



Remembering Tiananmen Square and Communist Rule in China

Total communist domination in China began in 1949 when the Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-Shek fled to Taiwan after many years of struggle. Betrayed by the U.S. government that refused to send weapons that had been paid for in advance, the anti-communists had no choice if they were to survive.

During succeeding decades under leadership supplied by the mass-murdering Mao Zedong, the communists killed millions of fellow Chinese and made sure that total power over the people would prevail. Mao passed into eternity in 1976, and Deng Xiaoping soon took his place. Labeled a reformer by many who were goaded into believing that China was steadily becoming a bastion of freedom and human rights, Deng steered the nation toward massive ties with the West. But he maintained authoritarian control over the huge nation.

Because real freedom, including and an ability to exercise basic human rights, beats in the heart of every person, unrest began to swell in the breasts of many Chinese, especially in its young. In April 1989, death silenced the well-known Hu Yaobang, a reformer much revered by students. Many of these idealistic young people decided to take demands about easing controls over their lives into Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Urged to abandon their protests by Communist Party officials and police, the demonstrators not only refused, but their numbers grew.

Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang sought to defuse the situation by offering compromise and relying on persuasion. He failed and was soon replaced. Ultimate leader Deng Xiaoping promptly showed the brutal hand of communism.

Some commentators believe that the peaceful youth-led protests in the spring of 1989 might actually have led to mass defections of police and military personnel and a change in China's government. Whether the idealistic youngsters posed a real threat to Communist rule is hard to know. But their courage and determination ended during the notorious June 3-4, 1989 crackdown known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Army tanks followed by highly trained troops using machine guns stormed into the youthful crowds killing hundreds and maybe thousands. An immediate clampdown on reports about the carnage ensued. Even 30 years later, few details about what occurred and how many unarmed youngsters died have come to light.

China is led today by Xi Jinping, another communist leader labeled a reformer. When hundreds of



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thousands took to the streets of Hong Kong in early June 2019, they were clamoring for human rights in much the same way the Tiananmen Square youngsters did 30 years earlier. This demonstration, however, occurred in the former British-run enclave of Hong Kong, a wealthy anomaly abutting Mainland China. British leaders abandoned their claim to rule Hong Kong in 1997 and China's Communist leaders have tightened their rule incrementally ever since.

The latest exercise of totalitarian authority imposed on the colony is the decision of Xi's government to extradite dissident Hong Kong residents to the mainland for a hearing and possible trial. Previously, anyone demonstrating against the arbitrary rule imposed by the mainland government would face a judge in Hong Kong. The people now fear kangaroo court-style proceedings will be the fate of those claiming basic rights. Hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong's more than seven million residents paraded in a demonstration of their displeasure about the edict on June 9. But Xi Jinping is their ultimate ruler and there is little expectation that the mandate requiring mainland-style "justice" for protesters will be rescinded.

Might a tightening of the screws by Xi's government eventually lead to another Tiananmen Square-style massacre? Simply pondering an answer to that question indicates awareness that Communist totalitarian rule remains in place. Hong Kong continues to benefit from semi-independence. But its leaders surely know of the brutality being foisted by the Beijing government on millions of Muslims in China's Northwest province. Many are aware of similarly totalitarian edicts handed down to Catholic clergy who wish to remain tied to the Pope of Rome. And all are aware of the history of the government's forced abortion and family planning mandates.

Wherever the Beijing regime sees or even senses a threat to its totalitarian power, harsh action can be expected. It can even be as harsh as what unknown numbers of students experienced at Tiananmen Square in 1989. The reality is that today's Communist rule governing China's millions doesn't face any serious challenge.



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