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of a conspiracy. Such an unfortunate turn of events should not disturb the symbiotic moral relationship between the party, the army, and the people, including the patriotic students who had represented the latter during the movement.

At the moment it is still too early to tell whether the landslide caused by the People's Movement will be permanent, or whether the authorities will succeed in restoring at least a semblance of discursive dominance. The authorities' continued control over the bureaucratized social structure will surely play an important, if not decisive role. If a successful career continues to be dependent on ideological correctness, most people will have to keep up at least an outward show of orthodoxy. On 8 June, just four days after the massacre, the manager of my guest-house already found it necessary to put on the following performance:

The manager volunteers his opinion about the present situation. To my astonishment he parrots faithfully the official propaganda about the successful suppression of the counterrevolutionary rebellion. Bad and violent people have destroyed state property, and it was therefore correct to proclaim martial law and pacify the situation. When I listen to him I notice that he is sweating profusely and that his whole body language shouts out 'lies!'. (Fieldnotes, 8 June 1989: 1)

The history of the People's Movement and the truth about the massacre will play a central role in the future of China. On the one hand, a official reassessment of the movement will be interpreted immediately as a major policy shift⁴⁹. It is likely to cause a new wave of protest, just like the reassessment in November 1978 of the 1976 Tian'anmen incident signalled Deng's victory and triggered the Democracy Wall Movement.

On the other hand, to large segments of the population in Beijing any leadership that has not reassessed the movement is immoral and has no right to rule. Through the People's Movement and its suppression, the moral crisis of society has been decontextualized into the tradition of protest; dissatisfaction has been turned into a permanent rift between the regime and the population. The present regime is therefore faced with a dilemma, which, in my opinion, must lead to major political changes in the future. If the regime persists in promoting its

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present evaluation of the movement, it will continue to command no goodwill whatsoever, and its effectiveness will continue to be undermined by this profound crisis regarding its legitimacy. The only way out of this situation, however, is to re-evaluate the movement, which will provide its more reform-oriented opponents, most notably Zhao Ziyang, with a powerful weapon. Whatever may happen in the future, for the present leadership the repression of the movement will prove to be a Pyrrhic victory only.

7. CONCLUSION: DRAMATIZATION AND RITUALIZATION AS STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL ACTION

As I have tried to show throughout this analysis, the People's Movement entailed a constant battle over the interpretation of events. Actors tried to establish the legitimacy of their own truth about what was happening by presenting it as the only 'true' one. This makes the movement less of a simple clash over political power than a fight over the interpretation and direction of Chinese history. Owing to the fact that the students were extremely careful to fashion the People's Movement's primary discursive order principally from the creative reworking of the tradition of protest and the official ideology, it could not simply be rejected by the authorities. Within this new order the party leadership was recognized and invited to participate as a partner. However, the new discursive order was constructed by the students, and not by the authorities, giving the former a considerable strategic and moral leverage.

The tradition of protest was an especially important source of moral legitimization for the students and other participants. On a cognitive level though, China's history of protest, as opposed to the discursively constructed tradition of protest, was less important than is sometimes thought.⁵⁰ The way the demonstrations were organized and carried out, the types of slogans and political rhetoric used, and even the objectives of the movement were clearly more than just the application or re-enactment of behavioural patterns known from earlier protest movements, although this latter aspect did play an important role, especially during the mourning of Hu Yaobang. Protest behaviour is learned behaviour, and is modelled on and developed from

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behavioural patterns of daily reality in which the participants are engaged. This has also been observed by, among others, Tilly (1986) with regard to the French, by Perry (1980) with regard to Chinese peasant unrest in late Imperial and Republican China, and by Wasserstrom and Liu (1989) with regard to Chinese student demonstrations during the Republican period.

During the People's Movement this process was clearly at work as well. Many of the demands and complaints voiced during the movement have their foundation in the hardships and inequities of life and in the profound moral crisis of society which I have documented in the previous part of this book. Moreover, the demonstrations, slogans, and demands were shaped by the bureaucratized social structure – and more specifically by the work units and *xitong* – as well as by the Communist Party's tradition of political speech and behaviour, which was a much more important source of secondary and tertiary knowledge than distant memories of previous waves of protest.

Despite this the strategies and tactics of the People's Movement were often remarkably similar to those of earlier protest movements in the history of the People's Republic, and even those of the Republican period. However, in my analysis many of these similarities and the uniquely Chinese character of many forms of protest are caused by discursive continuities rather than by a direct historical link. The protests during the People's Movement are thus a complicated mix of old forms adapted to new circumstances and new forms (re)invented for old circumstances, in which a learning process during the movement itself played a crucial role.

The role of the tradition of protest was principally to provide the discursive resources for the construction of a primary order for the movement. The discourse of the tradition of protest was perceived by the participants in the People's Movement as the infallible and invincible moral force of Chinese history, which compelled them to actions over which they themselves had only limited control. It set the events apart from the surrounding reality of everyday behaviour, and charged them with a special morality. It provided the actions of the demonstrators, petitioners, hunger-strikers, and bystanders with an unquestionable legitimacy which the authorities had to negotiate very carefully. The process of recontextualization of discourses is thus at the

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core of the People's Movement. At the same time, however, the process of decontextualization, which may be defined for the purposes of the present analysis as the manipulation and creative production of discursive history, was just as important. Again, the use of the term 'history' as a motivating force and final arbiter, self-consciously referred to the impact and significance the current event would have on and for future ones. 'History' was both a recontextualization cue, which made past events serve the present one, and a decontextualization cue, which served to construct an ongoing process out of isolated past protests.

As the example of the term 'history' shows, recontextualization and decontextualization can often only be distinguished analytically, because in reality they are two aspects of the same action. The persistent use of 'democracy' as a central slogan is another example of the simultaneous occurrence of recontextualization and decontextualization. On the one hand, as an umbrella-slogan used throughout the movement it sought to invoke the tradition of protest, Western political thinking, and even aspects of Maoism for the purposes of the movement. On the other hand, 'democracy' gave the movement a significance which went beyond specific events.

The unifying primary discursive frame which is constructed again and again during protest movements is especially forceful because of the strength of another discourse: Chinese collectivism. During a protest movement the barriers of particularism which normally separate the Chinese from each other are torn down. The order of the movement, the Chinese people's historic quest for a just ('democratic') government, is at the same time a recontextualization of the largest collective which can exist within Chinese culture: the people. Rules of in-group conduct which stress trust, harmony, and cooperation suddenly apply to all. The only exception is the leaders. Their wicked behaviour defines them as the feared and hated outsider, whose refusal to behave in accordance with the order of the movement proves their inhuman nature and to whom normal rules of conduct therefore do not apply.

Within the context of this discursive order, Chinese social actors do not operate as individuals, but as members of that largest of collectives. Their actions are the product of the roles they have to play; social actors seem to have become play-actors

in their own history. As a result of this the actors acquire a special sense of discipline and even solemnity. Not spontaneous emotions or immediate self-interest inspire their actions, but the unstoppable force of the Chinese people and their history.

This type of social action is not unique to protest movements. In other social contexts in which they operate as members of a collective rather than as individuals, Chinese also often seem to act as one-dimensional players of proscribed roles. This has led many non-Chinese to think of the Chinese as 'inscrutable': impossible to have real contact with on a personal basis.⁵¹

However, during the People's Movement the same collective and the same moral order encompassed all of Beijing. For a non-Chinese like myself this presented a unique opportunity to become temporarily part of this collective and understand from within how Chinese actors style their behaviour according to its frame of reference. As a result, I found the movement's participants neither 'inscrutable' nor one-dimensional players. The collectivistic morality of the movement struck me as both natural and as a powerful tactical resource, while the Chinese in turn emerged as very human and expert at creatively using this resource.

The strict adherence to non-violence until the very last moment, and the sudden switch to almost unbridled, but still patterned, violence during the crackdown and its aftermath should be interpreted in this light too. Violence and its presentation are actions and means of signification which are not only contextual, but, as decontextualization cues, reach out beyond the confines of the particular event to shape future ones. As I have demonstrated above, the times, places, or various manners of killing and dying were all invested with meanings on which future actors could draw in order to construct the primary knowledge and morality of future events. Future political activists are more than likely to invoke the names of the martyrs of June Fourth and their murderers to claim legitimacy for their actions.

The importance of such extrinsic knowledge and morality throws new light on some of the most striking characteristics of the People's Movement. The invocation and creative reworking of this morality and knowledge was achieved mainly through two related, but, functionally at least, distinct strategies: dramatization and ritualization.

The People's Movement started as a dramatized event,⁵² but ended as an abortive rite of passage. It was dramatized because the actions of its participants were intended to, first, create one or more audiences (the people of Beijing, the authorities, foreign public opinion), and, second, to achieve certain ends by the effects these actions would have on these audiences. The actions were thus not guided by an instrumental rationality which directly aims at the target-situation or persons. Rather, they were governed by an indirect theatrical rationality.

By dramatizing actions the targeted situation or persons are manipulated by the effect the actions have on third parties who are indirect actors: the audiences. Actors who dramatize their actions create and affect the audiences by employing a variety of tactics, such as exaggeration, stylization, or indirectness. The result of these tactics is that the dramatized actions are highlighted and presented as having a special meaning beyond the direct context of the event. The audiences are therefore invited to interpret these actions in a special way. In other words, dramatization is a consciously manipulated type of contextualization cue, intended to invoke specific interpretations, not so much with the direct objects of the actions (the other actors) as with the audiences who witness the event. Dramatization usually necessitates that the action is ambiguous, because it is directed both towards the other actors in the event and towards audiences who may not even be physically present. Such actions thus simultaneously create and are constrained by two different frames of primary power, knowledge and morality. This is both an asset and a potential liability to the actors concerned.

Owing to the dramatization of the events, the different social actors in the People's Movement had to be extremely circumspect. In particular, during the early stages of the movement the students had to balance the requirements of the direct frame of reference, the mourning of a senior party leader, with those of at least two indirect frames, loyal petitioning of the government and mobilization of the population. Similarly, the government had to abide by the frames of mourning and petitioning, but at the same time had to convey messages and engage in other actions which would reaffirm its legitimate authority and prevent the students from mobilizing the population. As it turned out, the students were the most capable or willing to cater simultaneously to these different frames. They were able to use

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the ambiguities created to their own advantage. To them, the dramatization of the events was a valuable resource. To the government, it became a liability.

Besides dramatization, the tactics of exaggeration, indirectness, and stylization employed by the students also had another and less premeditated strategic effect which would become more important as the movement progressed. Many of the public events which constituted the People's Movement, such as the demonstrations, the hunger-strike, the blockade of the city centre and the mourning over Hu Yaobang, had ritual-like traits.

When discussing the ritualized character of the People's Movement we enter a qualitatively different level of interpretive analysis. Until this point I have tried to limit my analysis to a systematization and explication of the events as interpreted by the Chinese who witnessed and participated in the movement. Dramatization of the events, for instance, was a calculated strategy employed to achieve certain ends. It was based on the application of the actors' own conceptions of (indirect) rational action.

As a professional outsider, however, the anthropologist can also draw on the objectified knowledge of the social sciences further to interpret the events studied. Such interpretations are largely external, and therefore to a certain extent arbitrary. Nevertheless, they clarify structural or functional aspects which largely escape the notice of (most of) the participants of the event.

The distinction between the external and internal rationality of action is not an absolute one and remains a matter of degree only. The only reason I am using this distinction is to alert the reader to the fact that the following analysis is largely my own reconstruction. My application of the concept of ritualization is not based predominantly on either the movement's primary logic as I observed it, or on my informants' secondary interpretations. Nevertheless, certain key elements of the analysis, like the importance of tradition, are firmly rooted in the interpretive reality of the movement itself.

On the level of such a largely external rationality of action, some of the tactics employed by the participants which were intended to dramatize the People's Movement, also had the effect of ritualizing it. 'Ritualization', as it is employed here, does not therefore refer to the external characteristics of the

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event, but to its effects; ritualization is a functional, and not a descriptive concept.

The concept of ritual has a long history within anthropology, and has been subject to many reinterpretations and revisions. Some anthropologists have therefore decided to do away with it altogether (Goody 1977), but I do not think such a drastic step is necessary. The anthropological study of ritual has been invigorated by the publication of the book *Secular Ritual* (Moore & Myerhoff 1977a), in which, incidentally, Goody's article appeared as well. Central to these new studies of ritual is the awareness that, first, rituals are not limited to the religious sphere and, secondly, rituals are more often than not recent creations to suit present needs, and are not handed down from days long past (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Moore & Myerhoff 1977a).

From this more recent literature, but also from some of the older works on ritual (Bateson 1958; Leach 1968; Turner 1969), I have distilled the following characterization of ritual, or rather ritualization, which is relevant within the context of the theory of practice developed in this book. This is not meant as an exhaustive discussion of all aspects of ritual studies, but as a perspective on certain aspects of the People's Movement.

First, ritual is a performative phenomenon. A ritual is carried out by an individual or a group to produce an effect on another individual or group (in some cases, the target is the individual or the group itself, but that does not weaken the argument I am developing here). Ritual is thus one specific type of (inter)action. Characteristically, ritual, like drama, is not directly instrumental, in the sense that it directly produces the desired result – or sometimes another result not anticipated at all. Rather, ritual entails the creative use of the means of signification which are at the disposal of a certain group or individual.

Second, it is often better to speak of ritualization, or of ritualized aspects of certain events, than of ritual as a distinct category of behaviour (or a cultural form), which is qualitatively different from, say, economic transactions or political struggles.⁵³ Ritual-like aspects can occur in almost all contexts, setting apart the specific events or actions they highlight from the surrounding sequences of actions (both in time and place). In terms of the theory of practice developed in Chapter 2, ritualization thus serves as a framing device, cuing tertiary discourses. Ritualiz-

action is therefore a strategy through which interested parties (usually the participants in the ritual) claim that only a particular type of interpretation of the actions is valid.

What has been said thus far about ritualization is shared to a large extent with dramatization, which was discussed earlier. However, on a functional level dramatization and ritualization are clearly different. In contrast to dramatization, ritualization is strongly normative.

Ritualization as a mode of performative activity determines the nature and range of the legitimate interpretations. Ritualization is achieved by the often self-conscious formalization of what is done, a formalization which traditionalizes the message conveyed (Moore & Myerhoff 1977b: 7-8). The formalization which is typical of ritualized events produces a distinct illocutionary force for the meanings being manipulated. One speaks or acts no longer on behalf of oneself or a specific group, but claims to speak a truth valid for all parties involved; a truth sanctioned and made absolute by the force of an unquestioned tradition. Ritualization therefore speaks to – and often even tries to create – a collective, by appealing to a common heritage supposedly shared by all parties involved.

Nevertheless, ritualization through formalization is not without its pitfalls. Writing about another, but related, topic (political oratory), Maurice Bloch has claimed that the formalization of certain types of political speech leaves the speakers no choice but to voice the message of tradition and thus reproduce the existing relations of domination (Bloch 1975).

There is certainly a degree of truth in Bloch's, essentially Durkheimian, argument. Formalization and the traditions invoked by it certainly restrict the scope of the messages one wants to convey and the effects one wants to produce. This is not as much of a limitation as it may seem though. First, extremely formalized proceedings often only sanction messages and decisions which have been arrived at beforehand through informal lobbying or factional infighting. Formalization of public meetings is therefore no guarantee of an immutable social order (Irvine 1979: 784). Secondly, even extremely formalized speech genres leave a lot of room for subtle manipulation, which able speakers can put to good use to get their message across (Albert 1972). Thirdly, and most importantly, the content of the tradition invoked is by no means fixed. During the People's

Movement, for instance, both the students and the authorities invested a lot of effort in constructing the true interpretation of the tradition of protest and of the communist ideology from which both claimed the legitimacy of their actions. Ritualization thus acts as a cue which triggers a (constructed) tradition as the sole legitimate interpretive frame for the ritualized actions involved.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, citing tertiary discourses is never without its problems. When actors attempt to construct primary frames of reference, they must creatively adapt them to the circumstances of the current event. In ritualized types of action this gives the actors the opportunity to alter and construct a new, primary, tradition from the raw materials provided by tertiary traditions. This makes it not only possible to steer the event in a certain direction, but, by simultaneously trying to decontextualize this new tradition, the actors may also have an impact on future ritualized events, whose actors will draw on this new tertiary tradition.

By invoking the voice of tradition, ritualization is first a device to assert oneself as a legitimate participant in the proceedings: one has the right to participate because this is proscribed by tradition. Secondly, the 'true' tradition to which one refers is a resource and the object of creative manipulation. Ritualization is a strategy to force an interpretive frame, constructed by oneself, upon the other participants involved in the activity, and is not a mode of action limited to reproducing the existing social order. Ritualization is a powerful means by which to shape any order, old or new – and by implication simultaneously to challenge competing orders – because it seeks to invest the social relations it constructs with an unquestionable legitimacy.

To understand how the formalization of ritualized events can be such a powerful tool for the production of absolute truths, Judith Irvine's discussion of formality in communicative events is immediately relevant (Irvine 1979). To her, formality is actually a cover term for four quite different aspects which are largely independent of each other. *Increased code structuring* 'concerns the addition of extra rules or conventions to the codes that organize behaviour in a social setting'. *Co-occurrence rules* address the issue of the 'consistency of choices' at many different communicative levels, in order clearly to set apart the formal-

ized behaviour from other types of behaviour the same choice is made for different codes.

During the People's Movement, code structuring and co-occurrence were achieved by the simultaneous presence of stereotyped chanting and of the ubiquitous banners, head-bands and flags all showing the same slogans repeated over and over again and all aiming at distinguishing the demonstrations from the ordinary behaviour of the people participating in them and especially that of the bystanders. The effect of this was to highlight the demonstration. As already observed earlier, the most important fact about the demonstrations was that a demonstration took place at all: the medium really was the message, and formalization focused extra attention on this. Moreover, formalization also added to the seriousness of the demonstration. Through co-occurring structured codes the demonstrators established the importance of what they are doing: everything that was said and done was strictly controlled, thereby leaving little room for ambiguity or interpretive play. This was especially important because the demonstrators had to avoid being labelled as riotous elements. Disorderly behaviour would have given the authorities the opportunity to condemn and forbid the demonstrations. Formalization in the sense of co-occurring structured codes was an important means of establishing the credentials of the movement as a peaceful, legitimate form of political action.

The third type distinguished by Irvine is the formalization of the *social identities of the participants*. Formalization in this sense invokes 'positional and public, rather than personal identities'. Formalization of this type was also a very important aspect of the People's Movement. This was not only borne out by the fact that people demonstrated as members of their work unit's delegation, but also because they participated as part of a specific social category: student, journalist, intellectual, worker, member of the people. As a result, these abstract categories became, at least as long as the movement lasted, actual participating social groups with distinct identities and roles.

Fourthly, formality concerns the way in which attention is focused on one or a few actors because it *differentiates* their activities from those of more peripheral participants. During the People's Movement all activities contributed to focusing attention on the activities of the student activists, giving them the

mandate to represent the people to the authorities. As the movement progressed this became ever more pronounced, until the student leaders at the Monument of Revolutionary Heroes became the pivot for the whole nation.

Up to this point, my discussion of the People's Movement as a ritualized event has focused on its surface characteristics and their performative functions. However, ritualization has another, related, aspect which became more prominent as the movement unfolded. By constructing a normative tradition, ritualized events also point out what is wrong with the present state of affairs, and this in turn provides a mechanism to bring the ideal and the reality into harmony again.

Elaborating Van Gennep's classic study of rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960), Victor Turner has described how the existing social order is first broken down and then negated during a ritual sequence. During the ensuing 'liminal' phase, people are freed from the roles they ordinarily play in normal social life, and act as whole, integrated personalities. The 'communitas' thus produced is characterized by a total and intrinsic equality and a sense of brotherhood among all participants. From this 'anti-structure' the normal social order is carefully recreated during the later phases of the ritual. The net result of the whole ritual sequence is that the social structure is regenerated and strengthened.

In a recent article Maurice Bloch has refined Turner's analysis of how ritual carries out its Durkheimian work. Ritual exaggerates certain elements of the social structure and thereby presents these as problematic and in need of a remedy. By subsequently breaking down the old social order during the liminal phase, the ritual can later recreate the social structure, curing those elements it had earlier labelled problematic (Bloch 1985).

The People's Movement can be described as such a ritual transformation process. The demonstrations, the support, and the hunger-strike can be interpreted as its first phases. What started as dramatized actions to challenge the authorities, mobilize the people and invoke the tradition of protest, became a ritualized acting out of the social structure. Acting out the existing social structure in turn focused attention on that aspect which the participants considered to be the source of strain: the flawed policies of a handful of leaders and their unresponsiveness to the demands of the people. In this way, the ritualized

events became normative statements about what the social structure should be like.

With martial law the movement was forced into a liminal phase. The roles of the old social order, acted out earlier, were replaced by the generalized role of bystander/protector who was a member of that largest collective, 'the people'.⁵⁴ In this role all other roles merged and the people of Beijing suddenly faced each other as whole personalities. Characteristically, people had a very strong sense of personal responsibility, especially after the declaration of martial law, and an almost festive, jubilant atmosphere pervaded the city. The old norms of social behaviour had faded away. People were polite, friendly, and even considerate to each other. The people of Beijing had discovered that they had something in common with all other citizens. They could and had to relate to each other as citizens, and not just as occupiers of positions in the social structure.

My discussion of the People's Movement as a ritual transformation process also highlights some shortcomings of Turner's and Bloch's approach to ritual. First, a ritual is not just a cultural form mechanically acted out by the participants. Ritualization is used by participants in a social event as one way to frame their activities. Like all other forms of social action, a ritualized event is the common product of the participating actors, who shape their actions according to their interpretation of the actions of the other actors. Starting out as a dramatized event, the movement became a ritual transformation process, because the interplay between the actions of the authorities and the other participants forced it in that direction.

Second, both Bloch and Turner are still too much rooted in Durkheim's characterization of ritual as an instrument of social reproduction (Durkheim 1965). Earlier, I showed how ritualization of social action does not have to mean that one subscribes to the existing relations of domination. Rites of passage, as an example of the phenomenon of ritualization, can be just as instrumental in shaping a new social order as in recreating the old one. The function of a social phenomenon is never determined by its form, but always by the concrete context in which it occurs.

In the case of the People's Movement, the attempted transformation of Chinese society was short-circuited by the invasion of the army. Nevertheless, the movement had already achieved

something of lasting value. The movement had not only expressed ideas about what was wrong with Chinese society, but also sown the seeds of a new social order. The role of bystander, and later of protector of the students, were inventions based on an existing discursive repertoire allowing the people of Beijing to circumvent the barriers erected by the bureaucratized social structure and traditional Chinese particularism. These roles may also be the seeds of a future society in China, in which individuals can act and organize as citizens independently of the social structure controlled by the state.

NOTES

- 1 The National People's Congress is the Chinese parliament which in name is the highest authority in the state bureaucratic structure, but which in fact is largely ceremonial.
- 2 The most famous of these political prisoners was Wei Jingsheng (see Chap. 5). For some more details about the 1989 petitioning movement which was started by the well-known dissident Fang Lizhi, see Schier 1989.
- 3 See Chap. 5. Hu was replaced as Party Secretary-General by Premier Zhao Ziyang. Although Zhao, too, was a reform-oriented leader, he had decided not to support Hu in his losing battle against the rest of the leadership united around Deng Xiaoping. Ironically, during the People's Movement Zhao found himself in a very similar situation as Hu when the majority of the leadership united again to defeat him and the People's Movement.
- 4 See Chap. 5.
- 5 The authorities probably shared this assessment of student movements. Although they were sufficiently annoyed by the students to decide to suppress it (see the discussion of the 26 April *People's Daily* editorial below), they actually did so only after the hunger-strike had mobilized the large majority of the people of Beijing.
- 6 See Chaps. 4 and 5.
- 7 The Great Hall of the People is the most important ceremonial centre of the People's Republic. In the Hall official meetings are held, and foreign delegations are received.
- 8 At the time, nobody seemed to know who these delegates were. Only after I had returned from China did I learn that they had probably been the members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.
- 9 During the movement I spent a fair bit of my time trying to collect as many of these documents as possible. Upon my return to the Netherlands I used this body of documents to start a collection of materials about the movement at the International Institute of Social

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- History in Amsterdam. The two-volume inventory of this collection has been published as Pieke & Lamboo 1990, 1991.
- 10 On the role of the media in the People's Movement, see Faison 1990 and Walder 1989b.
- 11 For electronic mail on the movement, see Ståhle & Uimonen 1989.
- 12 The political importance of poetry goes back thousands of years. A mandarin's protest against incorrect policies was very often expressed by means of poetry. In modern times poetry had also been used by Mao Zedong to popularize his ideas. During the 1976 April Fifth and the 1978 Democracy Wall Movements the writing, reading and copying of poems were crucial forms of political action. In a way, poetry is also more anonymous and powerful than ordinary prose. Poetry is less analytical and more associative than prose, signifying by the direct application of typified knowledge. It therefore claims to be true on the basis of a shared tradition and moral order, and much less because of a structured and explicit argument designed by an individual author.
- 13 Copying poems and wall-posters has also been reported for other movements (1976, 1978), and seemed to be a standard element in the repertoire of Chinese protest behaviour. On the other hand, the use of audio recorders and video and photo cameras was a new elaboration of this type of behaviour made possible by the increased standard of living and the import of Japanese and Western consumer durables.
- 14 For the symbolism of smashing bottles, see above, Chap. 5 n. 13.
- 15 That day I was out of town, and could not personally witness this demonstration. The following description is based on a detailed account in a Chinese reform-oriented journal, *Xin guancha* (*New Observer*, Ji 1989), and on conversations with friends and interviewees after my return (see also Shen 1991: 202–206).
- 16 For a translation, see Oksenberg *et al.* 1990: 218–243.
- 17 According to Shen Tong, one of the leaders of the movement, only one Beijing University activist was allowed to be present in order to give the impression that the authorities were engaging in a real dialogue (Shen 1991: 210–211).
- 18 See e.g. the fifth and the seventh demand posed on 18 April cited above.
- 19 For English translations of Zhao's speeches of 3 and 4 May see Oksenberg *et al.* 1990: 244–251, 254–256.
- 20 This accusation was made by Premier Li Peng during a closed meeting held on May 22 attended by Li, President Yang Shangkun, Secretary of the Party Central Commission for the Inspection of Discipline Qiao Shi, and Head of the State Planning Committee Yao Yilin (Wu *et al.* 1989 Vol. 1: 389, English translations in Tong 1990: 73–75, and Oksenberg *et al.* 1990: 317–320).
- 21 The situation for Zhao was so desperate that his predicament was openly explained by Yan Mingfu during a meeting with student representatives on May 13 (Shen 1991: 242).
- 22 That it was very difficult for more moderate students to avoid being

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- coopted by Zhao's supporters, is illustrated by Dialogue Delegation member Shen Tong's account of the help he received from officials and reform-oriented intellectuals in preparing for a meeting with Yan Mingfu (Shen 1991: 232–234).
- 23 This sentiment was expressed, for instance, by Cai Jingjing, a student activist who has fled abroad after 4 June (Cai 1989).
- 24 For translations of the students' announcements of the hunger-strike, see Oksenberg *et al.* 1990: 258–259, Han & Hua 1990: 199–202.
- 25 As Shen Tong puts it in his autobiography: 'the hunger strike was about much more than those two demands. Some of the students were willing to die in order to see the true face of the government' (Shen 1991: 237).
- 26 The existence of a Chinese history of hunger-strikes dating from the Shang dynasty (1766–1122 BC) was pointed out to me by Prof. Kristoffer Schipper in a personal communication. The hunger-strike had also been a (minor) element in China's modern history of protest. For example, it had been used by some Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution in a strikingly similar way as during the People's Movement 23 years later (Hua 1987: 111–116). However, these historical precedents were probably not very important to the actors of the People's Movement themselves. None of the people I spoke to in Beijing mentioned past hunger-strikes when talking about the one which was happening at that moment. What was mentioned, however, was the model provided by Mahatma Gandhi's hunger-strikes. The hunger-strike during the movement should therefore not be considered as a reference to Chinese traditions of protest. Instead, it was both a cultural reinvention and a product of the students' eagerness to copy foreign models for international public relations purposes.
- 27 For a translation of Zhao's meeting with Gorbachov, see Oksenberg 1990: 260–264.
- 28 The word *pingxi* would return later in the official accounts of the successful suppression on 4 June. This is an indication that the distinction made by my informant between *pingxi* and *qusan* is directly relevant to the authorities, too. By using the word *pingxi*, the authorities conveyed a propaganda message beyond the fact of the forcible suppression of the movement. The movement has not only been suppressed, so they imply, but it has also been swept from the historical record. Thanks to the heroism of the army, a counterrevolutionary rebellion has failed to enter the collective memory, and will never come back to challenge the dictatorship of the proletariat again.
- 29 By pure coincidence the symbolic value of the colour red are similar in traditional Chinese and communist culture. Traditionally, red denotes happiness, being used for wrapping gifts, for bridal dresses, and the like. In communist colour symbolism red is of course the colour of the revolution, of the working class, and of the party.
- 30 Especially during this stage of the movement, mocking the powers-that-be played an important role. As Mary Douglas has pointed out,

humour attacks formal hierarchies and classifications by introducing different ways of looking at reality. In the terminology developed in Chap. 2, humour is a means to recontextualize and use for counterhegemonic purposes the dominant tertiary discourses. In this way, humour helped to create an experience of discursive liberation, which was the greatest achievement of the demonstrations of 17 and 18 May (Douglas 1968 as summarized in Brukman 1975: 239).

31 According to Shen Tong (1991: Chap. 11), hundreds of students continued, started or started again their hunger-strike under martial law. Although I cannot confirm this from my own observations, this is probably correct. More important is, however, that the hunger-strike ceased to be an important theme in the movement's discourse after 20 May.

32 The establishment of this new organization took place on 21 May according to Shen Tong (1991: 307), or on 24 May according to Luo *et al.* (1990: 30, 31).

33 It has to be emphasized that these demonstrations were totally different from the pathetic attempts of the authorities to organize pro-government demonstrations during the last week of martial law. At my host unit participation was always voluntary, and the demonstrations were organized by the leaders in order not to lose their credibility with the members of the unit.

34 This happened at a meeting of some key members of the Politburo on 17 May at which it was decided to declare martial law in the urban areas of Beijing municipality. According to the official report on the movement by Beijing's mayor, Chen Xitong, Zhao was the only one present to vote against this (Chen Xitong 1989: xiii).

35 An amusing consequence of this prohibition was that the authorities could organize their own counter-demonstrations (see above, n. 33) only in the rural counties outside Beijing which were not under martial law.

36 Pamphlet PAM 00292, collection Chinese People's Movement 1989, at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (Pieke & Lamboo 1990).

37 The role of history in the construction of truth and morality has deep roots in Chinese Confucianism, and is evident in many different historical and ethnographic contexts. For instance, writing about the competition between contemporary Taiwanese Mazu temples, Sangren observes that 'In contrast to much of the traditional Western thought, where ultimate authority is attributed to a transcendent power and is known by means of revealed truth, for China, history itself is the text through which heaven's order can be known' (Sangren 1988b: 688).

38 This is a term often used in the official propaganda about the Army. It is a good illustration of the creative use of the dominant ideology against its proponent, a ubiquitous feature of the movement's rhetoric.

39 As I have said in Chap. 4, food, drink, and the gift are some of the

most powerful symbols of sharing, that is, of belonging to the same collective. Giving food and drink to the soldiers thus served as a cue to establish a common frame of reference and moral order. It sought to draw the soldiers into the in-group of 'the people', and to make morally accountable human beings out of strangers. Sharing food and drink is a cultural tactic to surmount the barrier between 'inside' and 'outside' which plays such an important role in Chinese culture, and can be applied during a wide variety of events for an equally wide variety of pragmatic objectives (cf. also the giving of food and drink to the demonstrators by the bystanders).

40 Late 1989 the news spread that Deng Xiaoping wanted to deploy Beijing troops already at the end of April, but that at that time many soldiers and officers had refused (NRC Handelsblad 1989: 5). Of course, this begs the question why the same troops were used after all one month later.

41 The Party Military Commission is the party's most important formal instrument of control over the army. Its chairman at the time of the People's Movement was Deng Xiaoping.

42 See above, n. 28.

43 See the quotes from the transcript of a taped discussion between a student and some citizens on pp. 000 above. The government's condemnation of those who had resisted the army's occupation as 'violent' and 'bad elements' (see below) has to be interpreted in the same light.

44 Chai Ling's testimony was taped on 8 June 1989, and smuggled out of China to Hong Kong. The transcript was first published on 12 June 1989 by the *Singdao Daily*, a Chinese-language newspaper in Hong Kong. The translation here is my own. An English translation of the whole transcript can be found in Mok & Harrison 1990: 194-200.

45 The most authoritative statement of the official account of the movement and the massacre is Chen Xitong 1989. Below I am quoting from another document, because this is of an earlier date and thus much less polished than later ones.

46 The stress on the orderliness of the students was vitally important to the official propaganda. Its success depended on the credibility of its claim that the movement had turned into a counterrevolutionary turmoil because violent and bad elements had used the opportunity to create trouble, a theme I will return to below.

47 Quoted from a document written by the Propaganda Department of the Beijing Committee of the Communist Party dated 5 June 1989 and released by Xinhua News Agency on 9 June 1989 (Xinhua News Agency 1989).

48 For reliable reconstructions of the capture of Beijing, see Amnesty International 1990; Morrison 1990; R. Munro 1990.

49 Recently, a first readjustment in the official evaluation happened almost surreptitiously. Currently, the press and other propaganda no longer refers to the movement as a 'turmoil' (*luanluan*) but merely

as a 'disturbance' (*fengbo*). Although this change in terminology (*jifā*) does not seem to have any substantial policy implications, it does indicate that the leadership is aware that it cannot indefinitely postpone facing the legacy of the movement. Extensive security measures taken in Beijing every year around the date of 4 June also point to the fact that the authorities realize only too well that they have failed to erase the movement from Chinese history.

50 It is with regard to this aspect that my anthropological and discursive analysis differs most from Wasserstrom's historical one, despite our agreement and mutual indebtedness on many other points (Wasserstrom 1990; 1991; Escherick & Wasserstrom 1990).

51 The centrality of the collective in the Chinese construction of the self should not lead us to believe that this is the only reason why Westerners and Chinese often fail to communicate effectively. 'Inscrutability' is an orientalist label which actually covers a variety of cultural differences. Young (1984) has pointed at differences in discourse conventions as one other reason why Chinese are often found inscrutable by Americans, whereas Chinese occidentalism labels Americans blunt, aggressive, and even rude.

52 That many of the events of the People's Movement were strikingly similar to theatre performances has been pointed out by Escherick & Wasserstrom (1990).

53 Cf. Victor Turner's distinction between the 'liminal' and the 'liminoid' (Turner 1977).

54 As the example of the soldier who held a speech on 22 May denouncing the army (see p. 000 above) shows, the roles of the old social structure had not been abandoned completely. The movement was a multifaceted event. Apart from being a ritualized process, it also entailed a very concrete confrontation with an invading army. At that level, the old roles continued to be an important aspect of the movement's moral discourse.

Part IV

CONCLUSION