

# A WORD OF ADVICE TO THE POLITBURO

Text by He Xin

Translated, annotated and introduced

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## Translator's Introduction

Prominent among the numerous targets of the purge that has followed in the wake of the 3-4 June Massacre in Beijing have been the personnel of Zhao Ziyang's think tanks or related groups.<sup>1</sup> Some of them will certainly be placed in the category of 'those who colluded with hostile foreign powers and revealed top Party and State secrets to illegal organizations'. Others will be identified as the 'political schemers behind the scenes' whom State Council spokesman Yuan Mu excoriated in his 6 June press conference.<sup>2</sup> But Zhao's men were not the only schemers working behind the scenes.

There are definite indications that it is the best and brightest of Li Peng's scribes who have concocted the present line that it was Taiwan,

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1 In mid-August, Li Peng denounced Zhao for his reliance on 'talents' to rule both the Party and the nation ('*jingying*' *zhidang zhiguo*), which was aimed at transforming the Party and weakening its leading role; 'the real effect of this was to abolish the leadership of the Party'. See the New China News Agency report, 21 August, 'Central Leaders Discuss Strengthening Party Construction' [*Zhongyang lingdao tan jiaqiang dangjian*].

2 See 'The State Council Spokesman Yuan Mu Held a Press Conference to Expose the Truth of the Counter-Revolutionary Rebellion in Beijing', in *The June Turbulence in Beijing* (New Star Publishers, Beijing, 1989), p.16.

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the United States and the Chinese Democratic Alliance which masterminded the April-June 'turbulence'.<sup>3</sup> The story they have pieced together may seem unconvincing, yet it is no more incredible than any other aspect of the official account of the massacre. Chinese propagandists reason that since the rest of the world has been so easily convinced about the human face of Chinese communism in the past, there is every reason to believe foreigners will come around to accepting the present line coming from Party Central.

The Party leadership throughout its history has relied on intellectuals and ideologues to rationalize the quirks of its decision making. The more talented and astute intellectuals of this kind serve a function not dissimilar to that of the advisers to the imperial court; or perhaps their role can be likened to that of the itinerant 'lobbyists' (*youshui zhi shi*) or the 'strategists' (*zonghengjia*) of the Warring States period.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes these hired hands have proved to be highly capable men, as in the case of Chen Boda, Zhou Yang and Hu Qiaomu in the 40s and 50s, or Yao Wenyuan in the 60s. Though he has yet to achieve the prominence of the above-listed figures, over recent years another intellectual has appeared on the scene to vie with the clever young things employed by Zhao Ziyang and his supporters. His name is He Xin.

Born in 1949, He Xin was a successful candidate in the university entrance examinations of 1977 but soon abandoned his studies. After a

3 This was first rumoured in the Hong Kong press after 4 June, and the attacks on 'foreign powers' have formed a central theme of Party propaganda since then. The Beijing mayor Chen Xitong's 30 June report to the State Council is the most thorough and imaginative application of this conspiracy theory. See 'A Report on Bringing a Halt to Turmoil and Suppressing the Counter-revolutionary Disturbance' [Guanyu zhizhi dongluan he pingxi fangeming baoluande qingkuang baogao], *People's Daily*, 7 July 1989.

4 The most famous *zonghengjia* are perhaps Su Qin and Zhang Yi. Su worked for a north-south axis of powers (*zong*) against the state of Qin while Zhang attempted an east-west alliance of states (*heng*) with the Qin. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, *liezhuan* IX and X for Su and Zhang's biographies. A work entitled *Zhanguo zonghengjia shu*, found in the Mawangdui Han tomb, contains writings by Su Qin. For all of his talents as a schemer Su was finally executed as a traitor. *Zongheng* is also used in the four-character phrase *zongheng baihe*, 'to manoeuvre among different factions'. In the 'Five Pests' (*wudu*) chapter of *Hanfeizi*, the *zonghengjia* (or *yantanzhe*, as they are called here) are singled out along with scholars, knights-errant, fawners and merchants and artisans (*xuezhe*, *daijianzhe*, *huanyuzhe* and *shanggong zhi min*) as being the enemies of the state. Han Fei praises agricultural producers and warriors as the only source of wealth and power for a government.

short period as a Chinese language teacher in the Central Fiscal College of Beijing he managed to have himself transferred to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in 1980, becoming the research assistant of the Marxist-Leninist historian Li Shu in 1981. From 1982 he has been working in the Cultural History Department of the Institute of Modern History in the academy.<sup>5</sup> As an academician He Xin has written copiously, if not always convincingly, on a wide range of subjects including anthropology, history, philosophy, Marxist theory, cultural history, questions related to modernization and even contemporary literature. He played a minor role in a controversy that unfolded in the early months of 1983, when he co-authored a controversial essay on Chinese calligraphy and abstract art with Li Xianting, an exceptionally talented art critic and at that time an editor of the art monthly *Meishu*.<sup>6</sup> Li was cashiered for his temerity and remained un- or self-employed until *Fine Art in China* (*Zhongguo meishubao*) was founded in late 1985.<sup>7</sup>

He Xin had learned his lesson; he shifted cultural and political incarnations. Although he has not yet proved himself to be of the same calibre as Hu Qiaomu or Yao Wenyuan, he possesses considerable political acumen, and in 1985-86 he was promoted by Hu Qiaomu, making himself very unpopular in the Beijing literary and academic world by acting as the old ideologue's chosen successor.

Hu Qiaomu's support became evident among Beijing literary circles in 1985 when *Dushu*, the leading and highly controversial intellectual monthly, was, according to the magazine's editors, ordered by Hu to give prominence to He Xin's intriguing critique of Xu Xing's 'existentialist' story 'Variations Without a Theme' (*Wuzhuti bianzou*).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> These details are taken from a biographical note in *He Xin ji – fanxi, tiaozhan, chuangzao*, (Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, Haerbin, 1988). The picture of He on the same page shows him with a crewcut and dressed in a Mao jacket.

<sup>6</sup> See He Xin and Li Xianting's two part article, 'A Preliminary Discussion of Concepts of the Abstract in Classical Chinese Painting' [*Shilun Zhongguo gudian huihuade chouxiang shenmei yishi*], *Meishu*, no.1, 1983, pp.4-9 and *Meishu*, no.5, 1983, pp.16-19.

<sup>7</sup> Li was fired on the order of Deng Liqun, then Minister of Propaganda, who criticized the article as an example of 'spiritual pollution'. Note that this was some months before Deng Xiaoping launched the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign in October 1983.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that Liu Xiaobo, one of He's chief nemeses, as we will see below, defended Xu's story and another work by Liu Suola which was also singled out by He. For a direct rebuttal of He's critique, see Xu Zhenqiang, 'The

The article, a pointed attack on contemporary Chinese ‘hippyism’ as he calls it, was printed as the lead article in the November 1985 issue of *Dushu*.<sup>9</sup> The magazine was subsequently obliged to publish a number of other pieces by He Xin, including a study of Ke Yunlu’s highly acclaimed novels *New Star* (*Xinxing*) and *Night and Day* (*Ye yu zhou*).<sup>10</sup> While He Xin’s activities in the literary sphere deserve a separate study, it may be worthwhile here to note an anecdote concerning He’s literary pugilism in the mid-1980s. In 1985, He sent Li Tuo, a well-known Beijing novelist and critic famed for championing new literary and cinematic fads, a copy of a recent paper of his with the words ‘I challenge you!’ written on it. However, he threw down the gauntlet so many times that people began to tire of his near-comic zeal. Even Hu Qiaomu, advised by the scholar Qian Zhongshu not to embarrass himself by relying on an ‘ill-educated opportunist’, seems eventually to have dropped He.

Hu Qiaomu had not been He Xin’s only admirer. Included in a recent volume of He’s works are approving letters from China’s Wernher von Braun, Qian Xuesen, and the late aesthetician Zhu Guangqian.<sup>11</sup> The vice-minister of the Television, Film and Broadcasting Ministry in charge of film, Chen Yi’s son, Chen Haosu, told me in March 1989 that he had written the author a letter of praise and encouragement after finishing reading one of his books. But He Xin is not simply a modern-day amanuensis to the powerholders, or an intellectual acrobat who does turns for establishment figures; like many of his contemporaries and competitors he has proved himself to be both an ebullient writer and a complex cultural and political figure.

He Xin’s writings cover an impressive range of topics. He belongs to that particular brand of post-Mao Chinese academic generalists (*zajia*) who can write with great fluency and at considerable length on

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Cold May Not Presage Autumn’ [Tianliang weibi qiu], originally carried in *Dangdai zuojia pinglun*, vol.1, 1986, reprinted in *Xinshiqi zhengming zuopin*, vol.3 (Xibei daxue chubanshe, Xi’an, 1988), pp.44-51.

9 ‘Absurdity and Superfluous People in Contemporary Literature’ [Dangdai wenxuezhongde huangmiugan yu duoyuzhe], *Dushu*, no.11, 1985, pp.3-13. See Zhao Yuesheng’s attack on He Xin, He’s response, and his second article on the subject, collected in He Xin, *Yishu xiixiangde fuhao – wenhuaxue chanshi*, (Renmin wenxue chubanshe, Beijing, 1987), pp.154-75.

10 ‘A Political Sociological Analysis of *New Star* and *Night and Day*’ [‘Xinxing’ ji ‘Ye yu zhou’ de zhengzhishehuixue fenxi], *Dushu*, no.7, 1986, pp.45-52.

11 *He Xin ji*, pp.49-51, 71.

any number of subjects.<sup>12</sup> In his most recent volume of collected writings, published in 1988, there are studies of historiography, Hegelian logic, alienation and humanism in Marx's early thought, literary theory, traditional Chinese philosophy (with essays on the origin of the theory of the five elements, comments on Laozi, Kang Youwei's reformism, Tan Sitong's Buddhist thought and Chen Hengque's traditionalism), questions related to modernization and articles on Chinese cultural totems. There are even two essays on foreign literature.<sup>13</sup>

He Xin has been tireless in providing analyses of Chinese politics, society and even international relations for his superiors, a form of policy research generally dubbed in Chinese as 'memorial economics' (*zouzhe jingjixue*), 'memorial political science' (*zouzhe zhengzhixue*), and so on.<sup>14</sup> Unlike many renegade members of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, He has kept to his brief and worked steadily to provide what he regards as impartial analysis to political leaders, at the same time remaining anxious to prove his credentials as an independent thinker to his contemporaries. He Xin has provided us with an insight into his view of the role of the analyst and academic in a country like China in a rather revealing series of notes collected into what he calls a 'contemporary cultural *aide-mémoire*' (*dangdai wenhua beiwanglu*).<sup>15</sup> In it he gives a short description of what we could call the contemporary academic strategist, a modern-day *zonghengjia*.

<sup>12</sup> One of his mentors, Professor Sun Yuwen of Yanbian University, has characterized He Xin as someone who 'reads any and everything, thinks laterally and vertically, and writes endlessly' (*luanqibazaode du, diansandaoside xiang, meiwan meiliaoode xie*). See *He Xin ji*, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> See *He Xin ji*, *ibid.* In a bibliography given to me by He Xin he lists fourteen books, including translations. Other recent works include *Yishu xianxiangde fuhao – wenhuaxue chanshi*, (Renmin wenxue chubanshe, Beijing, 1987), and *Shenlong zhi mi*, (Yanbian daxue chubanshe, 1987). Some of his more popular writing has been on Chinese mythology and a translation of Francis Bacon's essays. His 'scholastic autobiography' entitled *Solitude and Challenge* [Gudu yu tiaozhan] is scheduled to be published by Hebei renmin chubanshe in 1990.

<sup>14</sup> See Wang Runsheng's comments on this form of applied scholarship in 'The Crisis Mentality and Studies of the China Problem' [Weiji yishi yu Zhongguo wentixue], *Dushu*, no.4, 1989, pp.44-45. A number of these pieces have been included in his *He Xin ji*, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> The material was published in late 1988 under the title 'My Perplexities and Concerns' [Wode kunhuo yu youlǔ]. See the Hubei journal *Xuexi yuekan*, no.12, 1988, pp.34-38.

In politically modern states, policies are invariably designed, demonstrated and proved by academics before politicians (many of whom are also scholars) make policy decisions and implement them. China, on the other hand, is a country in which academics are given the task of justifying a policy only after a decision has been made and it has been put into practice by a politician. Academics can be no more than a mouthpiece for and defender of predetermined policy. Perhaps this is the very reason why China's literati (*wenren*) – including the members of the so-called 'think tanks' – are so worthless in political terms.<sup>16</sup>

Notwithstanding He Xin's bewilderingly idealistic vision of Western political decision-making, this passage may also be interpreted in the context of He's career as an unintentional caricature of his own role in Chinese politics. In the same article, He energetically defends himself against both real and imagined adversaries. He is particularly scathing in his condemnation of the literary critic Liu Xiaobo, an academic in his early thirties who has been regularly categorized as a 'cultural nihilist' since his rise to fame in 1986. While Liu Xiaobo and many others perceive a need for another, even more thorough, May Fourth-like movement in China,<sup>17</sup> He Xin finds a more ominous significance in recent intellectual debates. At the end of 1988 he told his readers:

...I would like to remind my compatriots that behind the cries of radical anti-traditionalists and iconoclasts who are so popular today, there is a hidden agenda which calls for another Cultural Revolution (will it not be one initiated from below rather than above?)

Of course, the next Cultural Revolution may not be called that. What's in a name? Amidst the miasma of cultural nihilism, radical anti-traditionalism, as well as among the warped attitudes and extremism of some young intellectuals, if we sit back and consider things calmly and rationally we can discern many familiar shadows of the past. The difference is that the anti-traditionalism and cultural nihilism of those years marched under the banner of Marx and Mao Zedong; today it is hidden under the cloak of Freud and Nietzsche. The thing [the two currents of thought] that they have in common is their zealotry, their absurd theoretical framework and their wrong-headed and distorted analysis of Eastern and Western culture. (It is here in

<sup>16</sup> 'My Perplexities and Concerns', p.34.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Liu's 'The Tragedy of Enlightenment – a Critique of the May Fourth Movement' [Qimengde beiju – wusi yundong pipan], *Mingbao Monthly*, no.5, 1989, pp.37-45.

particular that I suggest people examine and re-evaluate Liu Xiaobo's theories.)<sup>18</sup>

He Xin's comments are particularly ominous when we consider that he has had the ear of 'conservative' political figures for some years and that the paper that I have translated here names Liu Xiaobo as a main instigator in recent years of intellectual unrest among students. Furthermore, in light of the virulent denunciations of Liu Xiaobo in the Chinese press following his arrest on 6 June,<sup>19</sup> He Xin's evaluation and pointed political attack on Liu can hardly be construed as simply an innocent scholarly debate.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps even more important is the fact that the line of argumentation revealed by this quotation – that the young iconoclastic intellectuals are little more than a new generation of Red Guards – one seen earlier in his critique of Xu Xing's 'Variations Without a Theme',<sup>21</sup> coincides with the line presented by Deng Xiaoping and his coevals over the decade since the Democracy Wall Movement of 1978-79, that the hidden agenda of the young agitators for political reform in China are rabble-rousers who are carrying on from

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- <sup>18</sup> 'My Perplexities and Concerns', pp.36-37. Liu Xiaobo accepted as valid comments from less malicious critics that his writings bear the mark of Cultural Revolution rhetoric. See, for example, Liu's article 'Foreign Salons and Cultural Aggression' [Yangshalong yu wenhua qinlüe], *Emancipation Monthly* [Jiefang yuebao], no.3, 1989, p.80. He Xin would dare say include the thirty-four-year-old Liu Xiaobo in his blanket condemnation of 'superfluous people' (*duoyude ren*) who grew up during the Cultural Revolution. See He Xin's 'Absurdity and Superfluous People in Contemporary Literature', pp.10-11. For my own comments on Liu, see my essay 'Confession, Redemption and Death: Liu Xiaobo and the 1989 Protest Movement', to appear in George Hicks (ed.), *The Broken Mirror: China after Tiananmen* (Oxford University Press, 1990).
- <sup>19</sup> Liu's arrest by plain-clothes men on 6 June was reported by eyewitnesses, although the New China News Agency announced that the Beijing Public Security Bureau detained Liu for questioning only on 23 June.
- <sup>20</sup> For the main attack on Liu in the Chinese press, see Wang Zhao's 'Grabbing Liu Xiaobo's Black Hand' [Zhuazhu Liu Xiaobode heishou], *People's Daily*, 25 June 1989. Other denunciations appeared in the *Beijing Daily* and *Beijing Evening News* during July.
- <sup>21</sup> See 'Absurdity and Superfluous People in Contemporary Literature', pp.10-11, where he also mentions, and criticizes, Liu Xinwu's work of 'faction' 'Zooming in on 19 May 1985' [5. 19 *changjingtou*] in this context.

where the Gang of Four left off, their real aim being to overthrow the Party and eliminate 'capitalist roaders'.<sup>22</sup>

In the closing paragraphs of 'My Perplexities and Concerns', He Xin states his support for a 'standard Marxist viewpoint' in assessing China's critical situation; he declares that economics and not politics is the determining factor in social progress. Having equated all radical intellectual opinion with stupidity or wanton iconoclasm, He warns against any and all 'Great Leap Forward' style changes. He makes a point that usually appears under the rubric of 'unity and stability', something laboriously repeated over the years by Deng Xiaoping to justify monolithic Party rule. 'Be it either economic growth or cultural development,' He Xin writes, 'both require a stable and peaceful social and psychological environment'.<sup>23</sup> He then ends with a warning to his readers not to be taken in by the proponents of faddish theories, to avoid being 'bewitched and deluded (*guhuo*)',<sup>24</sup> and not to 'trust in the pledges of artful swindlers (*jianghu shushi*)'.<sup>25</sup> In his writings he has proved himself scornful of the efforts of think-tank intellectuals to outline strategies for political reform and scornful too, of the influence of non-aligned writers such as Liu Xiaobo. In personal observations made during the 1989 Protest Movement, he bewailed what he saw as the invariably disastrous outcome of both the irrational student activists and the ill-conceived response of the government.

He Xin proudly proclaims himself to be a 'rational cultural conservative'.<sup>26</sup> He not only condemns Liu Xiaobo (an easy target, since

22 For one of Deng's earliest published statements on this question see *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan (1975-1982)*, (Renmin chubanshe, Beijing, 1983), pp.159-60.

23 'My Perplexities and Concerns', 2. 8, p.38. In *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures* (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1988), pp.132-33, Lucien W. Pye comments on the paradoxical attitudes among the elderly post-Mao leaders which are informed by their Cultural Revolution experiences. 'Deng and his appointed successors want to modernize China, to turn China away from the path that Mao set the country on, but they are possibly even more concerned than Mao was about the danger that political liberalization might produce anarchy and uncontrolled change. Having seen near anarchy, they are not prepared to take chances'. (p.132)

24 *Guhuo* is a fascinating ancient term. It is made up of *gu*, a type of mythical venomous snake, and *huo*, to befuddle or mesmerize. The expression was also used in the 26 April *People's Daily* editorial to denounce the supposed backstage manipulators of student turmoil.

25 'My Perplexities and Concerns', 2. 8, p.38.

26 'My Perplexities and Concerns', 2. 2, p.37.



the fiery loner Liu has made enemies in all intellectual camps over the years) but also takes to task Jin Guantao,<sup>27</sup> the authors of the popular tele-series 'River Elegy' (*Heshang*),<sup>28</sup> the Taiwanese essayist Bo Yang<sup>29</sup> and a number of other intellectuals. His comments on the think-tank intellectuals are worth quoting at length, as in both tone and style they are in line with comments privately expressed over the years by those antagonistic to the bodies aligned to Zhao Ziyang.

Empty talk is harmful to the nation (*qingtian wuguo*). In extreme cases such as with the two Jin dynasties, it can lead to centuries of turmoil.<sup>30</sup> Today there are those who threaten the grand policy of reform in China. I am of the humble opinion that this results from people engaging in empty talk concerning reform, presenting grandiose plans on macro and micro reform that are based merely on bodies of theory siphoned from foreign books. They have no deep understanding of or perceptions about the realities of Chinese society. The writings of all of these empty talkers have one thing in common: they revel in new, strange and foreign words (*xin, guai, yang zhi mingci*); they are adept at discussing the most common things in a way that even the experts cannot understand, leading others to be dumbfounded by their work. It is all too easy to elaborate schemes on paper or to build castles in the sky, but the moment this big talk is put into practice they are undone. Upon defeat they make no attempt to reflect on the disparity between their

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<sup>27</sup> op.cit., 1. 3, p.35. He calls the use of cybernetics and neologisms in the field of history as nothing more than 'historiographical metaphysics'.

<sup>28</sup> op.cit., 2. 5, p.37. He says of 'River Elegy': 'Of late there has been a great hue and cry that 'the culture of the Yellow River is dead'. In reality, it is just such anti-traditionalistic hysteria which, although superficially the opposite of the anti-cultural hysteria of the Cultural Revolution, is of exactly the same origin'. See also note 44 below. It is interesting to note that Su Xiaokang, the main author of 'River Elegy' was, in fact, a Red Guard leader in Jiangxi, and formerly stigmatized as one of the 'three types of human beings' (*sanzhongren*) in the Cultural Revolution, that is, one of the 'rebellion-risers, sectarians and violence venders'. He arrived in Paris after an escape from China that took him via Hong Kong.

<sup>29</sup> Author of the famous speech 'The Ugly Chinaman', op.cit., 1. 9, p.36. 'I despise the frivolous absurdities contained in Bo Yang's so-called "culture of the soy-sauce vat"' [for the way it denies our whole history, culture and all of our ancestors]'.

<sup>30</sup> The Eastern Jin, AD 317-420, and the Western Jin, AD 304-439. The other numerous subdivisions of power during this period are called the 'Sixteen Kingdoms'.

own erroneous theories and China's national peculiarities (*guoqing*);<sup>31</sup> instead they rail against the national character of the Chinese...

Recently one even hears of people who have suggested to the authorities that we should engage in 'reform that fears not the spilling of blood' (*gao buxi liuxie zhi gaige*). Common people such as myself cannot help feeling terrified by the breezy tone of such advocates!<sup>32</sup>

In December last year He Xin published an article in the Hong Kong *Mingbao Monthly* (*Mingbao yuekan*) in which he analysed the shortcomings of the economic reform policies – in fact, he declares the 'first period of economic reform' (1978-88) to have been a failure – and points out that a social and political crisis was just around the corner.<sup>33</sup> To the non-economist at least, it is an impressive study. Considering that a number of his other writings have been directed at Central Committee leaders, there is some reason to suspect that this lengthy economic analysis also found its way to the top. Taken as a whole, the study is highly critical of the economic reform policies of the last decade and full of praise for the model of central economic planning.<sup>34</sup> Given He's personal history and the fact that the paper was written in 1988 after the Thirteenth Party Central Committee's Third Plenum, which marked drastic changes in the economic reform policy and signalled the virtual upstaging of Zhao Ziyang as a leading political force, He Xin's economic analysis should not simply be regarded as an independent academic appraisal. However, having said this, we should not overlook his daring perceptiveness. He concluded his general analysis of the economic situation with a prediction:

We feel fully justified in making the following projection: poverty and deprivation, malignant inflation as well as a [political] system and policies

31 The question of *guoqing*, although a hoary one in 20th Century Chinese intellectual debate, has been of some importance again in 1989. I am preparing another paper related to Wu Zuguang's comments on this topic.

32 'My Perplexities and Concerns', 1. 2, pp.34-35.

33 The article, 'The Inflationary Crisis and the Reasons for the Failure of Economic Reform' [Tongzhang ehua ji jinggai shibaide yuanyin], was published in two parts. See *Mingbao Monthly*, no.12, 1988, pp.17-21, and no.2, 1989, pp.59-64. See also 'Crisis and Challenge: China's Difficult Road to Modernization' [Weiji yu tiaozhan: Zhongguo xiandaihuade jiannan zhi lu], *Mingbao Monthly*, no.5, 1988, collected in *He Xin ji*, pp.286-308.

34 'The Inflationary Crisis and the Reasons for the Failure of Economic Reform', *Mingbao Monthly*, no.12, 1988, pp.17, 19.

that ensure the survival and development of an economy based on special privileges (*tequan jingji*) will in combination lead to long-term social disorder in China.<sup>35</sup>

The sentiments expressed here are repeated directly to central leaders in the following document. He continues on from this prediction with a powerful critique of the 'economy based on special privileges', the rise of official speculators (*guandao, guanshang*), local feudal lords (*difang zhuhou yu fengjun*), and the skein of relationships or *guanxiwang* – the 'black net which enmeshes China' (*longzhao Shenzhoude heiwang*), as he describes it.<sup>36</sup> His evocation of these phenomena are both articulate and powerful, and at one point he pointedly praises Mao Zedong for his prescience in foreseeing the dangers of the economy of special privileges.<sup>37</sup>

Thus it was with grim horror that some months later He Xin was to observe Party leaders, directed by Deng Xiaoping, pointedly ignoring the students' complaints against economic corruption, instead taking the stance evinced in the 26 April editorial of the *People's Daily*. In this the student protests were denounced for causing 'turmoil' (*dongluan*) and analysed within the narrow confines of class struggle. The failure of the spirit of that editorial to be translated into action the following day, when student demonstrators were supported by a broad range of Beijing residents, preventing both police and army action against the students, led He Xin to present his views on the burgeoning social crisis to the highest leaders of the government. The following paper was written on 27 April following the peaceful mass demonstration led by university students that day, and presented to the Central Committee of the Communist Party on 28 April 1989.

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<sup>35</sup> 'The Inflationary Crisis and the Reasons for the Failure of Economic Reform', *Mingbao Monthly*, no.2, 1989, p.62. He Xin elaborates on the 'special privilege economy' on this same page.

<sup>36</sup> op.cit., pp.62-63.

<sup>37</sup> op.cit., p.63. In a letter written in late October 1989, He Xin told me that he had completed a book-length attack on Zhao's policies in 1988, of which this article is a part. He was rewriting it for publication in 1990 under the title *The Revitalization of the East: The Origins, Dilemmas and Prospects for China's Modernization* [Dongfangde fuxing – Zhongguo xiandaihuade qiyuan, wenti yu qianjing].

Although not a particularly unique analysis of the social, economic and political background of the protests,<sup>38</sup> He Xin's comments offer us a rare glimpse of the contents, format and rhetoric of a submission to Party leaders from a well-connected Party intellectual. It should be noted that He, generally the author of a flamboyant prose style, is pedestrian, almost wooden, in this carefully phrased document. The wording and presentation of the paper in the New China News Agency abridgement are worthy of a short study in themselves – one notes in particular the large, well-spaced print, a concession to the failing sight of elderly leaders, and the clipped, point-by-point presentation of the author's argument, a traditional way to present ideas to the harried bureaucrat who has difficulty in concentrating on any document for long. The written style of the document indicates the care that an adviser to the Centre must exercise if he is to avoid the many pitfalls that position opens up before him.<sup>39</sup>

Having returned from North Korea on 29 April, Zhao Ziyang decided to take a different stand from the other members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. He reversed his previous decision to support the 26 April editorial and instead advocated a conciliatory approach to the students. Yang Shangkun and other senior Chinese leaders soon identified Zhao's change of heart in late April as contributing directly to an escalation of the protests.<sup>40</sup> This point is taken up again in Chen Xitong's report on the 'turmoil'. It is worth considering whether reasoned advice such as that of He Xin may have influenced Zhao's *volte face* in any way.

As I indicate in footnotes to the translation, on almost all points the present leaders rejected most of He's advice on how to deal with the protest movement. More than that, He Xin's analysis of the immediate causes of the protests differed wildly from the official 'histories' of recent events, presented first secretly on 19 May by the vociferous Li Ximing, Party chief of Beijing, and then publicly by both the Beijing Municipal Committee, which published its account of events under

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<sup>38</sup> For other studies, see, for example, Anita Chan's 'The Challenge to the Social Fabric', *The Pacific Review*, vol.2, no.2, March 1989, pp.121-31; and He Bochuan's book-length study of China's crisis, *Shanaode Zhongguo: wenti, kunjing, tongkude xuanze* (Guizhou renmin chubanshe, Guiyang, 1989).

<sup>39</sup> See the 'Shuinan' chapter of *Hanfeizi* where the dangers of advising rulers are described in vivid detail.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Yang's speech of 24 May, reprinted in *Emancipation Monthly*, no.6, 1989, p.93. The contents of this speech were well known in Beijing within days of it being given at an enlarged meeting of the Party Military Commission.

the transparent pen-name Shi Wei (a homonym for 'Municipal Committee'), and Mayor Chen Xitong in his report to the National People's Congress in late June.<sup>41</sup>

Reading He Xin's analysis, and considering his apocalyptic writings in 1988 on China's economic and political situation, it is also possible that his dire warnings could have been used by Zhao's opponents in their arguments that the student and nascent worker and intellectual movements presented a long-term and recurring threat. As such, they may have argued, the protests had to be crushed at all costs, with as many of their participants and leaders being obliterated as possible.

It is the fate of willing and submissive intellectuals in Chinese political culture that their ideas can so often be used by the victors in any political struggle to justify their line of action; for the modern *zonghengjia* this is one of the chief aims of their intellectual activity. But there can be hidden dangers also for the volunteer strategist, for in periods of political crisis their carefully balanced advice can also be used both to justify irrational policy decisions and to damn the author who has so eagerly sought the attention of his leaders.

Information to hand from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in early August indicated, however, that He Xin had successfully negotiated his way into favour with the post-4 June policy-makers. He reportedly wrote three letters to Deng Xiaoping in June, the contents of which are not known. It appears that the missives did elicit a favourable response: Deng supposedly commented that He Xin 'is a good boy' (*shi yige hao qingnian*).<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, He is said to have been nominated as one of the vice-presidents of CASS. As the price for his political success, the same source says that He Xin has received threats against his life. Perhaps this is merely malicious in-academy rumour, but it is a fact that his April paper made him extremely unpopular with many people connected with the Beijing intellectual world during May. They were particularly outraged by the fact that he mentioned by name writers he regarded as having been crucial in fostering intellectual foment.

<sup>41</sup> For Li Ximing's crucially important speech 'A Report Concerning the Beijing Student Protests' [Guanyu Beijing xuechao qingkuangde tongbao] of 19 May, see *Emancipation Monthly*, pp.95-97; for Shi Wei's 'Why Impose Martial Law in Beijing?', see either *Beijing Review*, no.26, 1989, or *The June Turbulence in Beijing*, pp.21-37. Although not published in the open Chinese media, I am satisfied that Li Ximing's speech as printed in *Emancipation Monthly* is a fair reproduction of the original.

<sup>42</sup> Although forty years old, in Mainland Chinese terms he is still a youth.

He Xin's name was seen in print again shortly after the 3-4 June Massacre, an article by him was included in the *Beijing Evening News* column 'The One Hundred Fallacies of "River Elegy"' (*Heshang baimiu*) on 12 August 1989.<sup>43</sup> And in a letter to me on 2 October, he commented that although the 'independent group of intellectuals' (*zhishifenzizhongde ziyoupai*) had all but been obliterated, a state of affairs, he claimed, which was 'basically of their own making'. He also lavished scorn on Western observers and Sinologists who had paid heed to 'independent-style Chinese intellectuals and right-wing students', leading to his miscalculations concerning China's true state of affairs.

In early November, foreign observers who met with He Xin learned that he was then actually living in Zhongnanhai, the seat of Party power. If, however, by some chance, He Xin falls by the wayside during the present purge, there will be other younger intellectuals previously scorned by the fashionable urban glitterati waiting in the wings to take his place. Although few thinking people in China have been heartened by recent developments, the social, economic and political realities of the intellectuals' situation today, as well as the Chinese traditions of the academic adviser to powerholders, mean that opportunistic writers, some even of considerable talent, will be thrust forward by events.

An exemplar from the older generation for such a career pattern is Yuan Mu, the spokesman for the State Council during 1989. Yuan first rose to prominence as a New China News Agency reporter who was crucial in creating the Maoist mythology of the Daqing Oil Fields in the early 1960s.<sup>44</sup> After close involvement in factional fighting in the agency during the early Cultural Revolution, he went on to become a liaison officer in Ji Dengkui's Beijing office in which position he is said to have worked closely with Li Jinkai, Wang Hongwen's liaison man.<sup>45</sup> While his former career as a Maoist propagandist and a functionary in the Cultural Revolution might have been expected to preclude Yuan

<sup>43</sup> He Xin, 'On the Name "River Elegy"' [Ping 'Heshang' de mingming], *Beijing wanbao*, 12 August 1989. A much larger attack penned by He appeared in the *Beijing ribao* later in the month. See He Xin, 'The Patriot Qu Yuan and the National Humiliation "River Elegy"' [qiguode Qu Yuan yu ruguode 'Heshang'], *Beijing ribao*, 26 August 1989.

<sup>44</sup> Yuan was the author of the propaganda line that held that the Daqing miracle was based on the workers, in particular Wang Tieren, assiduously studying Mao's two philosophical works 'On Practice' and 'On Contradiction', the so-called *lianglun qijia*.

<sup>45</sup> I am grateful to a Chinese historian of the Cultural Revolution for these tidbits on Yuan Mu's early career.

from high office today, the realities of Chinese politics determine that just such adaptable figures can prosper under successive, superficially antagonistic administrations.

Over the years many talented intellectuals have written for Party leaders, and although they have remained hidden from view in their preferred role as authors of internal reports, they have often enjoyed considerable influence. Their true importance is sometimes revealed only after the passage of time or, suddenly, by purges within Party ranks. For example, despite considerable Hong Kong media attention in the late 1970s, it is only in a recent publication that the details of the crucially important post-Cultural Revolution debate concerning 'the criterion of truth' (*zhenli biao zhun*) and its main inner-Party proponents and opponents have been revealed.<sup>46</sup>

In the past, He Xin may have been satisfied with a position as a crucial member of some such writing group or as a *rônin* intellectual looking for the patronage of the powerful. But in the China of the 1980s the intellectual market is bullish and the competition fierce. Political patronage is not sufficient, especially not in the case of an ambitious critic. The desire to be known, both in China and to Chinese readers overseas, has led He Xin to vie with other leading writers and thinkers for public attention. Although frequently published in Hong Kong in 1988-89, he has never attracted the attention of his more controversial fellows. Having to some extent followed the changing fashions of the last few years – for example, engaging in literary debate in 1985-86 when this was a modish thing to do, and turning his gaze to economics in the last two years – He Xin has not excited the same interest among readers as have the more unorthodox intellectuals. The reasons for this are manifold and are beyond the scope of this introductory essay. However, it is by studying the activities and writings of people like He Xin that we may find out more about the political realities of the complex intellectual life of China today, rather than if all our attention is concentrated on the more visible and stimulating figures who always manage to embroil themselves in controversy.

It is with some interest and anticipation that we shall follow the career of bright establishment academicians such as He Xin.

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<sup>46</sup> See Tao Kai, Zhang Yide, Dai Qing, et.al., *Zouchu xiandai mixin – guanyu zhenli biao zhun wentide dabian lun* (Sanlian Publishers, Hong Kong, June 1989).

### A Note on the Text:

He Xin's paper was printed for 'internal reference' by the New China News Agency. Although the text I have lacks clear identification, one may assume that it was issued in the form of a 'Summary Report of the Internal Situation' or *Guonei dongtai jianbao*. Such reports (*jianbao*) are for the reference of senior government leaders and are generally issued twice daily by the agency's Internal Reference Division (*neibu cankao bu*, or *neicanbu*, for short), which also produces the *Neibu cankao* newspaper twice a day.<sup>47</sup> The function of these reports is not unlike memorials (*zouzhang*) to the throne in imperial times.

The text has been annotated to elucidate the points He Xin makes and, in some cases, to indicate in which ways post-4 June Party policy conflicts or coincides with He Xin's advice. It should be emphasized that such annotation is not an attempt to implicate He Xin in recent Party policy moves, but rather to put the text in a broader historical context. It should be remembered that He Xin's policy paper is only one of numerous similar documents regularly presented internally to Party leaders.

Canberra  
November 1989

## An Analysis of the Current Student Protests and Forecasts Concerning the Situation

by He Xin,  
Associate Research Fellow,  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

*New China News Agency report:* Recently, He Xin, an associate research fellow in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, wrote a letter to the leaders in the Centre, in which he offers his analysis of the current student protest and forecasts its future direction. In this letter he

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<sup>47</sup> See You Xiaowu's short article 'Reference News, Internal Reference and the Right to Know' [Cong 'Cankao xiaoxi' he 'Neican' tan zhiqingquan], *Mingbao Monthly*, no.4, 1989, pp.12-13. This article contains a number of useful references to other recent works dealing with the internal reference news apparatus of China.



suggests a number of ways to deal with the student protests. The main points of He's letter are as follows:

### Causes of the Student Protests

1. The current student protests are, in fact, the outcome of a variety of both internal and external factors which have reinforced and prompted each other's development in recent years. If the immediate cause of the protests is arbitrarily and simplistically defined as the product of a fortuitous development (Comrade Hu Yaobang's death), and from this an attempt is made to blame the situation on 'a minority of bad elements' (plotters or enemy spies),<sup>48</sup> then the actual background to the unrest will not be subjected to exacting and careful analysis. Such one-sidedness will be dangerous. An erroneous political analysis of the situation will lead to an inability to comprehend the crises that are inherent in the nationwide situation; this in turn will lead to a series of miscalculations and policy errors. In the forty years since the founding of the People's Republic, the Party has been taught many lessons by its economic and political miscalculations. In view of the extreme seriousness of the present situation facing China both internally and internationally,<sup>49</sup> we can say that if [the Party]<sup>50</sup> makes further major policy errors it is quite possible that it will lose forever the support of the people. This is a question of the utmost gravity. The Chinese nation cannot endure yet another major policy miscalculation.

2. If I may be permitted to be truthful, then I request that leaders in the Centre note the following. After the *People's Daily* editorial of 26 April was published and the speeches of the relevant leading comrades were transmitted to the lower echelons the response was one of panic and resistance especially within the cultural and intellectual circles. People felt that the Centre was preparing to launch another [political] movement.<sup>51</sup> Sympathy with the students is general among the citizens

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48 This was Deng's immediate reaction to the problem on 25 April and a view repeated in both his 9 June speech and Yuan Mu's post-Massacre statements. See *The June Turbulence in Beijing*, pp.1, 22 et passim.

49 He Xin touches on these in another paper presented to the Centre and published in Hong Kong in April 1989. See 'An Analysis of China's Present Situation' [Dangqian Zhongguo xingshi fenxi], *Mingbao Monthly*, no.4, 1989, pp.31-34.

50 The words within square brackets have been added by the translator.

51 The 26 April *People's Daily* editorial entitled 'We Must Take a Firm Stand and Oppose Turmoil' [Bixu qizhi xianmingde fandui dongluan] was written on the

and various social strata of the capital. During the demonstration [of 27 April] countless citizens gathered along the route [of the marchers] to cheer the students on and to lend their support (although central organs and enterprises had carried out ideological work and forbidden this). They gave the students money, bread and drinks.<sup>52</sup> Among the people even the citizens who generally show no interest in politics felt that the government's way of dealing with the situation was inappropriate; they felt that the government was being excessively heavy-handed in employing such a tough line. This is now causing new political disappointment and dissatisfaction. (The speeches printed in the press supporting the 26 April editorial are no different from the endless articles that appeared after the Tiananmen Incident in 1976, insincere products of political inducement. The political consequences of such speeches may be delusory for policymakers, who will in fact be seen by the public with indifference and ridicule.<sup>53</sup> The end result is the exact opposite of the desired effect.)

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basis of directives made by Deng Xiaoping on 25 April in which he labelled the student movement as 'a premeditated plot, turmoil' (*zhe shi yichang you jihuade yinmo, shi yici dongluan*), the ultimate aims of which were supposedly to negate the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system. Deng is also said to have declared that the leaders should quell the troubles even if blood had to be spilt, regardless of the international reaction and despite internal dissension. The Hong Kong press, quoting widely circulating rumours from Beijing, has attributed the 26 April editorial to Xu Weicheng, a vice-mayor of Beijing. Xu is notorious for his role in the Huang Shuai educational scandal of the late Cultural Revolution period and he was the editor of *Beijing Daily* in 1986-87 when the frenzied Maoist rhetoric of that paper indicated that a massive purge was on the way. He is now reported to be a key figure in charge of propaganda and was appointed the director of the Beijing Ideological Work Research Association [Beijingshi sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo yanjiuhui] when it was established in early August. See *Beijing Daily*, 5 August 1989.

<sup>52</sup> For a Chinese eyewitness account of the 27 April demonstration, see Gong Gong's article, 'Following the Students' [Genzhe xuesheng zou], in *The Nineties* [Jiushi niandai], no.6, 1989, pp.39-42.

<sup>53</sup> Qin Chuan, a former *People's Daily* editor, was quoted in the Hong Kong press in late May as saying that at the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress scheduled for 20 June he would demand an inquiry into the activities of secretaries of central leaders. He believed their reports had misled the leaders and resulted in serious policy errors being made. It is important to note in this context that although Hu Qili, as the member of the Politburo Standing Committee in charge of ideological work and propaganda, was presumably in charge of writing the 26 April editorial, former Cultural

3. There are complex political and economic factors behind the present student unrest. The following is a tentative analysis:

- a) There is widespread dissatisfaction among students and spontaneous demands for speeding up political reform.
- b) Under the influence of three main currents of thought – ideas favouring extremist reform, Western thought and cultural nihilism – university students in recent years have become an extremist lobby.<sup>54</sup>
- c) Behind-the-scenes encouragement has been offered by some extremist political factions within China.<sup>55</sup>
- d) Secret support of overseas enemy powers.<sup>56</sup>

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Revolution propagandists such as Xu Weicheng and Yuan Mu have had a high profile throughout the movement.

<sup>54</sup> The original text has a number of names listed within parenthesis here. They have been blanked out in the text I have used. On the basis of conversations with Beijing academics, I believe they included Li Honglin (or perhaps Yan Jiaqi), Fang Lizhi and Liu Xiaobo. This argument about an 'extremist lobby' parallels what Deng Xiaoping in his 9 June speech calls the 'micro environment of turmoil', the *xiaoqihou*. In the second week of September 1989, *Liaowang* weekly published an article by Zhang Guozuo, 'The Meaning of "Micro Environment"' [Ruhe renshi 'xiaoqihou'], which elucidated the eight manifestations of bourgeois liberalization which taken together created the micro environment. Point eight, 'the propagation of national nihilism, national betrayal and wholesale Westernization', is followed by unattributed quotations from Liu Xiaobo and Fang Lizhi. Zhang's article was actually given a preview in *People's Daily*, 5 September 1989.

<sup>55</sup> Possibly a reference to Bao Tong and the Political Structure Reform Committee.

<sup>56</sup> See He Xin's 'An Analysis of China's Present Situation', *ibid.* This was originally presented to the Party Centre as a 'research paper on the future' (*weilai yanjiu baogao*) under the title 'The International Environment of China's Modernization and Our Strategy Options' [Zhongguo xiandaihuade guoji huanjing yu zhanlüe xuanze]. It was subsequently published in the Hong Kong *Mingbao Monthly* with a subtitle indicating its prestigious pedigree. Deng Xiaoping emphasized the 'international macro-environment' (*guoji daqihou*) of the protest movement in both his 25 April speech to central leaders and in his 9 June comments to Party and army leaders. For a seemingly accurate record of Deng's April speech, see Sun Shixian's article 'Cause and Effect in Deng Xiaoping's Repression of the Student Movement' [Deng Xiaoping zhenya xueyunde qianyin houguo], *Jingbao Monthly*, no.7, 1989, pp.45-46. Chen Xitong's report on the 'counter-revolutionary uprising' to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in late June is, on many points, in agreement with He Xin's argumentation here.

The complex and extremely serious social background of the student unrest may be outlined as follows:

- a) Inequality in incomes over recent years has resulted in polarization with a small number of officials and new bourgeois elements developing direct conflicts of interest with the majority of middle and lower-strata workers. This has resulted in widespread discontent. These economic realities have caused the people to doubt the socialist nature of the system itself;
- b) Due to the repeated errors [of recent years], people's confidence in [the Party's] general and specific policies has declined;
- c) Rising inflation has made inroads on the standard of living of middle and low income earners, leading to widespread dissatisfaction.<sup>57</sup>

Apart from the above, there are three other latent but dangerous factors within the social environment:

- a) The concealed labour/capital contradictions between workers and management in certain enterprises may well result in widespread industrial unrest;<sup>58</sup>
- b) The emergence of a rootless, mobile part of the rural population has created a huge unorganized force. (It is already a hotbed of crime). Once they get organizations with an educated leadership and a political program, the floating peasant population could be moulded

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<sup>57</sup> See 'My Perplexities and Concerns', p.35, where He quotes three popular rhyming sayings about the state of affairs in China in support of his argument that the government has not taken popular dissatisfaction seriously enough in recent years.

<sup>58</sup> For an elaboration, see He's 'The Inflationary Crisis and the Reasons for the Failure of Economic Reform', *Mingbao Monthly*, no.2, 1989, p.63. It was no accident that both Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng went to talk to workers at the Capital Steel Mill, the massive industrial complex outside Beijing, on 14 May just after the student hunger strike began. Calming the workers was seen as a far more pressing task than engaging in a 'dialogue' with student representatives. Industrial unrest has been reported widely in the Chinese press in recent years and the spectre of Poland and the rise of Solidarity has haunted Deng and his fellows for some time. Deng has mentioned the threat of a Solidarity-like workers' movement in many speeches. In June and July the most stringent repression aimed at workers who had been involved in leading the demonstrations.

into a political force, a mobile, armed and formidable anti-social coalition;<sup>59</sup>

- c) Separatist social forces exist in national minority regions.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, people from various strata throughout the country are following the student protests with keen interest. If the Centre is incapable of smoothly and effectively resolving these contradictions and of finding rational solutions, then [I predict]:

- a) A deterioration of the situation will spark new and unpredictable incidents in other cities and regions; and  
b) Movements in other regions will emulate the 'Beijing model'.<sup>61</sup>

### Two Possible Scenarios

I am of the opinion that there are two possible scenarios developing depending on how the present student protests are resolved. One is positive, the other negative. If through well-chosen measures the government is able to turn the situation to its favour, then the general demands made by the protesters, such as calls for reform, support for the Party (even though this is superficial) and patriotism can be harnessed for speeding up political reform, building a more democratic system, cleaning up government, and doing away with corruption. By so doing, the patriotic and progressive tendency of the students will be inspired, and this will lead on to a new consensus within the Chinese nation, and unity and cooperation among different social strata. In this way we will be able to weather the present serious problems and be able to usher in a new period of political democratization and economic development.

If, on the other hand, inappropriate measures are taken to resolve the crisis, measures which lead to a deepening of conflicts, further dissatisfaction throughout society and an increased sense of hopelessness, then political reform and democratization will be delayed yet again. It is even possible that the achievements of the reform

<sup>59</sup> See number three in He's list of 'Four Great Latent Dangers' [sida yinyou] in 'The Inflationary Crisis and the Reason for the Failure of Economic Reform', *Mingbao Monthly*, no.2, 1982, p.60.

<sup>60</sup> Presumably a reference to Tibet. It is important to note Qiao Shi's visit to the region in July 1988 and the use of martial law and extreme force in quelling unrest in Lhasa in March 1989. This latter move was regarded by some observers as an obvious sign from the Centre to the residents of Beijing that martial law could be invoked in dealing with disturbances in the capital.

<sup>61</sup> As events would show, this is exactly what happened in such cities as Shanghai, Chengdu, Xi'an, Chongqing, Wuhan, Changsha, Hangzhou, Shenyang.

program of the past decade will be forfeited. China will enter a period of political turmoil with constant outbreaks of unrest on varying scales. Political unrest and a loss of popular support will invariably result in a failure to achieve economic goals. The inevitable worsening of the economy along with the exacerbation of class contradictions will, in the long run, lead to further small-scale disturbances that will spark mass turmoil. Civil war, military coups, and popular uprisings in China for decades to come are now far from unthinkable.<sup>62</sup>

For these reasons I am of the opinion that the leading comrades in Party Central must not underestimate the contradictions and dangers within society at the moment; it is also crucial that [leading comrades] do not underestimate the pervasive sense of public disappointment and discontent. The student unrest can trigger other protests. If the problems [raised by this unrest] are not resolved and diffused in an appropriate and suitable manner, continuing and indeed ceaseless disturbances will take place throughout the country, a situation which, in the long run, will quite possibly result in the collapse of the present [political and social] structure in its entirety. This is the very danger of 'destruction of the Party and the State' Mao Zedong often warned against.<sup>63</sup>

Some comrades will no doubt find the above analysis excessively gloomy. However, as a social scientist it is my duty to make a cool and realistic appraisal of problems. Although the Communist Party of China has many faults and has made various errors, I am of the belief that in view of the size of China and its massive population, and given the complex problems it is facing at the moment, China's sole hope lies in reliance on the Communist Party, on the force of political leadership to unite our nation's best and brightest and to revitalize the Chinese nation.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> I have quoted from this paragraph in my article 'Blood Offering', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 June 1989, p.40.

<sup>63</sup> *Wangdang, wangguo*. Although I have not found an exact source in Mao's works for this expression, talk of the collapse of the Party and the state was a constant refrain in the Chairman's speeches from the early 1960s. See, for example, his 'Speech at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP' [Zai bajie shizhong quanhuishangde jianghua] of 24 September 1962. Deng also avails himself of the expression. See, for example, his 1978 speech, 'Liberate Thinking, Seek Truth from Facts, Unite as One and Look to the Future', [Jiefangsixiang, shishi qiushi, tuanjie yizhi xiangqian kan], in *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan (1975-1982)*, p.133.

<sup>64</sup> This paragraph is a typical example of the type of 'ideological insurance' an intellectual courtier must take out to ensure his or her safety.

### Some Practical Solutions

On the basis of the above analysis, I would like to make the following concrete policy suggestions to Party Central:

1. It is inappropriate to publish provocative, hostile and threatening propaganda in the press media. Such propaganda is counter-productive; far from showing confidence and strength, it is an indication that you are 'fierce of mien but faint of heart'.<sup>65</sup> If from the outset a conciliatory and low-key approach had been taken in handling propaganda concerning the student protests, rifts would have quickly developed within the ranks of the university students and it would not have led to the present situation where there is such a hostile mass psychology of opposition.
2. It is inappropriate to keep employing the label 'Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist' to denounce people.<sup>66</sup> Over the last four decades China's intellectuals have been traumatized by these two labels. They fear these words, and it is a fear that turns to revulsion. As a result, anyone who is dubbed 'Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist' immediately becomes an object of popular sympathy. The Party should reaffirm and stand by the line it has held since the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee [of December 1979] which states that there will be no more political campaigns and that they will rely on the policy of seeking truth from facts to resolve problems that actually exist. This should be done because it has proved to be a popular line.
3. Due to an underestimation in recent years of the mood of political opposition among the people, the government has created a number of political 'heroes', so-called 'dissidents'.<sup>67</sup> It is ill-advised for the

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<sup>65</sup> *Se li nei ren*. See the 'Liyi' chapter of *Yantielun* by Huan Kuan of the Han Dynasty. One of the most common slogans during the 13-19 May hunger strike demonstrations was 'Down with the impotent government!' [wunengde zhengfu xiatai!]. This was in response to the seemingly passive and unresponsive attitude of the authorities to the plight of the students.

<sup>66</sup> These labels have been repeatedly used during June and July by Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng, Li Ximing, Chen Xitong and Yuan Mu to describe the 'instigators' of the student demonstrations. See, for example, Wang Zhao's attack on Liu Xiaobo, 'Grabbing Liu Xiaobo's Black Hand', *ibid*.

<sup>67</sup> He Xin lists names here, but these have been deleted from my text. I presume they are Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, all cashiered from the CCP in January 1987 during the Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Campaign of that year.

government to create any more such 'heroes'. (A case in point is the sacking of [Qin Benli] the editor-in-chief of the *World Economic Herald* this time,<sup>68</sup> which made him into a 'hero'. It would have been wiser not to announce his name, and put a temporary news blackout on the issue. Furthermore, it would have been more advisable to have him resign rather than to dismiss him.<sup>69</sup>

It is not advisable for the government to arrest, imprison or 'put under supervision' political dissidents (all of these methods are sure to create long-term political problems).<sup>70</sup> However, ways could be found of sending people into exile overseas and refusing them permission to return for a time on the grounds that their presence would not be beneficial to stability and unity.<sup>71</sup>

4. Leading comrades in the Centre should be aware of the fact that the methods of political leadership and mobilization effective in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are no longer applicable. Central leaders need to reform their political concepts and methods of leadership. For the Centre to have used yet again an editorial in the *People's Daily* [on 26 April] to mobilize people and issue instructions was stupid – according to my information, this move was highly unpopular even among the staff of the *People's Daily* itself.

Furthermore, as an organ of public opinion the press should not be expected to issue directly the government's administrative orders

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This list may also contain the name of the playwright Wu Zuguang, who was forced to quit the Party in August 1987.

<sup>68</sup> Qin Benli was suspended from his post and denounced by Jiang Zemin, the Party Secretary of Shanghai, at a mass rally on 26 April. This incident was instrumental in the 'rebellion' of many Chinese media organs during the first half of May. Jiang Zemin, subsequently named General Secretary of the CCP, was praised for his firm stand against 'bourgeois liberalization'. For the official version of the events surrounding the closure of *World Economic Herald*, see 'The True Story of The *World Economic Herald* Incident' [*Shijie jingji daobao* shijian zhenxiang], New China News Agency, 18 August 1989.

<sup>69</sup> It was reported on 24 June that Qian Liren and Tan Wenrui, the director and editor-in-chief of the *People's Daily*, had both resigned due to illness. See 'Deng's Henchmen Purge Media of Liberal Editors', *The Australian*, 24-25 June 1989. It seems that on this point He Xin's advice was not completely ignored.

<sup>70</sup> This is a formulaic expression which usually reads 'arrest, imprison and kill' (*zhua, guan, sha*), it is interesting that He Xin has changed it in this fashion.

<sup>71</sup> In early 1987, it was reported that Hu Qili had suggested sending Fang Lizhi into exile overseas. It is interesting to consider the escape of a large number of intellectuals and others after the Beijing Massacre in light of this suggestion.



(certainly, the press can pass on government orders, but should not have to announce them in the form of an editorial).<sup>72</sup>

5. The government must be determined to deal firmly with those large companies linked to high-level officials or their children which have a highly odious reputation among the people. The results of such a rectification should be made known to the society at large (where there are problems there must be investigation and punishment; where there are no problems this should be made clear). This is an essential step in the establishment of clean government and a crucially important means of revamping the image of the Party in the eyes of the people.<sup>73</sup>

6. A statement should be made to the effect that China will establish a system whereby high-level officials will declare their personal wealth publicly. Again, this as an important step in the establishment of clean government, and another key way in which to revamp the Party's image.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> On the one hand, post-4 June Party decisions have emphasized the need to update methods of political work. One province has even introduced the concept of ideological executives, or *zhenggongshi*, in the style of engineers or *gongchengshi*. On the other, the questions of press freedom and the Party's role in the press have come in for considerable attention. One of Zhao Ziyang's identifiable errors supposedly has been that he had encouraged a 'free press' in a conversation with propaganda bosses on 6 May.

<sup>73</sup> This is point three in the 19 May announcement 'To Citizens of the Republic, Compatriots, Students on Hunger Strike, Members of the CCP and Members of the PLA' [Gongheguo gongminmen, tongbaomen, jueshi tongxue, Zhonggong dangyuanmen, Jiefangjun zhizhanyuan], also known as the 'Six Point Opinion' [liudian yijian] and published the next day as a bogus *People's Daily* extra. This document was first read out on Tiananmen Square and then issued on the evening of 19 May, shortly before Li Peng and Yang Shangkun's speeches were broadcast announcing that the PLA was about to enter the city. The document itself, although issued as yet another 'Leaflet from Beijing University' [Beida chuandan] is said to have been written by members of Zhao Ziyang's think-tank organizations. Some of its contents constitute a portion of the 'top Party and state secrets' revealed to illegal organizations mentioned by Yuan Mu on 6 June. See 'The State Council Spokesman Yuan Mu Held a Press Conference to Expose the Truth of the Counter-Revolutionary Rebellion in Beijing', in *The June Turbulence in Beijing*, p.16.

<sup>74</sup> This meshes with points four and five attributed to Zhao Ziyang in the 19 May leaflet (see previous note). Points 5 and 6 have been fulfilled to some extent by a Politburo decision taken in late July to 'do a few things the masses are concerned about in the immediate future'. See *People's Daily*, 28 July 1989 for the details of

7. Real advances should be made in the realm of political reform. Concrete policies should be tabled so as to indicate to the people that the Party really is determined to advance democratization.

8. During the student protests much has been made of a widely distributed 'chart of officials' relatives' (*qinguantu*) (some pamphlets have used the satirical title of 'chart of revolutionary relationships').<sup>75</sup> This chart enumerated the marital and other relationships of officials at the provincial/army level and above. The chart has circulated widely among the general populace and can be said now to be quite notorious. It has seriously undermined popular confidence and support [for the Party leadership]. It is said that the chart is a mixture of truth and fiction;<sup>76</sup> I believe it imperative that the truth be revealed in the press.

In my opinion, the talented and morally responsible progeny of high-level cadres should have the same right as the children of commoners (*pingmin*) to become high-level officials. The crux of the matter are the words 'the same right' (*tongdeng zige*). An administrative mechanism for the election and promotion of officials should be an integral part of political reform, which would make it possible for the most talented people, to have an equal opportunity, on the basis of ability and character, and regardless of their family background, to be elected to high office.<sup>77</sup> As such a system is absent in the present setup, many high-level cadres' children with executive positions are [automatically] denounced and despised by large segments of the population.

9. Given the extremely complex political situation at present it would be highly ill-advised for the government to resort to high-pressure tactics or attempt to aggravate existing contradictions. History has taught us that in the long run those who die as a result of political repression invariably become heroes and martyrs. Incidents in which blood is spilt will be recorded in the history books. When a government is not blameless, and in a political environment in which social contradictions

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the seven points of this decision covering the involvement of the progeny of high-level cadres in commerce, special privileges, corruption, and so on.

<sup>75</sup> One of the most thorough, although not entirely reliable, lists of this 'Party genealogy' is given in *Emancipation Monthly*, no.6, 1989, pp.32-33.

<sup>76</sup> He Xin wisely avoids indicating that he may know which 'family trees' are reported accurately and which are not.

<sup>77</sup> This point is a logical extension of the argument He presents in his essay on reform and the individual, 'On Eliminating Talent' [*Lun jingying taotai*], published in *Mingbao Monthly*, no.2, 1988, collected in *He Xin ji*, pp.266-72.

are becoming increasingly intensified, bloody incidents will become political blood debts and wounds<sup>78</sup> (take, for example, the case of Zhang Zhixin under the 'Gang of Four').<sup>79</sup> Such [blood debts] can also become the motivation for future political protests and turmoil.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> It may be relevant here to recall a quotation from Lu Xun. On March 18, 1926, a group of unarmed citizens and students petitioned the Beijing government. Forty died in the ensuing massacre. Lu Xun commented:

If China is not to perish, then, as past history tells us, the future holds a tremendous surprise for the murderers.  
This is not the conclusion of an incident, but a new beginning.  
Lies written in ink can never disguise facts written in blood.  
Blood debts must be repaid in kind. The longer the delay, the greater the interest!

From 'More Roses Without Blooms, VIII', in *Lu Xun Selected Works*, translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, (Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1980, third edition), vol.II, p.260. The words 'Blood debts must be repaid in kind' were seen written up outside a number of universities, such as Law and Political Science University, after the 3-4 June Massacre. It has also appeared repeatedly in the Chinese press in Hong Kong since then.

<sup>79</sup> Zhang Zhixin (1930-1975), a woman cadre in the Culture Bureau of the Liaoning Provincial Ministry of Propaganda. A loyal Party member, Zhang became increasingly distressed by the Cultural Revolution policies on art and literature, defending the pre-1966 cultural line according to Marxist principles. Having criticized Mao, she was arrested as a counter-revolutionary and executed after having her vocal cords cut so she could not shout pro-Party slogans. Zhang became a martyr after 1976, and she has been included in the pantheon of contemporary Communist heroes. Interestingly, students in Tiananmen Square sang 'The Internationale' and Hou Dejian's 'Descendants of the Dragon' [Longde chuanren], both officially accepted songs, before the square was 'cleaned up' (*qingchang*).

<sup>80</sup> It seems that Chairman Deng has a way of dealing with such recalcitrant problems. In one version of a preamble to his 9 June speech published in *Shijie ribao* in America on 12 June, Deng reportedly said:

Some people are concerned that the relatives of those who were shot will not give up. Don't worry, if one family cries out we will eject them from the capital [by cancelling their residency permits]. Beijing can see one thousand such families booted out; then there'll be no more riots.

Not surprisingly, this passage is missing from the official version of Deng's speech. Then, again, the published version of Deng's 31 December 1986 speech is quite different from the original, and even at variance with the speech orally

China's traditional art of politics sets great store by 'ruling with virtue, maintaining prestige through laws',<sup>81</sup> and warned that 'those who depend on moral power will prosper, while those who rely on force will perish'.<sup>82</sup> It should be remembered that in the first years of the People's Republic the authority and leadership of the CCP was built on the basis of a shinningly uncorrupt morality that was extremely popular. Over the past twenty years, this moral image has been increasingly tarnished by corrupt officials. This is extremely painful. In my opinion this must be the starting point for restoring the Party's image, for only by so doing can the causes of political turmoil be fundamentally eliminated, can the dissatisfaction of the people be calmed, and the permanent security of the state ensured.

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transmitted to Party members in January 1987. Wang Zhen, an energetic advocate of the purge of the media, is also said to favour cancelling the residency permits of 'bourgeois liberals', among other more extreme measures.

<sup>81</sup> The expression probably has its origins in *The Analects*, see *Lunyu*, vol.2, no.3, *Zi yue: dao zhi yi zheng, qi zhi yi xing*. It is also a sentiment common in the writings of Han Fei and Xunzi.

<sup>82</sup> This is possibly based on a passage in *Mencius*, see *Mengzi*, vol.2A, no.3.