

# TOWARD THE JUNGLE

BY FAN BAIHUA

The loss of social justice under China's single-party autocracy has led the people to abandon tolerance for anger. How can China steer itself off its present course toward a jungle of violence and bloodshed?

Since 1989, the consensus regarding China has alternated between expectation and disappointment. The year 1992 marked the first emergence out of the doldrums and into hopes that market economy reforms would carry the political situation along with them. In 1998 there was another emergence out of the doldrums into hope, on the expectation that the "reformist" Zhu Rongji government could rein in corruption through political reform. In 2003 the horror of the SARS fiasco led to hopes that the so-called "new Hu-Wen government" could use political reform to restore order from China's chaos (what sociologist Sun Liping<sup>1</sup> referred to as "fractured society"). At present, it appears that disappointment also banished this hope some time ago.

What incident will next raise the hopes and expectations of the Chinese people? If hope is really only a psychological compensation for disappointment, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) already has abundant experience in pandering to the expectations of others. For example, they fabricate some internal conflict, then after a bit of time they release some "new views," then table some improved policies that allow modest consideration of the interests of disadvantaged groups, or even allow a couple of minor localities to make genuine "democratic advancements" such as electing People's Congress representatives or Party officials. These moves will all be enthusiastically applauded by boosters, businessmen and even the kind of "liberals" who lack integrity and genuine principles. In any case, most ordinary people have long stopped paying attention to the conventional wisdom, because their lives have already been completely circumscribed. The mechanism that circumscribes the lives of ordinary people is illustrated through a series of events that occurred in 2004.

## Uniformed "caretakers" block "governance capability"

The CCP has already reduced its "Communist ideology" to a

faded specter. Even though the Party continues to tout various ideals, the only bait it can offer the public is a comfortable living standard. But the vast majority of Party members have themselves been enjoying comfortable lifestyles for quite some time, and some have even become extremely wealthy. This spoils any inducement right from the outset.

In order to control the people, the Party traps victims of various forms of injustice in a malicious deception and the torments of a vicious circle, and the basis of that trap is the police and military. The typical process of the vicious circle goes like this: petition—wait—petition again—disappointment—anger—"revolt"—suppression.

Theoretically speaking, there should be general agreement on one fact: no one is evil by nature, and even CCP members should not be regarded as intrinsically demonic. So the development of situations that even many Party members may deplore should be attributed to the mechanisms that Party members so ardently maintain for the protection of their own interests. Putting principle aside, even the most mundane policy becomes distorted beyond recognition under the CCP's non-democratic politics, which provides a pyramid of power behind even the most petty village Party functionary. The wronged individual, having no autonomous body to appeal to, typically chooses forbearance, and only when patience is exhausted resorts to petitioning or legal action. Just think for a moment what it must take for an ordinary laborer or peasant, who has difficulty enough making a bare living, to pursue justice, scrimping and saving, gnawing on griddlecakes and sleeping at bus stations, asking his way along strange routes and through alien official corridors, finally managing to gain an audience with an official at the petitioner's office, who offers him a few platitudes and then sends him back home, where he waits, and waits, and then nursing his dreams makes his way to the provincial capital, and then to Beijing, and then again waits, and waits. What does it take to drive a person to that? As for legal action, for the most part this is nothing more than exchanging hard-earned money for bitter tears!

- Wang Ciniu was a peasant from Shipo Village, Zhifang Township, Song County, Luoyang City, Henan Province, whose son was beaten to death by police and the operator of a gold mine. After her appeals for help yielded no result, this village woman, who was functionally illiterate, cut her

son's head from his corpse and carried it with her to Beijing to demand accountability for his death. When a journalist from *Youth Reference* [Qingnian Cankao] caught up with Wang Ciniu at her home on May 8, she had just finished compiling the materials she needed for her petition, and had scrawled her grievance in a white robe in preparation for another trip to the provincial capital, Zhengzhou. When Wang began petitioning in 1991, the incident shocked the central government; the State Council's then-Secretary General, Luo Gan, at one point personally issued a written directive for the matter to be dealt with. But up until the present Wang was still petitioning. Was there any hope for Wang Ciniu? Subsequently the procuratorates in Henan Province and Zhengzhou City jointly protested a memorandum by the Supreme Court; the murder by gunshot of villager Cao Haixin<sup>2</sup> had already provided a precedent. In any case, her son had died before Cao Haixin, and the Luo Gan's of this world tend to place considerable emphasis on "not exceeding one's authority."

- Xinhua journalist Li Guohong reported that on the afternoon of July 21, outside the mortuary of a hospital in Harbin's Fulan District, a group of peasants attempted to burn funerary papers for a man named Chi Wenbin who had died after six days in custody at a detention center. The dead man's elder sister told the journalist that Chi had met his death after police detained him for cutting down trees on the land he cultivated. A person identifying himself as an official of the Fulan District Public Security Bureau had told the sister that Chi could be released for medical treatment once a document was signed, but a doctor furtively informed the family that Chi was "already dead."

Heavens! It's only people who spend their days in comfort who can fan themselves and sip their tea and advise others to "control their temper" and "not get excited." How can people not vent their exasperation when they've been disappointed by injustice? For those who vent their feelings, if they are one or a handful they can expect to encounter the police, while if they are a group or a crowd they will encounter the military.

- On May 26, thousands of taxi drivers in metropolitan Anhui staged a protest strike over the imposition of mandatory insurance costing 3,980 yuan per year. When police and soldiers from the joint defense unit began smashing the taxis, the drivers upgraded their protest by blocking all public thoroughfares. The PSB machinery, as if facing a major enemy, called in every police officer from the surrounding area, and two buses full of uniformed officers were sent to subdue the protest. The military police were in full uniform, and the national emblems on their helmets and the shields in their hands gleamed so brightly in the sun that people had to close their eyes and turn away. The drivers who were arrested were all beaten.
- On July 14, 68 retired soldiers from Shandong went to Beijing to petition over the insufficiency of their pensions. Police officers dragged them away from the State Council's Letters and Petitions Office.
- On August 2, Li Guozhu, a judicial officer from Heilongjiang who had come to Beijing to petition, told a

reporter that Beijing had recently experienced waves of petitioners, most of whom had been snubbed, beaten or detained. He said that on that morning, just before nine o'clock, more than 300 petitioners, most of them from Heilongjiang, arrived at the central government offices, kneeling on the ground, weeping, singing protest songs and calling out slogans such as, "China's legal system is corrupt!", "We want human rights!", "We want to survive!", "Down with corrupt officials!" Eventually more than twenty large police vehicles arrived at the scene, along with more than 100 police officers, guards and building security.

- The October 13 edition of *SouthernWeekend* (Nanfang Zhoumo) reported how villagers displaced by the Three Gorges dam project had been defrauded through a wide variety of corrupt acts. In 2004 a man named He Kechang finished serving a three-year prison sentence and returned to his family a cripple. In 2001, He Kechang and three others represented villagers displaced by the Three Gorges project in petitioning the Beijing government over the many lies and deceptions local officials had inflicted on them in the course of their migration, and the funds of which villagers had been robbed by corrupt officials. But local police followed the petitioners to Beijing, where they detained them and escorted them back to Yunyang County. Public Security police tried to break He Kechang through torture; they handcuffed his hands together, then suspended him in mid-air so that his full body weight was borne by his hands. The torture afflicted He Kechang with edema to his lower body, which never dissipated and left him physically distorted. When he asked to see a doctor, he was refused, and his requests to see his family were also refused. In the end He Kechang was sentenced to three years in prison for "disturbing public order" and "fraternizing with foreigners" (he had had his picture taken with a Hong Kong journalist, and had answered a few of the journalist's questions).
- On the evening of March 10, several dozen laid-off workers from the Jilin Oil Fields, who were under close monitoring after petitioning Beijing on numerous occasions, launched a mass suicide bid in protest. One of the protesters died, while the others were saved by medical treatment.
- After an incident last year in which a forcibly displaced resident named Weng Biao committed suicide by self-immolation, Nanjing made some genuine improvements to its urban redevelopment program. But it seems that the ethnically sensitive region of Xinjiang learned little from Nanjing's experience. On April 13, at 8:30 in the morning, troops marched down Bei Er Lu and Dong San Lu in Shihezi City. They were composed of Shihezi's urban management brigade, Public Security Bureau, anti-riot squad, employees of the Guanglun Company and employees of every municipal department, including the Lands Bureau, the Real Estate Bureau and the Development and Construction Commissions. Nearly 1,000 people, accompanied by three earth movers, a forklift, six dump trucks and four passenger cars (for redevelopment officials), entered two redevelopment

districts and engaged in a forcible clearance of all small houses remaining on the lots. The “clearance squad” included police, military police, plain clothes police, and ordinary civilians hired for the task at the rate of 100 yuan per day and a free lunch. There was an initial standoff between the 1,000-odd police and more than 1,000 elderly, ill and crippled residents, and then a conflict during which 45 structures were destroyed, more than 30 residents injured and more than 20 others detained and fined.

- Also failing to learn Nanjing’s lesson were officials in Jiahe County. On April 21, in order to begin construction on the Zhuquan Commercial District, without having provided residents with fair compensation, the local government destroyed newly-built residences. On that day, the county government dispatched more than 200 people from the county procuratorate and the Public Security Bureau to forcibly clear the homes of Li Huiming, Li Aizhen and Lu Shuide. The three stood on the roofs of their houses, resisting the clearance, and were taken away by police. Several days later the Public Security Bureau formally arrested all three on charges of “violent resistance” and “obstructing public works.”
- Likewise failing to learn Nanjing’s lesson was the police force of Jinan, previously a model for the whole country. Around eight o’clock on the morning of April 17, the municipal government deployed more than 400 police officers to forcibly clear a residential area known as Mingshi Shanzhuang at 123 Huanshan Lu. The government had unilaterally announced its method for determining compensation, and without signing an agreement with the residents of the clearance zone, it sent 400 Public Security police and other law enforcement personnel to invade the little enclave, occupy the neighborhood’s real estate management office, destroy the gate surrounding it, and topple the crude structures on the neighborhood’s perimeter. When residents of the neighborhood (a grand total of 24 people) came out to obstruct the process, they were attacked and beaten by law enforcement personnel. When residents called the police emergency hotline, no one responded.

#### **Upgrading coercion to ensure stability**

As the vicious circle of “petition—wait—petition again—disappointment—anger—revolt—suppression” expands, the process must begin to conform either to the requirements of suppression or to the needs of the wronged. No government in the world can function over the long term by increasing suppression without addressing the grievances of the wronged. If the aggrieved populace remains confined to scattered resistance, the pyramid of political power can continue without altering its practices; but if the aggrieved parties begin to unite in mass protests, the situation becomes hard to control. The difficulty is in how to act in accordance with established guiding principles—how to strengthen the dynamic.

People concerned with China are aware of the protests by tens of thousands of workers in Liaoyang a couple of years ago, which resulted in Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang being sentenced

to lengthy prison terms. Events of the past year show that the situation has undergone an obvious change. I’m not referring to the big military parade reviewed by Hu Jintao and other top leaders on October 14, during which the Secretary General particularly emphasized the need to strike a more powerful blow against vicious criminal offenses. This was inspired by incidents that had caused considerable embarrassment to law enforcement, such as the case in which police fired nine times before taking down a criminal, as well as by a genuine upsurge in criminal activity and a trend toward organized crime.

The situation is more accurately reflected in reports such as the following: On the morning of October 6, nearly 4,000 employees of Shenzhen’s Jinbaotong Enterprises Ltd. (also known as the Shenzhen Meizhi Haiyan Electronics Factory) angrily took to the streets because the government had failed to respond to repeated petitioning by workers regarding infringement of their rights. The protest led to severe traffic congestion of the city’s northern thoroughfares for several hours. Five days later, on the afternoon of October 11, the Guangzhou Municipal Public Security Bureau held a mass rally at the Tianhe Sports Stadium, at which it was announced that police had arrested 23 miscreants for violently obstructing the operations of law enforcement officers, and that the felons had already been subjected to administrative detention (*Guangzhou Daily*, October 12).

What particularly attracted my notice was not only the alacrity with which the matter was handled, but also the holding of a public rally regarding a case of “violently obstructing the operations of law enforcement officers.” Such cases are typically frame-ups devised by the dictatorship. For example, on June 12 CCTV reported that the Huidong High Tech Development Company in Zigong City, Sichuan Province had defrauded villagers in a redevelopment project. On June 24 the villagers went to the municipal government offices demanding to see senior officials and calling for a solution to the issue, only to be rebuffed and given no further recourse. Yu Meisun received a copy of the “Public Order Ruling” issued by the Da’an District Public Security Bureau on June 24 against a villager named Huang Fangying, on charges of “disturbing public order.” Again on July 6, the head of the Public Security dispatch station of Xugezhuang Township, Fengnan District, Tangshan City, threatened to punish the son of Zhang Youren, the Party Secretary of Tangshan, saying, “Zhang Youren, along with Yu Meisun, Zhao Yan and Li Baiguang in Beijing, has been colluding with reactionary forces outside of China and has revealed state secrets, and the Public Security Bureau has already initiated a major case against him.”<sup>3</sup>

What should particularly horrify us is that without going through a judicial ruling, these suspects were publicly identified, and the Party newspapers not only reported the allegations unquestioningly, but took the initiative to disseminate the calumny. It reminds me of the Cultural Revolution, with its steady diet of public trials and mass struggle sessions. A few years ago I read reports of some places such as Guangxi where people were paraded through the streets. But for a provincial capital such as Guangzhou to carry out “executive” operations on this scale, and just at the time when the ink on a new CCP resolution to enhance governance capability was not even dry,<sup>4</sup>



**A man petitioning against corruption in Heilongjiang Province. Photo: Anonymous**

it really makes one wonder how much further executive power can actually be increased!

Shenzhen provides a window on deep-seated “Chinese characteristics.” One of those characteristics is the unusually sharp conflict between management and labor, which has long been neglected by the authorities. Now this prosperous city, which attracts so many tourists and has inspired such a gold-rush mentality among the world’s manufacturers, has begun experiencing a labor shortage because workers’ interests have been so recklessly abused. Under these conditions it’s hardly surprising to see mass demonstrations among Shenzhen’s workers. According to a report on Voice of America, in the first half of 2004 the Shenzhen Letters and Petitions Office received some 41,000 petitions, an increase of 13.6 percent over the same period in 2003. Complaints over wages in arrears or excessive deductions were the topics of nearly 15,000 petitions, while another 3,000 petitions complained of wages lower than the government-set minimum wage and excessive overtime. Shenzhen experienced 512 labor disputes involving 30 or more workers, an increase of 11.9 percent over the same period in 2003. The number of such disputes had been rising steadily over the previous three years, with a large number of workers arriving every day at the Letters and Petitions office to seek assistance.

A well-known scholar and commentator whom I particularly admire, Yan Lieshan, made these comments after the labor protest in Shenzhen on October 10: “Why did they have to block their roads to make their statement? . . . I believe the parties who should be investigated and dealt with are the media-

tors between management and labor: the government’s ‘relevant departments’ . . . How could such a serious infringement on the legal rights of workers take place under their jurisdiction? Being required to work 12 hours a day is a serious violation of the Labor Law; workers earning wages so low that they can’t cover food, lodging and medical care; during negotiations this afternoon, workers suggested that wages should not fall below 610 yuan; isn’t this in fact the minimum wage that was announced by Shenzhen’s Labor and Social Security departments on May 8? Why do the departments responsible for monitoring labor conditions take no notice of these serious violations of the Labor Law, and not even enforce the minimum wage standard that they themselves have set? This is a factory employing thousands of workers, not some little back-alley sweatshop. Quite apart from the fact that these workers had expressed their objections ‘numerous times,’ even if they had not, the labor monitoring departments have a responsibility to go out and check into conditions. We have no evidence to suggest that factory management ‘took care of’ the labor monitoring departments; but even if there was no explicit perversion of law or dereliction of duty, there are still indications of nonfeasance and being asleep at the wheel that should be seriously investigated. In any inquiry into responsibility for the incident, how can the government departments responsible for monitoring labor emerge unscathed?”

It is common knowledge among international scholars that the Chinese authorities and the management class have “taken care of” each other. And just as scholars concerned with justice have predicted all along, the conflict between labor and man-

agement in China has become increasingly serious. I invite readers to stop and think for a minute: did the public sentencing in Guangzhou on October 11 contribute to a coercive social atmosphere? If it did, did that coercion weigh more heavily on business interests or on workers? The answer to this question is self-evident. At a time when Marxist-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought are once again being held high, and Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Three Represents have likewise become “guiding lights,”<sup>5</sup> what are the implications of this kind of open display of strength?

### How violent tragedies are perpetuated and spread

During the Fourth Plenum of the 16th Party Congress and celebrations marking the 55th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, Professor Ding Yuanzhu,<sup>6</sup> a scholar who like He Xin, Hu Angang, Kang Xiaoguang and Wang Shaoguang has all along made it his academic priority to protect the totalitarian power of the central government, issued a research report in which he projected that China would experience a crisis before the year 2010. For me there is nothing shocking about this conclusion. Already in 1998 I observed that the “new Zhu Rongji government” was nothing new, and immediately pointed out that China had already entered an eventful era. Subsequently we had various discussions on “fragmentation,” “rupture,” “collapse” and so on. My question is, why did Ding Yuanzhu dare to issue his report, and why did the authorities allow him to do so?

In fact, what I’ve written previously serves as a kind of answer: the vicious circle of “petition—wait—petition again—disappointment—anger—revolt—suppression” on the one hand demonstrates the CCP’s “governance capability,” and on the other hand, if I’m not mistaken, this kind of “crisis theory,” according to the CCP’s implications, can take on a whole other meaning, which is that China’s stability cannot be separated from the CCP’s control. Why else does the CCP at every opportunity emphasize its internal cohesion and so assiduously demonstrate the stability of its pyramid of power, devoting the resources of its finely-wrought “cusp of cooperation” to the crucial task of maintaining the stability of this pyramid? The more incidences of social crisis (or social instability) that occur, the more the “political stability” of the pyramid of power becomes “China’s lifeline”—for thousands of years this has been the common source of China’s coexisting conditions of “hyper-stability” and “hyper-instability.”

In this kind of vicious circle of profoundly Chinese characteristics, a stream of bloodshed is the “necessary price to pay.” Let’s see how these bloody tragedies continue and proliferate:

#### 1) Self-mutilation

- Just before the Lunar New Year in 2004, a worker who had failed in his demands for his unpaid wages committed self-immolation in Beijing. Fortunately, bystanders were able to intervene in time to save his life.
- On October 13, wreaths bearing the inscription “Give me justice” began appearing at the entrance to the office of the mayor of Shanghai. The reason turned out to be that an old woman selling crabs had had her goods confiscated, and

unable to get over her loss, she threatened to throw herself out of a window in protest. The official she was complaining to didn’t prevent her, but even said, “If you want to jump, then do it!” So the old woman jumped and killed herself.

- On July 7 and 8, around 3,000 miners from Hegang, Heilongjiang Province blocked the railway between Hegang and Jixi to protest the embezzlement of government funds allocated to their support. Subsequently, the miners sent 36 representatives to Beijing to petition on their behalf. When it became clear that they were unlikely to be compensated, 32 of the miners attempted group suicide.
  - Lei Xuean, a worker from Chengdu, Sichuan Province demanded that his two employers, surnamed Zhou and Wang, pay him 1,500 yuan in back wages, only to be beaten bloody by Zhou’s son and more than 20 others. On the afternoon of August 27, Tianma Township experienced four explosions. The first occurred in front of Zhou’s apartment building, destroying a car owned by Zhou’s wife. The second and third explosions occurred on the main street of the township, sending shattered glass flying in all directions. The last explosion occurred on Jinma Street; Lei Xuean was carrying the explosives, which blew him to smithereens.
  - On July 22, a bomb went off outside the offices of a private company in Ebian County, Dongshan City, Sichuan Province. The vice-chairman of the Ebian County Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, a wealthy man named Ge Junming, was killed along with another person. A peasant named Zhang Minchun had chosen to become a human bomb as a means of resolving a conflict over the field his family cultivated.
  - Around 9:30 on the evening of June 4, the express train from Chongqing to Beijing sped through a station, striking a young man who was standing on the tracks. One of the youth’s legs was separated from his body and flung 30 meters away. The suicidal youth, Zheng Qingming, was an impoverished peasant from Dazhoushan District. The university entrance exams were to be held three days later, and Zheng’s head teacher had told Zheng in front of the whole class that he had to pay up 700 yuan in tuition fees, otherwise the school would not issue him a permission certificate to take the exam.
- #### 2) Violent conflicts
- Xing’ang Shoe Manufacturing International Ltd. employs some 10,000 workers in Dongguan, Guangdong Province. On April 21–23, around 1,000 employees (including some minors) gathered together and ransacked the management office, garage, canteen, shop, security office and factory, causing various degrees of damage to goods and equipment. Subsequently the police detained and tried in secret five workers on charges of “intentional destruction of property.” According to reports, this riot was caused by workers’ dissatisfaction with long-term problems such as their already low pay being regularly subjected to deductions, as well as poor working conditions and food and excessive overtime. For example, one worker, Wan Jiafeng,

was paid 450 yuan per month, but had to pay out 400 yuan for room and board, leaving him with only 50 yuan to cover all of his other living expenses. Management carried out no communication with the workers, and none of them understood how their pay could be so low. On August 25, 2004, the Dongguan Court sentenced all five workers to prison terms after a closed hearing lasting one hour and six minutes.

- On July 31, shortly after 2 a.m., riot police launched a bloody suppression against villagers of Shijiahe Village, Zhengzhou City, Henan Province. The cause of the incident was villager's discontent over suspicions that the village head had corruptly pocketed some 40 million yuan in land sale proceeds. Early on in the course of the petitioning there had been a traffic accident that resulted in one person being killed and six injured, and when the authorities expressed no interest in the matter, the crowds declared that they would take it to the central government, at which point several hundred anti-riot police in dozens of vehicles surrounded the village with the intention of detaining the leader of the protest. When the crowd blocked police vehicles, the police retaliated with tear gas, rubber bullets, police dogs and batons. Ultimately around 100 people were injured and more than a dozen were detained.
  - On two occasions on April 22 and September 13, the district head of Xi'an's Beilin District, Shi Xiaohong, and the deputy head, Luo Xiaoping, commandeered more than 300 men to attack residents of Jitai Village who were resisting a land confiscation. More than 20 villagers were injured and four were detained.
  - In another incident in Xi'an on the morning of May 27, some 200 to 300 "employees" of the Xi'an Northwest Commercial Center Engineering and Clearance Office battered down the gate of the Anren residential area, invading homes and forcibly removing residents, pummeling and kicking any who dared to resist. When they were unable to break down the door of the home of a pregnant woman, Qin Cuiling, they climbed in through her balcony, then beat the occupants of the house and destroyed the telephone. In just over an hour, six residents were injured. When the residents went to the local PSB dispatch station to report the incident, the reply they received was, "We received orders from above that no police are to be sent out today. Anyone disobeying the order will be immediately relieved from duty."
  - In Xianyang City, located a half-hour's drive from Xi'an, more than 6,000 employees of the Tianwang Group, more than half of the shares of which are owned by Hong Kong's China Resources Group, began a round-the-clock sit-in at the factory's entrance on September 14. Late on the night of September 17, the government dispatched 1,000 police officers and dozens of vehicles to round up the strikers. The police announced through loudspeakers that people would be prosecuted for "illegal trouble-making." This provoked the wrath of some 20,000 to 30,000 other workers, including retirees, who rushed to the scene and foiled the attempted suppression.
  - Around the same time there was a bloody conflict over a land confiscation in Shanwei City, Guangdong Province. More than twenty PSB police staged midnight raids (a favorite tactic in many places) against organizers of a petitioning drive by protesting villagers. When two of the leaders were detained, the police found themselves surrounded by hundreds of villagers. The police drove their vehicles through the crowd, injuring some villagers and enraging many others. The police fired their guns into the air, but were unable to disperse the angry villagers, who continued to surround them for 20 hours. The local government was ultimately forced to release six villagers who had been recently detained before the villagers allowed the police officers to leave.
- ### 3) *Internal bureaucratic conflicts*
- Reports of vicious cases of officials killing each other have appeared repeatedly over the years. In the summer of 2004 there were many reports of inter-bureau violence, such as the story of a county Party Secretary, Huang Gaojin, feeling obliged to wear a bulletproof vest for six years. Due to space limitations, these cases will not be recounted here.
- ### 4) *Criminal collusion*
- In Tangshan, Hebei Province on March 30, with aftereffects still being felt from a drive by more than 10,000 villagers for the recall of Tangshan Party Secretary Zhang He as the city's representative to the National People's Congress, there were reports of similar protests gathering steam in Qinhuangdao City, Hebei Province and Fu'an City and Fuzhou, Fujian Province, demanding the recall of their own NPC representatives. In all of these uprisings there were reports of attacks not only by police, but also by the underworld. Reports of Zhang He's tactics against protesters were particularly horrifying, and Chen Jingxi, the Party Secretary of Chengmen Township in Fuzhou's Cangshan District, was labeled by local residents as "a gang boss capable of any evil act."
  - According to disclosures by a writer referring to himself as "having many years' experience in the government machinery of Changjiang County, Hainan Province, and part of the network of the Hainan provincial secretariat," an organized crime gang in Changjiang County led by Huang Hongfa is fully backed by the leadership of Hainan Province.
  - The Party secretary of Tianjin, Zhang Lichang, and the secretary general of Tianjin's Political and Legal Committee, Song Pingshun, have been accused by knowledgeable sources of protecting a criminal racket involved in a 4.3 billion yuan fraud. On March 15, more than 1,000 protesters from Tianjin gathered in front of the office of the Bank of China Supervision and Management Commission in Beijing, brandishing banners that read, "Down with Zhang Lichang! Down with the thuggish Song Pingshun!" The commission's headquarters was completely surrounded by the Tianjin protesters, and an even larger multitude gathered to observe.

- Particularly shocking was an incident revealed by writer Yang Lili, in which a model PSB officer, Ren Changxia, was tearfully accused by a villager, Zheng Erni, of “protecting underworld bullies who tyrannize the people.”<sup>7</sup>

##### 5) *The rise of terrorism*

In the past few years, incidents ranging from the explosions at Shijiazhuang to poisonings at Tangshan and Nanjing have evidenced a new truth: terrorism has come to China.

- Around 10:30 on the morning of September 11, 41-year-old Yang Guozhu, a resident of Jiaozhuang Village in Tongyang Township, Shuyang County, Jiangsu Province, barged into a Suzhou nursery brandishing a 40 centimeter melon knife. In the 20 minutes before he was brought under control, 28 children ranging in age from three to six years old were brutally slashed and sprayed with gasoline. According to news reports, Yang was a bachelor with a shriveled leg who had always been introverted and dutiful, and was particularly fond of children.

On September 16, residents of Jiaozhuang Village told a reporter about what had happened to Yang’s family: In May 2001, the Party secretary of Jiaozhuang Village, Liang Yingeng heard a report that Yang Guozhu’s younger brother, Yang Guolin, had entered into a secret marriage (local parlance for illegal habitation) with his sister-in-law, Chu Hongying. The village’s Family Planning Brigade had already fined Yang’s 69-year-old father, Yang Zhengyou, 1,500 yuan because of this, and had confiscated all of his goods, including 17 bags of grain and three bags of fertilizer. On May 24, 2002, Yang Zhengyou was ordered to pay an additional fine of 10,000 yuan. Three days later, Yang and his wife, Wu Zengying, unable to bear their family disgrace, poisoned themselves with pesticide.

Yang Guozhu and his siblings preserved their parents’ bodies in ice, but on the morning of June 6, the township Party secretary, Liu Biyang, accompanied by nearly 1,000 men, surrounded Jiaozhuang Village and confiscated the corpses. The bodies of Yang Guozhu’s parents were cremated, and two of Yang’s brothers, Yang Guocheng and Yang Guoxi, were badly beaten. After that incident, Yang Guozhu initiated a number of legal actions. A Xinhua journalist at one point reported on the incident for internal circulation, and after the report was published, the Jiangsu provincial government ordered an investigation into the matter, but due to “difficulties in obtaining evidence, the investigation was unable to reach a conclusion.”

Perhaps the 1989 “political disturbances” were an indication of the future China faces. I would like to believe that even the majority of CCP members do not want to see China descend into a bloodbath. But where is the path out of this jungle of violence?

Translated by Stacy Mosher

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##### TRANSLATOR’S NOTES:

1. Sun Liping is a sociologist at Tsinghua University. He wrote his first scathing critique of contemporary Chinese society in 1980, arguing that China’s developing middle class was being squeezed between a more wealthy and powerful upper class and a much larger lower class. Sun updated his argument more recently (“Women zai kaishi miandui yige duanlie de shehui?”, *Strategy and Management*, No. 2, 2002) by describing China as having developed a “fractured” society rather than a pluralistic society, and warned that a substantial part of the population had been excluded from industrial and urban society. Sun worried that if these social groups are not integrated into society, social turmoil will result.
2. Cao Haixin, a young farmer, was elected the head of Xihangzhai Village, near Zhengzhou. Cao was in the process of exposing corrupt land transactions by the previous village head, Cao Xinbao, when he was attacked by a group of men on September 28, 1995, killing one during a struggle over a hunting rifle. In spite of the apparent self-defense aspect of the shooting, Cao Haixin was convicted of “intentional homicide” in September 1998, and was executed on September 25, 1998. Cao’s execution was seen as a case of “buying a human head,” a long-standing form of judicial corruption in which judicial and law enforcement officials are bribed to eliminate an opponent through trial on false charges. For more information on this case, see Xiao Xuihui, “Wrongful Death,” *China Rights Forum*, No. 2, 2003, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/article?revision%5fid=4066&item%5fid=4065>.
3. For more information on these incidents, see “The Diary of a Peasant Advocate” and “Plumbing a Black Hole of Corruption” in *China Rights Forum*, No. 3, 2004.
4. The CCP Central Committee issued a communiqué on September 19, 2004 at the close of its four-day plenum, stating that enhancing the governance capability of the CCP was vital to China’s Socialist cause, the Chinese nation and the CCP itself: <http://english.sohu.com/20040920/n222129094.shtml>.
5. The September 19 communiqué emphasized that adherence to all of these political principles was necessary in improving the CCP’s capability of governance. Ibid.
6. Ding Yuanzhu is director of the Voluntary Services and Welfare Research Center of Peking University.
7. Lauded in news reports and books, Ren Changxia was director of the PSB in Dengfeng, Henan Province when she was killed in a car accident on April 14, 2004. Upwards of 200,000 people were reported to have paid their respects at her funeral. The protection allegation against Ren was reported on July 22, 2004 on the Web site of EpochTimes, which attached scanned legal documents purportedly relating to the case: <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/4/7/22/n604209.htm>.