

We have a dream, a free and democratic China!

Washington March for Democracy in China, October 1 of 1989

Washington March for Democracy in China



Washington March for Democracy in China (WMDC) was a project approved by the First Congress of Chinese Students and Scholars in the United States that was held in Chicago on July 28 to August 1 of 1989. It was scheduled for October 1, 1989, the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, a time when the present Chinese government was expected to wipe out the memory of the June 4th Massacre and gloss over its political and economic plight with celebrations of "great achievements". The historic significance of WMDC consists in the fact that it demonstrated the determination and persistence of the Chinese people in their pursuit of democracy and freedom in face of threat and brutality. Nothing, not even tanks and machine-guns, could stop a people that strive to set themselves free from a totalitarian government.

WMDC was sponsored by the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars (IFCSS) with the support of the Greater Washington Network for Chinese Democracy (an ad hoc committee formed by all the major organizations of the local Chinese community). Dozens of other organizations, such as the Alliance of Chinese Democracy, Boston information center, the Alliance of Chinese Patriots, and the Federation for a democratic China, also provided assistance.

Preparation

The preparation for WMDC started in early September. Given the overriding importance of the project, which was borne out by the repeated efforts of the present Chinese government to prevent its materialization, IFCSS established three special committees. The composition of these committees is as follows:

Organization Committee

Chairman Yongchuan Liu (Alex)
Vice Chairmen Lianchao Han Deyi Li

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Working Committee

Director Ben Tang
Deputy Directors Xiaochuan Zhang Er Du
Xingyu Chen Qiqi Dong

Members Tao Ni Yunlong Man Hao Jai Qun Ma
Hengxiang Yang Haiqing Zhao Boning Tong Qiang Wan
Qi Yu Jian Zhu Liang Wang Jimin Tong
Ning Li Yong Wang Jing Zhou Hongqing Chen
Zhemin Feng Jingsheng Huang Yang Jiang Sen Hu
Jielin Dong Linrong Yang Laian Zhi Nongxin Rao
Feng Gao Peng Huan Wei Liu Shengping Feng
Zhexi Luo Minxin Pei Shuxing Fan Ling Zheng
Qiang Yu Xixiang Jiang Wei Xu Ping Li
Maochun Yu Guoen Liu Yiquan Zhang Jianing Wang
Yuangen Huang Mingzhou Ding

Advisory Committee

Arthur Miller Yingshi Yu Hongda Qu
Ed Roberts Elbert Chernin Chuanshan Wen
Robert Cohen Xianzhong Chen Paul Gowins
Kenneth Pai Junshan Shen Xintan Gao
Zongjian Dian Jiaqi Yan Wuer Kaixi
Runnan Wan Nian Cheng Hua Situ
Shaozhi Su Yizi Chen Zhigong Ren
Weiming Du Daren Liu Yi Li
Yuchuan Huang Songlin Xu Lu Li
Liji Mai Zhimin Gao Dachang Jiang
Xinyuan Zheng Bingji Chen Yong Li
Su Cong Degang Tang

After the above committees were set up, a general division of work was implemented. Specific duties, such as mobilizing students, contacting speakers, organizing the concert, arranging for accommodation, giving press release, campaigning for public support, raising fund, were all under way within a few days. Besides, IFCSS and the Greater Washington Network for Democracy met once a week to coordinate their efforts and work out details, including applying for permit for the March, setting up temporary toilets, selling drinks and food, establishing marshall team, providing first aid, and numerous other things.

One of the greatest difficulties encountered was to organize speakers and musicians. Since the time was limited and all of the people invited had a tight schedule, it was almost impossible to line them up on the same day. However, thanks to the tireless spirit of our organizers and the cooperation of the speakers and the musicians, this was finally worked out. Most of the musicians prepared songs dedicated to the heroes of the democracy movement in Beijing.

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Another major difficulty was to find lodging for the 2,000 students who had to travel from ten to thirty-six hours to Washington D.C. to participate in the march. The Greater Washington Network for Democracy Chinese community tried their best and prepared over 500 beds in the homes of the local Chinese community, they also paid a substantial share for 420 hotel beds. Students, both American and Chinese, at University of Maryland, George Washington University, American University and the Johns Hopkins University hosted six hundred people. Some churches and local American friends also rendered much help. Many host families provided meals, too.

As October 1 drew near, IFCSS office was flooded with phone calls volunteering a great variety of assistance; Chinese student organizations and Chinese communities from all over the world sent in letters and telegrams to show their support, which reflected the unusual scope and depth of the significance of WMDC as well as unprecedented solidarity of the descendants of the Chinese nation.

The Event

WMDC was the largest demonstration held in Washington D.C. since the beginning of the 1989 democracy movement. Altogether 4,000 Chinese students and scholars plus 2,000 overseas Chinese and American friends participated. Sixty students came from UC Santa Barbara, each paying one hundred dollars for the air fare. Fifteen students drove thirty-six hours from Texas.

University of Maryland, the one with the largest Chinese student population around D.C., rallied more than two hundred. University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and University of Pittsburgh all sent over one hundred. One hundred students came from Virginia Tech, which came up to eighty percent of its total population of Chinese students and scholars.

A candle light memorial service in honor of the June 4th martyrs was conducted in front of the Lincoln Memorial on the evening of September 30. IFCSS president Liu Yongchuan (Alex), Tian An Men student leaders Wuer Kaixi and Shen Tong made speeches. Several hundred people attended the service.

WMDC started at 12:30 p.m., October 1, with Marathon for Democracy in front of the Lincoln Memorial. The Chairman of the Organization Committee of WMDC and President of IFCSS, Liu Yongchuan (Alex), made the opening speech. Han Lianchao, Vice Chairman, read the WMDC Manifesto. Among the speakers were: Father Dryner, president of Georgetown University Law School, Senator Slade Gordon, Congressman Walter E. Faunty, Chiu Hongda, professor at University of Maryland, Wuer Kaixi, Li Lu, Li Liangshan, president of the Chinese Student Association (Taiwan), and Chen Yonghua, president of the Federation of Overseas Hong Kong Chinese. The musical groups included Trace of Red from Boston, Eye in the Village from LA, Hong Kong overseas Chorus, Comet from North Carolina, Earthsong from Washington D.C., Mary Blankemeier from Virginia, Shanti from Chicago, and Washington Chinese Chorus. Among the individual singers were Manhua Zhan, Philip Morgan, Marty Eldrige, Rock Allen, and Wilson (Canada).

The march started at 3:40 p.m. The procession ran over a mile long, which was a truly magnificent view. Despite the heavy rain, no demonstrator dropped out and all of them were in

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high spirits. Disciplined and well organized, the demonstration embodied the spirit of nonviolence, which constituted a sharp contrast to the bloody crackdown ordered by the Chinese government. By 5:30 p.m., all the demonstrators have reached the Chinese embassy. However, only at the repeated requests of Liu Yongchuan (Alex) that the crowds finally dispersed at 7pm.

All the major media, both Chinese and English, covered the event, which, as one American friend remarked, will go down history as one of the "most memorable" moments of the 1989 Chinese democracy movement.

WMDC was a great success. As the sponsor, IFCSS also built a successful image characterized by solidarity, efficiency and vitality.



Manifesto of Washington March for Democracy in China

It has been forty years since the founding of the People's Republic of China. During the forty years of this so called ``Republic'', millions of lives have been lost as a result of political persecution and unprecedented starvation caused by mismanagement and poor government policies. Hundreds of millions of people have been subjected to cruel mental and physical torture. In the past forty years, there has been no freedom of speech, no freedom of press, no freedom of demonstration and no freedom of assembly in this nation. Both human rights and human dignity have been severely trampled upon.

With a centralized economic system, productivity has fallen. Consequently, China has forfeited all the opportunities of economic development. Today, China stands among the least-developed countries in terms of living standard and education and is on the verge of being expelled from the world community.

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In these forty years, the Chinese people have never given up the struggle for human rights and human dignity. The 1989 DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT represents a new phase in the struggle for freedom. The one million people who marched in TIANANMEN SQUARE and CHANGAN AVENUE told the world: We are a courageous, and freedom-loving people; we are determined to fight for human rights and the future of our country. The blood of the martyrs of the June 4th MASSACRE has not only united the Chinese communities around the world, but also promoted the solidarity of democratic forces in all the nations.

The bitter history of the People's Republic of China has taught us that dictatorship, tyranny, and feudalism are the roots of hardships and tribulations suffered by the Chinese people. The ultimate solution to the Chinese problems lies in the democratization of the Chinese political system. Therefore, we strongly demand that the Chinese Constitution be revised, and the so-called Four Cardinal Principles be repealed.

We demand that basic human rights be protected. These are the rights to life, happiness, freedom of belief, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of movement, as well as the right to privacy and private property.

We demand that the government be ruled by the will of the people, who determine its legitimacy. As such, we, the people, are entitled to participate in the political process, to choose our own government and social system, and thus determining the destiny of our own country.

We demand that a pluralist, multi-party political system based upon the principle of check-and-balance be established immediately, to prevent any political party or state armed forces from usurping the power of the people.

We demand that a free market economy and a complete set of economic laws be installed in China, to guarantee all people's legitimate economic rights.

Today, in this land of freedom and liberty, we, Chinese students and scholars, Chinese Americans, Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao, friends from all over the world, gather at this solemn place, in front of the Goddess of democracy, just as the great Dr. Martin Luther King did here in Washington over two decades ago, and declare to the world: **WE HAVE A DREAM!** a free and democratic China.

Brothers, sisters, and friends, the days of dictatorship in China are numbered, a free and democratic China is just ahead. Let us unite and fight for this DREAM!

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