

ARCHIVES | 1989

Beijing Rejects Deadline for Talks And Students March in Defiance

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** MAY 4, 1989

About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them.

Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems. Please send reports of such problems to archive_feedback@nytimes.com.

Waving banners commemorating a similar demonstration 70 years earlier, thousands of university students marched through the capital this morning to press their demands for greater democracy.

The march followed the Government's rejection Wednesday of the students' conditions for formal talks to resolve their differences. Today, demonstrators shouted slogans criticizing the Government's recent meeting with student leaders as a sham, and demanded that students themselves pick their representatives to meet with the authorities.

By the middle of the day, thousands of students had swept past police lines and into Tiananmen Square, the center of the capital, and policemen who had ringed it were unable to hold back the columns of marchers from at least eight universities and thousands of onlookers who also rushed to the square. Other student groups, including several from out-of-town schools, had yet to arrive at the square.

Aside from some pushing, there was no serious confrontation with the police. The authorities seemed to want to avoid any violence, perhaps partly because it was the 70th anniversary of the nationalist demonstrations in Beijing that sparked the May Fourth movement, which had a major influence in China's political,

economic and cultural modernization, and foreshadowed the rise of the Communist Party. Confrontation Expected

The demonstration could be highly embarrassing for the Government because, among other things, it might disturb the opening session of the Asian Development Bank annual meeting, for which China is host in the Great Hall of the People. Tiananmen Square is adjacent to the Great Hall.

The Government said Wednesday that it would cordon off the square, setting the stage for a confrontation between demonstrators and the police.

It was unclear what measures the security forces would use against the demonstrators, but the Government spokesman, Yuan Mu, suggested that the police would use the same methods they have in the past -principally long lines of unarmed men to block protesters from going farther.

The General Secretary of the Communist Party, Zhao Ziyang, appealed to a gathering of Chinese youths and officials Wednesday afternoon for political stability and unity. Student Demands Refused

"Haven't we had enough social turmoil?" the official New China News Agency quoted him as saying.

Students had demanded that the Government agree by noon Wednesday on their conditions for direct talks with China's leaders, but the Government refused. The authorities insisted that any dialogue be carried out through the official student unions, which the protesters reject.

In an unusually harsh attack against the nation's best-known dissident, Mr. Yuan also suggested that Fang Lizhi, the astrophysicist, had played a role in the current unrest. When pressed, however, Mr. Yuan refused to give details on Mr. Fang's involvement.

Mr. Yuan accused a "handful of people of manipulating the student unrest from behind the scenes," and he seemed to be saying that Mr. Fang was one of them. Mr. Yuan also asserted that the New York-based Chinese Alliance for Democracy, which publishes a magazine in support of greater democracy in China, was behind the student unrest. Fang Denies Any Role Mr. Yuan also criticized recently reported remarks by Mr. Fang that suggested foreign countries might exert pressure on China to improve its human-rights situation by withholding investments.

"His remarks and future facts will show what a role he is playing in the current unrest," Mr. Yuan said.

In a telephone interview Wednesday night, Mr. Fang denied any role in the student unrest. "They should show some evidence that I am behind the scenes," he said.

At an outdoor news conference of their own, students declared their intention to march today, after a vote by 47 student delegates representing universities throughout the capital. The vote was not unanimous, but the delegates said 40 universities would take part. Student representatives who had traveled from Shanghai, Hefei, Sichuan and Tianjin also said they supported the demonstration.

Informal Talks Faulted

Surrounded by a thick circle of students and journalists, Wuer Kaixi, the president of the independent student union, denied that the association was influenced by Mr. Fang or the Chinese Alliance for Democracy.

He also criticized the recent informal talks that had taken place between the Government and the students.

"I think that Mr. Yuan Mu and some of those he represents lack the sincerity with which to carry out a dialogue with us," said Mr. Wuer, who is from Xinjiang Province.

In a sign that dissatisfaction is spreading among intellectuals, a group of reporters for official publications met Wednesday to plan a peaceful demonstration of their own. They said that more than 100 reporters would gather in front of the New China News Agency today to protest the dismissal of a Shanghai newspaper editor, Qin Benli, who had insisted upon reporting controversial events.

A version of this article appears in print on May 4, 1989, on Page A00010 of the National edition with the headline: Beijing Rejects Deadline for Talks And Students March in Defiance.