

Workers Arise!

Tiananmen Square
1989
and the
Chinese independent
workers' movement

Sourcebook
compiled by
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1 Introduction

The real history of the democracy movement that swept China during 1989 has yet to be written. The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wants the world to forget the Tiananmen Square massacre that it instigated. The CCP denies that thousands were killed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the police and other security forces. It maligned the democracy movement as 'turmoil' led by 'criminals'. It represses the slightest signs of commemoration, erases the protests from publications and denies the demands for freedom made by millions.

But the democracy movement cannot be so easily ignored. There is so much television footage, so many publications, photographs and other artifacts. So many people took part, and some got out of the prisons and the labour camps they were sent to, and gave their testimony. Many bore witness, and would not forget. Revolutionary socialists must never forget the Chinese movement and how it was repressed. We continue to stand in solidarity with those who rose up.

Globally, there are many laudable books on the events of 1989. Most histories of the Chinese democracy movement, as important as they are, do not generally capture the whole story. There are many fine accounts of the heroic role of the university students, who instigated the movement, articulated many of its best critiques and who fought to the end against the overwhelming military forces stacked against them. Nobody should forget the role the students played and their vital contribution. Many of those who took part, despite the repression that followed, will not have forgotten what they did.

Workers' central role in the democracy movement is often missing from the narrative. Workers took action, marched, organised, took strike action, organised picket squads, made solidarity and fought against the repression. The regime understood that once the workers moved, its foundations would be shaken. Some of the student activists realised that workers' action was crucial to winning not only democracy but wider social transformation. A layer of Chinese workers found their voice, began to organise independently and became a political force in their own right for the first time in decades.

During 1989, the democracy movement triggered a magnificent wave of solidarity across the globe. The Chinese struggle took place within the context of a generalised revolt within the Stalinist states to throw off the bureaucratic ruling classes that had governed them for decades. Globally, thousands of socialists organised protests outside Chinese embassies, lobbied their own governments and tried to make direct links with activists in China. The newspaper *Socialist Organiser* carried reports and analysis. Comrades helped to build the China Solidarity Campaign, taking the issues onto the streets and into the labour movement.

The AWL publishes these documents to salute the struggles of Chinese workers in the past, but also to herald the battles of Chinese workers in the present. Learning from the events in Tiananmen Square and across China in 1989 is a matter of internationalism, but it is also an immediate necessity for activists within China. Ongoing battles in the factories, Hong Kong and by the Uyghurs all require a new democratic movement.

The texts show the growing political maturity of the emerging workers' movement. They began to develop a class critique of the autocratic rulers, and to flesh out the roots of their exploitation and oppression. They began to articulate an increasingly independent working class perspective. From singing *The Internationale* to identifying with the Paris Commune, the workers started to see themselves as the decisive force in shaping reform and beyond. These developments were tragically cut short by the crackdown. But the workers did not go quietly – they too fought to the end.

Some of the documents first reached a wider audience through the Hong Kong Trotskyist magazine, *October Review*, which made materials available in its June 1989 and November 1989 editions. These and others texts were collated in Chinese as *Gongren Qilailiao*, and published by the Hong Kong Trade Union Education Centre. They were first translated in Lu Ping's *A Moment of Truth: Workers' Participation in China's 1989 Democracy Movement and the Emergence of Independent Unions*, also published in Hong Kong, by the Asia Monitor Resource Center.

Many of these texts were also translated in *Voices from Tiananmen Square: Beijing Spring and the Democracy Movement*, published by Black Rose Books. Some short quotations have been taken from articles in academic journals such the *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* and the *China Quarterly*, often written by eyewitnesses or based on interviews with participants. The International Labor Organization (ILO) took evidence about the workers' movement and challenged the Chinese government about the repression. Those reports underline the realities of those struggles, which cannot easily be erased.

The AWL wants present-day activists to discuss the lessons of the 1989 Chinese democracy movement, to spread the word about those battles and make solidarity with today's struggles. In 1989, the Chinese working class began to flex its strength. Despite the repression, Chinese workers have continued to fight. The Chinese capitalist ruling class today is a formidable force undergirded by a totalitarian state. However the hundreds of millions of Chinese workers represent an enormous power and are the great hope for the future of humanity. The Chinese workers will prevail and cast off their CCP oppressors. International socialists and the trade unionists must help our Chinese comrades to free themselves and fight for socialist democracy.

Paul Hampton
April 2024

2 Chronology

Saturday 15 April 1989

Hu Yaobang, former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), died of a heart attack.

Sunday 16 April 1989

Students and teachers from various Beijing Universities put up posters in memory of Hu Yaobang. Slogans attacking the corruption of the government appear on campuses.

Monday 17 April 1989

Wreaths laid by students at the Monument of People's Heroes in Tiananmen Square were removed. Some 3,000 Beijing University students marched to Tiananmen Square. Preparatory Committee of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation (WAF) formed. In Shanghai, public mourning for Hu Yaobang, with demands for democracy.

Tuesday 18 April 1989

Some 5,000 students, largely from Beijing University, marched on Tiananmen Square shouting slogans like, 'Down with tyranny', 'Long live democracy', 'Down with official profiteering' and 'Down with corruption'. Qinghua University students also marched into the square, breaking through a police cordon in front of the Great Hall to lay a wreath. More than 30,000 students sat down in Tiananmen Square. In the evening, a thousand students rushed towards Xinhuaamen, the main gate to the compound for senior government officials (called Zhongnanhai), trying to lay wreaths for Hu Yaobang.

Wednesday 19 April 1989

In the early morning, a thousand students went to Xinhuaamen to present wreaths and the petition. Armed police formed a blockade, and the crowd tried three times to break through it. Soon there were 10,000 people shouting, 'Down with Li Peng'. By the evening, more than 100,000 people demonstrated, singing *The Internationale* and shouting slogans like, 'Down with official profiteering'. The Monument became a temporary platform and many students and teachers gave speeches on democracy and freedom. In Shanghai, 3,000 students from Fudan University held a rally calling on the Chinese people to unite in the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Thursday 20 April 1989

At midnight, 20,000 people demonstrated outside Xinhuaamen. Armed police used batons to disperse the crowd, which countered with bottles. About 100 students were injured. Beijing WAF published 'Letter to the People of Beijing'.

Friday 21 April 1989

The Preparatory Committee of the Solidarity Students' Union of Beijing University students called a strike in protest the Xinhuaamen incident. By noon, about 100,000 students from various universities arrived at Tiananmen Square. In the afternoon, some tried to break into the Great Hall of the People, but failed. By the evening, there were more than 200,000 people in the square, including workers and peasants.

In Tianjin, hundreds of Nankai University students were prevented from going to Beijing when authorities cancelled their train tickets. The few that got through were the first non-Beijing students to enter the capital.

Han Dongfang spoke in Tiananmen Square. WAF members visited factories and made contacts with students.

Saturday 22 April 1989

The ad hoc Action Committee, formed by nineteen Beijing universities, organised a march to Tiananmen Square to take part in Hu's funeral. Around 200,000 demonstrated. The committee made three demands: the safety of the students, permission to attend the funeral and a true report of the police violence on 20 April. After negotiations, the authorities agreed to the first request. The funeral service proceeded, undisturbed.

Students in Xian demonstrated outside the municipal buildings.

Sunday 23 April 1989

Students from cities around the country arrived in the capital. Students formed the Temporary Students' Union of Beijing Universities.

Monday 24 April 1989

In protest against the attack on students and censorship, 35 Beijing universities started a strike.

Tuesday 25 April 1989

A government attempt to communicate with the students through the official National Federation of Students (NFS) failed due to student protests. More than 100,000 students flooded the streets.

The Temporary Students' Union organised a 'Ten letters per person campaign' to break through the news blockade and report the situation in Beijing to the country and gain mass support.

Wednesday 26 April 1989

The Temporary Students' Union held its first press conference. It presented three demands: equal dialogue with the government, the government should apologise for the Xinhua incident, and the New China News Agency and other agencies should report the student movement truthfully. Beijing WAF application for registration turned down.

Thursday 27 April 1989

More than 200,000 students demonstrated, with wider public support. The students broke through eighteen barricades formed by police. Students acted as marshals. The march lasted fourteen hours. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, students declared their support for the movement in China.

Friday 28 April 1989

The Autonomous Students' Union of Beijing Universities (ASUBU) formally established in place of the Temporary Union. Beijing Normal University student Wuer Kaixi elected chair, one of seven standing committee members.

In Tianjin a demonstration was held in which over 6,000 students took part.

Saturday 29 April 1989

Government officials held discussions with Beijing university students, which were broadcast live.

Sunday 30 April 1989

29 students from Beijing universities were invited to a discussion with government officials, including the mayor of Beijing, Chen Xitong, on the issue of 'official profiteering'.

Monday 1 May 1989

ASUBU held a rally in celebration of International Workers' Day.

Tuesday 2 May 1989

More than 10,000 Shanghai students marched in protest of the authorities' suppression on the *World Economic Herald* newspaper. Students marshalled their own demonstration.

Thursday 4 May 1989

Around 200,000 students marched towards Tiananmen Square. ASUBU representatives presented a 'New 4 May Declaration', calling for democracy, first in universities, then the political system. In Shanghai, more than 10,000 students marched, demanding the authorities lift the ban on the *World Economic Herald*. Similar demonstrations held in Nanjing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Changsha, Wuhan and Xian.

Friday 5 May 1989

Except for Beijing University and Beijing Normal University, universities in the capital resumed lessons. ASUBU elected a representative group for the purpose of dialogue with the government.

Tuesday 9 May 1989

A thousand editors and news reporters submitted a petition to the Secretariat of the National Union of Journalists, requesting dialogue over propaganda work.

Wednesday 10 May 1989

Thousands of students marched in support of freedom of the press.

Thursday 11 May 1989

University students in Beijing decided on a demonstration to coincide with the visit of Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, to Beijing on 15 May, in protest at the government's delayed response to their demand for dialogue.

Saturday 13 May 1989

Some 3,000 students started a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square. They demanded the government conduct discussions with the students, broadcast live on television.

Monday 15 May 1989

More than 130 hunger strikers were hospitalised, and 800,000 visited the Square to support the students. In Hong Kong, 20 students started a hunger strike.

Tuesday 16 May 1989

More than 600 of the 3,000 student hunger strikers sent to casualty centres. Ten students from the Central Drama Academy decided to stop taking liquids. University lecturers, secondary school students and teachers, editors, journalists and workers marched to support the students. Student movements in cities across China demonstrated in support of the Beijing students.

Wednesday 17 May 1989

More than two million people marched to voice their support for the students.

Thursday 18 May 1989

Four Politburo Standing Committee members, Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng, Qiao Shi and Hu Qili, visited some hunger strikers in hospital. More than 2,000 hunger strike had been hospitalised. Some army officers sent an open letter to the Central Military Commission in support of the students. The letter was broadcast in the Square.

Friday 19 May 1989

Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng went to Tiananmen Square for the first time to visit the students. Zhao apologised to the students, asking them to call off the hunger strike. Li Peng made no speech. The students ended their hunger strike, replacing it with a sit-in.
Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation (WAF) formally founded. Declaration calls for a strike.

Saturday 20 May 1989

Li Peng labelled the student movement a 'riot' and claimed a handful of people were using it to achieve their political goals.
In Tiananmen Square, after listening to a report of Li Peng's speech, students decided to resume their hunger strike and call on the 200,000 students to join in.
Li Peng declared that from 10am, martial law was imposed on parts of Beijing.
When they learned of the army entering the city, student leaders called off the hunger strike.
The Beijing WAF called a general strike until the troops were ordered out.

Sunday 21 May 1989

Before dawn, more than one million people gathered in the Tiananmen Square. They set up barricades on all the important routes. More than 20,000 students and workers organised themselves into squads to protect themselves.
Twelve cities in China saw demonstrations, including Beijing, Xian, Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu.
A million people marched in Hong Kong in support of the democratic movement.

Monday 22 May 1989

The army and students clashed. Soldiers hit students with belts and bricks. Wuer Kaixi was removed from ASUBU's standing committee after he urged students to retreat from the square. Some 200,000 students and teachers swore that they would stay even under threat of death.

Tuesday 23 May 1989

Three people who had defaced the portrait of Mao Zedong, which hangs over the Tiananmen reviewing stand, were caught by students and handed over to the police.

Wednesday 24 May 1989

Around 600,000 joined the Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Macau march.

Thursday 25 May 1989

Around a million people marched in Beijing.
Demonstrations in support of the Beijing movement were held in cities across China.

Friday 26 May 1989

After a democratic vote, the meeting of university representatives adopted the policy that students should stay in Tiananmen Square, at the same time proposing marches and a hunger strike on an even larger scale, and calling upon workers to go on strike.
Beijing WAF holds press conference in Chinese and with foreign journalists.

Saturday 27 May 1989

After a meeting between representatives of student organisations, the Beijing WAF and the Autonomous Union of Citizens, it was decided that a retreat from the square would take place on 30 May.
A 12-hour concert in Hong Kong raised \$12 million for the students in Beijing.

Sunday 28 May 1989

Beijing WAF participates Chinese People's March for Democracy.

About 1,500,000 people participated in a pro-democracy demonstration in Hong Kong.

Monday 29 May 1989

Differences in opinion between Beijing students and those from outside affect the work of the Chief Command Centre. The commander, Chai Ling, and four other standing committee members, including Wang Dan, offered their resignation. The students decided to delay their retreat until 20 June.

The Autonomous Union of Shanghai Universities called on students to 'empty the schools' until the beginning of the next school year in September.

Tuesday 30 May 1989

The sculpture, Goddess of Democracy, reached Tiananmen Square before dawn and attracted thousands of citizens.

Leaders of the Beijing WAF, Shen Yinhan, Qian Yumin and Bai Dongping, arrested by the public security police.

Eleven members of the motorcycle team who had brought news and information to the students were taken into custody.

Wednesday 31 May 1989

In the face of increasing problems, the Chief Command Centre appointed Gao Haifang commander.

In the evening, about 3,000 students demonstrated in Tiananmen Square against the arrest of the workers' leaders. Nearly 10,000 students and workers marched to the Public Security Office and demanded to know the reasons for the arrests.

Thursday 1 June 1989

Student leaders Chai Ling and Fang Chunde told reporters that a kidnap attempt had been made against them.

ASUBU reorganised its standing committee. Wuer Kaixi and Wang Dan were no longer members. Beijing WAF leaders released.

Friday 2 June 1989

About a thousand Beijing students demonstrated shouting sarcastic slogans like, 'Support authoritarianism', 'Support dictatorial rule', 'Support Li Peng'.

Saturday 3 June 1989

From the early hours to the evening, numerous clashes broke out between civilians and military. Beijing WAF calls strike for 4 June.

Sunday 4 June 1989

Repression.

Beijing WAF headquarters destroyed.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

3 Background

Liang Hong. Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union: Origins and Activities, October 1989

Liang Hong was captain of supplies division, Beijing WAF, during the democracy movement

From the middle of April 1989, a patriotic, democratic movement led by the students erupted in Beijing. With the death of [ex-General Secretary] Hu Yaobang, the students called for the restoration of Hu's honour and demanded that Hu's achievements and criticisms made of him be reassessed. On 17 April, students from Beijing University spontaneously went to Tiananmen Square to deliver wreaths commemorating Hu. At the same time, they called for an end to official profiteering and the elimination of corruption. The students were expressing concrete opinions on matters affecting the interests of all people and the destiny of the nation.

At the early stages of the Beijing student movement, we workers recognised that the students were voicing the feelings of the masses. We believed that the workers should not stand on the sidelines; we should stand up to protect the students and support this great patriotic democratic movement.

On 17 April 1989, many workers were listening to speeches made by the students on the western side of Tiananmen Square. We said then that the workers should rise up. More than a dozen of us arranged to meet at 5:00pm the next day at the same place, and we agreed to go back to our workplaces to solicit more ideas from our work mates. The meeting took place on 18 April and each of us reported that workers in all the units contacted expressed their support.

First signs of violence

On the evening of 19 April, we heard that some students were beaten up by the police, and quite a few had been injured. The violence took place in the evening when about two or three hundred students were staging a sit-in outside Xinhua gate. The police justified their use of violence by saying that some people were creating disturbances. But actually the students never undertook any extreme or radical actions.

On 20 April, we met some of the students who had been beaten up and we were extremely angry. We felt we should immediately set up a workers' organisation to protect the students. On the same day, we made public speeches and called on the workers to organise. We also spoke publicly about the beating up of the students – the topic of the address was '*The Army and the People are like Fish and Water: the Workers' View of 20 April Incident*'. That same evening, at the north-west corner of Tiananmen Square, we put up wall posters entitled '*Letter to the People of Beijing*' and '*Letter to the Whole Nation's Compatriots*'. We openly called on Beijing workers to raise their views.

After we posted up the open letters, many workers from different units asked to join the Workers' Autonomous Federation (WAF). On 21 April, the Autonomous Federation formed a standing committee and a preparatory committee and decided to welcome applications from new members. we decided that only workers might join and we checked their identity cards as well as their work cards. We issued our own WAF identity papers to ensure the integrity of the Federation. On the same day, we released our slogans: '*Down with official profiteering, eliminate corruption*'; '*Stabilise prices and raise the wages of the workers*'; '*Publicly reveal the wealth and assets of Deng Pufeng and the sons and daughters of leading cadres*'. After this, the WAF gradually improved organisationally and it organised several demonstrations and marches. It also organised provision of food and water for the students.

On 26 April, the media declared that the students were instigating turmoil and the Public Security Bureau also declared that the WAF was an illegal organisation. But we workers had no fear of such threats and firmly believed that the questions we and the students raised were correct; and that the people should be the ones to judge what is right or wrong. In response to government accusations that the students were creating turmoil and declarations that the WAF was illegal, we organised workers to demonstrate and we demanded the retraction of the 26 April [*People's Daily*] editorial.

After 26 April, the government became more and more ridiculous. Not only did it refuse to recognise the student movement as patriotic, it dispatched two large battalions of soldiers to Beijing. The Public Security Bureau also announced that all activities commemorating Hu Yaobang should cease. There were to be no more processions and any new processions would be illegal. Applications were required for any rallies and marches. The WAF protested against this as we released a Letter to the the nation's compatriots', pointing out that students broke no laws in being patriotic and workers did nothing wrong by making suggestions to the government. We organised another demonstration to oppose the announcement. The march was fully supported by all the Beijing workers and citizens.

On 27 April, the students and the WAF also organised another massive protest march. The military police exercised restraint and many shook hands with the WAF participants and talked with the workers, citizens and students. Apparently, more than a dozen police cordons were broken through. The students paid respect to the military police and shouted slogans like: '*The People's Police Love the People*', '*Tribute to the Police*'. The WAF had its own slogans: '*The Military, the Police Come from the People*', '*The Workers Love the Military and the Police*'.

However on 30 April, the police beat up some students at Xinhuaamen. It was reported that student leader Wuer Kaixi would be arrested. One hearing this, the WAF immediately organised the workers and citizens to take part in an even bigger demonstration. It was also decided that the WAF and the Beijing University Autonomous Federation would maintain close liaison so that if there were arrests, the WAF would be immediately informed to take appropriate actions to protect and rescue them.

On 1 May, the WAF discussed ways to protect the students and promote the interests of the workers, and eventually decided on the new '*WAF guidelines*', '*WAF declaration*' and the '*Declaration of the Beijing Workers*'. The following were unanimously elected to be the main officials of the Federation: Shan Yinhan, Han Dongfang, Liu Qiang, Xiao Delung, Liang Hong and several others whose names I did not know. We had further discussions among ourselves and we all felt we needed to do our utmost in order that the workers could place their trust in us. We drafted a resolution containing five demands, which were accepted on the next day for release by the WAF. On the second day, the five demands were discussed by other workers and were unanimously adopted.

Discussions with factory representatives

After our agreement on the plan, the WAF proceeded with its prime task of publicity and the recruitment of more workers. We met and held discussions with representatives sent to join the WAF from various factories in Beijing and from units belonging to the commercial and professional sectors. We organised public meetings to discuss many topical issues such as the productivity of the nation, the promotion of export earnings, workers' welfare, human rights, democracy and freedom. These generated greater and wider support from the workers, citizens and students.

The students began their hunger strike on 13 May in protest against the government. The students continued for 7 days while the government ignored the threat the hunger strikes posed to the lives of the students. Instead, the government declared that the students were creating great turmoil. Hearing the irresponsible words of the government and the serious threat to the lives of the students

and the damage done to their bodies, the WAF decided to act immediately. We bought large quantities of medicine, food and clothes for the Students' Autonomous Federation. We protested & organised a workers' march with slogans like *'Down with Li Peng', 'Down with Xiaoping' and 'Our students are starving, what are you and your children eating? What are you doing?'*

On 20 May, the government declared martial law and sent the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to Beijing to enforce it. The situation was very tense. The WAF held an emergency meeting and decided to set up a Beijing Workers' Dare-to-Die Team and Beijing WAF Dare-to-Die Team. We also immediately called on our members to go out in all four directions to block the entry of the military trucks and the armed forces and to propagandise among the PLA soldiers. The masses also organised spontaneously to block the trucks. There were old people in their 70's and children who were just a few years old. The whole people were trying to stop the advance of the armed forces. The PLA soldiers said, *'We are just told it was a military exercise. We don't know what is happening. We have not read the newspaper for a whole week and have not heard the radio'*. WAF called for a city-wide strike, stoppages of water supplies and electricity. We were also resolutely opposed to martial law.

The situation on 21 May was more critical. Many citizens and students reported to us that both citizens and students had been beaten up and that the tanks and the soldiers were advancing towards the Square. We sent our members to the spots of confrontation to give support and organised various larger protests. Our members from the underground railway system turned off the power for the system in order to prevent the armed forces from entering the city by that route. We also put forward the slogan, *'We won't fight back when hit; our petition is peaceful and to love our country is no crime'*.

On 22 May, the government refused to take notice of the righteous actions of the people and continued its forceful attempt to send in the armed forces. At Fengtai and Six Li Bridge, members of the WAF clashed with the armed forces because the military police had been beating the students. We shouted slogans, *'Our heads can roll, our blood can flow, but democracy and freedom we cannot forego'*. We called on our members to erect barricades to prevent the armed forces from entering the city. We again called on workers to strike in order to press the government to make concessions.

On 23 May, the Mao Zedong portrait at Tiananmen Square was splashed by three unidentified persons who were caught by the students and members of the WAF. The three spoke with a Beijing dialect and did not understand Hunanese. On the afternoon of the same day, news came that some students had disappeared after being beaten up. Members of the WAF and students' patrol teams discovered that many plain-clothes soldiers had infiltrated into the Square, but they had to leave after we exposed them. During this period, the number of crimes dropped noticeably in Beijing. There were no street fights, no vandalism, no robberies or thefts. Even traffic accidents were absent.

On 24 May, the WAF publicly declared that there was nothing about the actions of the student movement or the workers. We declared the right to fight against the ruling class of all dictatorial regimes. Our movement is democratic and patriotic. We needed clean officials and did not want bureaucratic who sat on the heads of the people, drinking their blood and eating their flesh. We didn't want rulers who spoke human words but who did no human deeds. We didn't want a government who lived in beautiful villas, who wore fine clothes and who rode in luxury cars. We advanced slogans which directly addressed the corrupt officials: *'Sell your crowns and the people can dress; sell your villas and the people can live; sell your Mercedes Benz's and the people can eat.'* On 25 May many workers from other cities and provinces arrived and asked to join the WAF. We thanked them for their goodwill but declined to accept them as members, telling them that by working elsewhere, they would still be supporting us. We could see that the WAF was becoming influential and popular. On the same day, we led the city's workers, students and citizens in a protest

march on an even greater scale. We also organised a meeting to discuss shortcomings in our struggles over the past few days and to examine how to improve future actions. Many students, workers, citizens and peasants participated in discussion. The WAF also sent many members to carry out a massive amount of propaganda work, giving support to the students in blocking the military trucks, disarming the troops by explaining to them about the movement in Beijing.

The workers make demands

On 26 May, by democratically casting ballots, the WAF solicited a large number of suggestions from the masses of workers, citizens, peasants and the students, and a better plan of action was formulated. At the same time, the following demands were raised:

- 1) *The recognition of the rightfulness of the movement*
- 2) *The lifting of martial law*
- 3) *The release of the students who had been arrested.*

The WAF led in the shouting of the following slogans:

'Beijing workers are brave! They are not scared by tear-gas raids!'

'Beijing workers are brave! They're not scared of guns and grenades!'

'The Beijing workers' spirits are high. They don't fear the tanks or the planes in the sky.'

'Imbeciles! Big foolish head! We workers call you names without dread!'

'We called you big brother, to do what is right, but if you harm the students, we workers will fight!'

On the morning of 30 May, our leaders Shen Yinhan, Qian Yumin and Bai Dongping were secretly detained. As soon as some citizens told us, we went along to protest at the Municipal Public Security Bureau. The students also came to lend their support. Han Dongfang, Liang Hong and another person went inside the Bureau to negotiate. We were informed that under martial law, the authorities were vested with the power to arrest and hold anybody for questioning. We asked them whether they made the arrests with due regard to legal procedures and what crimes they had allegedly committed and under what laws. They didn't give us a satisfactory answer. The members of the WAF demonstrated outside Xinhua Gate protesting against the government's action. Those arrested were eventually released without charge at about 6:00pm on 31 May.

Around the same time, we also learned that a large number of troops were approaching Beijing and some were making their way towards Tiananmen Square. The WAF immediately made the decision to send large numbers of its members to block the military trucks and called upon all citizens and peasants to act to stop the troops from entering the city. A lot of meat cleavers and iron rods were discovered. They had been planted by the troops and the police so that they could point an accusing finger at the workers and students. These weapons were displayed at the command headquarters of the WAF so that workers and citizens could see the viciousness of the government.

On the morning of 1 June, a group of unidentified people attempted to kidnap Chai Ling and Feng Chongde. Luckily the plot was discovered by the Workers' Picket Team and the kidnappers fled. At the same time, news came that the troops had again clashed with the students. It was also reported that members of the WAF had been beaten up and injured.

On 2 June, the troops tried to force their way forward into the city. Many clashes occurred. However, members of the WAF noted certain anomalies – once the workers, citizens or students engaged the troops in clashes, the armed troops simply dropped their weapons and withdrew. We decided to call upon the workers, the citizens and students to take these weapons to the Public Security Bureau or to the curfew troops but they refused to take the weapons.

In the early hours of 3 June, a police vehicle with no number plates (it was also a vehicle to clear the way) drove recklessly through the Muxidi area. Three people were killed and one injured. Members of the WAF were present during the incident and asked the driver why he was driving so fast with no respect for the lives of the people. The driver responded in an insane way, saying 'It is none of your business. I am simply carrying out military orders'. The driver subsequently fled. When our members came back with this report, we quickly organised a big protest.

On the afternoon of 3 June, at around 2:05pm the military police went to Xinhuaamen in large numbers to seize the weapons on display there. They accused the students and the workers of stealing these weapons. Our members tried to explain the truth to them saying 'We sent them back to you but you refused to accept them. What does a gun mean to a soldier? Why were the guns left behind so freely? We workers didn't buy government treasury bonds to finance you to fight us. Don't you still have a Chinese conscience? It is crystal clear that the government is just playing a dirty trick'.

Around 3:00pm, a large number of soldiers appeared at the western side of the Great Hall of the People. When the WAF received an emergency report from the students, we went to their support, raising our flag. We met the officer in charge of the troops. He claimed to be the head of the battalion. Three students from Beijing University, a journalist and I negotiated with him. He gave us an undertaking that his battalion would not take any action within 48 hours. But the military police were beating up people and were firing tear-gas in front of the ticket office of the Qianmen train station. Many people were hurt, including an old man who was bleeding from his face and his left leg. Workers, citizens and students were infuriated and they destroyed some military trucks. Clashes, large and small, were occurring continuously. Meanwhile, at around 3 pm or 4 pm to the west of the Great Hall of the People, military police were throwing bricks from inside the Hall at students and citizens, a few of whom were injured. Angry citizens charged the north door of the Hall but were stopped by members of the WAF. We tried to explain to them that the government was provoking us and was looking for a pretext to attack. The government broadcast at 6:30pm described this democratic patriotic movement as a 'counter-revolutionary rebellion'. Some members of the WAF, on hearing this, climbed up the electricity pole and cut the wires to the government's PA system.

At about 10:00pm things became worse and reports of casualties kept coming back to those of us in the Square. At midnight, up to 500 PLA soldiers appeared from the underground railway exit on the south side of Mao's Mausoleum. They lined up in two formations and stayed still. At the time, we decided to mobilise immediately and we called on everyone to grasp chairs and tables, benches, bricks and tiles as weapons in order to defend the Square, defend the students and defend the Republic. At about half past midnight, a tank suddenly appeared from the south-west corner of the Square and made its way along the side of the Great Hall up the South-North Road, charging right into the Square. Gunshots were heard from all sides. I sensed then that a massacre was beginning.

The troops stationed at the exit of the underground on the south side of Mao's Mausoleum now fired red tracer bullets into the air, but they remained stationary. The tank now charged towards the north-west corner of the Square (I was chasing it) and crushed a woman, aged about 30, to death. All the people were angry and some threw home-made fire-bombs at the tank. The tank caught fire and retreated to where it had come from, back along the same route. A second tank met similar resistance and had to retreat as well.

Around 2:00am, large numbers of troops marched from the south-west corner into the Square (marching very close to one another forming a seamless tight mass). As they advanced, they opened fire crazily near the Kentucky Fried Chicken fast food restaurant; corpses lay on both sides of the road as they marched through. The WAF immediately organised workers and the citizens to counterattack. After we reached the south-west corner, we drove three public buses onto the South-North Road (on

the West side of the Square) positioning them in the middle of the road. But how could these vehicles block the advance of the fully armed regular forces? Our members at the south-west corner continued to fight while retreating towards the Square. On the way, we witnessed some gruesome sights – corpses were all over the South-North Road in front of the Great Hall of the People, especially outside the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant, where the WAF engaged in the first fight against the advancing soldiers. We went back to the encampment of the WAF and from there witnessed even more vicious and brutal killings by the PLA, who were charging from West Changan Avenue, the south-west corner of the Square, and the Great Hall of the People. They were using machine guns and rifles fitted with bayonets; gunning down our patriotic workers, students and citizens. They were firing at the Monument of the People's Heroes for thirty minutes.

During this time, the members of the WAF were under fire and we were unable to hold together. I retreated from the tents towards the Monument. I saw many deaths and injuries on the western side of the Square. Members of the WAF had vowed: *'For democracy, for freedom, we are prepared to sacrifice until the last drop of our blood is shed and fight until the last person fall.'* They were even shooting at medical personnel. Two doctors were killed instantly. We still wanted to charge but a doctor told us to retreat so that he would talk to the soldiers. He shouted, 'Freedom, freedom!' The fascist soldiers did not listen and continued to fire. The members of the WAF were forced to disperse. I was given help by a doctor and put into an ambulance. I hid in the Friendship Hospital. There were many corpses at the hospital, including old men and women. By far the greatest number were students. There were also members of the WAF. There was no Beijing citizen who did not shed tears. In the morning, I heard that many of our members had died or been injured. Very few actually survived. Had we purchased treasury bonds in order that they would kill us?

Blood debts shall be paid in blood!

Compatriots, I was a member of the WAF and one of its officer bearers. I witnessed the way the PLA massacred the people. I am recording the activities of the WAF here to enable my countrymen and women to understand more about the organisation. What I have written covers only a fraction of what might be said about the WAF. Now the Chinese police are hunting and persecuting members of the Workers' Federation and other democracy fighters. They want to eliminate all of us, but they shall fail! If we can unite and fight back, they will fall. The bloody facts of 4 June revealed the fascistic nature of the fraudulent government headed by Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng. Blood debts shall be paid in blood. We WAF members who survived shall struggle against them to the end!

I want to pay homage to those who have sacrificed their lives in this democracy movement, including both the members of the Workers' Autonomous Federation, and the innocent citizens and students. Those members of the Workers' Autonomous Federation who have survived are taking this pledge: We must wage the struggle for democracy until the end. Our efforts shall never cease until we overthrow the false government headed by Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng!

Long live the great democracy movement!

Long live the working class!

Long live the Workers' Autonomous Federation!

Long live the great students!

Long live the Beijing citizens!

Farewell, those members of the Workers' Autonomous Federation who have sacrificed their lives for this great patriotic democracy movement. Rest in eternal peace. Those of us who live on will carry through your unaccomplished tasks.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990).

Andrew Walder: Workers, Managers and the State, September 1991

A profile of known independent workers' organisations in Beijing will give a sense of the variety of such political activity. There were at least two organisations of the 'picket corps' variety, both with a continuous presence on Tiananmen Square from mid-May onward. The Beijing Workers' Picket Corps (Beijing gongren jiucha dui) was a quasi-independent offshoot of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union, and was made up almost entirely of factory and construction workers. The Capital Workers' Picket Corps (shoudu gongren jiucha dui) was formed at the apparent instigation of teachers at the Workers' Movement Institute under the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and included workers and other urban wage earners. There were several organisations of the "dare-to-die corps" variety, primarily the Beijing Workers' Dare-to-Die Corps, and the Beijing City People's Dare-to-Die Corps, both of which mainly comprised ordinary wage earners. In this category should also be included the large motorcycle brigade of some 300 known as the 'Flying Tigers' (feihudui). Headed by a worker from Beijing Jeep, it consisted primarily of young workers and private entrepreneurs who owned motorcycles. They rode prominently and loudly in the many street demonstrations of May; after martial law, they formed smaller teams of messengers that helped co-ordinate the blockade of army trucks; on at least two occasions they clashed with the security forces, and one afternoon invaded the grounds of the Capital Steel Corporation in an effort to call the workers out on strike. Beijing also teemed with small dare-to-die corps of unknown origin, for example, the 'Manchurian Tigers' (dongbei hu gansidui) and the 'Long White Mountain Dare-to-Die Corps' (changbai shan gansidui). There were also efforts to organise at least three independent labour unions in Beijing. A group from Capital Steel attempted to form a Beijing Steel Workers' Autonomous Union (Beijing gangtie gongren zizhahui) in order to represent steel workers at the industry level. They marched at one major demonstration under a banner that said 'Beijing Steel Workers', and made contact with the organisers of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union, but little is known of how far their organisation developed. A second organisation, the All-China Urban Construction Workers Autonomous Union (*Zhongguo chengjian gongren zifa lianhehui*), announced their desire to represent construction workers and established a presence at the eastern reviewing stand of Tiananmen, after a number of their members broke away from the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union. Little is known of any activities they may have organised.

The Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union (*gongzilian*) is by far the best-documented such organisation in the country, and probably the largest and most active. It originated in the activity surrounding the revolutionary heroes monument on the evening of Hu Yaobang's death, and issued its first two formal declarations on 20 April. By the week of the student hunger strike it had almost 200 fulltime activists, the vast majority of whom worked for state enterprises, and maintained a continuous presence at their headquarters at the western reviewing stand of Tiananmen. By the end of May it claimed to have registered around 20,000 members, although it had established no branch organisations in places of work. The union had a picket corps, several 'dare-to-die' teams, a broadcasting station on the square, and a printing press and other duplication equipment, with which it issued over 25 printed statements and a long list of demands. It marched prominently in each of the large demonstrations of mid-May. Its broadcasts on the square satirised the government, revealed official wrongdoing, articulated citizen demands, and attracted large and appreciative audiences. It promulgated a formal programme and a charter. After the declaration of martial law, as work unit delegations ceased to march, it appeared to grow stronger and bolder, organising large protest marches, forging closer ties with student organisations, successfully confronting the Beijing Bureau of Public Security over the arrest of three of its leaders, and issuing two (largely unheeded) calls for general strikes.

Andrew Walder, Workers, Managers and the State, September 1991

Chai Ling: Account of the Beijing Massacre. 10 June 1989

Chai Ling was a leader of the Autonomous Union of University Students on Tiananmen Square. In 1989 she escaped via Hong Kong to the USA. This message was smuggled out to Hong Kong's Christian Industrial Committee and broadcast on Hong Kong television on 10 June 1989.

It is four o'clock on the afternoon of 8 June. My name is Chai Ling. I commanded the student headquarters in Tiananmen Square. I am still alive. I think that I am best qualified to say what happened in the Square between 2 June and 4 June. It is my duty to tell the truth to everyone in China and abroad.

At about ten o'clock on the night of 2 June a police car ran over four pedestrians, three of whom died. Then some soldiers began distributing guns, uniforms, and other equipment to townspeople and students who stood in their way. We took these things to the Public Security Bureau and got receipts for them. At ten past two on the afternoon of 3 June crowds of soldiers and police at Liubukou and Xinhuaamen started beating up students and civilians. Some students standing on top of vehicles began to chant, *'The people's police love the people, they do not beat the people'*. A soldier ran out and kicked one of the students in the stomach. The soldier shouted, *"Who the hell loves you!"* and hit him on the head with a stick. The student fell to the ground.

Let me explain where we were. We had a broadcasting station in the Square that broadcast news about the hunger strike. We used it to direct students' actions in the Square. Of course there were other students there too, for example, Li Lu and Feng Congde. We constantly received reports of student and townspeople being beaten and injured.

Things got worse between eight and ten o'clock that evening. We received at least ten reports of attacks on people. At around seven we called a press conference for Chinese and foreign reporters, but few foreigners attended, probably because their hotels were under army control. We told the meeting that our only slogan was *'Down with Li Peng's puppet regime'*.

At nine o'clock all the students in the Square stood up, raised their right hands, and vowed: *'I hereby pledge, in the name of the democratisation and prosperity of the motherland and in order to prevent its exploitation by a handful of plotters and the loss of 1.1 billion Chinese to white terror, to defend to the death Tiananmen Square and the Republic. Heads may fall, blood may flow, but the Square must not be lost. We will fight to the last young life.'*

At ten o'clock, the Square set up Democracy University, with deputy commander Zhang Boli as its president. Many people warmly applauded this step. Meanwhile, reports flooded in about the increasing tension. While people near the Goddess of Liberty statue at the north end of the Square were applauding the establishment of Democracy University, blood was flowing on East and West Changan Avenue. The butchers of the Twenty-Seventh Army used tanks, assault guns, and bayonets on anyone who shouted a slogan or threw a stone. Dead bodies lay in pools of blood. The clothes of the students who came to headquarters to tell us what was happening were stained with the blood of their fallen comrades.

Our aim had always been nonviolence. No few students, workers, and townspeople had come to tell us that it was time to meet force with force. Some male students were particularly incensed. We had to keep reminding people that our demonstration was peaceful and that the price of peace is sacrifice.

Hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder we walked toward the Monument to the heroes of the People singing the Internationale. There we sat down, to await death. We realised that we were caught up in a conflict of love against hate, not force against force. We knew that if we were to give up nonviolence and try to arm ourselves against the machine gunners and tank drivers, the tragedy would be even greater. So we just sat there quietly, awaiting the moment of sacrifice. Headquarters began broadcasting the song '*Descendants of the Dragon*'. We sang with tears in our eyes, embraced each other and held hands, for we knew that the end had come. It was time to die for the nation.

There was a young fellow named Wang Li. He had written his will. I don't remember its exact wording, but I do remember him saying: '*There was this insect. Whenever I moved my foot to crush it, it would freeze.*' He was only fifteen, but already he was thinking about death. Citizens of the Republic, do not forget the children who fought for you.

At around two or three o'clock the next morning, on 4 June, we were forced to give up our headquarters under the Monument. I walked round the Monument to rally the students, who sat there quietly. They told me that they would sit there whatever happened, and that they would kill no one. I reminded them of an old story. '*One billion ants lived on a mountain. One day the mountain caught fire and the ants had to leave. They massed in a giant ball and rolled to the bottom. Those on the outside died, but most survived. Fellow students, we are the outside layer. Only by dying can we ensure the survival of the Republic.*'

We sang the *Internationale* again and again. Finally the hunger strikers – Hou Dejian, Liu Xiaobo, Zhou Duo, and another – could stand it no longer. '*Children,*' they said, '*don't sacrifice yourselves.*' We were all extremely tired. They went to negotiate with the soldiers and found an officer who was in charge of the martial law command. They told him that we would evacuate the Square if the army guaranteed us safe passage. We consulted the students, and decided to leave. But as we were preparing to go, armed and helmeted soldiers stormed up to the third level of the Monument, thus breaking their word. They gave us no time to communicate our decision to the students. Our loudspeakers were destroyed. They even fired at us on the Monument, the Monument to the Heroes of the People. Most of us left, crying. Onlookers shouted at us not to cry, and we answered that we would be back, for the Square was ours.

We only discovered later that some people still had illusions in the government and the army. They thought that at worst they would be removed by force. Some were asleep in their tents. The tanks ground them to pieces. According to some people, two hundred students died. Others put the figure at four thousand. I don't know who is right. But I do know that at least twenty to thirty members of the autonomous workers' federation died, on the edge of the Square. According to reports, soldiers flattened the tents with tanks and armoured personnel carriers, poured gasoline over the bodies, and set fire to them. They later washed the Square to remove evidence of the killings. Our Goddess of Liberty statue was also crushed.

Arm in arm, we walked round the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall toward the south. There we saw several thousand armed troops. We shouted that they were 'dogs' and 'fascists'. Heading west, we saw large numbers of troops running toward the Square. Students and townspeople shouted at them, 'Dogs, fascists, beasts!' But they continued to run as quickly as they could toward the Square. As we passed Liubukou, where the first bloody battle had taken place on the afternoon of 3 June, we from headquarters walked in the front line. There was debris and garbage everywhere. On Changan Avenue we saw fire-razed trucks, broken stones, and other evidence of fierce fighting, but no corpses. We later learned that while the fascists at the front were shooting the students, others were coming up from the rear to collect the dead and wounded and throw them onto buses and trishaws, so that the wounded died of suffocation. They did their best to cover up the atrocity.

We intended to go back to the Square, but bystanders told us not to. '*Children,*' they said, '*don't you realise they have guns? Don't return to the Square just to die.*' We then decided to go west from Xidan. On the way I saw a mother weeping. Her child was dead. We also saw the corpses of four townspeople. Everyone we met was crying. One told us, '*Is that why I bought state bonds? So they could make bullets to kill children and innocents?*' Later reports showed that they'd really staged a massacre. They'd fired rockets at houses along Changan Avenue, killing children and old people. What were their crimes? They had not even shouted slogans. A friend told me that he saw tanks crush to death a small girl who was waving her arms at them, and that two students he was holding hands with were shot dead, one after the other.

We met a woman looking for her son. She told us his name and said that he had been alive the day before. Is he still alive today? Wives were looking for husbands, teachers for students. Posters on public buildings were still calling for support for the 'correct' policies of the Central Committee. We tore them down and burned them. The radio kept announcing that the troops had come to Beijing to 'quell a handful of rioters and restore order in the capital'. Were we rioters? Put your hand on your heart and think of us young students sitting together arm in arm around the Monument: were we 'rioting' while we peacefully awaited our executioners? If the soldiers are animals, what do you call those who sit in front of the cameras and mouth lies? As we left the Square a tank charged after us firing teargas and knocking down students and grinding them to pieces. Who were the 'rioters'? We walked on, with masks over our faces because of the teargas. How can we bring back those who were sacrificed? They are gone forever.

Our return to Beijing University spelled the end of the nonviolent protest that we had started on 13 May as a hunger strike and later changed into a sit-in. Later we heard that at ten o'clock on the evening of 3 June Li Peng had issued three orders: the troops could shoot, army vehicles could drive into the Square at full speed and take it before dawn on 4 June, and leaders and organisers of the movement should be killed.

Friends, this frenzied government of puppets is still moving troops into Beijing and is still ruling China. Massacres are still going on in Beijing and throughout China. But the night is darkest just before the dawn. From this frenzied fascist crackdown a real people's republic will be born. This is a critical moment for the Chinese nation. Compatriots, citizens of conscience, awake! Final victory will be yours. Yang Shangkun, Li Peng, Wang Zhen, Bo Yibo – the days of your regime are numbered. Down with the fascists! Down with military rule! Victory to the people! Long live the Republic!

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990); Benton and Hunter, *Wild Lily, Prairie Fire* (1995).

4 Beijing independent workers' movement

Letter to the People of Beijing, 20 April 1989

The entire population of China now faces an intolerable situation. Long accustomed to bureaucratic-dictatorial forms of control, they must now live with uncontrolled inflation and declining living standards. To recover from their extravagant behaviour, the ruling elite have issued various government and treasury bonds, squeezing the people for every penny of their cash. In this situation, people from all walks of life must join together to reveal the truth and protect the future of China.

Those of you who are policemen and soldiers must stand by the people, for truth, not serve as tools of the people's enemies. You are also being oppressed. As for the murderers in the 5 April incident and the 20 April bloodshed [of 1976], the people will never forget your crimes.

We earnestly demand the following: a wage increase, price stabilisation, and a publication of the incomes and possessions of government officials and their families. We, the workers of Beijing, and citizens from all walks of life, support the university students and their fight for honesty and justice.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

Ten Questions for the CCP, 20 April 1989

- 1) How much did Deng's son bet on a horse race in Hong Kong, and where did he get the money to place the bet?
- 2) Mr and Mrs Zhao Ziyang play golf every week. Who pays the green fees, and other expenses?
- 3) How does the Central Committee [of the CCP] judge the ongoing reforms. In his New Year address, Premier Li Peng said that there have been mistakes. What are they? What exactly is the present situation?
- 4) The Central Committee has proposed a reform for the control of prices, yet inflation continues, with the people's living standard declining. Can they explain this?
- 5) China must begin the repayment of foreign loans in 1990. How much must each citizen contribute to this? Will it affect basic living standards? Please answer us.
- 6) Deng Xiaoping has suggested raising the status of intellectuals from 'stinking ninth' to 'top rank'. What is a top ranking person? Would that be a landlord or a landlord's father?
- 7) How many residences and retreats do top party officials own around the country? What do they cost? Can this be made public? Please answer us.
- 8) Can you make public the personal incomes and possessions of top party officials.
- 9) How is the party going to respond to approaches from Taiwan's government for peace talks?
- 10) Would the party kindly to explain the meaning and implications of the following terms: i) Party, ii) Revolution, and iii) Reactionary.

Would the party please publish their responses to the above ten questions as soon as possible?

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

An Open Letter to the Students from a Beijing Worker, 23 April 1989

Your righteous acts have moved us and the whole of society. The words you have spoken echo what is in our minds. Your worries and concerns for the nation are also our own. The destiny of a nation should not rely on a single person.

For various reasons, we workers cannot presently march the streets like you students, we cannot yell out slogans nor stage a general strike. However, our hearts are with you and we share the same viewpoint. We strongly support the seven reasonable demands made by you. In the fight for truth, we do not fear death!

We cannot join you for the time being, but we can still provide you with moral and material support so that you won't be fighting alone. If you need money, we can raise contributions for you; if you need equipment or facilities, we can provide them for you. The working class is a generous class. Your movement is a righteous one, concerned with the prosperity and decline of the nation as well as the security of the people, so it is natural that you will be supported widely by Chinese people. Lastly, I would like to raise several points for your consideration:

- 1) Since the media is now deliberately mixing the truth with lies in order to fool the people, I suggest you propagate the truth widely through all kinds of channels, including leaflets, propaganda teams etc, so that the people can separate the truth from the lies.
- 2) When staging a school strike, you should plan and conduct every step very carefully with great vigilance, including parades, petitions, demonstrations etc. all these would produce pressure.
- 3) Encourage more tertiary education institutes to join. In addition, you should invite well-known figures who support the movement to publish their viewpoints in order to enlarge the outreach of your movement and win more widespread sympathy and support.
- 4) Hold on to the end, do not falter until your objectives are reached. Be prepared for sacrifice if you fail.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your righteous movement. There is a bright future awaiting us. Although the path is rugged and winding, the first light of dawn has already appeared, hold on, comrades! Let us shout together: long live democracy, long live equality, long live freedom!

Sources: *October Review*, June 1989; Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

A Letter from a Worker to the Students. 28 April 1989

Comrades:

You have kept going for several days and you will certainly want to gain the support of the broad mass of workers, peasants, soldiers, and private traders. How to do so? First, don't only stress the treatment of intellectuals and the need to increase educational expenditure and don't shout empty slogans about democracy, for that might affect relations between the students and the workers and peasants and thus harm unity.

Toward workers, peasants, and soldiers you should propagate the idea that 'public ownership' has in reality become ownership by a minority of aristocratic bureaucrats. Wealth created by the workers and peasants is consumed by the minority of aristocratic bureaucrats. They call us 'masters of the state' but we live crowded together in intolerable conditions while they, the so-called 'public servants', build themselves villas everywhere. The 'masters' crowd into buses to get to work while the 'servants' have high-grade limousines & police cars to clear the road ahead of them with sirens.

Compatriots, under the banner of stability and unity they bar our way. But what causes instability and disunity? Should we close our eyes and ears to their theft of public vehicles? Where did they get this money from? Isn't it the product of our sweat and blood? They pay no attention to the country's interests. They just sit in their limousines and go off to spend hundreds of yuan on a game of golf. You may well ask what they earn, and what their expenses are. It's not surprising people say that

'their wages are the gross national product'. You may well ask what the difference is between them and feudal lords!

We should not place our hopes in one or two sagacious lords. We must set up a flawless democratic system in which the press is free, the courts are independent, and the people's representatives are elected by the people. A minority control the media to cheat the people and make fools of them. Unless they are exposed, the will of the people will never find expression. If the representatives of the people are designated by a minority of aristocratic bureaucrats, how can they represent the people? How can they reflect the heart of the people?

Dear compatriots, I remember two years ago when the students were in turmoil that a minority of people used the media to cheat the whole of China and sow discord between students and workers and peasants. They said: *'To produce one student the country spends more than ten thousand yuan, produced by more than one hundred workers and peasants. But the students don't value it.'*

Whereas in reality the wealth created by the sweat and blood of hundreds of millions of compatriots is squandered by the bureaucrats, China's biggest capitalists. And they shift the responsibility for the country's calamities onto the shoulders of the people, for example by inflation. The students' movement and the interests of the workers and peasants are one and the same, we support you!

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990); Benton and Hunter, *Wild Lily, Prairie Fire* (1995).

Letter to the Whole Nation's Compatriots. 17 May 1989

The illegal behaviour of the corrupt officials has reached an extreme! The brutality of officials reaches an extreme! In a vast country like China, there is no place for truth! No repression can stop the people's anger; no longer will people believe the lies of the government. The words on our banners read: science, democracy, freedom, human rights, and by laws!

The Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation was established on 21 April to protect the rights of workers; and we published our 'Letter to the People of Beijing' and 'Ten Questions'. The 26 April editorial [in *People's Daily*] falsely stated that these documents were counter-revolutionary. We must request, in the absence of any answers to our ten questions, that you publish the two documents in your newspaper. Or are you too much afraid, even after parading the slogan, 'Believe in the People', for the past forty years? We demand a retraction of the 26 April editorial, and the punishment of its authors and those behind it.

We have carefully considered the exploitation of the workers. Marx's *Capital* provided us with a method for understanding the character of our oppression. From the total value of output we deducted the workers' wages, welfare, medical welfare, the necessary social savings, equipment depreciation and reinvestment expenses. Surprisingly, we discovered that 'civil servants' swallow all the remaining value produced by the people's blood and sweat! The amount taken by them is unprecedented! How cruel! How typically Chinese! These bureaucrats use the people's hard earned money to build luxury villas all over the country (guarded by soldiers in so-called military areas), to buy luxury cars, to travel to foreign countries on so-called study tours (with their families, and even baby sitters)! Male officials keep mistresses, while female officials keep pretty young boys. Their immoral and shameful deeds and crimes are too numerous to mention here.

Concerning our general welfare. Comrade Fang Lizhi's views on the subject of off-shore investment are accurate. Foreign investment eventually becomes the legal property of top officials, through

Guandao (i.e., bureaucratic corruption). The victim is the country, the beneficiaries are a small minority, and the people pay for it.

We strongly protest the savage action of forcing the people to buy treasury bonds. We demand that the government provide a report on income and expenditure in this trade, return the money with interest to the bond holders, and close the bond markets which are a main source of income for Guandao [official profiteering]. We demand an increase in wages, the stabilisation of inflation, an end to the refusal to adjust wages according to age and experience. We demand the investigation of the top party officials of the CCP Central Committee's Central Advisory Commission, the Central Committee itself, the Politburo, the Central Military Commission of the CCP. The first to be investigated should be those who have luxury villas; like Deng Xiaoping, Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng, Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, Yang Shangkun, Peng Zhen, and Jiang Zemin and their families. This should be done by a 'national investigation committee', elected by the people, and reporting to them.

The students are now mature, the good discipline of several millions of them in Tiananmen Square being ample proof. The people have arisen! They understand that, whatever the society, whatever the moment in history, there are only two classes, those who rule and those who are ruled. From the time of the first Emperor of the Qing dynasty [1636 BC], those who acknowledged the tides of history proved to be progressive and revolutionary, whether they were a class, a political party, an organisation, or an individual. Those who failed in this proved to be regressive and reactionary. This is the fundamental reason why in the present day, in a society ruled by man, the Chinese people still yearn, praise, desire and remember with fondness those enlightened rulers. All the political campaigns of the past forty years have merely been methods of the political suppression of the people. History has shown that the government is good at taking revenge after earlier promises of no reprisals. But ultimately, history will not be falsified.

Those politicians who are using the students' democracy movement of the should take heed. Deng made use of the 5 April Movement to become leader of the party, and time has revealed the awful consequences. The economic reforms which followed are both superficial and fake. The standard of living has declined for most people, and heavy debts remain to be paid by the people.

Workers, comrades, remain closely united with the Beijing WAF. Under its direction the democratic movement can be raised to new heights. Our union is going to hold a workers' march to Tiananmen Square on 22 May at 2:00pm, to demonstrate peacefully and support the university students. The slogan is, "*In a vast country like China, there is not even a place for truth!*"

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

Declaration of the Preparatory Committee of the Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation, 19 May 1989

It is our understanding that the students' democratic and patriotic movement, which began in April, has become a national movement that directly influences the interests of the workers. We understand that, in the national interest, the students have given their all, and that the lives of the hunger strikers are now in danger.

In the interest of those thousands of students, of workers, and of the welfare of the entire nation, we formally declare:

The Politburo must unconditionally accept the two student demands within 24 hours. Otherwise, beginning on 20 May at noon, there will be a one-day general strike, after which we will decide on further steps.

Further, let the workers of the whole nation know that the workers of Beijing are now organised.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

Public Notice No.1, 20 May 1989

The Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation is a temporary body formed voluntarily by the workers in the capital during this emergency period. Its aims are: to fight for democracy, to oppose dictatorship, to support and protect the student hunger strikers, and to unite people for the democratisation of the country. To achieve these goals, the WAF makes the following appeals:

- 1) Staff of various businesses in Beijing (excluding those engaged in the supply of electricity, water, gas, postal and communications), should stage a massive strike at noon on 21 May, which will last until the troops sent into the city have all moved out of Beijing.
- 2) Show determination in preventing troops from entering the city, to preserve the achievements of the democracy movement. Maintain the existing order in Tiananmen Square, mobilise the vehicles from all work units to block the main roads into the city and all exits from the underground railway, and ensure the normal operation of the central radio and television stations.
- 3) Join hands with Beijing's public to inform the military personnel stationed in Beijing of the truth.

Sources: *October Review*, June 1989; Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

Public Notice No.2, 21 May 1989

This afternoon, Beijing WAF called an emergency meeting to consider its specific role in the present situation. In the current circumstances the standing committee has completed organising its leadership, setting up a leaders' group, a secretariat, a publicity section, and a liaison and supplies section.

- 1) The Beijing WAF is an autonomous organisation for Beijing workers with the objective of promoting a patriotic democratic movement, democratically and legally. Our union invites all workers in the capital to actively participate.
- 2) Given the present state of affairs, the meeting decided specifically:
 - i) that the present task of the workers' picket team is to maintain a close cooperation with the Students' Autonomous Federation, and to guarantee the safety of the students and the stability of Beijing society; and,
 - ii) that the workers' picket team at the same time ensure the smooth distribution of daily necessities for citizens, such as foodstuffs and vegetables.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

The Workers' Manifesto, 21 May 1989

- The proletariat is the most progressive class in society. We have to display our strength as the central force within the democratic movement.
- The working class is the vanguard of the People's Republic of China. We have the right to expel dictators.
- Workers know full well the value of knowledge and skills in production. Thus we should allow no harm to come to any of the students nurtured by our society.

- It is our essential obligation to overthrow all forms of despotism and domination and to advance the progressive of democracy in this country.
- From solidarity, from our unswerving faith, comes our strength and power.
- Through the democracy movement, we have nothing to lose but our chains, and a world to gain.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

Letter to the Workers of the Whole Nation, 21 May 1989

Workers of the nation,

The patriotic democracy movement of the students has now become a movement involving the entire people. This irresistible movement affects the future and the destiny of the Chinese nation. We, the workers of Beijing, are willing to demonstrate the traditional spirit of the Chinese – to be fearless of death – and to stand in the forefront of the struggle for civil rights and democracy. We have been shackled by feudalism and autocracy for forty years, or one can say, for thousands of years. The dignity and human rights of the Chinese have been ruthlessly denied. Hence, the Chinese continue to believe that rights and dignity are the exclusive privileges of kings and emperors. They feel that citizens can only plead for these rights rather than fight for them. Those who dare to struggle will be executed or suffer the extermination of their entire family. All these experiences breed an inexplicable fear among Chinese people today.

We have been enlightened by the student movement and we know that we are entitled to human rights and dignity. However, with their high-handed policies, the inhumane autocrats exercise the administrative power to dismiss the workers or impose economic penalties on them. Although our people know very well that their rights and dignity are defiled by the autocrats, they dare not say a word or put up a fight. The utter inhumanity of the autocracy is obvious.

On the Chinese! What a lovable yet pitiful people! We have been bullied for thousands of years until today. No! we should be a great people. China has to reveal its true face once again!

Dear workers and brothers! If our generation is destined to carry the disgrace of our nation into the twenty-first century, we would rather sacrifice ourselves in the struggles of the twentieth century. Dear workers and brothers! Autocracy is not something to be feared; what is to be feared is an uprising of the people under autocracy! Moreover, authoritarian policies are not something to be feared. What is to be feared is the explosive force of people held down by high-handed rule. We appeal to all Chinese people to wake up – no more slumber!

Dear workers and brothers, let us unite wholeheartedly! Let us face temporary hardship, even though it may be bitter, for the well-being of future generations, that they might freely breathe the pure air of democracy, that they might enjoy human rights and dignity as any individual might! The people constitute the majority. It is the autocrats who are a handful. If we, the workers, are bold enough to stand up and take a step forward, the dust we kick up can hurl the autocrats into hell!

Sources: *October Review*, November 1989; Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990).

Letter to all Compatriots – At Home and Abroad, 21 May 1989

Compatriots at home and overseas,

We declare the establishment of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation. It is an organisation supported mainly by working people, together with all sectors from society and, united, we shall advance the democracy movement to achieve its goals.

Compatriots, we need your solid support from all sides. Particularly important is support from the media, the press and democratic groups overseas. Our motherland is now in a state of turbulence. We, heirs of Chinese history, should always bear in mind the interest of the nation. We shall make every effort to help the revival of the dragon.

Compatriots, we will unite to build a system which is guided by an honest and incorruptible Chinese Communist Party, one which has the Chinese proletariat as its mainstay, one which is anchored by all patriots at home and overseas.

Compatriots, the time has come for us to act. In solidarity, we will beat the graft and corruption. We will struggle for democracy, freedom and human rights. We will struggle for the truth.

Finally, we make this urgent appeal: compatriots, this is where the Chinese people must make the ultimate decision. "It is only through people that history may exert its momentum."

Source: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990).

Joint Declaration of all Workers and Students of the Capital. 21 May 1989

We hereby state that:

- 1) An emergency meeting should immediately be convened by the National People's Congress to remove Li Peng as Premier of the State Council and Yang Shangkun as the National Chairman. We demand an inquiry into the legal responsibility for the misdeeds of the present government officials who are nothing but enemies of we people. A special court should be set up by the National People's Congress to publicly investigate the crimes of these oppressors.
- 2) We oppose martial law. We call on the people of Beijing to resist the troops entering the city. Should the troops come, we workers from the capital will unite with the local people to protect the thousands of students who have maintained their hunger strike in Tiananmen Square for eight days. We urge the students to stop their hunger strike as soon as possible; it is not worth making such a sacrifice for the oppressors. We, the working people, are very much indebted to these noble university students. History will record their deeds. Let Tiananmen Square be our battleground as we shelter these students, hunger-strikers and petitioners under our wings. With out blood, we will reconstruct the walls of the Paris Commune.
- 3) We oppose the way the dictatorial regime used the army as their stooge. We call on all officials in the Chinese People's Liberation Army to turn their guns on the oppressors. Our maxim is: the people's army should be an army of brothers and sons; and an army of brothers and sons should protect the people.
- 4) We will not accept the martial law imposed on some parts of Beijing by the Premier of the State Council. Further to item 16 stated under section 89 of the constitution of the People's Republic of China, the State Council is never granted the power to authorise the municipal government in Beijing to ban its people from exercising their legal rights of free speech, assembly, and protest. On these grounds, we urge the State Council to abandon martial law without further delay.
- 5) Until final victory is won, we students will rally with the teachers to boycott lectures and classes.
- 6) in order that our goals might be achieved, we workers from the capital will make use of all effective peaceful means, including strikes.

Source: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990).

Provisional Memorandum of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation. 21 May 1989

Since mid-April, in the patriotic and democratic movement led by the students, most Chinese workers have already voiced their ardent democratic wish to take part in political affairs. At the same time they have recognised that they lack an organisation to represent their aspirations. So in our view there is a need for an autonomous organisation that speaks and acts for the workers. To that end we are preparing to set up an autonomous federation of workers of the capital. We propose the following program for it:

- 1) This organisation should be a completely independent, autonomous, and democratically constituted body in which workers participate of their own free will. It should not be under the control of any other body, and it should coexist on the basis of equality with other mass organisations.
- 2) The fundamental aim of this organisation should be to base its political and economic proposals in the aspirations of the great majority of workers, not simply to act as a welfare organisation.
- 3) It should assume the function of supervising the Chinese Communist Party.
- 4) In public and collective enterprises it should have the right to take all legal and effective steps to supervise its lawful representatives and to guarantee that the workers are the true masters of these enterprises; in other (kinds of) enterprise it should ensure workers' rights and interests by negotiating with the bosses or by adopting other legal measures.
- 5) This organisation should, within the confines of the Constitution and the law, guarantee all its members' legal rights.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990); Benton and Hunter, *Wild Lily, Prairie Fire* (1995).

Provisional Statutes of the Autonomous Federation of Workers of the Capital. 21 May 1989

Article 1: Membership

All workers and employees, active or retired, and all labour unions and autonomous labour unions belonging to enterprises or other units in our city that support our aims and tasks may register to join our organisation. Individual workers and employees who are members and collective members (labour unions and autonomous labour unions) have the right to give up their membership of our organisation. Members must pay their dues according to the regulations.

Article 2: Oath

Members must abide by the following oath: "I will freely observe the state's Constitution and laws and the discipline of this organisation, and I will work tirelessly and determinedly to defend all the interests of the workers."

Article 3: Congress

- 1) The congress of this organisation is sovereign; it must be regularly convoked by the executive. If the standing affairs committee or one-fifth of the membership so propose, the executive shall convoke an emergency congress.
- 2) Our statutes and any amendments to them require the support of two-thirds of the members.
- 3) Members of the executive must be proposed by ten members and must receive the votes of at least half of the membership of the federation.
- 4) Members of the executive can be recalled if a proposal is made by ten members and supported by at least half of the membership.
- 5) If ten members sign a motion the president must put it to congress for discussion and decision.

Article 4: Standing Committee

The standing committee is made up of representatives of labour unions and autonomous labour unions from enterprises and other units that participate in our organisation. Its organisation and powers are stipulated in the statutes governing the standing committee.

Article 5: The Executive

- 1) The executive is constituted by between five and seven members elected by the congress.
- 2) The executive elects a chairperson and two vice chairpersons. The chairperson chairs and convokes meetings of the executive; the vice chairpersons help the chairperson, and act as chairperson when the chairperson is absent.
- 3) The executive executes resolutions of the congress and of the standing committee and attends to day-to-day affairs. Resolutions of the executive must be arrived at according to the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority.
- 4) When necessary the executive can set up this or that administrative organ.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990); Benton and Hunter, *Wild Lily, Prairie Fire* (1995).

The People's Command, 29 May 1989

Gong Ming, 'The People's Reporter', Beijing WAF

Our vast country of 1.1 billion people has been dominated by a handful of bureaucrats who govern in the name of socialism, but really operate through autocracy and obscurantism, persecuting in intellectuals. They are superior to the masses and defy both the law and party discipline. In order to secure their own power, they form cliques and factions and they appoint their own favourites. This is especially true of the present Empress Dowager [Deng Xiaoping]. He holds court from behind a screen, divides and rules the masses and antagonises the people. Despite the people's hardships, he is only concerned with playing bridge and poker.

Our internal and external debts are enormous, our taxes are heavy and prices are skyrocketing. One-billion-strong China ranks the last on the list of the world's nations. Ignoring the state of affairs, this counterpart of the Empress Dowager smothers freedom of speech. He announces that our total output and total revenue compares to this or that country, but ignores the reality that there is only a small population in these other countries while our per-capita income is only one-tenth of theirs. I'm afraid there is no other large country of the world that shares the same position as us.

We are all human, yet why are we so poor and backward? Are we incompetent? If our problems are caused by our dense population, then why is Japan, which is also densely populated, better developed than us? If you want to say the United States' success is because of a longer history as a modern nation, then what about South Korea and Taiwan? Even they do better than us.

Answering recent pressures from the people, Li Peng has said that his three children were not involved in speculating in goods. Even though your own son is not involved in corruption, it does not mean that you are competent as premier. You should act to eliminate and curb all corruption. However, you remain ignorant of who the most corrupt bureaucrats are. If you are so incompetent, who don't you resign? How can such an incapable man be premier?

China was originally a vast country with rich human resources, but you have spoiled it. In order to defend yourself, you say that you are inexperienced in practicing socialism, and for this reason only,

one billion people have to follow you in groping their way across the river. So many people have been feeling their way for more than ten years, but where have they got? There must be times when the people loosen their grip on the rocks and are drowned. Are human lives and property trifling matters to bureaucrats?

The reform has been going on for more than ten years without orientation or aim. Which bureaucrat can state unequivocally which direction our one billion people are going? They can announce that 'it doesn't matter whether the cat is white or black, so long as it catches mice'. But when the white and black cats both want to catch the same mouse, they will fight. Confusion and contradictions will reign, and divisions will be deepened. The inevitable consequence will be the fattening of the bureaucrat cats and the emaciation of the people cats. Is this an effective strategy for ruling a country?

Premier Zhou Enlai said, *'Who wins the students wins the future'*. Chairman Mao said, *'Those who suppress the student movement are doomed.'* Reactionary forces will not fall by themselves if you don't first give them a shove. Dust will not disappear if you don't use a broom. If there is a struggle, there will be sacrifice. *'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'*. We must prepare for sacrifice if we want democracy; the rulers will not retreat from the political scene if we don't bombard them. They will certainly not bestow democratic rights on us – we have to struggle for democracy by ourselves. Speculation and corruption among the bureaucrats can only be uprooted by real democracy, and in order to achieve real democracy, we have to abolish the nomenklatura. Otherwise, under the system of one-man dictatorship, thousands of disenfranchised people cannot put their voice to their fury. We cannot have human rights if we lack democracy, and if we lack human rights, we will become slaves.

'Arise you workers from your slumbers! Arise you prisoners of want! Servile masses, arise! Arise! We'll change at once the old condition, and spurn the dust to win the prize.'

Spread this patriotic protest movement widely and seize the chance to succeed. Experience tells us that the prime question of the democracy movement is one of political power. We must overthrow the dictator and eliminate obstacles in the path of the democracy movement in order to advance. Otherwise, our movement will later meet with reprisals from the dictatorial regime. For this reason, the patriotic democracy movement appeals to us. The words of the school song of the Resistance University go like this:

'Workers, students, and merchants join forces, hasten to the front of the patriotic movement. Listen the cheers of democracy resound. Look, the flag of liberty flutters. Workers, students, and merchants unite, rush towards the violent storm and welcome the dawn. Workers, peasants, merchants and all people stand up, and rush to the patriotic movement.'

Fellow comrades, even though we are against some party and government leaders, it does not mean we are against the party leadership or socialism. Since we do not have democracy, the reactionary dictator can falsely accuse us. How can we let such a thing happen again! No, the people will not accept it! In order to save China and our people, we have to unite and throw the big dictator Deng Xiaoping out of the political scene, so that we can bring about a breakthrough in democracy and liberty within China.

Sources: Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

5 Workers organise across China

Apart from workers from the capital, the Beijing WAF was joined by workers from the north-east, Tianjin, Shanxi, Jiangsu, Hebei, Hunan and several other cities in the north...

Although first set up in Beijing, Workers' Autonomous Federations soon appeared in many other cities, including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Xian, Suzhou, Changsha, Fuzhou, Jinan and Huhehaote. WAFs everywhere looked to the Beijing WAF as the big brother and discussions soon began on the issue of building better links among each other...

Between 6 and 8 June, demonstrations were organised in cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, Changsha, Xiangtan, Fuzhou, Nanjing, Chengdu, Wuhan, Taiyuan, Xian, Kunming, Chengzhou, Changchun, Harbin, Hangzhou, Wulumuqi, Tianjin, Lanzhou, Hefei, Qingdao and Jinan. Among them, many were organised by the WAFs. In other places, strikes were called and some factories closed for a certain period of time. Sadly, however, the relentless pressure from the government soon forced demonstrators to flee, at least temporarily, underground...

Among the first group of activists executed in June were 12 workers...

On 12 June, Chinese Central Television broadcast film of the arrest of a Shanghai WAF leader who bore obvious marks of a severe beating. In September, Shanghai *Wei Hui Bao* reported that out of the 90 WAF leaders in the province, 72 had been caught.

Source: Lu Ping, *A Brief History of the Workers' Autonomous Federation*, February 1990. In Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990).

680. The ICFTU report states that other workers' autonomous federations have been organised in Shanghai, Xian, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Canton and other cities. Numerous WAF delegations from Tianjin, Shanxi, Jiangsu and some north-eastern cities were seen at Tiananmen Square rallies.

Source: ILO, Case No. 1500 (China) 19 June 1989. Interim Report – Report No. 268, November 1989

Shanghai

681. On 7 and 9 June over 1,000 workers marched with banners in support of the WAF in Shanghai. On 10 June another demonstration was held to protest against the arrest of nine leaders of the Shanghai WAF. On 12 June Chinese television broadcast pictures of a badly beaten man presented as a leader of the Shanghai WAF. The ICFTU cites a number of leaders and members of the Shanghai WAF who were arrested: Zhang Qiwang, Chen Shangfu, Wang Miaogen and Wang Hong, accused of spreading rumours, constituting an illegal organisation and incitement to overthrow the Government. Shen Zhigao, a Shanghai toy factory worker who was arrested on 11 June, was charged with spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda, and Li Zhiguo, arrested on 10 June, of having advocated the overthrow of the Government.

677. Chinese television reported on the first trial of workers and independent trade unionists on 15 June 1989, when it stated that 26 ruffians had been publicly tried at Changchun in Jilin province and had received 'adequate punishment' for having blocked traffic and advocated a strike. On 21 June three workers from Shanghai were executed, after the Higher People's Court had upheld the death sentences passed three days earlier. The workers, Xu Guoming, Xie Hanwu and Yan Xuerong, had

been found guilty of setting alight a train which had crashed into a peaceful demonstration at a Shanghai railway station, and of having obstructed the firefighters' work. According to the ICFTU, other workers have been executed.

Source: ILO, Case No. 1500 (China) 19 June 1989. Interim Report – Report No. 268, November 1989

Guangzhou

The Guangzhou WAF, which grew from the experience of the nationwide patriotic-democracy movement, has developed into an accomplished organisation. Today we announce its inauguration. Guangzhou WAF is an organisation founded by local workers, monitored by and accountable to local people. It is our hope to foster freedom, democracy and prosperity in this embittered China, and to quicken the pace of the democracy movement. We will strive to push together with all the strength and power we can gather.

In Beijing, guns have been used and people lie bleeding. This is a critical moment for the life or death of the whole Chinese people. A burdensome historical task now rests on the shoulders of every Chinese worker. To oppose violence, to support the students, to promote democracy and science is the only way out. This is the only choice.

China tosses and turns in great dismay, on the edge of a vast, uncertain void. The nation is tyrannised by a bureaucracy and a corrupt political and economic system. We know that the destiny of this nation is closely linked to the welfare and interests of the whole working class. Guangzhou WAF is therefore making this urgent appeal to people from all sectors of society to support and participate in this nationwide, patriotic, democracy movement.

Source: Manifesto of Guangzhou WAF, 4 June 1989. *October Review*, June 1989; Lu Ping, *Moment of Truth* (1990); Yu and Harrison, *Voices from Tiananmen Square* (1990).

Hangzhou

It was not only students who were making it difficult for the authorities. The Hangzhou Workers' Autonomous Association had been established on 5 June and its members had been highly visible at the intersection on the south side of Wulin Square. Speakers had denounced the Party and government and called on foreign businesspeople to withdraw their investments from China. The leaders of this organisation came from the provincial clothing research institute's experimental factory.

The endeavour, then, to involve industrial workers in the protest seemed to score some success only after 4 June. Students went to factories, gathering at entrances, making speeches, and stopped workers going to and knocking off from work. The day shift at the No.1 Cotton Mill was prevented from going to work on 8 June and on the same day production stopped at the Zhejiang Hemp Mill. Disturbances of varying degrees were experienced at factories in the industrial district of Banshan and the light industrial and textile district.

On 5 June the Hangzhou Iron and Steel Mill organised over 200 employees as a security squad to keep student activists away from the factory. Later, on 11 June, Governor Shen Zulun went to the mill to commend the workers for sticking to their posts. Shen praised the activities of similar squads organised to secure factories, shops and streets. By mid-June three districts had organised 10,000

people into such teams. A letter from an employee at the Hangzhou Glass Factory stated that on the morning of 6 June, sixty students had arrived at the factory gate to call out the workers on strike. There were production problems for three days from 6-8 June due to the roadblocks preventing supplies and employees from reaching the factory. On 7 and 8 June people formed a human wall at the front gates of the Hangzhou Oxygen Generator Factory...

The crack-down in the province was launched once the local leaders realised that the centre had reasserted its authority. However unwillingly, they had no option but to go along with it. A notice of the provincial government dated 10 June banned the Autonomous Students Association and other organisations including the Hangzhou Workers' Autonomous Association. Seven of the workers' organisation leaders were detained for investigation by the public security bureau.

A public security bureau notice of 12 June requested leaders of banned organisations to turn themselves in within a stipulated period. Others were reported by workmates or neighbours. Crackdowns were carried out against eighteen illegal organisations and 151 leaders, including secondary and tertiary teachers and students, workers, peasants and unemployed, turned themselves in.

Source: Keith Forster, Impressions of the Popular Protest in Hangzhou (1990).

Shenyang

Some workers by this time had formed loose groupings, and on 19 May we ran into a huge number of people crowding around a marching group of striking workers, not as orderly as the students, following a roundabout route along the main streets towards the railway station...

The university students had tried to organise workers to join in their marches; but a list that went up on the wall that week, calling for worker volunteer monitors to sign their names on it, was still blank a few days later. The first time I saw an organised group of workers join a Liaoning University march was six days after martial law. One group carried a banner proclaiming themselves to be the 'Shenyang United Workers and Citizens Contingent'...

In Shifu Square, huge crowds watched as groups of marchers paraded around the perimeter. At least three hundred people marched behind two wreaths and a banner that read 'Citizens weep for those tragically killed'. This time, crowds no longer thronged the streets on the way to the square; only a few people stood and watched the marchers go by. But on the Democracy Forum wall a 'Citizens and Workers Oath' in a rhyming couplet (presumably for a crowd to chant) read 'Five million Shenyang citizens say 'Down with those bastards on the Central Committee!''...

Workers from the Shenyang aircraft factory, one of the largest in town, went on strike: rumour said that one worker there had lost a child at Tiananmen Square. A hundred thousand people were said to have taken part in a march round the city. We saw one group at noon, with a banner that read 'Autonomous Patriotic Citizens' Association', who told us with satisfaction about the strikes. One foreign teacher went to the Tiexi industrial area and found it largely closed down.

Source: Anne Gunn, 'Tell the World About Us' (1990).

Xian

The popular response to these protests was overwhelmingly positive. Small restaurants set out bowls and buckets and provided boiled water for the marchers to drink freely. Crowds two and three deep lined the streets downtown to applaud the students. Boxes that students carried to collect contributions were quickly filled, and the students themselves told how in the previous days they had been going to factories and had collected over 10,000 yuan from the workers of Xian. Much of this enthusiastic response can be attributed to the sentiment that the students were acting selflessly...

At the blockades I encountered, the activists seemed from their appearance to include more workers than students. There were also widespread reports of strikes, and it is believed that for a few days after 4 June, quite a few workers at some of the larger Xian factories stayed away from work. There were a few large student demonstrations, of perhaps 1,000-2,000 people...

Around 11 June, the authorities began making arrests: first 48, then 128, then over 200 within a week. The leaders of the student federation and those responsible for the loudspeakers at the Bell Tower were the first targets, and most of them are believed to have been caught. Worker activists were another target. After the first 48 hours, most of the arrests were not publicly announced, so hard information was sparse and rumours numerous. In general, it appeared that more workers than students were arrested. One certainly got the impression that the authorities were much more worried about workers disrupting production than about students missing classes.

Source: Joseph Esherick, Xi'an Spring (1990).

Tianjin

Though there were no organised political strikes by Tianjin workers, large numbers of factory workers and others came out in support of the students on 17 and 18 May. An independent general union was founded; the 'Tianjin gongren duli gonghui' along with a more loosely organised citizens' association...

On 25 May, there was an 'intellectuals' demonstration', which again received a lot of support from factory and office workers. The demonstration was on a scale comparable to those of 17 and 18 May: perhaps several hundred thousand, if not one million. It was the last really large demonstration in Tianjin...

Source: Josephine Fox, The Movement for Democracy and its Consequences in Tianjin (1990).

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