

ARCHIVES | 1989

## TURMOIL IN CHINA; Shanghai, at a Standstill, Waits Apprehensively

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES JUNE 7, 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](mailto:archive_feedback@nytimes.com).

This is a city waiting. The buses have stopped running. Barricades have been erected across main thoroughfares. The police are nowhere in sight. For the moment, the authorities seem to have abandoned Shanghai to its people.

At the junction of Nanjing and Tibet Roads, one of the largest intersections in the city, a huge crowd gathered tonight and applauded a speech made from the pedestrian overpass above. On the famed Bund along the waterfront, a young man came out of a milling crowd and said: "Be careful. Something is going to happen tonight."

He was asked what it might be. An attempt by the police to clear the streets? The appearance of troops? "I don't know what it will be," he said before melting back into the crowd, "but something is going to happen."

Along Nanjing Road, the main commercial thoroughfare, people congregated in large knots, talking or reading the posters that have been glued to the plane trees or to the walls. Unconfirmed, farfetched rumors circulate, among them that Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader, is dead and that Li Peng, the Prime Minister, was shot by a soldier in the Great Hall of the People. Defiance and Apprehension

At 10 P.M., a late hour for this city of no nightlife, the crowd at the Nanjing-Tibet Road intersection was so thick that a car carrying a foreign reporter took

nearly 15 minutes to nudge its way through it. There was no sign of the municipal authorities.

Journalists monitoring the municipal radio said it described the situation as the worst in the city since the 1949 Communist takeover, with production seriously hit by sabotage.

In the three days since the crackdown in Beijing, which is a two-and-a-half-hour flight from here, Shanghai has been engulfed in a mood of defiance and apprehension, foreign residents and local citizens say. The talk is of strikes and the possibility that the city may be next to be put under the control of the army.

Contrary to some reports, there have been none of the student-led demonstrations that took place here almost daily up to the army's violent move to take control of Beijing late Saturday and Sunday; residents here have learned of the crackdown largely through Chinese-language broadcasts of the Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

"We have something far more powerful than demonstrations," said a man about 30 years old, wearing a white shirt and standing with the scattered crowd on the Bund. "Shanghai is the economic center of China. We can strike a blow at the Government simply by not working."

The man, who identified himself as a worker but who did not give his name, went on, "Ninety-nine percent of the people of Shanghai are against the Government." He was asked how he could know such a figure. "Because I listen to what people say on the streets," he said. "I haven't heard anybody, not one person, say he supported the Government." Killings Unsettle City

Clearly, news of the Beijing killings deeply unsettled Shanghai, China's largest and richest city. The buses used to block many streets, people here say, are not intended to stop the army from coming in; they are intended to disrupt transportation to make it difficult for people to get to work, and, given the total absence of bus service, the tactic appears to have been at least partly successful.

"The students have two ideas," another man on the Bund said. "One is to make it difficult for those who want to report for work to get there. The other is to give the excuse of no transportation to those who do not want to report to work."

There are no firm figures on absenteeism in work places, but word on the street tonight was that in factories 50 percent of the workers are not turning up. The situation seems clearer at the universities. Students here have been boycotting classes since the end of last week and universities are said to be almost empty.

There is a feeling that danger lurks everywhere. The planes coming into Shanghai from Tokyo, Hong Kong and elsewhere are almost empty. A Cathay Pacific Airlines Boeing 747 from Hong Kong tonight had perhaps 30 people on it. But the flights leaving the city are all fully booked, as overseas Chinese and foreigners working for foreign companies try to leave.

At the high-rise Hilton Hotel in the western part of the city, a request for a hotel car to take a visitor to the Bund was met with a refusal; hotel personnel explained that the crowds on the street might seize the car, let the air out of its tires, perhaps even turn it over to make it part of a barricade. Long Lines for Food

"We have been warned by the Government not to take visitors to the center of the city," a hotel staff member said.

The driver of an ordinary taxi, nonetheless, was willing to take the risk and set out through the darkened streets eerily devoid of motorized traffic but full of bicycles, pedestrians and the ubiquitous knots of people standing and talking. But there seemed to be no danger, as the taxi wove its way past disabled buses pulled across streets, made detours around impassable barricades and crept carefully through crowds of people who gave the V for victory sign as it passed.

One man reported that the lines outside shops had been long during the day as residents stocked up on food.

"I bought 50 caddies of rice myself," he said. A caddy is slightly more than a pound. "Nobody knows what is going to happen."

The worst fear is that the Communist Party's leaders, sensing that they have lost control of Shanghai, will send in the army to reimpose authority and insure against the spread of strikes. There are constant rumors here of the approach of troops, all of them unconfirmed.

A version of this article appears in print on June 7, 1989, on Page A00010 of the National edition with the headline: TURMOIL IN CHINA; Shanghai, at a Standstill, Waits Apprehensively.