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Lowell Dittmer, The Tiananmen Massacre, 38 Probs. Communism 2 (1989).

ALWD 7th ed.

Lowell Dittmer, The Tiananmen Massacre, 38 Probs. Communism 2 (1989).

APA 7th ed.

Dittmer, L. (1989). The tiananmen massacre. Problems of Communism, 38(5), 2-15.

Chicago 17th ed.

Lowell Dittmer, "The Tiananmen Massacre," Problems of Communism 38, no. 5 (September-October 1989): 2-15

McGill Guide 9th ed.

Lowell Dittmer, "The Tiananmen Massacre" (1989) 38:5 Probs Communism 2.

AGLC 4th ed.

Lowell Dittmer, 'The Tiananmen Massacre' (1989) 38(5) Problems of Communism 2

MLA 9th ed.

Dittmer, Lowell. "The Tiananmen Massacre." Problems of Communism, vol. 38, no. 5, September-October 1989, pp. 2-15. HeinOnline.

OSCOLA 4th ed.

Lowell Dittmer, 'The Tiananmen Massacre' (1989) 38 Probs Communism 2

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The Tiananmen Massacre

Lowell Dittmer

"No!" cried his father, cutting short the answer, threw the blankets off with a strength that sent them all flying in a moment and sprang erect in his bed. Only one hand lightly touched the ceiling to steady him. "You wanted to cover me up, I know, my young sprig, but I'm far from covered up yet. And even if this is the last strength I have, it's enough for you, too much for you."

—Franz Kafka, *The Judgment*.

The suppression of democracy activists in and around Tiananmen Square on the night of June 3–4, 1989, at the cost of at least several hundred and possibly well over a thousand lives, was unprecedented in many ways. Political repression is, of course, not unheard of in the People's Republic of China (PRC). But never before had the regime unleashed the full firepower of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) against unarmed civilians.¹ Never before had the regime been confronted with such a shrewd and tenacious opposition, which seems to have utterly outmaneuvered the government in the play for public opinion. Never before had the reform regime that emerged after the Cultural Revolution been so seriously split within its own ranks (the rumor of impending civil war was, however, a great exaggeration).

Although unique in these and other respects, this watershed event in the history of the PRC can be ren-

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dered somewhat more comprehensible if it is seen in the context of a number of recent developments. The upheaval might be said to mark the convergence of three unresolved and festering questions: the role of the "masses," the future of reform, and the basis of political legitimacy (which subsumes the other two).

In contrast to the situation in most other socialist countries, in China, the "revolutionary masses" have always played an integral role in politics, though the form of their political mobilization has changed over time. During the first 17 years of the PRC, it took the form of the "mass movement." This was a sort of controlled unleashing; under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), focused on a clearly defined set of negative and positive targets. And it seems to have been relatively successful, achieving the ideological objectives of the regime (i.e., "socialization of the means of production") while still achieving rapid economic progress.

During the Cultural Revolution period (1966–76), the masses could, of course, still be mobilized, but the apparent exhaustion of positive objectives (and the inability of the regime to control the masses once aroused) brought mobilization and economic production into increasing friction. Although Deng Xiaoping himself benefited from spontaneous agitation by the masses to regain power, his regime, too, has recognized this friction. On the one hand, it has attempted to deny or repress spontaneous mass movements; on the other hand, it has promoted occasional quasi-campaigns to mobilize the masses against "bourgeois liberalization" or "spiritual pollution." Yet, the first course left a vacuum between leadership and masses, while the second again precipitated friction between production and mobilization.

¹This is one of the reasons adduced for the otherwise puzzling nostalgia for Mao Zedong, who once said that whoever suppressed the students would fall.

In the post-Cultural Revolution era, the students have stepped into the breach, reviving an old Chinese tradition of youthful idealism, utilizing appropriate ceremonial occasions and slogans to revive reform momentum when it seemed to flag. This student activism has evoked in the minds of China's leaders nightmares of Red Guard chaos and has split the reform leadership—first, in 1987 with the purge of Hu Yaobang, now again in 1989—between those most concerned with maintaining control and stability and those in search of a mass constituency for further reform.

The reforms began with the Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress, in December 1978, which in effect returned control of the agricultural sector to individual families under a leasehold arrangement. This policy resulted in an impressive increase in agricultural productivity. The focus of reform shifted to the urban industrial sector at the Third Plenum of the 12th Congress, in October 1984. Although urban reforms also stimulated rapid economic growth, the leadership became divided over whether to press on to ownership reform (which aroused strong ideological reservations) or further marketization. The latter route was chosen in the spring of 1988 when Zhao Ziyang, with the support of Deng Xiaoping, initiated retail price reform. However, this reform unleashed an unprecedented bout of inflation (official figures for 1988 were 18.5 percent; unofficial figures, double that), resulting in bank runs, commodity stockpiling, and a general financial panic. The retreat from price reform left the leadership in a quandary about how and where to pursue economic reform.

The crisis of legitimacy is in part the result of the stifling of mass participation and frustration of the reform impulse already noted, and in part a predictable consequence of the systematic undermining of Maoist ideology that Deng's regime has conducted since 1977 in order to permit greater latitude for pragmatic experimentation. But the regime has been dismayed to see egoistic consumerism replace ideological dogmatism, not to mention a growing wave of crime and corruption. In the absence of any vision or plan for development beyond "moving from stone to stone to cross the river" (*mozhe shetou quo ho*), the intellectual community had tacitly begun to adopt models of "bourgeois" electoral reform and parliamentarism. Orthodox attempts to defend the "leading role" of the Communist Party and other Leninist tenets were intellectually unconvincing and failed to sway the masses. This contributed to a crisis of legitimacy so severe that in the spring of 1989, it was unclear whether the army would respond to the political leadership, and a cashiered Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary—who had clearly violated the rules of "democratic centralism"—could appeal to ideals of

parliamentary democracy to try to have the National People's Congress (NPC) repeal martial law.

In order to see how these three questions or crises culminated in the tragedy at Tiananmen, I would like to begin *in medias res*, focusing on the maneuvers of the leadership, to whom the population remained responsive even while attempting to act autonomously. My purpose is simple but not easy: to puzzle together what actually happened. Such an examination will show that the Tiananmen massacre in China was not inexorable. Rather, it was the outcome of a subtle interplay of developments whose complexity must be thoroughly examined. This contention refutes Deng Xiaoping's somewhat self-serving declaration at the June 30, 1989, meeting of the NPC Standing Committee:

The storm was bound to come sooner or later. This was determined by the macro climate of the world and the micro climate of our country. Its inevitable arrival was independent of man's will.²

Leadership Cleavages

As of the beginning of 1989, the CCP leadership was riven by two overlapping cleavages: one, ideological; the other, generational. Ideologically, the party leaders were divided between a still powerful minority committed to reform (but accepting the need for temporary retrenchment), and an ascendant majority determined to use the necessary retrenchment to reverse reform policies and shore up the centrally planned economy. Generationally, the leadership was divided between, on the one hand, the Politburo, consisting of Premier Li Peng (60 years of age), Central Disciplinary Inspection Commission Chairman Qiao Shi (65), Propaganda Department Chief Hu Qili (60), State Planning Commission Chairman Yao Yilin (72), and General Secretary Zhao Ziyang (70), and on the other hand, a shadow cabinet of senior veterans—none of whom had seats on the Politburo Standing Committee, only one of whom (Yang Shangkun) was on the Politburo, but most of whom had seats in the Central Advisory Commission (CAC). In declining rank order of power, this elder group included Deng Xiaoping (85), chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC) as well as its governmental counterpart; Chen Yun (84), chairman of the CAC; Yang Shangkun (82), president of the state and executive vice-chairman of the CMC; Li Xiannian (80), chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's

²Cheng Ming (Hong Kong), July 1, 1989, pp. 6–9.

Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC); Wang Zhen (81), vice president of the state and a CMC vice-chairman; Bo Yibo (81), executive vice-chairman of the CAC; Song Renqiong (80), vice-chairman of the CAC; Peng Zhen (87), retired chairman of the NPC Standing Committee; and Deng Yingchao (85), widow of Zhou Enlai, and a former Politburo member and ex-chair of the CPPCC National Committee.

Although the older generation was generally more "leftist"—i.e., more ideologically orthodox and less reformist—than the Politburo members, the two cleavages were to some degree cross-cutting: some of the younger Politburo members (e.g., Li Peng) were also orthodox, while some of the members of the older generation (e.g., Deng Xiaoping) supported reform. The main reason for this was that as a condition of their "retirement," the senior veterans had exacted the right to name their successors to the Politburo; thus, Yao Yilin was beholden to Chen Yun, Zhao Ziyang to Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng to Deng Yingchao (and to Chen Yun). Hu Qili, an "orphan" of Hu Yaobang's China Youth League group, seems to have been "adopted" by Zhao Ziyang. These bonds of obligation ensured that the party did not have two centers but one. In fact, when important issues were at stake, the Politburo often met in "expanded" session, to which the gerontocrats were invited in their capacity as CAC members (or simply ad hoc). The elders took full advantage of their seniority and experience to weigh in on critical issues and, according to some reports, even had voting rights at these meetings.³

By the end of 1988, a strong leftist, anti-reform wind was blowing within the CCP leadership. The reform forces, stymied from further movement on the economic front by an uncontrollable double-digit inflation (which affected with particular severity reform-minded students and bureaucrats, who lived on fixed incomes), sought to counterattack on the political front. In December 1988, Hu Qili, Wang Renzhi, and Hu Sheng jointly planned and convened a seminar of reform intellectuals to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the December 1978 Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee, which had effectively launched the post-Mao re-

forms. Among the more than 300 attendees were reform intellectuals Yu Guangyuan, Wang Ruoshui, Yan Jiaqi, Su Shaozhi, and Tong Dalin. Su Shaozhi delivered a bold speech attacking the conservatives' campaigns against spiritual pollution and bourgeois liberalization and calling for a reversal of verdicts on one of their victims, Wang Ruoshui. This speech was too bold even for the seminar's organizers, Hu Qili and Wang Renzhi, who as officials of the party propaganda apparatus, decreed that Su's presentation should not be published. Nonetheless, it appeared in Qin Benli's outspoken Shanghai newspaper, *Shijie jingji daobao* (*World Economic Herald*), together with an editorial contending that in building socialist democracy, "there is a need courageously to draw lessons" from "modern democratic forms" that "have developed in Western capitalism . . ." ⁴

In February and March 1989, the reform forces shifted their attention to human rights as the regime imposed martial law on Tibet for the first time since 1959.⁵ Fang Lizhi petitioned Deng Xiaoping to release all "political prisoners" (the regime denies that any exist) and sent a similar letter to the Western press.⁶ In the same period, two young literati, Bei Dao and Chen Jun, collected the signatures of some 33 scholars and writers (including prominent overseas Chinese) on a petition demanding amnesty for Wei Jingsheng, a Democracy Wall activist imprisoned since 1981 for his crusade on behalf of the "Fifth Modernization" (i.e., political democracy). Another "letter of opinion," signed by 44 scientists and scholars (including nuclear experts Wang Ganchang, Lu Liangying, and others), demanding the release of political prisoners and proposing structural reform of the political system, was submitted to the Standing Committee of the NPC.⁷

These pro-reform intellectuals had, for the most part, been protégés of Hu Yaobang, who was ousted from the CCP general secretaryship in January 1987 in the wake of the December 1986 student demonstrations. With him gone, they tended to look to Zhao Ziyang for protection. By early 1989, staunch opponents of liberalization were already holding Zhao responsible for the behavior of the reformists. Chen Yun reportedly circu-

³This inference is based on the fact that authoritative decisions issue from such "expanded" meetings, at which nonmembers are reputed to play an active role. Thus, a Politburo meeting was held on May 22–24, 1989, at which Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Yang Shangkun, and Wang Zhen, all "older veterans with great prestige" (but only one of whom is a Politburo member), decided to reaffirm the hard-line April 26 editorial and denounce Zhao's May 4 speech. *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong—hereafter, *FEER*), June 15, 1989, p. 13. *Ming Pao* (Hong Kong), May 30, 1989. My supposition that the votes of these veteran leaders are counted is based on a conversation with Feng Shengbao, a former member of Bao Tong's Commission to Restructure the Political System.

⁴"New Realm in the Emancipation of Thinking," *Guangming ribao* (Beijing), Dec. 31, 1988.

⁵Martial law was imposed in Lhasa in March following the sanguinary suppression of riots touched off when police opened fire on a small group of monks involved in a peaceful demonstration on behalf of Tibetan autonomy. Some 60,000 PLA troops were brought in to help the police with mass arrests and house-to-house searches. *Asiaweek* (Hong Kong), July 7, 1989, pp. 26–31.

⁶*Cheng Ming*, Apr. 1, 1989, pp. 6–10.

⁷*Ching Pao* (Hong Kong), Apr. 10, 1989, pp. 22–23; *Cheng Ming*, Mar. 1, 1989, pp. 6–9.

lated "Eight Opinions," accusing Zhao of a "failure to perform public opinion, ideological, and theoretical work properly," as well as neglecting grain production and central planning. Chen claimed that "the entire ideological front is occupied by the bourgeoisie, and nothing proletarian is left." Bo Yibo, who had prepared the indictment against Hu Yaobang in January 1987, submitted a "letter of appeal" to Deng Xiaoping complaining about the above-mentioned decennial conference (which he characterized as an "attack on the party Central Committee") and asking that publication of the *World Economic Herald* be suspended and its editor subjected to public criticism. Wang Zhen and Bo Yibo reportedly proposed three times to Deng that Zhao make a self-criticism for mistakes in his work.⁸

The criticism of Zhao from this conservative group (which, in addition to Chen, Wang and Bo, included Li Xiannian, Deng Yingchao, Yao Yilin, and Li Peng) continued to mount during the early spring. In March, Li Xiannian reportedly flew to Shanghai for secret talks with Deng Xiaoping, in which he urged that Zhao be pressed to make a self-criticism and to step down at the imminent Fourth Plenum of the 13th CCP Central Committee in order to clear the way for Li Peng to move into the general secretary slot, Yao Yilin to become premier, and Zou Jiahua (another leader who, like Li Peng, had studied in the Soviet Union) to replace Yao as vice-premier and head of the State Planning Commission. It was proposed that Zhao be allowed to stay on as vice-chairman of the state CMC for six months, as a sop. However, Deng decided to postpone the plenum and what promised to be a stormy leadership showdown until after the Sino-Soviet summit in May.⁹

Zhao thus was caught in the cross-fire between would-be constituents and factional antagonists. In response, he equivocated, adopting a tough rhetorical stance vis-à-vis reformist dissent without permitting a mass-criticism campaign or sanctions with teeth in them. His stance seemed to enjoy the continued protection of Deng, who on January 17, had delivered a speech contending that "we have made great achievements in reform over the past 10 years" and decrying the "trend toward taking the road back" (in economic policy).¹⁰ Zhao and Hu Qili summoned Qin Benli, the editor of *World Economic Herald*, to Beijing for a reprimand following publication of Su Shaozhi's article, and

Hu proclaimed a six-month moratorium on publishing anything written by the 33 protest signatories. But Su was not expelled from the CCP, and the case of Yu Haocheng (a jurist who had written an article in defense of human rights) was not investigated.¹¹ In addition, Zhao decided that Chen Yun's "Eight Opinions" need not be "transmitted throughout the country," and made it stick. In response to Bo's letter to Deng, Zhao remarked: "Intellectuals have their own understanding of problems. What is there to be surprised at?" Although the Propaganda Department compiled a list of targets for criticism, Zhao said at the last minute, "Just ignore it; there is no need for us to handle the case."¹²

However, Zhao did convene several Politburo meetings, during which he denounced Fang Lizhi and the various petition drives mentioned above as tools of international human rights organizations. At an enlarged Politburo meeting on March 5, Zhao gave what was labeled an "important speech" lambasting critics of China's Tibetan policy.¹³ Moreover, large Public Security stations were established at major university campuses in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Xi'an, Wuhan, and Chengdu (Peking University reportedly had the largest one in the nation), and the State Council's Education Commission was encouraged to send work teams to various college campuses to see what the students were up to and to prevent signature-gathering on petitions, the affixing of inflammatory wall posters, or the formation of protest movements.¹⁴

Catalyzing Events

The second session of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which convened in March, brought new hope to reform advocates and also set in motion a chain of events that brought the struggle over reform to a head. To be sure, the session introduced no noteworthy policy initiatives. It hewed to the policy of "curing and rectification" set out in Premier Li Peng's work report, and it sought (not entirely successfully) to prevent the sort of spontaneous expression of unsolicited complaints or proposals that had characterized the first session in 1988—particularly taboo were suggestions for further privatization or calls for a multi-party system. However, the session witnessed the political reappear-

⁸*Ching Pao*, Apr. 10, 1989, pp. 22-23.

⁹*Cheng Ming*, Apr. 1, 1989, pp. 6-9. The Fourth Plenum of the 13th CCP Central Committee originally expected to take place before the March 1989 meeting of the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, did not take place until June.

¹⁰*Cheng Ming*, Mar. 1, 1989, pp. 6-9.

¹¹See Yu Haocheng, "Defending Human Rights," *Shijie zhishi* (Beijing), No. 23, 1988.

¹²*Cheng Ming*, Mar. 1, 1989, pp. 6-9.

¹³*Ibid.*, Apr. 1, 1989, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴*Ibid.*; *Ching Pao*, Apr. 10, 1989, pp. 22-23.

ance of Hu Yaobang, who had not been active in policy forums since his January 1987 dismissal as general secretary.

Hu's real "comeback" came on April 8, at an enlarged Politburo meeting focusing on problems of education. Hu not only attended the meeting, but registered to address it. In carefully prepared remarks, he made an impassioned plea for greater support of education and for stabilizing the intellectuals' position in the life of the state so that this social force would rally around the party. During his speech, Hu fell into an altercation with his old nemesis Bo Yibo and was stricken with a heart attack. On April 15, Hu died. In a conversation with Li Rui shortly before his death, he reportedly confided that one of the things he most regretted was having submitted a self-criticism in January 1989 in which he had implicated others.¹⁵

Hu's death presented the leadership with two thorny problems: namely, what line to take on Hu and his 1987 "resignation," and how to respond to spontaneous demonstrations that broke out upon his death (might one say "martyrdom"?). Zhao and some colleagues proposed a compromise that would praise Hu as a "great Marxist" but not open the question of his resignation. Although Deng agreed to this compromise, some of the other elders refused to commit themselves. The memorial speech had to go through several drafts before winning approval.¹⁶

While the debate over the tone and content of the memorial speech went on, student protesters began to prepare for Hu's April 22 funeral. On the evening of April 19, thousands of students gathered in Tiananmen Square, where they staged a sit-in before the Xinhua gate and demanded the right to "petition" the CCP leaders. Their petition included demands for a reevaluation of the December 1986 student movement, a reassessment of Hu Yaobang's resignation, repudiation of the 1987 anti-spiritual pollution campaign, granting of freedom of the press, provision of more funds for students, and a crackdown on corruption. This demonstration was forcibly dispersed by armed police.¹⁷

Despite an official ban on demonstrations in the central square on April 22, the date of the official memorial service for Hu in the Great Hall of the People, an estimated 100–150,000 students occupied the square the night before and staged a sit-in, despite threatening troop and police movements and leaks to the effect that

the Ministry of Public Security had already prepared a blacklist of student leaders from universities throughout the country. On the morning of April 22, more contingents of students began marching toward the square to reinforce their comrades. That evening, the Politburo held an urgent meeting at which it was resolved: not to relent on the campaign against bourgeois liberalization, not to permit the mourning to put pressure on the government, and to end the mourning for Hu.¹⁸ In response, on April 24, the students declared a classroom boycott of indefinite duration and announced the formation of a "national students' federation preparatory committee"—the first step toward establishing autonomous student and labor unions.¹⁹

Zhao Ziyang had departed on April 23 for a scheduled week-long visit to North Korea for consultations with the Korean Workers' Party, leaving only vague instructions on how to cope with the escalating situation in Tiananmen Square. As soon as he was out of the country, party hard-liners began to respond to the demonstrations as if confronted by a national emergency. Li Peng convened the Politburo Standing Committee (Yang Shangkun also attended) on April 24 to discuss the situation. The next day Li and Yang reported to Deng Xiaoping, who came over to their way of thinking and gave a response that was recorded verbatim and widely circulated to cadres:

We have set a very high value on Hu Yaobang, . . . but some people do not feel satisfied with this. They want to build him up as a "great Marxist." We are not qualified to be "great Marxists." I am not qualified either. . . . Hu Yaobang was irresolute and made concessions in combating liberalization. The drive against spiritual pollution lasted only a little over 20 days. If we had vigorously launched the drive, the ideological field would not have been as it is today, and would not have been so tumultuous. . . . This is the same old stuff as was prevalent during the Cultural Revolution: Some people are craving nothing short of national chaos. . . . We must take a clear-cut stand and forceful measures to oppose and stop the upheaval. Don't be afraid of students, because we still have several million troops.²⁰

Deng further claimed the demonstrations were led by

¹⁵See *Ching Pao*, May 10, 1989, pp. 22–26; also, *Cheng Ming*, May 1, 1989, pp. 11–12.

¹⁶*Cheng Ming*, May 1, 1989, pp. 10, 94–95; *Ching Pao*, July 10, 1989, pp. 42–48.

¹⁷*Cheng Ming*, May 1, 1989, pp. 94–95.

¹⁸*Ching Pao*, May 10, 1989, pp. 22–26. There seems to have been a split at the April 22 meeting, as Wan Li expressed the view that "we must not confront the tough with toughness." *Cheng Ming*, June 1, 1989, pp. 6–10, 89.

¹⁹*Cheng Ming*, June 1, 1989, pp. 6–10.

²⁰*Ching Pao*, May 10, 1989, pp. 22–26.

"people with ulterior motives" engaged in a "premeditated conspiracy" aimed at negating the socialist system, and he warned, as he had in December 1986, of the lessons learned from the Polish developments of 1980–81: "Events in Poland prove that making concessions provides no solutions. The greater the concessions the government made, the greater the opposition forces became."

The gist of Deng's views was incorporated into a now-famous editorial broadcast on April 25 and published on April 26 in the party daily, *Renmin ribao*, under the title: "It Is Necessary to Take a Clear-Cut Stand Against the Disturbance." It was immediately evident, however, that Deng's hard line was not going to be the solution to the growing crisis. On April 27, the largest spontaneous demonstration in 40 years of CCP rule was launched to protest the editorial. Although the authorities had warned that "troops will be dispatched when necessary" to enforce the official prohibition of demonstrations, security forces made only token efforts to halt the 50–100,000 students who marched all day through the streets of Beijing and finally broke through police lines to surge into Tiananmen Square. An estimated 1 million Beijing residents also poured out of their offices and factories to applaud and support the demonstrators.

Although Deng's remarks did not head off the demonstrations, they may have had one important effect: the protest organizers maintained tight discipline over their ranks to avoid provoking what appeared to be an imminent crackdown. They formed a human chain on either side of the eight-kilometer-long procession to maintain order and prevent outsiders from joining in or from suppressing the action and to prevent acts of vandalism. The marchers interspersed their protests with patriotic songs and slogans and in their vanguard carried banners proclaiming "Long Live Communism" and "Support the Correct Leadership of the Party."

The leadership was taken aback by these tactics and, in the absence of a consensus on how to cope with the situation, began to split into two factions—"hawks" and "doves." At an April 28 Politburo meeting on how to respond to the demonstrations, some of the younger members (reportedly including Yan Mingfu, Bao Tong, and Li Tianming) counseled against a crackdown. Yuan Mu, spokesman for the State Council, in a televised meeting with students on April 29 said that the target of the provocative April 26 editorial had been not the broad masses of patriotic students but "a small minority" of "behind-the-scenes plotters."²¹

Although Zhao Ziyang had reportedly originally approved the April 26 editorial by telegram from Pyongyang, upon his return from North Korea, he traveled to Beidaihe to apprise Deng of his misgivings about its "strident" tone. Deng, perhaps chastened by the miscarriage of his own preferred hard-nosed solution, reportedly told Zhao: "The most important thing you should do is stabilize the situation. . . . If the situation is under control, you can implement your plans if they prove feasible, disregarding whatever I have said."²² Armed with this conditional endorsement, Zhao made an impromptu speech on May 4 to representatives of the Asian Development Bank assembled in Beijing, in which he set forth a new, softer line. Estimating that the majority of the students "are in no way opposed to our basic system; they only demand that we correct malpractices in our work," he called for further reforms to improve the legal system and for popular supervision over the party. "Now we must most urgently keep calm, exercise reason and restraint, and maintain order," he said. "We must solve problems on the track of democracy and legality."²³

Zhao's soft line remained in effect for two weeks, although hard-liners disavowed it.²⁴ Unfortunately, it neither solved the immediate problem of removing the demonstrators from the square, nor succeeded in converting them into a mass base of support for long-term reforms. Zhao reportedly put forward two proposals to deal with the student movement—a return to the political line of the 13th CCP Congress (which had proposed reforms of the political structure) and the retirement of all senior cadres over the age of 75—but was unable to gain Politburo endorsement for them.²⁵ Yet, even these proposals (probably inadequate from the demonstrators' viewpoint) infuriated the hard-liners, who had been diverted from the crackdown on the demonstrators and were now watching for a sign of failure in the soft line so as to justify the purge of Zhao that they had already contemplated earlier in the year.

The period was a difficult one for the demonstrators. They had to cope with the regime's efforts to minimize differences between the government and the demonstrators and to co-opt them. These efforts fragmented the movement's leadership, leading to an escalation of student demands in an attempt to forestall attrition of

²²*South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong—hereafter, *SCMP*), May 29, 1989; *Ming Pao*, May 26, 1989.

²³*Cheng Ming*, June 1, 1989, pp. 6–10.

²⁴Li Peng and Yao Yilin complained that the Zhao speech had not been discussed in advance by the Politburo's Standing Committee. "Zhao Ziyang acted as a fine man, landing us in a passive position," Jiang Zemin reportedly remarked at a Politburo meeting during this period.

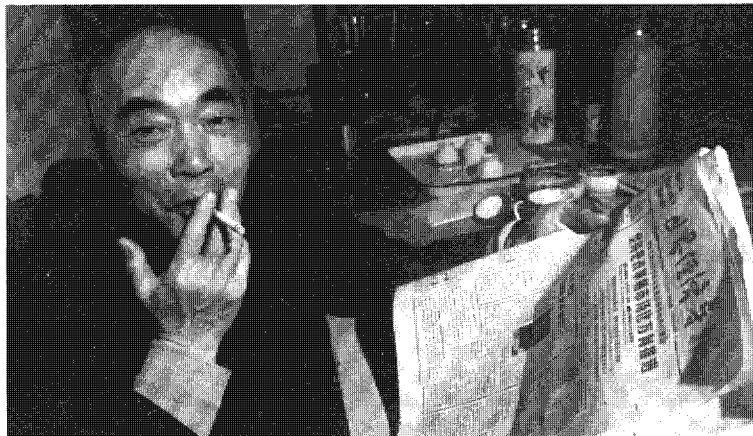
²⁵*Ming Pao*, June 1, 1989.

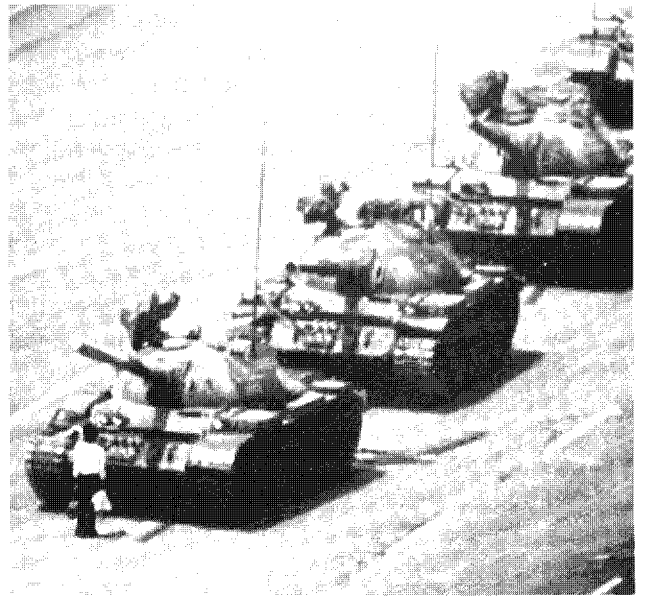
²¹*FEER*, May 11, 1989, pp. 11–12.



China's democracy movement in action, clockwise from above: thousands of students mourn former party leader Hu Yaobang; a demonstrator with a sign denouncing Premier Li Peng after he declared martial law in Beijing; students parade the "Goddess of Democracy" through Tiananmen Square on May 30; Qin Benli, editor of the World Economic Herald, a Shanghai-based reform newspaper.

—Photos by Magnum, Wide World, Gamma-Liaison, and Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos.





Drama in Beijing, clockwise from top left: nurses tend to student hunger strikers; a courageous Beijing citizen faces army tanks advancing toward Tiananmen Square on the Avenue of Eternal Peace on June 5; Jiang Zemin, secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee, who was elevated to the post of General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party on June 24, 1989; Zhao Ziyang, then party general secretary, speaks to the hunger strikers after martial law had been declared.

—First three photos by Magnum, last two by Eastfoto.



the movement and maintain the opposition stance that gave the students' movement its identity. The students demanded a "dialogue" with the authorities, but when various representatives of the regime (including Yan Mingfu and Li Tianming) acceded to this demand, the students further demanded that the talks be televised. There resulted at least two such discussions on live TV (a four-hour session with Yuan Mu on April 29, and a meeting with Li Peng, Yan Mingfu, Chen Xitong, and others on May 18). After the first TV discussion, the students demanded that the government spokesmen meet exclusively with representatives of their autonomous student union (thereby conferring recognition on this group), and on May 13, some 1,000 students began a sit-in and hunger strike in Tiananmen Square to protest the refusal of the authorities to conduct such a dialogue.²⁶

Enter *Glasnost*

The hunger strike was doubtless timed to coincide with the scheduled May 15–18 summit meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and top Chinese leaders. The presence of large numbers of representatives from the Western news media in Beijing to record the summit not only gave the demonstrators reason to assume that there might not be any crackdown for at least three days, but it also provided them an international audience. They ignored Zhao's appeal not to disrupt the summit, thus forcing the authorities to shift the locus of several of the scheduled events of the summit, including the official welcoming ceremony for Gorbachev.

Perhaps also related in some measure to the summit, Hu Qili decided to accede on May 16 to a demand by Chinese journalists for greater press freedom, and China's central media promptly began to report on the demonstrations factually and prominently, disseminating this information throughout the land. In Beijing, the movement swelled to more than 1 million people.²⁷ Around the country, some cities, such as Xi'an and Shanghai, had already experienced unrest following Hu Yaobang's death; now, the democracy movement spread to more than 20 provincial capitals.

These developments spelt the doom of Zhao's conciliatory approach. Deng Xiaoping now threw his support to the hard-liners, and with Yang Shangkun, Chen

Yun, and Li Xiannian, arranged an expanded meeting of the CMC in the Western Hills of Beijing on May 16. The meeting rejected the declaration of nation-wide martial law, but apparently decided to impose it on parts of the capital and worked out a detailed plan to assemble the requisite troops.²⁸

When leaders of some military regions said they would have difficulty in dispatching troops, Yang brought the problem to Deng, who traveled to Wuhan to meet with commanders and political commissars of the major military regions. Deng succeeded in getting troops transferred from Hubei, Hunan, Inner Mongolia, and Sichuan; 13 group armies out of a total of 24 in the country's seven military regions sent a total of some 100,000 well-armed soldiers to ring the capital. It was the first time since 1949 that main force units had been sent to Beijing (which is normally out of bounds for all but the Beijing garrison).²⁹

At a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee on May 16, Zhao made a "Five-Point Proposal" for concessions to the demonstrators: this included retraction of the April 26 editorial, assumption by Zhao of personal responsibility for its original publication, establishment of an organization under the NPC empowered to investigate corruption on the part of high officials or their relatives (including Zhao's two sons), and publication of details about the finances of high-level cadres (at the level of vice-minister and above), and elimination of their special privileges. This proposal was defeated by a vote of 4 to 1.³⁰

That Zhao and Deng were now at loggerheads became evident later the same day, when Zhao met with Gorbachev. Zhao commented in the course of their talk that on the whole, political reform should keep up with economic reform, otherwise the latter could not succeed. Then, looking straight into the TV camera, he noted that "Since the 13th Party Congress, we have always made reports to and asked for opinions from comrade Deng Xiaoping while dealing with most important issues."³¹ This remark, construed as flattery at the time, made Deng furious, since it revealed him to be the man pulling the strings behind the scenes at a time when very tough decisions were about to be made.

At a Politburo meeting on May 17, Zhao again argued that the April 26 editorial be disavowed, but Deng countered, "We cannot retreat. One retreat will lead to

²⁶FEER, May 28, 1989, pp. 10–11, and June 1, 1989, pp. 12–18; SCMP, May 13, 1989.

²⁷From May 16 to May 27, more than 200,000 students from other provinces poured into Beijing. The government sent more than 100,000 of these by offering them free tickets. See *Ming Pao*, May 26, 1989.

²⁸*Asiaweek*, June 9, 1989, p. 24; *Cheng Ming*, June 1, 1989, pp. 6–10, 89.

²⁹*Cheng Ming*, June 1, 1989, pp. 6–10, 89. See the transcript of the May 22 meeting containing Yang Shangkun's speech (which attributes responsibility for the fatal decision squarely to Deng Xiaoping), as published in *Ming Pao*, May 29, 1989.

³⁰FEER, June 1, 1989, pp. 12–18; *Ming Pao*, May 21, 1989.

³¹SCMP, May 17, 1989.

another," and added, "Comrade Ziyang, your speech to the Asian Development Bank officials on May 4 became a turning point because after that the students created more serious disturbances." Zhao replied, "Let comrade Xiaoping make the final decision."³² But Zhao also wrote a letter addressed to Deng, the Politburo, and its Standing Committee, in which he said that he wanted to resign from his post of general secretary because his ideas were "different from yours, and I cannot go along with your decision; if I continue to work with the Standing Committee, I might be an obstacle to the Standing Committee's implementation of the ideas of several senior colleagues, including Chairman Deng."³³ His resignation was refused at the time, apparently for fear that it would strengthen his popularity and cast Deng and other leaders in a bad light.

At a Politburo meeting early on the morning of May 19, Zhao offered to take full responsibility for the demonstrations and, at the same time, called once again for an investigation into corruption by top leaders and their relatives, including his own sons. This apparently led to an argument between Deng and Zhao in which threats were exchanged. Zhao again offered his resignation, which Deng again rejected. Zhao then returned home, ordered a car, and drove out to the square to talk to some of the hunger strikers; he was followed by a suspicious Li Peng. "We've come too late," Zhao told the demonstrators. "I'm sorry. You criticize us and blame us. It is reasonable that you should do so."³⁴ Zhao then returned to Zhongnanhai (the leadership's special compound), where he refused to see visitors, claiming to be ill.

Shortly after Zhao's visit to the square, the military moved to occupy television and radio stations and the premises of the official print media, and large troop contingents began entering the capital. At midnight, Li Peng declared martial law in a nationally televised speech before an audience of several thousand party and military officials at a military hotel. Zhao's conspicuous absence from the group of five on the stage (which included the other four Politburo Standing Committee members, plus Yang Shangkun) made the split in the leadership public.³⁵

Deng and the Politburo Standing Committee moved to strip Zhao of all his power and placed him under virtual house arrest. On May 23, the party's CMC sent a cable to the whole army, stating that only Deng and Yang had the right to transfer troops (as vice-chairman of the parallel state Central Military Commission, Zhao could conceivably have issued counteracting orders). Meanwhile, Zhao withdrew his resignation and defiantly refused to back down.³⁶

In contrast to 1986–87, when dismissal of a sympa-

thetic CCP general secretary (Hu Yaobang) left students alone and cowed, regime actions in May 1989 triggered a massive outpouring of support for the demonstrators. An estimated 1 million people flooded into the streets to protest martial law and prevent the military from marching to Tiananmen Square to evict the students. Throughout the weekend of May 20–21, there were equally impressive demonstrations of support in many other cities throughout China, including Guangzhou, as well as outside the PRC, e.g., in Hong Kong.

Even though Zhao was now powerless, his refusal to make a self-criticism may have heartened his supporters. The CCP leadership began to splinter. There are reports that Yan Mingfu and more than 150 other top party cadres wrote a joint letter to the Central Committee, urging it not to use force to suppress the pro-democracy movement. In the ministries of justice and public security, too, there was pro-Zhao (or anti-Li) sentiment. Some 260 high-ranking officers from the CMC, the General Political Department, the General Logistics Department of the PLA, and the Beijing Military Region wrote a letter to Yang Shangkun arguing against any use of force to clear the square. On May 21, about two dozen veteran military officers tried in vain to get an audience with Deng Xiaoping; instead, Yang Shangkun met with a five-man delegation for about 30 minutes and asked them to take the overall situation into account and resolutely and unconditionally carry out CMC decisions. Later the same day, seven senior generals, including former Defense Minister Zhang Aiping and retired chief of staff Yang Dezhi, reportedly drafted a petition (signed by more than 100 other officers) calling on troops not to fight civilians, and sent it to the CMC; China's two surviving marshals, 90-year-old Nie Rongzhen and 88-year-old Xu Xiangqian, also expressed opposition to deploying PLA forces in civilian areas. Deng Yingchao issued a statement that refused to recognize martial law. Finally, some 57 of the 135 members of the NPC's Standing Committee demanded that the group's chairman, Wan Li, convene an emergency session of the parliament to deal with the crisis.³⁷

³²*Ming Pao*, May 30, 1989.

³³*FEER*, June 8, 1989, pp. 14–18.

³⁴*Asiaweek*, June 2, 1989, pp. 23–29, quote on p. 27.

³⁵Yang told an emergency meeting of the CMC on May 24, "The students feel there is a person in the Party CC who supports them, and therefore, they stir up greater trouble. . . . Without the participation of the General Secretary, people could immediately discern the problem." *Ming Pao*, May 29, 1989.

³⁶*Asiaweek*, June 2, 1989, pp. 23–29.

³⁷*Cheng Ming*, June 1, 1989, pp. 6–10, 89. In response to the bidding of the NPC, a cautious Wan Li returned prematurely from a trip to the United States on May 25, but he then accepted Deng Xiaoping's invitation to "rest" in Shanghai until the situation sorted itself out in Beijing.

Ming Pao, May 31, 1989.

The initial euphoria over the unexpected failure of the authorities to enforce martial law did not last long. Once the authorities had informed the demonstrators that their acts were now illegal and had regained control over the news media, the movement's momentum seemed to slacken. After Zhao's removal, the government replaced negotiations with a cold silence. The student demonstrators, who had numbered some 200,000 at the height of the protest, dwindled to approximately 10,000 on the eve of the June 3–4 crackdown, and the movement's leadership was riven by disputes over what the next step should be. Nevertheless, sustained by a stream of cash donations from China's private sector and from overseas sympathizers, and reinforced by recruits streaming into the capital, the movement was hard put to dissolve itself.

The CCP leadership was similarly unsure about how to proceed. The failure of the hard-line strategy to remove the demonstrators seemed to validate Zhao's arguments. Because his opponents seemed to have willy-nilly adopted his Fabian strategy, it would be hard to expel Zhao from the party leadership for violations of party discipline. To charge Zhao with the more serious offense of being a counterrevolutionary would subject him to a possible death penalty, and there were fears that the accusation that the Secretary General was splitting his own party would be greeted with ridicule and would probably not win acceptance from a majority in the Central Committee. Hence, the Fourth Plenum was delayed further.

Finally, the hard-liners decided to accuse Zhao of links to a "counterrevolutionary rebellion" of their own making. On the afternoon of June 2, Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, Li Peng, Wang Zhen, Bo Yibo, Qiao Shi, and Yao Yilin held a meeting at Deng's home to finalize preparations for the forcible dispersing of the student demonstrators. Upon learning of the decision, Zhao made phone calls to Yang, Li, and other Standing Committee members to appeal to them not to carry out the crackdown. On the same evening, he apparently staged his own brief hunger strike.³⁸

The Massacre and Sequel

Once the decision was made to use armed military troops to remove the demonstrators from Tiananmen, it was carried out swiftly and brutally. On the night of June 3–4, the PLA, which had been stationed in and around Beijing, used its overwhelming firepower to clear the

streets, killing at least several hundred civilians in and about Tiananmen. As in 1987, the move against democratic forces in the capital was immediately generalized throughout the country, only in much harsher terms than before. The number of officially reported arrests as of early July 1989 exceeded 2,500; unofficial estimates put the figure at more than 10,000. Officials have announced at least 27 executions. Secret lists of intellectuals whose thinking was considered to be a source of the students' misbehavior were compiled for systematic pursuit and purge. As in the campaigns of the 1950's, units have been assigned quotas of purge targets in at least some instances.³⁹

Following the bloodbath of June 3–4, there was a brief hiatus during which few members of the central leadership were to be seen. Then on June 9, Deng, looking radiant, made a surprise TV appearance (his first since the Gorbachev summit). Together with other gerontocrats and a covey of military officers he paid tribute to the soldiers who had died defending the capital against "anarchy." His speech on that occasion has been quoted more extensively than any other document since the days of Chairman Mao.⁴⁰ At roughly the same time, in preparation for the convening of the Fourth Plenum of the CCP Central Committee on June 23, all full and alternate members of the CCP Central Committee were invited to a meeting to see doctored documentaries on the "counterrevolutionary rebellion," listen to reports, and study Deng's speech; this was followed by group discussions of the materials.⁴¹

According to officials charged with preparing for the Fourth Plenum, more than 50 Central Committee members and alternate members asked for sick leave or a leave of absence so as not to have to attend the plenum, an indication of continuing sharp division within this important party body. Zhao Ziyang's request for an opportunity to speak at the plenum was rejected.⁴² Fittingly enough, it was Li Peng who presented the Politburo report that expelled Zhao from all his party posts. A special group was also set up to "look further into his case," leaving open the possibility that Zhao may yet be expelled from the party and placed on trial (the former is a precondition for the latter, because party members cannot be tried). Through the summer and fall of 1989, this possibility steadily receded, as Deng Xiao-

³⁹FEER, July 6, 1989, pp. 10–13.

⁴⁰Ibid., June 29, 1989, pp. 10–12.

⁴¹Cheng Ming, July 1, 1989, pp. 6–9.

⁴²Ibid. Zhao was allowed to make a statement in his own defense to an expanded Politburo meeting convened before the plenum; in this speech, he denied criminal links to "counterrevolutionaries" and insisted that he had acted out of what he had believed were the best interests of the party and the people.

³⁸Cheng Ming, July 1, 1989, pp. 6–9.

ping finally rallied to the defense of his own economic reforms, whose survival would have been jeopardized by a public trial of one so closely associated with them.

To replace Zhao as secretary general, Chen Yun nominated Yao Yilin, while Peng Zhen recommended Qiao Shi. Deng broke the resulting stalemate by nominating Jiang Zemin, former party secretary of Shanghai, who won by only a slight majority of seven votes. Jiang studied in Moscow in the early 1950's, where he was almost certainly a classmate of Li Peng, and he is said to be very close (rumored to be a son-in-law) to Li Xiannian. Widely perceived a supporter of reform when deputy secretary of the Shanghai Municipal CCP Committee, Jiang came to Deng's attention for the hard line he took against the *World Economic Herald* (firing editor Qin Benli when he published minutes from a restricted briefing on Hu Yaobang in April), and his successful suppression of Shanghai's democracy movement. After the Beijing massacre, he took charge of a nationwide propaganda campaign that blanketed the country with very skillfully assembled videos and photographs that purported to prove that the capital had been threatened by a counterrevolutionary insurrection.

The plenum purged Hu Qili from the Politburo, but he retained his seat on the Central Committee. It also removed from the secretariat, in addition to Zhao, Rui Xingwen, formerly in charge of ideology, and united front chief Yan Mingfu, who had borne overall responsibility for negotiations with the democracy demonstrators. Also apparently purged were Wan Jiabao (head of the CC's General Affairs Department), Du Rensheng (director of the CC's Rural Policy Research Center), An Zhiwen (vice-minister of the State Commission for Reform of the Economic Structure), and Bao Tong (head of the Institute for Reform of the Political Structure).

Chief beneficiaries of this purge include Song Ping, 72, a former chief of the Organization Department, vice-minister and then minister of the State Planning Commission (a Cultural Revolution "survivor" and protégé of Chen Yun); and Li Ruihuan, 55, an energetic former mayor of Tianjin (rumored to be the son-in-law of Wan Li). Both became full members of the new six-man Standing Committee of the CCP Politburo, together with Li Peng, Jiang Zemin, Qiao Shi, and Yao Yilin. Li Ruihan was also given the propaganda portfolio and promptly initiated a purge of *Renmin ribao*.

On June 30, the NPC Standing Committee, on which the reformers had staked their last desperate hopes, finally held its Eighth Session, to "study and discuss" the decisions of the previous week's Central Committee Plenum. The NPC Standing Committee's Chairman, Wan Li, called the military crackdown "legal, correct, and necessary," noting pointedly that "proletarian revolu-

tionaries of the older generation represented by comrade Deng Xiaoping had played a significant role in this struggle." Hu Jiwei, a member of the Standing Committee and president of the journalism confederation, came under criticism for having led a signature campaign to petition the NPC Standing Committee to convene a special session to abrogate martial law. Deng Xiaoping personally moved to dismiss Zhao Ziyang from his last remaining governmental position, that of vice-chairman of the state Central Military Commission (the shadow body of the party CMC). The motion carried overwhelmingly, although three of the 132 Standing Committee members, resisting strong pressure to make the vote unanimous, abstained from voting altogether, and three others failed to activate the voting mechanism.⁴³

Tiananmen in Perspective

The hard-liners' actions were swift and "effective" in obtaining their immediate objectives of ending the demonstrations and removing Zhao from power. The long-term impact of the crackdown remains to be seen. At this point, one can offer only a tentative assessment of the consequences of these events on the Chinese political system, on economic performance and policy, and on China's relations with the outside world. Let us explore these three subject areas in reverse sequence, which reflects their ascending order of importance.

Impact on China's "open door." Although the new leadership has reaffirmed China's interest in continued economic openness to the outside world, such relations have been seriously damaged because of the crackdown. This is not an inconsequential matter. In the period 1978-87, the share of foreign trade in China's total gross national product had increased from 10.2 percent to 29.7 percent, making the PRC more trade-dependent than the United States.⁴⁴ In response to US President George Bush's call on international lending institutions to postpone issuance of new loans to the PRC as a sign of outrage at the Beijing massacre, the World Bank and Japan froze aid projects worth some US\$10 billion; the Asian Development Bank postponed decision on new loans worth some \$1 billion; and the International Monetary Fund also suspended action on loan applications from China. It is unlikely that private commercial banks will extend additional loans until international aid agencies decide to make new commit-

⁴³SCMP, July 1, 1989.

⁴⁴FEER, Mar. 2, 1989, p. 49.

ments. Although moral compunctions may play some role in the decision whether or not to resume lending to China, a more important factor by far is how lending institutions perceive the prospects for China's economic stability over the next several years—witness the announcement by Moody's Investors' Service that it would review China's credit rating.⁴⁵ Over the next six months, foreign investment and loan agreements signed before June 3 will provide a steady capital inflow to China, but by the second half of 1990, as the sanctions take hold, the country will face a liquidity crisis.

Western firms already involved in China will presumably try to make good on existing investments, but firms that were on the verge of investing are now likely to think twice. The tourist industry, an important source of hard currency (\$2.2 billion in 1988), has most obviously been adversely affected: major hotels in the PRC reported occupancy rates of 7–10 percent in June.⁴⁶

Yao Yilin apparently has suggested in an unpublished speech that China deal with its sudden financial ostracism by turning its back on the United States and Japan and seeking closer cooperation with the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ However, the USSR has its own budget deficit at present and may not be prepared to offer appreciably better trade terms than the West, despite the recent normalization of Sino-Soviet relations.⁴⁸

Retrenchment and reform setbacks. China is likely to experience budget and trade deficits in the coming year and well beyond. The crackdown has clearly reinforced the economic retrenchment that has been under way since the Third Plenum of the 13th Central Committee, in September 1988. To the extent that the retrenchment has succeeded in cooling the overheated Chinese economy, it has reduced state revenues. The PRC seems to be heading into its fifth consecutive year of agricultural stagnation, which will probably require it to import as much as 15–16 million tons of grain in 1989.⁴⁹ The Chinese government forecast a \$2 billion deficit for the year in March, but the figure is now likely to be high-

er, due to expenditures for the maintenance of martial law troops and for price subsidies and worker bonuses approved in the hope of quelling social discontent. To slow continuing price rises, the authorities have been both diverting exports to the domestic market and importing more. These two steps had already resulted in a \$4.6 billion trade deficit for the January–May period.⁵⁰ If more money is printed to cope with the twin deficits, inflation will accelerate.

The difference between the current retrenchment and earlier ones, as Zhao Ziyang pointed out,⁵¹ is that this is the first to be superimposed on a two-tiered price system, so it is quite possible to get a slowdown of economic growth without any decline in inflation, a phenomenon known in the West as "stagflation." Indeed, this seems to have been the impact of the "curing and rectification" campaign so far—inflation has remained high or even escalated (it was running at an annual rate of 28.5 percent from January through May 1989), despite an economic slowdown, bankruptcies, growing unemployment, and budget deficits.⁵²

It is possible to argue that a period of political repression is more consistent with this particular phase of China's "business cycle" than would be the initiation of ambitious new reforms, economic or political. Throughout the last decade, periods of reform vitality have consistently coincided with economic expansion, blatant appeals to material appetites, and rising living standards. By contrast, during periods of economic retrenchment, the reform process has slowed or given way to campaigns against "spiritual pollution" and other forms of corruption, to repudiation of materialism in favor of "thought and political work" and selflessness, as symbolized by Lei Feng.

If the bleak economic forecast given above is accurate, one might reasonably expect this period of economic retrenchment to be relatively short. In the past, when such upheavals resulted in the deferral of reforms, the balance always eventually swung back in favor of new reforms, with the apparent help of Deng. However, this time, Deng's commitment to reform seems less certain, and his position may be much weaker without Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili. Moreover, given Deng's complaint that the cause of present difficulties is the failure to carry out thorough anti-liberalization campaigns in the past, one might reasonably expect

⁴⁵ *Asiaweek*, June 30, 1989, pp. 28–34.

⁴⁶ Based on a conversation with an American teacher who remained in Shanghai through late June 1989.

⁴⁷ *Asiaweek*, June 9, 1989, p. 2. In September 1989, a new "half-half" policy was announced, according to which future Chinese foreign trade will be equally divided between Western capitalist countries, on the one hand, and various socialist countries, on the other. *Renmin ribao* (Beijing), Sept. 14, 1989.

⁴⁸ Indeed, one of the reasons that the USSR has been so willing to allow its East European allies to find their own path to socialism is that the Soviet Union can no longer afford to subsidize them. From a personal communication with Oleg Bogomolov, director the Institute of the Economics of the World Socialist System.

⁴⁹ *Kuang Chiao Ching* (Hong Kong), Apr. 16, 1989, pp. 22–25; *FEER*, July 13, 1989, p. 71.

⁵⁰ *Asiaweek*, July 7, 1989, pp. 26–31.

⁵¹ *Xinhua* (Beijing), Apr. 11, 1989, as cited in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: China* (Washington, DC), Apr. 12, 1989, pp. 13–14.

⁵² *Asiaweek*, July 7, 1989, pp. 26–31; *China News Analysis* (Hong Kong), No. 1385, May 15, 1989; *FEER*, Oct. 20, 1988, pp. 70–71.

this latest campaign to be more protracted.

The price reform launched in the spring of 1988 proved politically disastrous, and ownership reforms have encountered ideological objections from those with whom Deng chose to align himself to crack down on the democracy activists. There does not seem to be a very coherent policy program to return to, and surviving reformers may well be too shell-shocked to stick their necks out for new experiments.

Conservatives within the leadership have sought—increasingly so after the elimination of both Hu and Zhao—to utilize the retrenchment to gut market reforms and restore the planning apparatus. The rectification campaign launched under the auspices of Jiang Zemin has focused its attacks on private businesses, services, and rural enterprise—all areas associated with Zhao Ziyang—claiming that these are the source of corruption and inequality. The government has also renewed its monopoly over the pricing and distribution of some major commodities—such as cotton, steel, and grain—reimposing single fixed prices in hopes of thereby curbing inflation. Since the Third Plenum of the 13th CC, the number of commodities over which the government has resumed monopoly control has risen from a dozen or so to 32. The central planning system, led by the powerful State Planning Commission, has regained the importance it enjoyed before the reforms. The wings of enterprises are being clipped as the People's Bank of China tries to limit the expansion of credit. In foreign trade, all unauthorized companies are targeted for closing.

Political system. As for the political system per se, the prospect of "structural reform" can probably be dismissed for the foreseeable future. Even the credibility of those modest political reforms that have been achieved

(particularly the notion of the CAC as a solution to the problems of superannuated cadres and, more generally, of political institutionalization) has been left in shambles by this latest episode.

The line of political succession has also gone awry for the second time in as many years. In July, Deng Xiaoping again expressed his desire to step out of the limelight, and in September, he indicated that Jiang Zemin was his candidate for the succession.⁵³ Yet, Deng has also been quoted as refusing to resign from the chairmanship of the party's CMC until the CAC, chaired by Chen Yun, is dissolved.⁵⁴

Beyond the problem of which individual is to succeed to power, China will also continue to face for the next decade or so the issue of the death of an entire generation of leaders. Until their successors are firmly in place, the CCP leadership may well remain unstable.

Of even greater significance, perhaps, is the question of legitimacy. That the legitimacy of the regime was severely damaged by the bloodbath is a journalistic cliché. Even before the Tiananmen massacre, legitimacy was seriously attenuated, explaining the difficulty the regime had in deciding how and when to use the army. According to Deng Xiaoping's conceptualization—namely, that legitimacy is based on the credibility of the threat to use violence—the crackdown should have bolstered legitimacy.⁵⁵ But if legitimacy is based on any notion of the reasoned consent of the governed, the use of violence to compel obedience signals a failure. We may well have an opportunity over the next few years to see which of these theories is most relevant.

By way of conclusion, it would seem that the majority of the top Chinese leadership, facing very serious and complex problems for which no easy solutions presented themselves, succumbed to the temptation to translate these problems into moral and ideological terms with which they were more familiar. But the betting at this point is that this translation was not appropriate to contemporary circumstances, i.e., that the suppression of the democracy demonstrators and purge of the reformers will not solve, but rather will exacerbate, the underlying problems of contemporary China. The most basic of these underlying problems, it seems to me, is the need to construct a credible vision of the nation's future economic development, around which a political consensus can be built.

⁵³Deng's most recent succession scenario was publicly disclosed in a commentary by Yuan Mu in *Renmin ribao*, Oct. 10, 1989. See *Oakland Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1989, p. C/10.

⁵⁴SCMP, Apr. 12, 1989.

⁵⁵Deng, a strong advocate of the use of violence to teach lessons, whether to Vietnam, to Democracy Wall activists, or to potential criminals (the once called capital punishment an indispensable educational technique), believed that the legitimacy of the communist system had been eroding largely because of the failure of weaklings like Hu Yaobang or Zhao Ziyang to maintain the credibility of the regime's willingness to use force. Deng's disappointment in Hu was quite evident in his posthumous remarks of April 25; see *Ching Pao*, May 10, 1989, pp. 22–26.