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CROWDS IN STREET ASK DENG'S OUSTER

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 18, 1989

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More than a million Chinese took to the streets of Beijing Wednesday in an extraordinary outpouring of support for more democracy.

The protests, amounting almost to a general strike, continued this morning and greatly increased the pressure on the Government to sacrifice one or more top officials and speed political liberalization.

In an attempt to defuse the situation, several of the nation's top leaders visited hospitalized students on a hunger strike early this morning to show their concern. But the crowds this morning seemed at least as militant as those on Wednesday, and many people said they would be satisfied only with the removal of the country's senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, or Prime Minister Li Peng. Many Banners, Few Police

Some workers said their factories were on strike, and the crowds in the streets again turned the normally drab city into a kaleidoscope of banners demanding more democracy and urging support for the hunger strikers.

The police were nowhere to be seen, but the city reverberated with angry slogans demanding a more open political system and with sirens of ambulances carrying unconscious hunger strikers from the central square to nearby hospitals. It was the 3,000 hunger strikers -like Wang Wen, a young man who turned 21

years old Wednesday and pledged to maintain the strike until death if necessary - who galvanized the support and often tears of people all over the city. On Wednesday, the fifth day of their strike, the students were visibly weakened as they lay on the ground sheltered from the hot sun by sheets and tents. But they saw their cause provoke a political crisis in China. Party Leaders Visit Strikers

The Government televised this morning's hospital visit, in which Prime Minister Li and the Communist Party leader, Zhao Ziyang, met with hunger strikers, and some of the television scenes included students making strong criticisms of Communist Party rule.

"Everybody thinks the nation has no hope, the Communist Party has no hope," a disheveled young man shown on national television told his visitors. "We should do things the way they do them in the United States, and thus restore people's confidence."

The hospital visit seemed to have no impact in placating the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who gathering again this morning in the center of the city to join the protests. More and more were high-school students and people from other cities who have poured into Beijing on trains and buses to show.

The demonstrators had little to say about the Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, whose visit to China continued to be disrupted by the protests. Many workers seemed little aware of Mr. Gorbachev, and though intellectuals said that they admired what Mr. Gorbachev had done in the Soviet Union, they emphasized that it was sympathy for the hunger strikers rather than Mr. Gorbachev's presence that brought them into the streets.

The demonstration Wednesday was the realization of one of the Government's worst nightmares - organized worker participation in what began as student protests. Furthermore, the workers included not only auto mechanics and railroad employees, but staff members of some of China's most respected and sensitive institutions.

Among the thousands of "work units" that paraded through the capital were organized groups representing pillars of the establishment like the People's Liberation Army, the Foreign Ministry, the Central People's Broadcasting Station, People's Daily and even the cadre school of the Communist Party Central Committee. Most of the marchers were young people who said they had taken the initiative to demonstrate, but many said that their bosses did not object when they painted banners and marched out the door.

"Dump Li Peng! Dump Li Peng!" shouted employees of the Government-affiliated Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to roars of support from the crowd.

Demonstrations for democracy and in support of the hunger strikers were also held in 21 other cities around the country, the official New China News Agency reported. The agency, which like other official Chinese news outlets has reported extensively on the hunger strikers, said that in the cities of Shanghai and Tianjin, nearly 30,000 students rallied, while smaller numbers gathered in the other cities.

In calling for more democracy, the students are specifically demanding press freedom, an end to corruption and, in many cases, free elections to fill leading positions. The students' demands also include open-ended talks with the nation's leaders on a variety of issues and an official reappraisal of the student movement.

Weakening Support for Party Line

More and more prominent individuals and organizations also called on the Government to bend to the students' demands, in a sign of weakening support for the official party line. Among those appealing to the Government to heed the students were the presidents of eight universities and the central committees of the Chinese Communist Youth League, the All-China Youth Federation and the All-China Students Federation.

On Wednesday, the protest campaign seemed to complete its transformation from a student movement into a broad-based democracy movement that will be very difficult to squelch. The New China News Agency reported that the number of protesters in Beijing exceeded 1 million, corroborating Western estimates and making it by far the biggest demonstration in China since the organized rallies of Red Guards more than two decades ago, early in the Cultural Revolution.

Students and workers reported that small strikes were beginning at a number of offices and factories to show support for the students. The strikes compounded the urgency of the crisis and narrowed the options for top leaders.

Televised Debate Sought

A senior Communist Party official said he expected Prime Minister Li or Mr. Zhao to meet with students in an attempt to end the hunger strike and defuse the crisis. He said that while there were disagreements among top officials about how to handle the situation, the leaders are likely to bend to the students' main demands, for open-ended televised talks with the Government.

Further delays are likely only to hurt the Government's position, as the hunger strikers continue to weaken and inspire more and more sympathy from throughout

the nation. China has had a long history of respect for scholars, and there is an enormous poignancy here in the situation of the youths who say they are willing to die on hunger strike to achieve more democracy.

"This is the fifth day of the students' hunger strike, so we have come to support them," Sun Yong, an engineer in the People's Liberation Army who marched with dozens of other members of his Army unit, said Wednesday. "The Government ignores the students, and so people hate the leaders. It is very dangerous for us to come, and we may lose our jobs. But every Chinese must speak out. If the Government doesn't answer the students' demands, we will keep coming."

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