

Three: A Mayor Of Mean Spirit

1: A Try Out Of Iron Wrist



Shanghai Party chief, Chen Guo-dong, and Mayor Wang Dao-han, deeply appreciated Jiang Shang-qing's favors and promotions in the old days. To pay back Jiang Shang-qing's goodwill, they both strongly endorsed the dead man's phony adopted son, Jiang Ze-min, to become the next Mayor of Shanghai.



Jiang Ze-min came to Shanghai during a time when urban reforms were

just beginning. Citizens were faced with the prices of non-staple food products and other daily basic necessities that unexpectedly rose 17% within just one year. The high prices led to public discontent and gave rise to a student movement. At that time it's Hu Yao-bang, who presided over the CCP's Central Committee. And the reformist camp had the upper hand. So naturally Jiang Ze-min presented himself as being part of the reformist camp. He went to a university to make a speech to more than ten thousand students. The students believed him at the time.



During that period, Vice-President of the Chinese University Of Science and Technology, Fang Li-zhi, after returning from his study at Princeton University in the United States, gave a series of speeches advocating democratic principles. In Sept. across the strait in Taiwan, the first Opposition Party, the Democratic Progressive Party founded, and 14 years later, won the general election and set the stage for political change in Taiwan.



At the end of 1986, the Party Committee of the University of Science and Technology, refused the students to run against the designated candidates for the People's Representative positions in the elections in Anhui Province. More than ten thousand students from the University took to the streets to demonstrate. The outcries later spread all over the country.



Students in Shanghai, requested dialogue with Jiang Ze-min, and demanded political reform, freedom of the press, and a loosening of the governmental control. Jiang Ze-min resorted to his old tricks, and took Chen Zhi-li, the Minister of Propaganda with him, to give a speech at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. He stepped onto the podium, a sheet of paper in hand, put on his thick glasses, unfolded his paper, and proceeded to speak about the achievement of the Five Year Economic Plan. The students, however, were noticeably disinterested. The three thousand plus students booed and hissed at him, and some began shouting slogans.



Jiang Ze-min with sternness in his voice pointed at the most boisterous student, and said: Jeering about me won't get you anywhere! Let me tell you, I have seen plenty upheavals! What's your name? I dare you to come up the podium! I dare you to make a speech!



To his surprise, the student did get up and walked up to the podium. He took the microphone and began talking confidently about the news and democracy. Then about ten other students sprung up and went to the podium, standing face to face with Jiang Ze-min, ready to debate. Jiang Ze-min's legs began to shake as things escalated. Most shocking to him was that the students went so far as to ask an extremely touchy question: "How did you become the Mayor?"



He smiled awkwardly in response, as he retreated to the edge of the platform. When people had turned their attention from him, Jiang Ze-min signaled for the Minister of Propaganda, Chen Zhi-li, to take pictures of each student who came up to the podium!. He wanted to take revenge on each of them later.



After the students' emotionally charged speeches, it's finally Jiang Ze-min's turn to speak. He plucked up his courage, cleared his throat, and began to recite loudly, in English, the Preamble of the US Constitution, and then Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address. The night before he had gone over each, time and again so as to commit them to memory. Then he began to rumble about how the leadership of the Party would be necessary for democracy. The students bowed neither by persuasion nor threat, remained fervent in their defiance of Jiang Ze-min, even though they have lost the microphone.



The afternoon's meeting lasted for over three hours. As the atmosphere grew only increasingly more tense, Jiang Ze-min lied, and said that he had an appointment concerning foreign affairs and had to leave. Panic stricken and eager to escape, on his way out, Jiang Ze-min accidentally banged his head on a partially opened door. Though the cut was not deep, it bled much. He used his hand to cover his forehead, hurriedly walked out, got into his car, and slipped away. His panic exit was for quite sometime the standing joke among students.



The first thing Jiang Ze-min did, upon returning to his office, was to make a phone call to the Party chief of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Heh You-sheng. He instructed Heh: go to Chen Zhi-li, and collect the photos of the students from that afternoon. Jiang Ze-min urged him repeatedly to uncover the students' names and class years.



The next day the students of Shanghai took to the streets, and gathered at the People's Square, marching all the way to the City Government, and demanding further dialogue with Jiang Ze-min. Jiang Ze-min ordered two thousand police to disperse students by force. The most rebellious were whisked off by bus. The students dispersed in an uproar. To Jiang Ze-min the episode was taste of sweet success, success in using political might and force, to suppress dissidents.



Those students whose photos were taken by Chen Zhi-li were not in the same class year, and graduated at different times. In those days, China had a system whereby the government allocated college graduates to different locations. Jiang Ze-min, the Mayor, personally involved himself for several years, in the petty work of following up those students. He was not satisfied until each of the students was sent off to the most remote, and poverty stricken area of China!



At meantime, Jiang Ze-min instructed to shut down all student organizations and publications. No student gathering were allowed, except dance parties. This way he indulged the students with their more basic desires, distracted them from their concerns over democracy and human rights, a strategy he kept using throughout his term in power. When the student movement started in 1989, students in different parts of the country marched, and organized like wildfire. The students at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, however, closed their doors, and held dance parties everyday.