



THE PAST AS FUTURE

On the 16th Anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Crackdown

Any significant historical event will have significant impact beyond its local territory or time limit, and the reactionary Tiananmen crackdown in Beijing 16 years ago is such an historical event in our contemporary history. As a participant and observer, I have witnessed the decline of the Chinese democratic movement, the militarization of the peaceful Japanese politics, and the transformation of the American imperialism.

When I decided to organize a forum to commemorate the 16th anniversary of the Tiananmen square crackdown, I sent out the invitation letter starting with “While the American Empire is fighting hot wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, fighting cold wars in Iran, North Korea, Haiti, Columbia, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela, and almost everywhere in the world,” to the American public with the progressive anti-war South San Francisco Bay Area communities as my appealing audience. How clearly I see the link from Tiananmen in Beijing to almost all main problems we face to today in the world! I hoped we can utilize this opportunity to establish connection among all possible forces to understand and support each other for a better future of a world of justice.

San Jose Peace Center helped to mail out 750 copies of the event flyer with its own Peace Time newsletter. Besides the advertisement and press release in Chinese media by Bay Area Tiananmen Committee, I also sent to hundreds fax numbers and email addresses.

Our effort was not in vain. About fifty people, including several American friends (mostly from Labor Party) attended the meeting. New Tang Dynasty Television, Sound of Hope Radio Network, Radio Free Asia, The Epoch Times sent reporters to the meeting. There were three other reporters from local “mainstream” Chinese media but they left the meeting early. I was told later that these media have bad relations with Falungong, politically or economically. There is no need or obligation from CPRI to explain that CPRI is a completely independent think tank in the world.

That said, Falungong affiliations made great contribution to the declining Chinese democratic movement. My only hope are that our Falungong friends fully understand our democratic movement’s concern, and that they are not “doing politics.”

The meeting was quite successful. Six speakers (Zhou Fengsuo and Han Shaohua were at the Tiananmen Square, I was in Japan, Nan Su was in the US, Wang Xizhe was in

Guangdong's jail at that time, and Paul Kong was from jail too) covered a wide varieties of current Chinese political situations. The audience also raised deep inquiries. A woman labor researcher from Taiwan reminded us to be patient for the time coming, especially for the business world to turn to the opposition when they realize that they cannot do normal competitive business under one-party dictatorship. A former student from Shanghai expressed his disappointment after he found out that our Chinese people could not carry out the democratic movement overseas even in the free world. A veteran local democratic activist suggested us look for cultural aspects of China's non-democratic tradition. When Labor Party member Loz Dean introduced her American dissident experience (the concern of American society's fascism and the good aspect of Communism), the Chinese dissidents started to argue with her. This is a rare opportunity to bring serious dialogues between people of good will with different life experience for peace and justice.

Unfortunately we did not have longer time than two hours for the total meeting. I had to omit the theme of the meeting: "The Betrayal of Democracy." An old lady told me that this was an eye-opener for her and asked our next meeting's schedule. I could only say that this was not a start nor the end. We are determined to carry through the difficulty time of China's democracy until we can freely commemorate at Tiananmen Square in the future. Until that day's coming, we need to educate the American general public; we also need to self-educate.

Sixteen year is not a short period, especially for those who spent their 20s or 30s age in these 16 years. Every time when I recall the tremendous hardship, sacrifice, loss and betrayal we encountered, I always reassure myself: we endure them because this is the only cause to which we can devote our whole life. China's democratization is far beyond the narrow meaning of politics. It is the cause to save our soul and morality; It is the cause to rebuild China's civilization and to contribute to the human being's peace and prosperity. For that, we will carry through for at least another sixteen year.

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