



## Language

There were signs of unrest before 1989: students in Heifei demonstrated in December 1986 against the Party's role in elections to the Peoples Congress, and student protests spread to Shanghai and other cities. Simmering unrest continued, encouraged by conflict at the top of the Party between hardliners and those more sympathetic to intellectuals. But the spark for the mass protests of April to June 1989 was the death of the former General Secretary Hu Yaobang, forced out of office by hardliners for alleged responsibility for the protests of December 1986. Students massed in Tiananmen Square in April to lay wreaths to Hu, and the protest rapidly developed through marches, occupation of the Square, boycott of classes and formation of autonomous student unions. The demonstrations won support from workers and other Beijing residents and spread to other parts of the country. Some Party leaders tried to conciliate the students, but in May the rise of a more radical student leadership and the launching of a hunger strike, coinciding with the visit of President Gorbachev, led most of the Politburo to endorse the imposition of martial law. This met widespread popular resistance. Numerous collections of documents and accounts of both protest and repression were compiled at the time. The sources selected here seek to give an overall perspective on events.

Asia Monitor Resource Center, [A Moment of Truth: Workers Participation in China's 1989 Democracy Movement and the Emergence of Independent Unions \[1\]](#), Hong Kong, Asia Monitor Resource Center, 1991, pp. 254

Cherrington, Ruth, [China's Students: The Struggles for Democracy \[2\]](#), London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 239

Duke, Michael S., [The Iron House: A Memoir of the Chinese Democracy Movement and the Tiananmen Massacre \[3\]](#), Layton, Utah, Gibbs Smith, 1990, pp. 180

Eyewitness account from May 19 by Chinese-speaking American professor.

Goldman, Merle, [The 1989 Demonstrations in Tiananmen Square and Beyond: Echoes of Gandhi \[4\]](#), In Roberts; Garton Ash, [Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present \[5\]](#) ([A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements \[6\]](#)), Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 247-259

Han, Minzhu, [Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement \[7\]](#), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 401

Collection of materials from the protest movement.

Lee, Terence, [Military Cohesion and Regime Maintenance : Explaining the Role of the Military in 1989 China and 1998 Indonesia \[8\]](#), Armed Forces & Society, Vol. 32, issue 1, 2005, pp. 80-104

Liang, Zhang ; Nathan, Andrew J. ; Link, Perry, [The Tiananmen Papers \[9\]](#), compiled by Zhang Liang and edited by Andrew J. Nathan and Perry Link, London, Little Brown and Abacus, 2001, pp. 679

Secret Party papers leaked to the west provide details of the meetings, negotiations and communications between the top leaders about how to deal with the protests, and the triumph of the hardliners over Zhao Ziyang, General Secretary of the Party, who wished to be conciliatory. Western scholars generally accepted the papers as authentic.



Lizhi, Fang, [Bringing Down the Great Wall: Writings on Science, Culture and Democracy](#) [10], translated and edited J.H. Williams, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1990, pp. 336

Fang Lizhi, a prominent astrophysicist, became an increasingly vocal critic of the regime in the 1980s and was linked to the 1986 student protests.

Mok, Chiu Yu ; Harrison, Frank, [Voices from Tiananmen Square: Beijing Spring and the Democracy Movement](#) [11], Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1990, pp. 203

Collection of documents from participants in demonstrations.

Oksenberg, Michael ; Sullivan, Lawrence R. ; Lamberts, Marc, [Beijing Spring 1989: Confrontation and Conflict. The Basic Documents](#) [12], Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe, 1990, pp. 403

Collection of documents from official perspective.

Saich, Tony, [The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989](#) [13], Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe, 1991, pp. 207

Includes both an account of the protests and the authorities' response, and scholarly essays interpreting the context. Extensive bibliography.

Thompson, Mark R., [To Shoot or Not to Shoot: Posttotalitarianism in China and Eastern Europe](#) [14], Comparative Politics, Vol. 34, issue 1, 2001, pp. 63-83

Seeks to explain why in 1989 there was a massacre in Beijing but not in Berlin or Prague. Similar discussion in Thompson, [Democratic Revolutions: Asia and Eastern Europe](#) [15] (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [6]) .

True, Michael, [The 1989 democratic uprising in China from a nonviolent perspective](#) [16], In Kumar, Mahendra ; Low, Peter , [Legacy and Future of Nonviolence](#) [17] New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation, , 1996, pp. 141-157

Unger, Jonathan, [The Pro-Democracy Protests in China: Reports from the Provinces](#) [18], Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe, 1991, pp. 239

Zhao, Dingxin, [The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement](#) [19], [2001], Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. 456

See also:

Kurt Schock, [Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies](#) [20], (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [21]), pp. 98-119 on reasons for failure

John Simpson, [Dispatches from the Barricades: An Eye-Witness Account of the Revolution that Shook the World](#) [22], (C. I.2.c.i. Comparative Studies [23]), which has two chapters on Tiananmen



communist-regimes/c-ii-china-and-tibet-1947/c-ii1-china/c-ii1c

### Links

- [1] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1991/moment-truth-workers-participation-chinas-1989-democracy-movement-and-emergence>
- [2] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1991/chinas-students-struggles-democracy>
- [3] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/iron-house-memoir-chinese-democracy-movement-and-tiananmen-massacre>
- [4] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2009/1989-demonstrations-tiananmen-square-and-beyond-echoes-gandhi>
- [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2009/civil-resistance-and-power-politics-experience-non-violent-action-gandhi-present>
- [6] <https://civilresistance.info/section/introduction-nonviolent-action/1-theory-methods-and-examples/1b-strategic-theory-dynamics>
- [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/cries-democracy-writings-and-speeches-1989-chinese-democracy-movement>
- [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2005/military-cohesion-and-regime-maintenance-explaining-role-military-1989-china-and>
- [9] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2001/tiananmen-papers>
- [10] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/bringing-down-great-wall-writings-science-culture-and-democracy>
- [11] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/voices-tiananmen-square-beijing-spring-and-democracy-movement>
- [12] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/beijing-spring-1989-confrontation-and-conflict-basic-documents>
- [13] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1991/chinese-peoples-movement-perspectives-spring-1989>
- [14] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2001/shoot-or-not-shoot-posttotalitarianism-china-and-eastern-europe>
- [15] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2004/democratic-revolutions-asia-and-eastern-europe>
- [16] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1996/1989-democratic-uprising-china-nonviolent-perspective>
- [17] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1996/legacy-and-future-nonviolence>
- [18] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1991/pro-democracy-protests-china-reports-provinces>
- [19] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2004/power-tiananmen-state-society-relations-and-1989-beijing-student-movement>
- [20] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2005/unarmed-insurrections-people-power-movements-nondemocracies>
- [21] <https://civilresistance.info/taxonomy/term/7>
- [22] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1990/dispatches-barricades-eye-witness-account-revolution-shook-world>
- [23] <https://civilresistance.info/taxonomy/term/59>