

Massacre, Chinese Government Kills Thousands

The story as never told before



by Mats Brian Belfour



Tiananmen Square in
Forbidden City, Beijing

On May 4, 1989, thousands of Chinese college students had gathered at the Tiananmen Square and set up tents in front of the monument to demonstrate against the lack of democracy in China. By May 13, more than 500 students began a hunger strike to get their point through to the government. More and more students began to join the strike, and the numbers grew quickly, as the "Beijing Spring" started to take place. Two days later, May 15, 1989, more than half a million students had gathered at the square.

The week of May 13-20 turned out to be the largest demonstration in China's post-war history, since the

Treaty of Versailles incident in 1919. On May 17, it is estimated that up to two million people assembled in the centre of Beijing. The majority of them were workers and their families who walked beside the banners of their work company, students from across China, peasants from nearby rural regions, teachers, public servants, and journalists.



The PLA lines up on the
streets of Beijing

Meanwhile, the Russian Prime Minister, Gorbachev, was making a trip to China to discuss certain matters with the Chinese government. The government then decided to take action against the protestors, to put an end to the dispute. By May 20, a few

weeks into the protest, the protestors had defied the martial law set by the government.



On man stands tall, as the
PLA threatens to kill him

One hundred thousand PLA soldiers were sent into the city of Beijing. By the time the soldiers reached the outskirts of Beijing, May 23, 1989, thousands of students were sent to explain what was happening inside the city. However, even the martial law did not have an effect on the demonstrations as one journalist stated, "The martial law that Li Peng and his gang has issued has thus far been rendered as useless as a blank sheet of paper. The soldiers are being persuaded by excited people and students; some of the persuaders are choking with

sobs, while some soldiers shed tears in return. Quite a number of soldiers have driven their trucks away.” By May 24, the PLA units had completely withdrawn from the city of Beijing. As the days grew older, many students had already returned to their campuses, and several thousands had fled. On May 28, 1989, the PLA started returning to the city of Beijing.



The PLA wreaked havoc on the streets of Beijing

On June 1, 1989, more than 280,000 soldiers were prepared for battle. Then, on June 4, 1989, the soldiers of the 27th Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) lined up on the streets to crush more than six weeks of demonstrations from the college students. The first tanks that entered Tiananmen Square crushed the tent headquarters of the Workers Autonomous Federation, in which they killed more than 20 people, as the massacre continued. More than 40,000 Chinese citizens were arrested in just the months of June and July. Many were subjected to a death penalty and were executed.



Thousands of Chinese citizens lay dead on the streets of Beijing

In what was an awfully violent act, thousands of Chinese citizens were killed for what they believed. The number of people killed in the massacre on June 4, 1989 has never been officially recorded. Estimates range up to 7,000, with over 20,000 wounded. However, one month after the massacre Chen Xi-tong, Mayor of Beijing, presented his report to the Politburo of the Communist Party of China, in which he wrote: “During the whole operation no one, including those who refused but were forced to leave, died.” To this day, the Chinese government justifies the fact that nobody was killed during the violent act.



Chen Xi-Tong, mayor of Beijing



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