

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Fifteen years ago, in June of 1989, the Chinese government ordered the People's Liberation Army to violently crush a movement by Chinese citizens calling for political and social reform. The ruthless suppression in Beijing and elsewhere in China shocked the world. However, the subsequent distractions of endemic violence and brutality in other parts of the world, China's growing integration into a global economic order, collective amnesia (sometimes self-imposed) and China's powerful propaganda and information control have all contributed to protecting the impunity of the Chinese authorities responsible for the bloody crackdown.

The writers in this issue powerfully argue that we cannot allow the Chinese authorities to maintain their contention that they were defending social stability against the orchestrated turmoil of "hooligans" and "black hands." As the Tiananmen Mothers and other groups and individuals petitioning for accountability demonstrate, a rectification of the historical record and an end to impunity are essential if Chinese society is to move forward on a path to genuine stability and justice.

The contributors to this issue look back – towards a more complete historical record and a reminder of the human debts owed – and also forward in an exploration of how we can ensure that the sacrifices of 1989 were not in vain. In the absence of transitional justice mechanisms similar to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, projects such as the 64Memo archive, the compilation of personal testimonials by the June 4th Memorial Global Coalition and the heroic efforts of individuals such as Dr. Jiang Yanyong and groups such as the Tiananmen Mothers are part of an essential effort to retrieve history, assign culpability and obtain appropriate legal and material redress.

Looking forward, the articles in this issue explore the challenges to the task of building the free, democratic and just China to which the 1989 protesters and their successors have aspired. But an important roadblock is suggested by Ren Bumei, who urges a recognition of the apathy, indifference, complacency and self-interest in each and every one of us that contributes to injustice and stagnation. The debts owed to the lives sacrificed, and the responsibility to ensure justice for those who suffer punishment and persecution for their political and moral convictions, must be honored by individual and collective actions. To this end, this special 15th Anniversary CRF issue offers critical reflections and inspiration for the road ahead.

— Stacy Mosher, Editor

INCORPORATING RESPONSIBILITY 2008: HRIC'S BEIJING OLYMPICS CAMPAIGN

– Invest in Human Equity – Free Political Prisoners – Unshackle the Internet – HRIC has embarked on a multi-year research and monitoring project, Incorporating Responsibility 2008 (IR 2008), focusing on China's new global presence as a member of the World Trade Organization, host of the 2008 Olympic Games, and participant in the UN Global Compact Initiative. The selection of Beijing as host city for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games presents significant challenges both to Chinese authorities and to the international community. HRIC's IR 2008 campaign will leverage international attention and participation to advocate an Olympics untainted by human rights violations.

HRIC aims to work with other concerned NGOs to engage constituencies sharing an interest in an open and untainted Olympics, including corporate sponsors, past and current Olympic participants, journalists and private and multi-lateral funders promoting rule of law.

HRIC will engage these constituencies in a multi-pronged strategy focusing on three core aspects of China's international obligations:

- Promoting economic, cultural and social rights by investing in human equity
- Promoting civil and political rights by freeing all political prisoners
- Promoting the rights to free of information and expression by unshackling the Internet

PREPARATORY PHASE	DEVELOPMENT PHASE	PRE-GAME OPERATIONS
<p>Allocation of tenders and sponsorships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – undertake research on Olympics corporate sponsors, contractors and licensees – examine the 21-member committee set up to audit and supervise Olympics projects – identify benchmarks for China's human rights progress over the next five years – liaise with other interested NGOs to develop a more detailed plan of action 	<p>Site construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – develop and disseminate NGO resources to reach out to targeted constituencies – develop benchmarks and introduce monitoring and assessment tools – work with labor rights NGOs to monitor labor conditions on Olympics projects – work with IT and telecommunications experts to examine Games-related security systems and their possible post-Games applications – examine the transparency of funding, contracting and sub-contracting allocation – work with environmental NGOs to monitor Beijing's efforts for a Green Olympics 	<p>Final Preparations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – monitor clean-up campaigns and crackdowns against dissidents – monitor and report on any stepped-up censorship of the domestic and foreign media – organize and host issues briefings for government, corporate, and civil society sectors – prepare and distribute final assessment of benchmarks

CRF will serve as the main vehicle for reporting on the progress of the IR 2008 Campaign. The introductory phase focuses on corporate social responsibility and the human rights impact multinational corporations are having on China.

Upcoming issues of CRF will feature concrete benchmarks and timetables targeting:

- release of political prisoners
- more equitable distribution of development funds for the hinterlands
- improvements in labor rights by the Chinese government and foreign corporations
- progress on due process and transparency in the Chinese legal system
- appropriate implementation of security measures and population movement control

As HRIC moves forward on this important IR 2008 initiative, we welcome input and suggestions from interested individuals and organizations.

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CHINA RIGHTS FORUM

IN THIS ISSUE

There is some validity in using “nuclear explosion” as a metaphor for the effect the spring of 1989 had on Chinese society.

— Fang Lizhi, “On the Eve of the Explosion”

The Tiananmen Mothers movement promotes and exemplifies two deep values—truth and love – that could do much to re-anchor a Chinese nation that has become morally adrift.

— Perry Link, “What the Tiananmen Mothers Offer China”

The background and mechanisms of international interaction are changing in ways that seem detrimental to human rights progress in China.

— Wang Juntao, “June 4th and Human Rights in China”

The mission of Human Rights in China (HRIC) is to promote universally recognized human rights and advance the institutional protection of these rights in China. HRIC encourages victims of human rights abuses to seek redress under domestic law, and assists them in seeking international intervention when appropriate. If Chinese domestic law, practice, or policy is in conflict with international human rights standards or obligations, HRIC advocates amendment or repeal of such law, practice, or policy.

COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Conference for Action

State Secrets and Civil Society

HRIC—The Next 15 Years

No.2, 2004

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TIANANMEN: THE ONCE AND FUTURE CHINA

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HISTORY: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

MEMORY: HONORING THE DEBT

VISION: MOVING FORWARD