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TURMOIL IN CHINA; Students in Shanghai Wage War of Buses With Officials

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES JUNE 8, 1989

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First there are several disabled buses blocking the road to traffic and then, at the entrance to Fudan University, whose students put up the barricade, there are the signs of rebellion.

A Chinese flag is marked with a black band and under it the words "China is Dead." Another sign hangs from a building declaring, "National Disaster." Covering glass cases where school notices are usually posted are photocopied pages of Hong Kong and American newspapers showing pictures, not available in the Chinese press, of the violent crackdown over the weekend in Beijing.

Like most of the 40 or so institutions of higher learning in this city, Fudan, the most prestigious, is engaged in a strangely indirect battle with the local authorities, one that reflects the tension and unease in this city, China's largest, since the army's move on protesters in Beijing. To Topple the Government

"Our goal is no longer, as it was before, merely to promote democracy," said one student, who gave only his surname, Wang. "Now, it is to encourage strikes, to disturb traffic and to help bring about the fall of the Government."

Mr. Wang was standing next to a mobile speaker's unit, complete with microphone and loudspeakers, which students said is one of several being taken

around this sprawling urban area so that the students' point of view can be spread, particularly about the brutality of the army's move in Beijing.

But a more intense battle has been taking place over the city's buses. They have been commandeered by students and supporters among the city's working class who let the air out of their tires so they can be used to disrupt the city's traffic and prevent people from showing up at work.

The crippling of the city's buses, which has all but eliminated public transportation in this city of about 12 million people, took place in broad daylight in the two days since the Beijing crackdown. Counterattack at Night

The Government's counterattack takes place in the small hours of the morning when, presumably, most of Shanghai's aroused citizenry is asleep. Tonight, in fact, the state-controlled local television news showed a nocturnal police operation to tow the disabled buses off the streets and into repair yards.

A spokesman for the city transportation department, interviewed on the air, said 236 disabled buses had been recovered in this way, though he said they had not yet been put back into service because of a need for repairs and a lack of spare parts. Another view is that the city does not dare to restore bus service for fear that the buses will be commandeered and used as barricades again.

The students say the use of buses to make barricades is justified by the need to fight against a brutal Government. The action has the support of a large majority of people, they say, and the police have not interfered with their operations in what the students say is an effort to avoid arousing the people's anger. By contrast, the official propaganda machine attributes the sabotage of the buses to "a very small number of bad elements" who are seeking to use the current instability in China to stir up even more trouble. No Public Transportation

Whatever the case, even as many of the barricades set up since Sunday have disappeared and the buses recovered by the city administration, there is still no public transportation in Shanghai.

The intensity of distrust here, and of the indirect conflict, could be seen when a train plowed into some people blocking the tracks a mile or so from the central station on Tuesday night, killing six and injuring six.

People who gathered about the scene of the accident said they believed that the train crew had been told by higher authorities to ignore the human blockade. They were so angry that they not only set the train's nine passenger cars ablaze last night, but also burned six police sidecar motorcycles parked on a road parallel to

the tracks.

During a visit to the site this afternoon, a reporter discovered a large crowd of people, mostly workers in nearby factories, supporting the theory that the train accident was, like the Beijing army action, another instance of the reckless disregard by the authorities for the lives of ordinary people. Tracks Blockaded

"All of the tracks have been blockaded for several days," said a man in the irate crowd examining the charred wreckage of the train and the heap of burned motorcycles. "So they knew there were people on the tracks, and yet they ordered the train not to stop."

The official news accounts of the incident acknowledged that six people were killed in the accident but did not specify the cause. The account, carried on the local television news, along with pictures of the train engulfed in flames, went on to blame the arson on the "very small number of bad elements" who have been sabotaging the buses.

The Government's effort to quell the brooding crisis in Shanghai is, on the one hand, to try quietly, in the dead of night to repair the damage being done to the city's transportation system while, on the other, to portray its opponents as tiny, isolated bands doing harm to the people's welfare. Mood of Defiance

The strategy also seems based on the hope that the student movement will die away, and indeed perhaps a half of the students have left the universities to go home, depleting their forces. Nonetheless, the mood at the partially depopulated Fudan today was defiant and even optimistic.

"The Government has lost its right to rule," said a student who, like virtually all of his colleagues, preferred not to give his name. "We are confident because we have so much support among the Chinese people. If we remain united in our effort, maybe we can succeed in forcing the Government to step down."

Another student took a visitor on a tour of the campus slogans, drawing particular attention to one that made an allusion to a past martyr in the fight against tyranny.

According to legend, the student explained, a hero named Jing Ke tried to assassinate the cruel and ruthless first Emperor of China in the third century B.C. Before he set out on his doomed task, Jing Ke wrote a short poem reproduced at Fudan in black characters on red paper. It said: The wind blows. The river is cold. The hero sets forth. He may never return.

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