



Written by [Bonnie Gillis](#) on January 1, 1991

## Playing the China Card

**If the Chinese democracy movement is one arm of a dialectical ploy, what does the future hold?**

*May 1989: Drawn by hunger strikers and increasingly large and defiant crowds, huge numbers of students, workers, and peasants from Beijing and surrounding areas gather around Tiananmen Square, placing the center of Communist Party rule under siege. By Wednesday, May 17th, a crowd of two million angry protesters occupy the streets in Communist China's capital, with millions more openly challenging the government in other major cities.*



*June 4, 1989: Early in the morning, under cover of darkness, tanks and armored cars suddenly roll toward Tiananmen Square, opening machine gunfire directly at Chinese citizens. Even ambulances become targets.*

*Gunfire does not stop when daylight arrives; within 48 hours thousands of bodies are left on the streets or are rapidly disposed of by army units. The following several months bring tens of thousands of arrests and secret executions of anti-government protesters.*

*In the United States, horrified audiences watch the drama and its brutal ending unfold, as the heroism of the democracy movement is graphically presented on the television networks and in America's magazines and daily newspapers. But a sign of hope is given; the cruel rulers of mainland China are old men, and their opponents young. Times may change for the better.*

*Once again, the Red Chinese government had revealed its lust for power. At the same time, Americans had learned to respect and admire a movement that dared challenge the regime. But the massacre of innocent Chinese does not necessarily make the democracy movement a reliable ally. The enemy of one's enemy is not always a friend.*

Although previously applied by revolutionary socialists, the dialectic principle was openly named by Karl Marx as the central strategy in implementing world socialism. According to this idea, forces working toward some aspect of socialism represent a *thesis* confronting the status quo; the forces reacting against this thesis were called by Marx the *antithesis*. The struggle between thesis and antithesis would produce an outcome known as the *synthesis*, which according to Marx would always mark a step toward the ultimate socialist goal. This dialectical process would be repeated as often as necessary, and at many levels, before a new world order would finally be constructed.

However, only one way exists to ensure that dialectical clashes produce the planned synthesis: Both sides of any dialectic, thesis and antithesis, must be controlled and even initiated by the socialists themselves. In other words, they must create their own opposition. When such a controlled fight is



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established, the intended victims of the dialectic believe they have a choice between two sides. But, since the conflict is dialectical rather than genuine, everyone who joins in merely plays into the hands of the socialists.

### **“Scissors Strategy”**

The dialectic often appears under other names. A December 30, 1961 report by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, entitled “The New Role of National Legislative Bodies in the Communist Conspiracy,” contained two crucial chapters from a book smuggled out of Czechoslovakia. Written by an official of that country’s Communist Party, the book described the dialectical method used to seize power in Czechoslovakia. Communists infiltrated key positions in the Czechoslovak government, while simultaneously organizing street demonstrations against that government. Those two arms of the dialectic, by pretending to fight each other, generated enough confusion among the general public that all genuine opposition was neutralized. The book used the terms coined by V.I. Lenin, first dictator of the Soviet Union, referring to thesis and antithesis as “pressure from above.”

The Soviet KGB uses its own set of code words to refer to the dialectical strategy. According to former KGB staff officer Anatoliy Golitsyn, the official term for the dialectic is the “scissors strategy,” in which the blades represent the two falsely opposed sides that converge on the confused victims. Golitsyn, who is probably the most important Soviet ever to defect to the West, escaped in 1961. After more than two decades of trying to warn uninterested American leaders, he wrote the 1984 book *New Lies for Old* as a warning to the general public, exposing the role of the scissors strategy in global events.

Golitsyn revealed that the communist bloc had adopted a coordinated long-term strategy beginning in the late 1950s, created in part by Golitsyn himself, the purpose being to convince the West that international communism was disintegrating. Phony dissidents, factions, and power struggles within communist parties, splits or wars between communist nations, and temporary freedoms within each country have become dialectical tools of deception, allowing people in the West to take sides in these controlled straggles and thereby succumb to the strategy. Golitsyn argued that the dialectic has succeeded because imaginary factions or splits among communist rulers are perceived as real by the West.

### **Sakharov the Charlatan**

Andrei Sakharov, the recently deceased Soviet physicist widely known for speaking out against the Soviet regime, was one dissident identified by Golitsyn as probably working for the government as a conduit for disinformation. Sakharov openly advocated “convergence” between the United States and the Soviet Union, once the United States becomes more completely socialist. Golitsyn pointed out that Sakharov was allowed amazing access to the western news media, something never provided to genuine opponents of the regime.

Similarly, Golitsyn concluded that the Solidarity union in Poland was actually established and controlled by the secret police and Communist Party. It was “suppressed” in 1981, though not completely, so as to convince the West that Solidarity was truly an enemy of the regime. Martial law in Poland also helped provide a sharper contrast to the planned democratization of Poland, which was finally implemented in 1989.

Based on his high-level knowledge of the scissors strategy, Golitsyn concluded in 1984 that the “final phase” of the plan was about to begin. He correctly predicted the rise of a Soviet leader with a public image similar to that of Mikhail Gorbachev, the opening of the Berlin Wall. the Solidarity government in



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Poland, the democratization of such Eastern European countries as Czechoslovakia, restructuring in the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, and the end of the Warsaw Pact. Golitsyn also predicted the false democratization of third-world nations such as Cuba, the unification of all Europe as a socialist state aligned with the Soviet Union, the widening of the “split” between the Soviet Union and Red China, and a closer alliance between the United States and Red China. These last few steps will effectively divide the world into two main power blocs, the final step before the scissors are closed and a world government imposed. Only at that point will the pretense of democracy be abandoned and the overt police state be reimposed.

Although Golitsyn’s book does not deal at length with the situation in mainland China, it does provide detailed methods for interpreting events in such countries. In light of the dialectic, the student demonstrations and government massacre last year take on new meaning.

Since at least the early 1970s, the Communist Party of China has been poised to create a spectacular but controlled “democratization” at any appropriate time. The Party had by then spent two decades consolidating its power, building a network of informants and agents that permeate every aspect of Chinese life, both in the cities and in the countryside. Government control is now so complete that it will not be seriously disturbed by free speech and democratic elections; power can now be exerted through the all-pervasive but largely invisible infrastructure of control. A transition to an apparently new system, using dialectical tactics, is now starting to occur.

In the fall 1989 issue of *International Socialism*, the journal of the Socialist Workers’ Party, an article reviewing the events at Tiananmen Square described the partial liberalization in recent years by Deng Xiaoping as “reform from above,” now faced with “opposition from below” in the form of the student democracy movement. The Socialist Workers’ Parties, the branch of international communism that follows Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky and often dialectically opposes other communist parties, understand perfectly well such dialectical language. The Trotskyites stand among those movements on the Left that support the democracy movement in China.

But the 1989 democracy movement did not start in a vacuum; the Communist Party had already created “pressure from below” a number of times in the past.

### **“Democracy” in China**

The year 1976 marked the deaths of two of the most powerful Communist dictators of mainland China, Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong. That April, demonstrators filled Tiananmen Square in the capital city of Beijing to mourn Zhou Enlai’s death. The protests were organized by communist supporters of Deng Xiaoping. The demonstrations were turned into riots, convincing the rest of the world that factionalism was undermining totalitarian rule by the Party. Not long thereafter, Deng was placed at the center of power in the Communist Party.

The Democracy Wall movement in 1978 began with the appearance of new posters and magazines in the cities. Many of the activists distributing the materials were former members of Mao Zedong’s Red Guards; Wei Jingsheng, the son of Communist Party officials, achieved widespread fame as a leader of these activists by making posters and writing magazine articles demanding democracy. According to Fox Butterfield’s 1982 book, *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea*, Wei’s father was a high-level economic official who worked closely with one of the more powerful members of the Politburo; during the Cultural Revolution, Wei himself had joined the Red Guards.

Although Deng Xiaoping had supported the Democracy Wall movement, it was suddenly terminated a



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year after it started, reinforcing the image of the protesters as genuine opponents of the regime. When put on well-publicized trial in 1979 for his pro-democracy activities, Wei Jingsheng emphasized that he was not a counterrevolutionary. The government has allegedly imprisoned Wei, thereby painting him as an authentic dissident. Wei became an acknowledged inspiration to later pro-democracy demonstrations, while the illusion of communist power disintegrating allowed the United States to open diplomatic relations with the Beijing regime in 1979.

This temporary campaign resulted in a new law allowing local elections for “people’s congresses” throughout Red China; former participants in the Democracy Wall movement continued their efforts in 1980 through this election process. Eventually this partial democratization was also ended, but the outside world was again impressed by images of a nation on the verge of liberalization.

### **Student Protests**

Demonstrations by students were organized as early as 1984, but the student protest movement began to appear systematically only in late 1985. Starting largely as nationalist demonstrations, often against the Japanese, the protests increasingly called for democratic reforms, rather than insisting on free enterprise. The movement openly supported the maintenance of power in the hands of the Communist Party. These positions should not be surprising: The fall 1989 *International Socialism* described the participants as “students, journalists, lower party officials and academics,” the privileged elite in communist society.

Three of the key leaders of this movement illustrate the forces that truly controlled this opposition:

- Wang Ruowang, a Shanghai journalist, held Communist Party membership.
- Liu Bin Yan, a journalist working at the Communist Party newspaper *People’s Daily*, was also a Party member.
- Fang Lizhi, mainland China’s leading astrophysicist and vice president of the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC), in the city of Hefei, held significant status in the Communist Party; in a 1985 speech at Beijing University, he ambiguously defined the role of the opposition movement: “We Communist Party members should be open to different ways of thinking.” He was later dubbed “China’s Sakharov,” after the Soviet physicist and supposed dissident, and until 1989 was allowed to travel remarkably freely throughout the country as he publicly spoke at protests. During the November 1989 ceremony giving Fang the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights award, Senator Edward Kennedy praised him by noting, “What Andrei Sakharov was in Moscow, Fang Lizhi became in Beijing.” A sympathetic article in the fall 1990 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the quarterly journal of the globalist Council on Foreign Relations, quotes Fang as condemning “the problem of patriotism.”

Most of the leaders of the student pro-democracy protests of 1985-86 were in fact Communist Party members; their subsequent removal from membership has further persuaded people both inside and outside China that these leaders were true enemies of the government. The regime certainly must have had the situation well under control, though, since the official policy, clarified in *People’s Daily* in May 1986, required police authorities to tolerate limited opposition.

These demonstrations reached a climax in December 1986. Student protests at USTC, Fang Lizhi’s campus, led to large demonstrations at campuses in a number of major Chinese cities. Beijing police initially arrested some protesters, but were later ordered not to intervene. Then, once again, the government suddenly halted the protests. Much attention was given to Communist Party members who were purged for supporting the opposition; many of the protest leaders were among those expelled,



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including Fang Lizhi, who was also dismissed from his university post. Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang was also removed. But these leaders were not imprisoned. Indeed, Fang Lizhi was promoted to the Academy of Science, and allowed to keep up his outspoken criticism of the government. Fang was even relocated to Beijing, where he was able to speak openly to the foreign press for the next two years; the November 4, 1990 issue of *This World*, supplement to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, was told by Fang, “during [the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations] I spoke every day with foreign journalists.”

### **“Blackhands”**

The Communist Party decided again in late 1987 to permit limited opposition. Students held a number of demonstrations throughout 1988, but the most important events did not begin until 1989, when Hu Yaobang died on April 15th. The next day students came to Tiananmen Square in Beijing to mourn. Huge protests developed in many cities over the following days, calling for democracy. Although the government officially banned the demonstrations, the police and the soldiers did not interfere. The students began displaying red flags and singing the “Internationale,” the anthem of communists around the world.

The protests continued without serious trouble from the government, and by late April workers and government journalists started to join in with the students. The movement briefly waned, but hunger strikes in Tiananmen Square rejuvenated the protests in May, with Beijing workers and journalists from *People’s Daily* helping bring the crowds to some two million in that city. The movement was organized as a hierarchy, with student ID cards being required for entrance into the center of the demonstrations. Non-students known as “blackhands” played the most important roles in the movement. According to one movement leader, interviewed in the November/ December 1989 *CV Magazine*, “Blackhands give the students ideas, support them, and bring money. They are the ones who are really in control.” These unidentified persons were described as being older and more experienced than the students. Some of them may well have been members of the Public Security Ministry, Communist China’s secret police.

A *New York Times* story released May 1st, while insisting that the demonstrations were largely spontaneous, acknowledged that “it is possible that some [Communist Party] leaders who favor more rapid change are doing what they can to help the students succeed.” Certainly, most student demonstrators had little idea that they might be pawns in a larger game of disinformation. The same article quoted one student leader as saying, “Those who walk in the front row of the demonstration and get caught are not the most important leaders.”

### **Controlled Opposition**

Because the government did not imprison leaders of the 1985-86 democracy protests, many of them became important figures in the 1989 movement. The voices of Fang Lizhi and Wang Ruowang were openly heard, and Liu Bin Yan became a key organizer. Other leaders emerged as spokesmen and organizers for the movement, most having privileged backgrounds and associations with their supposed enemies:

- Sun Hui, a Beijing University student, helped found the Autonomous Students’ Federation to organize the demonstrating students. Sun’s parents were Communist Party members, but his death at the Tiananmen massacre suggests that he may not have fully understood the dialectic he was a part of. Nevertheless, Sun’s ties to the regime made him vulnerable to manipulation.
- Wan Runnan has been married twice, both times to daughters of high Communist Party officials.



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According to one undisclosed source in the student democracy movement, Wan closely associated with members of the inner circle of control in the Communist Party of China. These connections helped him financially, since he was allowed to own and build the Stone Corporation, the largest private corporation in mainland China and its main producer of computers. Wan supplied public address systems, walkie-talkies, and other equipment to help the student leaders organize. Given his contacts, he probably knew Communist Party Secretary Zhao Ziyang rather well; Zhao was purged after the June massacre for supporting the democracy movement. Wan Runnan was quoted in a July 1990 Reason article as insisting that “we are not counter-revolutionaries.” After hinting that he supported free market reforms in addition to democracy, he qualified himself by noting, “The transformation must take place in stages... the communication, transportation, and energy sectors will remain in government hands.” Wan now heads the Paris-based Federation for a Democratic China, one of the two largest organizations in the currently exiled Chinese democracy movement.

- Wu'er Kaixi was the Beijing Normal University student who quickly emerged as a key leader of the student protests, and achieved international prominence for his brashness and his participation in the hunger strike at Tiananmen. Less advertised was his father's active role in the Communist Party, and his own participation in local branches of the Party while in high school and college. When the Beijing Autonomous Students' Federation was formed by the student leaders in late April, Wu'er was named its first chairman. Since escaping to the West, he has been made vice president of Wan Runnan's Federation for a Democratic China. However, Wu'er's flamboyant habits and arrogant demeanor, described in the September 1990 issue of *Esquire*, may cost him a future role in the democracy movement, especially if he continues to irritate other movement leaders.
- Yan Jiaqi, an outspoken leader of the students during the 1989 protests, was a high-ranking government official and a member of the privileged intellectual class. He worked in Zhao Ziyang's office, and was a key planner of future communist policy, since Zhao had been chosen by Deng Xiaoping to inherit the reins of power.
- Hu Ping was a graduate student at Beijing University when he campaigned for people's deputy during the post-Democracy Wall elections and was allowed to win against an official Communist Party candidate. When his term finished, Hu was permitted to enter the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. After the Red Chinese government sent him to the United States to continue studies at Harvard, he became chairman of the Alliance for Democracy in China, also one of the largest organizations in the overseas democracy movement. The Red Chinese government “punished” him by not allowing him to return to China, and today he helps coordinate the democracy movement.

The workers participating in the demonstrations were organized through the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, started during the protests in May. This organization openly declared its support for the retention of power in the hands of the Communist Party, and its desire to work with the unions officially controlled by the Party. The main goals of the Federation were democracy and the redistribution of wealth among the general populace. Thus the workers were also kept under control.

Throughout the demonstrations from April to June, the democracy movement remained extraordinarily passive in resisting the government, often wasting opportunities to seriously threaten the Beijing regime. In late May, the Workers' Autonomous Federation officially called for a general strike, which might have paralyzed the economy enough to endanger the Communist Party's hold on power. But the strike never happened. Some information, mentioned in the fall 1989 *International Socialism*, suggests that the Autonomous Students' Federation may have persuaded the Beijing Workers' Federation to



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cancel the plans. In Shanghai the student leaders even publicly opposed labor strikes, explicitly because of the economic turmoil that would result.

Despite the presence of army units around Beijing for nearly two weeks prior to the June 4th massacre, the people occupying the streets were completely taken by surprise when the military attacked. The opposition leaders had psychologically disarmed the people, partly by adamantly maintaining a policy of nonviolence, and partly by chanting such slogans as “The people’s army loves the people, the people love the people’s army,” both actions supposedly to keep the soldiers from attacking. Often the workers, and some of the students, argued for the need to start fighting, but the student leaders always talked them out of it. When some weapons were captured from soldiers in late May, the democracy movement leaders actually returned them to the military. By the time the army began its attack on June 4th, the protesters in the streets could mount little more than sporadic resistance, killing individual soldiers and throwing stones and firebombs at the army units. These late, disorganized actions proved futile; thousands of innocents, unaware of the dialectic manipulating them, were slaughtered.

But not everyone was equally endangered. “Ironically, the vast majority of the student protesters, viewed even then by the government as young prodigies to be handled with care, escaped injury in the crackdown,” revealed Joseph F. Kahn in the September *Esquire*. Apparently non-students, who were less likely to be connected with the Communist Party, were considered more expendable. The timing of the massacre also proved interesting: Tiananmen Square was invaded only after student leader Wu’er Kaixi was deposed from his leadership role by Chinese who considered him too accommodating toward the regime. Perhaps the government felt that the protests were on the verge of truly getting out of control.

### **Massacre Publicity**

The 1989 events in Red China received far greater media coverage than would have been likely had the regime faced genuine opposition. State-controlled media, both broadcast and print, publicized to the world such events as meetings between government officials and students. Foreign media services were also allowed tremendous access to the demonstrations, and television crews were even able to record at least the Sounds of the June 4th massacre. Even when the Beijing government tried to cover up the full extent of the killings, the effort appeared so clumsy that one might speculate that the censorship attempts were never meant to succeed. Plenty of material continued to arrive on American television screens, keeping audiences fully aware of the bloodbath; past efforts at censorship by communist regimes, including those of China, have always been much more successful. Many of the arrests and executions following June 4th were even officially publicized by state media in Red China.

Criticism of the government has not stopped since the Tiananmen killings; even *Beijing Review* noted that “it is striking that inhibition against speaking should break down so quickly, despite an atmosphere of police terror.” Certain other controls seem inexplicably to have been neglected more than in the past. For example, a surprisingly large number of leaders of the democracy movement have managed to escape from Red China. Many went south, through Hong Kong, without being captured as they would have been in years past.

Fang Lizhi and his wife were able to seek refuge for nearly a full year in the United States embassy, finally being allowed to leave by the Beijing government earlier this year. The regime also let Fang’s son leave, thereby removing all obstacles that might keep Fang from speaking out against the Red Chinese government. Wan Runnan, Liu Bin Yan, and Wu’er Kaixi have also found escape possible, and now organize the democracy movement abroad. In effect, the government has enabled the democracy



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movement to continue uninterrupted overseas. Many of its organizations are based in the United States, but a number can be found in Paris, because socialist President François Mitterand has befriended the movement.

More recently, opposition supporter and former Communist Party member Wang Ruowang has suddenly been released from “detention” by the regime with no explanation, while thousands of other citizens continue their imprisonment for participating in the same protests.

### **The Near Future**

If the Chinese democracy movement is indeed merely one arm of a dialectical ploy, what direction are future events likely to take? The closest parallel to recent events in Red China can be found in the rise of the Solidarity union in Poland. Because it was allowed for a period to demonstrate openly and without significant interference, Solidarity developed a following in the West. This was followed by martial law and a harsh crackdown by the Polish government in 1981, which, according to Anatoliy Golitsyn, served to convince outsiders that Solidarity was an authentic alternative to the Communist Party. But by 1989 Solidarity was legalized again, allowed to organize political opposition and take over the reins of the Polish government. Poland is now widely considered non-communist, though in reality the Communist Party retains control through Solidarity.

The Chinese democracy movement has now developed through the first two phases, openness and repression. In accordance with the scissors strategy, the Red Chinese government can be expected to legalize the movement at some point in the relatively near future. As with the phony changes in Eastern Europe, opposition parties will be allowed to compete for political power, and the Communist Party may even arrange for its opponents to win. Zhao Ziyang will likely be revived politically and incorporated into the new government, and such opposition leaders as Fang Lizhi or Wan Runnan may be able to return to play significant roles. Fang’s future importance was underscored during President Bush’s February 1989 visit to Red China, when Bush invited Fang to a formal dinner, although the Beijing government prevented him from showing. Fang already admitted in the November 4, 1990 issue of *This World* that, “if circumstances allow, I will immediately go back and make whatever contribution I can.” The new state may be declared officially non-communist, as several Eastern European countries have been, but this would merely be a disguised form of communist control.

Some important authorities already seem to be expecting such changes. Writing in the October 1989 *World Marxist Review*, an official in the Communist Party of China stated that his government is about to implement “all-round transformations designed to alter the model of socialism... and to create a new and fully viable one.” He further noted, “Democratization is all the more important because without it it is impossible to create a socialist civilization.” Winston Lord, President Reagan’s ambassador to Red China and the former president of the Council on Foreign Relations, repeatedly emphasized in the fall 1989 issue of *Foreign Affairs*: “The current discredited regime is clearly a transitional one ... we can be confident that, however grim the interlude, a more enlightened leadership will emerge within a few years .... Once the hard-liners leave, we may see a more determined move toward pluralism and openness.” Edward A. Gargan, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, announced in a *Los Angeles Times* analysis released July 4th: “It will be Fang’s [Lizhi] voice, not that of Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues, that the world will hear in the years to come.”

### **One Way Out**

Once this planned transition occurs, the United States government will move to align more closely than





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ever before with mainland China. Says Winston Lord, “A more moderate government in Beijing will need — and deserve — outside cooperation.” Vast increases in economic and military aid can be expected. These would, of course, play right into the hands of the long-term scissors strategy, in which the United States is expected to ally itself with mainland China against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, internal and external pressures may push the Republic of China on Taiwan into reunification by merger with the mainland, thereby eliminating a major obstacle to communist expansion in the Far East.

But a successful transition depends on the political and economic stability of Red China. George Bush, also a former director of the Council on Foreign Relations, defended his lack of response to the massacre by declaring on June 5th that “we must react to setbacks in a way which stimulates rather than stifles progress toward open and representative systems.” In short, Beijing cannot afford to lose too much aid, lest its controlled dialectic collapse before it can be pulled off. For the United States, the only way out of this dialectic is to terminate all aid now, and to continue denying it after a controlled democratization is carried out. Only then can socialism be overthrown in China, and a truly new system built.



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