newcomers to the scene in Beijing ready and eager to carry on the struggle. They were more prone to continue to occupy the square. They

established the Autonomous Association of Colleges Outside Beijing (AACOB). They competed with one another. Four separate groups claimed to be the AACOB even within one day. On May 25, Chai Ling suggested that students from outside Beijing return to their cities and mobilize students there. Observers generally agree that the whole movement was out of the control of the BCAA at the end of May.

On May 30, the Goddess of Democracy statue was erected in the square. At midnight on June 3, I witnessed the massacre which I described in the preface of this thesis. That same night the Goddess of Democracy was toppled by a tank of the People's Liberation Army.

CHAPTER 6

The Legitimation Crisis after June 1989

Most of the problems contributing to the party's crisis of legitimacy and to the Tiananmen confrontation have continued to develop since June 1989. The official propaganda and people's resistance to the propaganda remain. The introduction of the market mechanism continues to undermine the legitimacy of the monopoly power of the party. Inflation, corruption and people's anger and frustration regarding both remain. The succession problem and political uncertainty remain. Demoralization continues to erode the government's legitimacy.

Since 1989, the Chinese economy has shifted to greater reliance on the market mechanism. Chinese civil society, especially the private section of the economy, has continued to grow. Many economic laws have been enacted. But the political reform of the monopolistic control of power by the CCP has been blocked. The party has tightened its control over the news media, and the press reform has been set back. No critical views regarding the 1989 movement and its repression have been allowed to appear in news media. My impression is that more and more people perceive politics as a struggle among elites who try to seize and protect their own interests at the expense of ordinary people

behind an iron curtain. Many people feel that politics have nothing to do with themselves and that there have been no ethical standards in politics. Many people feel demoralized regarding the prospects for improvement in the political sphere. They have turned their eyes to their own business. Thus, although there has been a general stabilization of political institutions and a boom in the economy since the Tiananmen events, people cynically describe the general situation at the present time in China as "nine out of ten of a billion people are merchants, the other one tenth is preparing go into business." (shiyi renmin jiuyi shang, haiyou yiyi dai kaizhang) It appears that people now care about nothing but making money. Coupled with the phenomena of "all people being involved in commerce" (quanmin jingshang), there is a seemingly irreversible spread of corruption.

According to research conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, social anomie increased considerably in 1992. Associated phenomena included under-the-table deals between holders of money and power (qianquan jiaoyi), violation of financial discipline and regulations, evasion of taxes, production and sale of counterfeit and low-quality goods, economic fraud, increased criminal activity including organized crime, and widespread exploiting of superstition. There has been a high inflation rate and people resent it. "According to statistics, the price of living in thirty-five large and middle-sized cities increased 10.5% in the first half of 1992,...masses feel that they have 'more losses than gains' (shi dayu de) in the reform." A questionnaire

completed by 20,500 city residents revealed that 43.9% of residents who answered the question feel that they "are barely able to subsist" (mianqiang duri, wenbao shuiping), and 2.9% feel that they "cannot adequately feed and clothe themselves" (shang bude wenbao).[1]

It is not only the inflation and seemingly irreversible corruption but also people's feeling of political uncertainty that further undermines the already eroded legitimacy of the regime. In the midst of the Tiananmen events, Jiang Zemin, at the time mayor of Shanghai and a technocrat, was chosen to replace Zhao Ziyang as the general secretary of the CCP. Subsequently Jiang also succeeded Deng Xiaoping in assuming the post of chairman of the Central Military Commission. The official propaganda portrays the leadership of the CCP as united around the new Secretary Jiang Zemin and stable. They suggest the successor problem has already been solved. However, most people I know generally believe it is not at all certain who will be the top man in the CCP after Deng Xiaoping's death. These people especially feel uncertain about what role the army will play in the internal conflict of the top leaders of the CCP.[2]

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[1]Research Team of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for Analysis and Forecast of the Social Situation, "China in 1992-1993: Analysis and Forecast of the Social Situation", China National Condition and National Power, (Zhongguo Guoqing Guoli) No.2, 1993, p.20-22.

[2]China specialists share this uncertainty. Nathan points out, "Four flaws in the American understanding of China weakened China specialists' grasp of these events. Unfortunately, two of them are irremediable. We knew the importance of the web of personal relationships among the Chinese party leaders, and appreciated how

There is no evidence that the army will remain neutral in political conflicts. Instead it is likely the army will continue to be involved in such conflicts. Chu-Yuan Cheng points out that "by ordering the PLA to intervene in the student demonstrations, Deng repeated the error Mao had committed. He opened the way for the PLA to assume the role of king maker again."[3] He uses two examples to support this point. One is the appointment of Shao Huaze. Shao, the head of the propaganda division of the General Political Department of the army, was appointed editor-in-chief of the People's Daily, the organ of the Party's Central Committee. Shao has remained in this post. Another is the one-year military training imposed on students who entered Beijing universities in the fall of 1989.[4]

A recent indication that it is likely the army will continue to be involved in successional conflict is an article by Yang Baibing. Yang, the director of the Political Department of the Central Military Commission, published an article in People's Daily on July 29, 1992.[5] He starts the article with a eulogy of Deng

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influential the internal politics of the Chinese military could be in political crises. Both were decisive factors in 1989. But they are the most tightly guarded subjects in a very secretive country. Even the U.S. government's intelligence specialists know little about them." See China's Crisis, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p.19.

[3]Chu-Yuan Cheng, Behind the Tiananmen Massacre, (Colorato: Westview Press, 1990), p.119.

[4]This is no longer true. The time of military training is one-month as last reported.

[5]Yang Baibing was removed from this post in 1993.

Xiaoping's contribution to China's reform. "In this great and creative practice, Comrade Deng Xiaoping has made the greatest contribution as a general architect." Deng was portrayed as a great Marxist with "revolutionary courage and foresight." Yang goes on to state that the army must be the "escort" for the course designed by Deng, and the army must steadfastly struggle against all wrong words and deeds which deviate from the basic political line drawn by Deng.[6] In this article the army is assumed to be capable of determining what are wrong words and deeds and to take action to counter them. Although theoretically the Army is under the leadership of the CCP, the practical problem is that historically there have always been factionalist splits within the top leaders of the CCP. To a large extent which faction the army follows is determined not by established procedure but by the personal connections and charisma of individual leaders. At the present time there is no reason to assume that factionalist conflict among the top leadership of the CCP will cease in China's future. The possibility that a faction of top leaders of the CCP backed by military force will try to eliminate an opposite faction so as to take over the party still exists. The assumption that the

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[6]Yang Baibin, "Take on the Historical Task of Escort and Convoy for the Nation's Reform and Construction", People's Daily, July 29, 1992, p.1. I find similar language, logic and connotations in this article and the articles published during the late years of Mao Zedong's era. That is, one man and his thought are elevated to the highest authority against which the words and deeds of others are judged. What happened after Mao's death was that a factionalist struggle among top leaders surfaced, which led to the arrest of four members of the Politburo by a faction backed by military leaders.

army is capable of defining what are wrong words and deeds will considerably increase this possibility. In the event that two or more factions are all backed by different military forces, this assumption will likely produce the worst possible scenario, a civil war.

In the face of seemingly irreversible corruption and political uncertainty, demoralization and related behaviour can be seen in major sections of society. In July 1992, a friend living in China told me that there was a feeling of being on a sinking boat among many cadres who tried to grasp as much wealth as possible. In July 1993 the friend told me again that this attitude still prevails among many cadres.

The following are a few examples from the press. Jiang Zemin, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), President of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, recently addressed the Research Association on Political and Ideological Work among Chinese Workers (zhongguo zhigong zhengzhi sixiang yanjiuhui). He stated that "if people's consciousness keeps declining, and the general mood of society keeps deteriorating, it will be difficult for us to build a good economy; even if we can build it, it will be difficult to strengthen and stabilize it"[7].

A week earlier Jiang Zemin, addressing the Chinese People's Liberation Army, stated, "the army must preserve the good traditions of the Chinese Red Army and strengthen progressive and

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[7]People's Daily, Overseas Edition, May 6, 1993, p.1.

scientific ideas and infuse them into the army, only in this way can the army effectively reject the erosion of corruption."[8]

Two weeks earlier Premier Li Peng, addressing a conference on rural work, stated "if peasants had good food to eat, good places to live, good clothes to put on, and good things to use, but ugly phenomena like gambling, feudal superstition and so on continued to develop, and we could not do a good job of family planning, then peasants could not enjoy happy lives, and their quality would not be improved."[9]

An experienced reader of Chinese official newspapers would decode these news items in the following way. There are vast and deep problems in the realm of social norms in three major groups of Chinese society. The consciousness and general mood of Chinese workers is steadily deteriorating; the army has been affected by corruption; and in the rural areas, gambling and feudal superstition continue to develop.[10]

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[8]People's Daily, Overseas Edition, May 1, 1993, p.1.

[9]People's Daily, Overseas Edition, April 13, 1993, p.1. A Westerner might feel the fascist connotations of the expression "their quality would not be improved". Many activists of the movement of 1989 had a similar feeling when they were watching and listening to Li Peng's declaration of martial law on the night of May 19, 1989.

[10]There are at least three reasons to decode these statements in the above way. a. The official newspapers, especially their news sections (not the advertising, literature or information sections), are still the mouthpiece of the Party and government. The major task of this news reporting is to propagate the policies and ideas of the Party.

b. Only a few elites have the privilege of access to updated news regarding the negative aspects of the overall situation through an internal reference system of news mainly produced by journalists of Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily and other news

There is a prevailing disappointment about political reform among many of China's intellectuals and students. Before I left China at the end of 1990, I talked with some intellectuals and students. Some of them predicted that the days of the Chinese Communist Party were numbered. Some of them believed that China's "Brezhnev era" had just started and might last for ten or more years. Here "Brezhnev era" roughly refers to a period of economic growth under a technocratic regime with stagnation of political reform.

At the present time, only a few participants in the Tiananmen events are still active politically. A few activists who are living in exile have organized the counter-movement against the Chinese regime. When two such activists, Chai Ling and Li Lu attended the National Conference of the American Democratic Party, they were reported to have announced to the Conference that they would never give up their dream of pursuing Chinese democracy.[11] Chai and Li were the commander and vice commander of the Safeguard

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media. "Confidential" or "Highly Confidential" are printed in red ink on the top of the front page of these restricted publications. To divulge information from the internal news to ordinary people or foreigners would be considered a violation of party discipline and state law, and such action might be punished.

c. Because of the above discussed context, only when the negative phenomena have spread nationwide, are they reported in the news media or speeches by the top leaders of the Party or government.

In the event that something has to be reported, the warning form "if...then.." is often used. But actually these statements are not merely a warning but a reflection of serious problems and the failure of the policies to deal with the problems.

[11]Zhongyang Ribao, July 17, 1992.

Tiananmen Square Headquarters during the last stage of the student movement. But unlike Chai and Li, most participants are no longer active politically, and some of them feel lost. They give the term "dream" a different meaning.

Recently I talked with a former student leader who had a close connection with both Chai Ling and Li Lu when the events took place. I asked him what he thought about the Tiananmen events at this point in time. He said: "It was like a dream." He was disappointed with some student leaders who, he said, were so selfish that they got their passports and foreign visas ready even before the movement was crushed. They could never make clear the situation regarding the donations which they had managed. He said that they cared more about their political ambitions and holding power in their own hands than the lives of thousands of students who participated in the movement.[12] Later he told me that democracy did not suit Chinese society and that China needed a sort of authoritarian government. After the Tiananmen events I asked some student participants in the movement about their thoughts regarding the events. I often got the answer that they felt that the events were "like a dream."

In China, to say "past events are like a dream" (wangshi rumeng) is often to express a feeling about something past, especially a past tragedy. The phrase conveys a kind of frustration, a sadness at the destruction of something beautiful, an escape from the suffering associated with the memory of a

[12]Here I have to keep all of these students' name anonymous.

tragedy, a feeling of mysterious forces behind the events.[13] Most Chinese I know seldom talk about their tragic experiences, instead they try to hide them. People usually take for granted this hiding of negative experiences. They seem to follow the old Chinese adage "don't allow outside people to know ugly things happening in your family" (jia chou buke waiyang). Here the "family" can refer to a family, a kinship network, a social network of supporters, a work unit, a community, a geographic area, even the whole country.[14]

This kind of psychology at least can be partially attributed to the long history of the domination of totalitarianism in China. Under totalitarian regimes, people's attitudes toward social tragedies are suppressed into deeper layers of consciousness. In peaceful times, these deeper layer attitudes remain more or less hidden. When a crisis takes place, these deeper layer attitudes rise to the surface in a surging emotional tide as we saw in the people's movement of 1989. After the events, not only did the monopolistic control over news media by the party continue to exist, the party even tightened this control. No news media in China are allowed to touch issues regarding the democracy movement

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[13]A typical example of this sort of feeling can be found in the classical novel Dream of the Red Chamber.

[14]I personally know many Chinese who were denounced as rightists, whose relatives died of starvation in the famine, or who were tortured in the Cultural Revolution. But usually they don't like to talk about these tragic experiences. I myself, although I went through all of these events, also feel it is too painful to recall and to talk about these experiences. This kind of attitude has been slightly changed in recent years. Novelists and journalists started to explore tragic experiences in what is known as the "wounds literature" (shanghen wenxue).

of 1989 in a critical manner.

Now once again the official news media have been filled with "good news": celebration of the economic boom, people's smiling dedication, and so on. There is a danger that more and more people, Chinese and foreign, over time are going to turn their eyes away from the tragic reality of China again. I even suspect that being surrounded by the smiling and celebration, top leaders of China are also starting to lose touch with the tragic side of China's reality.

What is likely to be ignored is people's attitudes toward the tragic events of 1989. Compared with what we know about this series of tragic events in China, we know much less about public attitudes toward these events. Since the Tiananmen events, the trauma left by the events has been partially hidden. But most of the problems contributing to the massive protests in 1989 have continued to develop, and the legitimation crisis continues to deepen. In the meantime, China's civil society has been growing, the general trend of the growth of self-awareness among people remains, Chinese political culture is undergoing a transformation. People will tend to identify themselves in opposition to the party-state and will continue to long for self expression. People will probe into problems such as official corruption and political demoralization, in an organized manner sooner or latter.

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