A collection of photocopies of leaflets relating to the Spring 1989 Pro-Democracy Movement in China has been assembled in Oriental and India Office Collections. Most of the original leaflets were collected in Peking by Robin Munro, who was working for Amnesty International at the time and is now a member of Asia Watch, the New York based human rights monitoring organization. Further leaflets have since been presented by June 4th China Support. This is an ad hoc group of sinologists and others with Chinese connections which was formed in the United Kingdom in response to the massacre in Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. As many people in China tried to send news of the massacre and its after-effects abroad, and many Hong Kong Chinese began gathering evidence in anticipation of an official cover-up, June 4th China Support felt that archival material should be collected and is continuing to channel such material to the British Library. For example, seventy-two photographs and twenty-nine slides of banners and wall posters taken in Peking in May 1989 by free-lance photographers Sally and Richard Greenhills, material published in Hong Kong concerning Tiananmen Square, and a collection of newspaper articles relating to China andHong Kong from The Financial Times, The Economist, the European edition of The Wall Street Journal and The International Herald Tribune, covering the period from 1 March 1989 to the present, have been generously contributed to the Library by various sources.

The Pro-Democracy Movement of Spring 1989 is the most recent manifestation of a movement which has been growing since the death of Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) in 1976, with an initial outburst in 1979. The death of Mao Zedong and the subsequent arrest of the Gang of Four signalled the end of ten years of chaos and bloodshed. During the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, it is estimated some ten million people lost their lives. Deng Xiaoping, disgraced during the Cultural Revolution, was rehabilitated and rose to the highest position in the party. Under his leadership, China opened its doors to the outside world and introduced economic reforms which challenged the prevailing concept of Marxist economic theory. The decentralization of market controls and the expansion of free trade created a temporary prosperity and the beginnings of a consumer society.

The first major Democracy movement began in 1978, at the same time as Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms. Liberalization of the economy was described in the slogan
‘the four modernizations’, which referred to the modernization of industry and agriculture, of science and technology to achieve this, and of the army. Students and young workers put up dazibao (big character posters) on a street corner known as ‘Democracy Wall’ in Peking, calling for a fifth modernization, democracy. During the first movement, new organizations were formed, for example, the Human Rights Alliance and the Enlightenment Society; and unofficial publications emerged from underground, such as Tan suo (‘Exploration’), Si wu lun tan (‘April 5th Forum’), Bei jing zhi chun (‘Peking Spring’), and Jin tian (‘Today’). The movement was firmly suppressed with the arrest and imprisonment of its leaders, most notably Wei Jingsheng and Fu Yuehua. A marked feature of this first Democracy movement was its literary proliferation. Many young poets, like Bei Dao, Meng Ya and Duo Duo, first ‘published’ their work in dazibao or in one of the underground journals which they founded at this time and particularly in Today, which was a literary magazine in contrast to the theoretical journal Peking Spring. When their leaders were arrested, some students fled the country and continued their publishing and editorial work abroad. Probably the best-known and organized exile group is the militant Chinese Alliance for Democracy (Min lian), which has its headquarters in New York and publishes the monthly magazine Zhong guo zhi chun (‘China Spring’). It was recently accused of being the ‘Black Hand’ behind the chaos in Peking.
After the suppression of the youthful Democracy movement in 1981, subsequent student-led protests were smaller in scale but none the less persistent. Some campaigns, such as that begun by Peking University students in 1985 against Japanese ‘economic imperialism’, were idealistic and nationalistic. Another major student protest broke out in the Winter of 1986, resulting in the stepping down of the reformist party leader Hu Yaobang. The revival of student protest in 1989 coincided with a worsening economic situation, more than thirty per cent inflation and popular discontent at the way many top leaders and their families were able to amass personal fortunes as general living standards worsened. The death of Hu Yaobang on 16 April 1989 sparked a new series of Pro-Democracy demonstrations in Peking and soon spread to other major Chinese cities. The visit of the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, seen by Chinese students as a political reformer, brought hundreds of thousands of students out into Tiananmen Square in May. The demonstrations lasted over forty days. When the dialogue between the students and the government failed, the students went on hunger strike. Meanwhile, after a power struggle between hardliners and reformers in the Chinese Communist Party, the hardliners gained control of the politburo. The last reformer, Zhao Ziyang, was ousted and on 20 May martial law imposed. The Pro-Democracy Movement ended on 4 June when the Chinese People’s Liberation Army attacked the demonstrators and seized control of Tiananmen Square amidst scenes of carnage witnessed on television by people all over the world.

The leaflets, copies of which form the main body of the archive, were written, printed and distributed by the organizers of the demonstrations and, in particular, by university and college students’ unions. Some, however, were by teachers, journalists, workers, ordinary citizens and People’s Liberation Army officers who participated in the demonstrations. Most of the leaflets were mimeographed: handwritten on a stencil and printed with an oil-based ink roller onto newsprint, often resulting in a partial loss of text. Some have been reprinted so often that they are barely legible. The contents of the archive range from the patriotic to the cynical, from the highly topical to the satirical. With much use of anti-establishment rhetoric, the writings of the 1989 movement are distinctively different from the publications of the first Democracy movement of 1978–9. Most of the articles seem to be written by young authors without much concern for literary style. They offer insights into the experiences, emotions, and memories of the students of Tiananmen Square.

Theoretical essays form a major part of the leaflet collection. Their themes include the causes and origins of the movement, the implications of democracy, human rights, and constitutional reforms. Some articles sparkle with revealing observations and interesting arguments, such as ‘The final battle between Light and Dark’ (Archive, vol. i, p. 3), and ‘Declaration of May 4th’ (Archive, vol. i, p. 5). One noteworthy topic is the comparison between the Pro-Democracy Campaign and the Cultural Revolution (Archive, vol. i, pp. 15, 16). When the movement began, the government tried to dissuade people from joining in the anti-government demonstrations and attacked the campaign as a continuation of the Cultural Revolution, which was officially condemned in China.
order to refute this false accusation, the leaders of the movement listed several differences; for instance, in the Cultural Revolution the government deliberately created the cult of Mao Zedong in an attempt to stifle individuality, whereas the organizers of the Pro-Democracy Movement stressed that their aim was to eliminate such idolatry and to promote individuality, encouraging free thought and a scientific approach. It is interesting to compare some articles in this collection with those in the unofficial publications of 1979. The first ‘Declaration of Chinese Human Rights’, published by the Chinese Human Rights Alliance in January 1979, was a lengthy document eloquently written by authors who looked into the historical perspective of the human rights movement. The Alliance has since dissolved after the arrest of its organizers. A new ‘Declaration of Chinese Human Rights’ (Archive, vol. i, p. 29) was published by the Chinese Human Rights Movement Committee in May 1989. It is unfortunate that this can only be viewed as a conveniently simplified version of the 1979 Declaration. The same is true of Minzhu shuo (‘On Democracy’) (Archive, vol. i, p. 18) by Wu Ming, compared with ‘What is the implication of the Chinese Democracy experiment?’ by Yang Guang, who was arrested in the 1979 purge.

Criticism of the government and of overt corruption at the top level of society is another major theme (Archive, vol. i, pp. 54–7). Students from humble backgrounds were deprived of opportunities of finding a desirable job, going abroad to receive a Western education, and all sorts of privileges that the children of high-ranking government officials and other more fortunate youngsters enjoyed. This literature provided them with an opportunity to voice their feelings of bitterness, cynicism and frustration. It is, therefore, not surprising that in some articles such arguments are expressed in a sarcastic and occasionally provocative tone. One, entitled ‘Who’s who in China today’ (Archive, vol. iii, pp. 222–3), provides mock genealogical trees, listing the family or blood relations of a number of prominent government officials and revealing the dynastic structure of the present government and the many cases of nepotism. Open letters addressed to the public, to the government, to People’s Liberation Army officers or other members of society, constitute another major part of the collection. There are letters from the parents of students (Archive, vol. ii, p. 142) giving consent to their children’s decision to go on hunger strike. Equally moving are letters from students (Archive, vol. ii, p. 141) who were prepared to give up their lives for the sake of freedom. There are also letters from high-ranking officers of the People’s Liberation Army (Archive, vol. iii, p. 206) declaring their disapproval of the introduction of martial law ordered by Li Peng. A letter addressed ‘To all citizens of the world from Peking hospital staff’ (Archive, vol. iii, p. 213) divulges that during the student hunger strikes, the government imposed the following prohibitions on major hospitals in Peking: no ambulance should go back to the Square after returning; only out-patient treatment could be given; no student was to be admitted to a hospital bed; expensive medicines should not be used in the first-aid room; no medicines should be dispensed to the students; no food or drink was to be supplied to the students.

It is probable that some of the authors of the documents are dead, and others have
been arrested. Thus, the archive provides a source of information to Amnesty International and other organizations trying to trace the victims of persecution. Asia Watch is in the process of compiling an updated list of people arrested in China after the declaration of martial law on 20 May 1989. The names on the list include the authors of some of the political pamphlets. For instance, one of the articles (Archive, vol. ii, p. 172) records the detention by the police of a young factory worker while he was on his way to the Peking Steel Plant to plead for the workers’ help in barricading Tiananmen Square against the army. He was accused of ‘spreading rumours and invoking social unrest’. Another report (Archive, vol. ii, p. 173) told how a trade union leader was abducted without reason.

The archive also offers a glimpse of the attitude of various occupational groups towards the movement. As well as workers and peasants, most professional people declared their support for the students, including distinguished professors and scholars (Archive, vol. ii, p. 143), journalists and even some high-ranking army officers. Ignoring the risk of being accused of treason against the state, seven army generals signed a letter protesting against the imposition of martial law (Archive, vol. iii, p. 206). Even more remarkably, some elderly professors and teachers not only publicly endorsed the
students' action but, despite their physical frailty, joined in the hunger strikes (Archive, vol. ii, p. 151). There are also supportive letters with donations to the students sent by the Chinese diaspora from all over the world (Archive, vol. iii, p. 215). On 22 May, some veteran student activists tried to persuade protesting students to retreat from the square to avoid the impending tragedy (Archive, vol. i, p. 45). However, the young and inexperienced were in favour of extending the protests. A manifesto written on the eve of the massacre by the Students' Union of the Peking Academy of Agriculture (Archive, vol. i, p. 48) reveals that some of the students still in the square were planning a tour, a pro-democracy expedition to the South emulating the 'Long March' of the Chinese Red Army in 1935, but this time on bicycles.

The compilation of a list and index of the archive appeared at first to be a daunting task. The possibility of a satisfactory logical grouping of material seemed to be ruled out by a multitude of problems, such as illegible handwriting and print, the absence in many cases of author or title and the existence of different works with similar titles. A chronological arrangement was considered but rejected as many of the documents are undated. An alphabetical arrangement presented similar problems. After several different methods were tried, it was finally decided to group them together by form. They have been divided into three main categories and each category is composed of several sub-divisions. The first comprises theoretical essays and includes scholarly essays, political proposals and background analysis. The second contains news reports, arranged in rough chronological order. The third category, consisting of addresses to the public, is subdivided by their authors' occupations (e.g. students, teachers and professors, workers, and army officers). Each leaflet is listed by its title or, if this is lacking, the first phrase of the article. In addition, author and subject indexes are appended as alternative finding aids. The term 'author' here extends beyond individual writers to include corporate bodies such as colleges and students' organizations. Anonymous articles are listed at the end of the index with titles arranged in Pinyin alphabetic order. In order to produce a presentable title list and author index, an agency was commissioned to keyboard the list using a Chinese character software. The computer-assisted catalogue thus produced has been a considerable success and has been praised by archive contributors and other Sinologists alike.

Since the listing and indexing of the archive was completed, the Library has received an influx of further materials from various sources. Robin Munro has presented a new set of copies of some two hundred leaflets produced by the learned group Dang dai Zhong guo xue hui (Society of Contemporary China Studies). These mainly deal, in depth and at considerable length, with the feasibility of a democratic political system and the problems of a market economy in China. They are an invaluable addition to the existing archive. They are supplemented with collections of secondary material culled from newspapers and periodicals by publishers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. For example, Huo yu xue zhi zhen xiang is a compilation of Taiwanese commentaries, a chronological record of the movement, documentary source material from Peking, surveys and photographs. The source material consists chiefly of transcripts of pamphlets similar to
those in the British Library’s collection. Again, *Ba jiu Zhong guo min yun*, compiled by the Centre for Chinese Pro-Democracy Movement Materials in Hong Kong, consists of copies of the front pages of newspapers, advertisements in support of the movement and eye-witness accounts. Several translations of selections from the archives are projected. Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng are publishing translations of large numbers of pamphlets and, particularly, wall-posters. Meanwhile, a book edited by Suzanne Ogden will provide translations of many leaflets, especially those collected by Robin Munro. The obvious advantage of these publications is that they will be easily accessible to researchers, besides being much more legible than either the mimeographed and handwritten originals or copies of them. They will, however, only cover a small proportion of the documents in the archive.

The British Library’s collection of Chinese Pro-Democracy material must also be seen in the context of other such collections. Inspired by the British Library’s initiative, a number of European institutions and North American university libraries are now also taking part in the collection and exchange of documents. One of the best examples is provided by the International Institute for Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam and the Sinological Institute of Leiden University, which have set up an extensive project to assemble leaflets, posters, audio-visual records and eye-witness accounts. Frank N. Pieke of Leiden has created a special database for the project and recently published the first volume of the inventory of the collection. The database is divided into three files, according to the different nature of the material: ARCHIVE for documents; IKON for photographs, audio and video recordings, and material objects (banners, bullets and buttons); and REPORT for newspaper cuttings and foreign eye-witness accounts. There will be only restricted access to a fourth file, SOURCE, which gives details of contributors. In the preface to the inventory, Frank Pieke stresses that the project has endeavoured not to duplicate work carried out in other institutions, such as the British Library’s listing of material presented to it by Robin Munro. Though an impressive achievement, IISH’s inventory uses Pinyin romanization. In this, it differs from the British Library list which employs Chinese characters. Taken together, however, all such projects should be of the greatest value to those studying the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 and the events leading up to it.

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1 All related materials in Oriental and India Office Collections have the pressmark 15312.f.67. The British Library’s collection is unique in the United Kingdom. However, similar collections elsewhere in Europe and North America will be discussed in the last paragraph of this article.


3 Wei Jingsheng, ‘Di wu xian dai hua – min
4 Wei Jingsheng was born in Peking in 1950 into the family of a high-ranking Communist Party official. He was an electrician at Peking Zoo, editor of the magazine *Tan suo* ('Exploration') and author of 'The fifth modernization — Democracy'. He was arrested on 29 Mar. 1979. Branded a 'Counter-revolutionary', he was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment followed by three years deprivation of civil rights.

5 A peasant woman and human rights activist, Fu Yuehua was born in Peking in 1947. She was arrested on 19 Jan. 1979 on a charge of 'jeopardizing social law and order', and sentenced to two years imprisonment in 1980.

6 These were a group of avant-garde poets, editors and contributors to the magazine *Jin tian* ('Today'). See David Goodman, *Beijing Street Voices*, and also Duo Duo, *Statements*, transl. by Gregory Lee and John Cayley (London: Wellington, 1989).


9 *Economist*, 11 Nov. 1989, p. 84.

10 There is a fundamental difference between the Soviet reform programme and the Chinese 'Open-door' policy. Gorbachev's policy involves the introduction of *Glasnost* (political reforms) concurrently with *Perestroika* (economic reforms). Deng Xiaoping's policy of Four Modernizations focuses on economic reforms, ignoring the political issues.

11 Zhao Ziyang, born in 1918, joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1938 and replaced Hu Yaobang after Hu was ousted in 1987. He too was a passionate advocate of reform. After the declaration of martial law on 20 May 1989 he disappeared from the politburo and is allegedly under house-arrest.


14 See nn. 4, 5.

15 *Un bol de nids d'hirondelles ne fait pas le Printemps de Pekin*, p. 319.


17 *Huo yu xue zhi zhen xiang* ('The truth of fire and blood, a documentary on the Pro-Democracy Movement in mainland China in 1989') (Taipei: Institute for the study of Chinese Communist Problems, 1989).

18 *Ba jiu Zhong guo min yun*... ('...On the democratic movement in China' '89', bilingual), published by Zhong guo min zhu yin dong zi liao zhong xin and Xiang gang shi min zhi yuan ai guo min zhu yin dong lian he hui (Hong Kong, 1990).


