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A Million Chinese March, Adding Pressure for Change

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** MAY 18, 1989

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Sirens wailed as ambulances whizzed by, carrying hunger strikers who have fainted after five days without eating, when the gray-haired school teacher suddenly pulled out her handkerchief and cried.

"Our hearts bleed when we hear the sound of ambulances," she said, her voice breaking. "They are no longer children. They are the hope of China."

The teacher, like more than a million other people in the capital, had taken to the streets to support the hunger-striking students and express her demands for democracy. When a group of students approached, passing around a cardboard box to collect money for their cause, she reached into her faded purse and pulled out the equivalent of \$5 - a week's wages for her - and put it into the box. 'They Represent Our Hopes'

"I want to thank them," she said, sniffing. "They represent our hearts. They represent our hopes." Scenes like that near Tiananmen Square - the Square of the Gate of Heavenly Peace - occurred all over central Beijing today, as office clerks, factory workers, bank tellers, journalists and taxicab drivers fought through vast seas of people to get near the enclave of hunger-striking students, now the center of China's swelling democracy movement.

The twist and tangle of people, bicycles, pedicabs, cars and banners froze the

steady flow of traffic, and when protesters had no room to march, they cheerfully walked around in circles. Clear Lane for Ambulances

But as confusion bordering on chaos spread across the capital, with more and more people leaving their dank offices and small homes for the open air, a certain order is evident on the streets, revealing the touch of a tightly run organization of students.

Specially designated students used long ropes to keep a single lane free on the otherwise jammed Avenue of Eternal Peace and on Tiananmen Square, so that spectators did not get in the way of ambulances carrying hunger strikers.

The result is that the ambulances dash by at 40 miles an hour, while all around them are pedestrians who struggle even to inch forward through the mass of demonstrators. Human Rings of Protection

Just a week or two ago, many Beijing residents patronized the students, saying they were a bit too idealistic and too inclined to tie up traffic with their demonstrations. But now the city's citizens, from the young entrepreneurs in business suits to the old ladies sitting in front of their homes, compete in praising the students.

"The student movement is terrific!" an elderly police officer shouted to a group of high-school students and workers who had gathered to listen. "If the Government commands a crackdown, will I obey their order? No, I will go against it."

Marchers and spectators, chanting and singing and screaming, shoved their way back and forth on the Avenue of Eternal Peace in front of Zhongnanhai, the Communist Party headquarters, where the country's leaders live. Even late at night, the entrance was packed with 2,000 workers, students, and other protesters shouting for the Prime Minister: "Li Peng, come out! Li Peng, come out!" In the afternoon, students formed a semicircular human fence to protect the leaders' compound from the possibility of being stormed by angry workers. Just inside the human ring, but outside the doorway, students turned the area into a place for resting and eating. Soda Water and Bread

Deep in the heart of Tiananmen Square, the nation's political center that the democracy fighters have now invaded, inside several rings of students, is a heavily guarded, peaceful, airy enclave where the senior student leaders confer with the hunger strikers and where the containers of water and stacks of medicines - glucose and aspirins and salt tablets - are dispensed.

Here, the nearly 3,000 strikers -sprawling on the ground from exhaustion, heat, lack of food and sleep - are fainting more frequently as the sun sears the square throughout the day.

Every so often, bicycle riders carting wagons of soda water and bread are allowed to penetrate the outer layers of the rings to bring in nourishment for students who are eating but still showing their support by occupying a spot on the square 24 hours a day. Some rise in the early morning, carrying old, dirty banners that they use to help sweep away the litter of the previous day's thousands of spectators. Support From the Workers

A makeshift loudspeaker system allows them to announce news of their latest plans or supporters - how much money they have raised, the condition of strikers, a letter of sympathy. They have a copying machine, and every time they distribute a stack of pamphlets, spectators fight for every scrap of paper.

The outpouring of sympathy stretches two miles in either direction, from the faces that peer out of office buildings, to the posters hanging out the windows, to the cars whose passengers lean out to wave banners or pictures of Zhou Enlai, the former Prime Minister who is now a hero for many young people.

Sensing that this is a historic time that they want to play a part in, many workers have come to help. Often that means buying food and drink for students, even if they don't ask for it.

"We're very moved by the people coming out to support us," said T. F. Wang, a Beijing University student who was carrying a watermelon and box of popsicles that people had handed to him. "This turnout adds to the pressure on the leadership to come out and talk to us."

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