

Thousands Again Protest in Beijing

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** APRIL 20, 1989

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Defying a ban on political protests, tens of thousands of people poured into Beijing's central square Wednesday night, and then at least 10,000 of them marched for the second time on Communist Party headquarters, where police officers beat some of them.

"They hit me on the head and face with a belt, and I have a one-inch cut that required three stitches," said a 23-year-old student at the University of Political Science and Law, who gave his name only as Mr. Wang. He said three other students with him were also hit on the head, and other students said the number of those beaten appeared to be in the dozens. Nobody was reported to be seriously injured.

Earlier, the demonstrators pushed back and forth for more than an hour in a test of strength against a unit of security men guarding the walled Zhongnanhai compound, where Prime Minister Li and many other Chinese leaders live and work. "Li Peng, come out," they shouted.

In the largest protest since early 1976, when mourners commemorated the death of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and displayed their opposition to Maoist leaders then in power, thousands of university students marched from Tiananmen Square toward Zhongnanhai, as a sympathetic crowd, a virtual sea of people,

surged raucously behind. Onlookers Drawn Into the Fervor

At first, workers, young couples and mothers holding infants seemed to follow the students mostly out of curiosity, but later many seemed drawn into the fervor and joined students in shouting slogans and singing the "Internationale," the song of revolution.

"Tonight, tomorrow - it will be like this all week," said Li Hui, a student at Beijing University, as he pressed with the crowd to try to push back the guards. He said he did not know if the demonstrations, which began after the death of the ousted Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang five days ago, would continue after Mr. Hu's official funeral services Saturday.

At about midnight, less than 24 hours after the first march on Zhongnanhai, more than 2,000 police officers filed out of several nearby buildings to disperse the student demonstrators. The crowd was separated into smaller groups by lines of police, and foreign journalists were ordered to leave. It was difficult to determine whether the remaining students were beaten or taken into custody.

When the police began to push the crowds back, they were met with resistance from the crowd of expectant onlookers, who shouted, "No beating," and "Running dogs, go away."

The night's protests culminated three days and nights of nearly continuous demonstrations mourning Mr. Hu and calling for more democracy. Mr. Hu was forced to step down in January 1987 after nationwide student rallies. After that, he was regarded by intellectuals and students as a supporter of greater freedom and democracy. Challenge of Regaining Control

No challenge that the Chinese leadership faces is likely to be more delicate than the task of establishing order -effectively of winning back control over the center of the city including Tiananmen Square, the political focal point of China - without alienating more people and undermining its authority to govern. The Government, already alarmed at signs it is losing control over sectors of the economy, thus faces a new test: the extent to which it can reassert political control.

The demonstrations in the last few days were a sign of the resentment that many young people, especially intellectuals, seem to feel for the Government. But student demonstrations in China often have broader significance, because traditionally scholars and students have been useful to confer legitimacy and moral authority. Since late in the last century, student demonstrations have presaged some of the great political movements and upheavals. Monument Becomes

Soapbox

Wednesday evening, demonstrators who had come to express their grief for Mr. Hu turned a monument in central Tiananmen Square into a soapbox, as speaker after speaker climbed the ledge of the tall monument to discuss ideas for change before a crowd of at least 30,000 people.

Many demands echoed what students have been calling for in the demonstrations and sit-ins of the last three days. Among them are a reappraisal of Mr. Hu, a repudiation of past crackdowns on intellectuals, freedom of the press and public disclosure of the income and assets of China's leaders and children.

On Monday and Tuesday, the demands were cloaked somewhat in expressions of mourning. But by Wednesday, the speakers had abandoned subtlety and used the soapbox to expand on those demands and to spread news about the events of the recent days.

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