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£THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

@RECENT TRIALS AND ARRESTS CONNECTED TO THE 1989 PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

A number of arrests and trials of political dissidents took place in China in December 1991 and January 1992. At the end of last year the trials of five people involved in the 1989 pro-democracy movement were announced but to date the verdicts have not been publicly announced. Another trial is scheduled to take place at the end of January this year. All those tried in 1991 have been held in detention for at least 18 months. Most have been held for over two and a half years without trial. Since December 1991 a number of arrests connected with the 1989 pro-democracy movement have also been reported, including that of Bao Tong a close associate of the deposed Chinese Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang.

RECENT TRIALS

ZHAI WEIMIN

Zhai Weimin, a student aged 23, reportedly went on trial at the Beijing Intermediate People's Court on 28 November 1991. The authorities have not confirmed whether the trial has taken place and there has been no public announcement of the verdict. Zhai has been detained without trial for over 18 months.

Zhai Weimin has reportedly been charged with "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement", an offence under Article 102 of the Criminal Law. He could face a sentence of up to ten years' imprisonment.

Zhai Weimin had been involved in the 1989 pro-democracy protests and had undertaken a number of activities at the time with other student leaders. Following the military crackdown on the night of 3-4 June 1989 the authorities issued a list of the 21 "most wanted" student leaders. Zhai Weimin was number six on that list. He was arrested in Beijing at the end of May 1990.

For almost a year Zhai Weimin had managed to evade arrest. During this time he reportedly moved from place to place, but continued to be active in trying to bring about democratic reforms. He established a nationwide organization called the "Chinese Democratic National Front" which reportedly held its inaugural meeting in Beijing on 25 February 1990. It was attended by over 60 participants. Shortly before his arrest, Zhai Weimin is reported to have said:

"We founded the organization to show our sense of duty to our people and country and to emulate the spirit of those who died in June 1989".

The organization did not reportedly advocate the dismantling of socialism or the Communist Party but its members agreed on a manifesto demanding that China end the one-party system, reform the economy, permit freedom of speech, release political prisoners and "liberate the mind and completely eradicate feudal vestiges".

Zhai Weimin comes from Xian County, Hunan Province. He is believed to be held with several other leaders of the 1989 pro-democracy movement in Qincheng Prison, north of Beijing.

WU JIAXIANG

Wu Jiexiang, a former aide to the now deposed Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang¹, reportedly went on trial in November 1991. A report in the South China Morning Post dated 28 December 1991 said that Wu Jiexiang had been "secretly tried" but no verdict has yet been announced. According to the report Wu Jiexiang was charged with "counter-revolutionary propaganda" and "leaking state secrets". His arrest was reportedly linked with the decision of the Communist Party to impose martial law in Beijing in May 1989. He may be charged under Articles 91 and 102 of the Criminal Law, dealing with counter-revolutionary offences under which Wu Jiexiang could face a sentence ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment.

Wu Jiexiang was arrested on 17 July 1989 and has been detained without trial for two and a half years.

A member of the Research Office of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee, Wu Jiexiang was instrumental in helping Zhao Ziyang draft theories on political reform in China. Even though Wu Jiexiang was not directly involved in the 1989 pro-democracy protests, he supported reforms in China and reportedly took a strong position against the decision to use force to suppress the demonstrators.

Wu Jiexiang rose to prominence in 1988 following an essay he wrote entitled New Authoritarianism which called for economic growth and the need for democratic reforms in China.

¹ Zhao Ziyang is the former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). His reforms and conciliatory attitude towards the 1989 student protests split the CCP at the time. He was subsequently dismissed from his post in the CCP and has not been seen publicly since 1989. There have been recent contradictory reports about whether the charges against Zhao Ziyang have been lifted.

Wu Jiaxiang, aged 36, is married and has a six-year old daughter. He reportedly comes from a poor peasant family in Anhui Province. He studied economics at Beijing University before working for the CCP Central Committee where he developed a friendship with Bao Tong².

His family has been able to visit Wu Jiaxiang once a month since his arrest in July 1989 but since 1 December 1991 they have reportedly been barred from visiting him at Qincheng prison.

WU XUECAN

A notice posted outside the Beijing Intermediate People's Court announced on 28 December 1991 that Wu Xuecan had gone on trial on charges of "counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation". The trial was reportedly adjourned after less than two hours and the verdict has not yet been publicly announced. Wu Xuecan has been detained for almost two and a half years.

Wu Xuecan may be charged under Article 102 of the Criminal Law which carries sentences ranging from "deprivation of political rights" to life imprisonment.

Wu Xuecan, aged 42, a former editor and journalist with the overseas edition of the official newspaper, The People's Daily, is believed to have been arrested in July 1989. Wu Xuecan was arrested for reportedly photocopying and distributing copies of a leaflet entitled the People's Daily Extra Edition. The leaflet which was distributed in May 1989 described criticism of government corruption made by Zhao Ziyang, the former Communist Party leader, and called for an investigation into the finances of government officials and the activities of their children.

It is reported that Wu Xuecan was one of several people involved in the production of the leaflet.

In September 1989 the Ministry of Public Security published a "wanted list" of 24 names. Wu Xuecan was entered on the list as "arrested".

Wu Xuecan comes from Binhai County, Jiangsu Province. He is married and has a daughter. He is reported to be held with several leaders of the 1989 pro-democracy movement in Qincheng Prison.

PENG RONG

Associated Press reported in late 1991 that a notice outside the Beijing Intermediate People's Court announced that Peng Rong had gone on trial on 27 December 1991. Sources at the time said that Peng Rong was charged with "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement" and with "colluding with hostile forces" because of his contacts with overseas Chinese and foreigners.

² Bao Tong was the former private secretary to the now deposed CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang and Director of the now defunct Research Centre for Reform of the Political Structure (RCPRC). (See section below on Arrests.)

Peng Rong may be charged under Articles 91 and 102 of the Criminal Law and could face a sentence ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment. According to unofficial sources, his lawyers had originally planned to plead not guilty to the charges but they reportedly came under great pressure from the government and in the end had to plead guilty.

Peng Rong, a biology student, aged 27, has been held without trial for over 19 months. University sources said he was arrested with two other students on 24 May 1990 after giving a speech at Beijing University ("Beida") in which he called on Western countries to lift economic sanctions. At the time of his arrest fellow students suspected that his arrest was linked with putting up a poster on 11 May 1990 which announced the results of a poll on whether students were willing to take part in a new round of protests. In April 1989 posters at Beijing University had helped to spark off the student demonstrations which developed into the 1989 pro-democracy movement. Peng Rong had participated in the 1989 student demonstrations but was not detained at the time.

It is not known where Peng Rong is being held but he may be detained with other members of the 1989 pro-democracy movement in Qincheng Prison.

LI MINGQI

A student leader, Li Mingqi, went on trial on 6 December 1991 at the Beijing Intermediate People's Court. No verdict has yet been announced.

Li Mingqi's family were informed in October 1990 that their son had been formally charged on 25 September 1990 with "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement". Under Article 102 of the Criminal Law he could face a sentence ranging from deprivation of political rights to life imprisonment.

Li Mingqi was arrested on 3 June 1990 at Beijing University following a speech he gave to a spontaneous gathering of thousands of students. He called for political and economic reforms. After the speech bottles were reportedly thrown from dormitory windows, a veiled protest aimed at the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping: the word Xiaoping is a homophone for "little bottle". According to several newspaper reports at the time, this incident occurred without any violence. Li Mingqi was released shortly after the incident. However on 15 June 1990 he was expelled from the university and re-arrested. He has been detained without trial for over one and a half years.

Li Mingqi, aged 22, was a member of the Beijing Students Autonomous Federation formed during the 1989 student protests. He studied economics at Beijing University.

QI LIN

According to unofficial sources Qi Lin, a journalist, is to go on trial at the Beijing Intermediate People's Court on 30 January 1992. It is feared that the trial will be closed to the public.

Qi Lin was arrested on 11 July 1991 in Beijing by officers of the Public Security Bureau. At the time of his arrest he was reportedly hurt in circumstances which are not known to Amnesty International and is said to have lost a substantial amount of blood as a result. Qi Lin is diabetic and has to inject himself with insulin several times a day. He was officially "arrested" (charged) on 23 July 1991 and according to unofficial sources he may have been charged with "leaking information to foreigners" but this has not been confirmed.

Qi Lin had worked for several years with the Beijing Ribao (Beijing Daily). During the 1989 pro-democracy protests, he reportedly visited students at Tiananmen Square, documenting the scene by taking photos and is said to have witnessed many deaths during the army crackdown on 4 June.

In May 1989, Qi Lin is said to have taken part in demonstrations in support of the students at Tiananmen Square. During the months which followed the 4 June crackdown in Beijing, he was not arrested but was put on probation as a party member pending investigation although he reportedly continued to document events linked with the 1989 pro-democracy movement. It is not known what the exact charges are against Qi Lin, but he is likely to be charged with "counter-revolutionary" offences under the Criminal Law and could face a heavy sentence. It is not known where he is being held.

Qi Lin is married and has a young son.

ARRESTS

A number of arrests of suspected dissidents are reported to have been carried out in China since late 1991. The following examples concern people whose arrest appear to be connected to the 1989 pro-democracy movement.

BAO MI

Arrested: 22 December 1991

A well-known author of a book entitled Huang Huo or Yellow Peril was reportedly arrested in Beijing on 22 December 1991. The author, who uses the pen name Bao Mi, had his book published in Taiwan. The book took as its starting point the 1989 pro-democracy movement and the social repercussions which followed the crackdown by the authorities in June 1989. The book was never published in mainland China. There has been no news of him since his arrest and no reports of any charges.

WANG GUOQI, ZHANG QIANJIN, ZHAO XIN, LI XIANG, CHEN WEI, WANG TAO
Arrested: 27 December 1991

Five students were reportedly arrested at the funeral of a fellow student, Wen Jie, who had died of cancer at the age of 27. Mourners reportedly laid a wreath at the funeral ceremony made up of four red and six black roses, representing the day and month (4 June) when the authorities cracked down against the pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989. Wen Jie was reportedly detained between June 1989 and December 1990 for his involvement in the 1989 pro-democracy protests and was not treated for cancer while in prison. The five, were reportedly arrested on 27 December 1991. They had all been involved in the 1989 protests and had been detained with Wen Jie. Sources said that a sixth person, Wang Tao, was also missing and may have been arrested. Wang Guoqi and Zhang Qianjin were reportedly released on 28 December but there has been no further news on the four others.

BAO TONG
Arrested: 21 January 1992

Bao Tong, a close associate of the deposed Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, was reportedly arrested in Beijing on 21 January 1992 by military security officers on charges of carrying out "counter-revolutionary incitement" and "leaking state secrets". It is reported that he may be tried within one month. His whereabouts are unknown.

Bao Tong was first arrested on 28 May 1989, a few days before the student protests. He was then accused of "revealing party secrets" for allegedly telling some of his colleagues about the impending imposition of martial law in Beijing on 20 May 1989. One of the highest ranking of the party intellectuals behind Zhao Ziyang's reforms, Bao Tong was a member of the Chinese Community Party Central Committee and Director of the Research Centre for Reform of the Political Structure.

Following his 1989 arrest, he was held for a year in solitary confinement at Qincheng prison. It seems that he was not formally charged, though his legal status subsequently was not clear. In May 1990, he was released and placed under house arrest in a government guest house. He was then allowed to live at his home in Beijing with his wife but it is not clear whether he was still subjected to restrictions.