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The *Economics Weekly*, the Public Space and the Voices of Chinese Independent Intellectuals*

Edward X. Gu

Although after the 4 June crackdown on the Tiananmen protest movement in 1989 many newspapers were banned, their previous issues remained accessible in public libraries. However, there were two exceptions, the Shanghai-based *World Economic Herald* (hereafter abbreviated as the *Herald*) and the Beijing-based *Economics Weekly* (hereafter abbreviated as the *Weekly*).

It is obvious that the intention of the authorities was to make people forget the existence and influence of these two newspapers before 4 June. At the very beginning of the student movement, the editor-in-chief of the *Herald*, Qin Benli, was dismissed from his post by Jiang Zemin, then Party head of Shanghai. Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, respectively former manager and former vice-editor-in-chief of the *Weekly*, were accused of being “black hands” of the student movement, and were sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment in 1991, the heaviest punishment on non-conformist intellectuals.¹

The *Herald* has been analysed by a number of authors.² Study of the *Weekly*, however, has been limited. Although it has frequently been mentioned in the literature with the increasing interest in the role of Chen and Wang in the Tiananmen movement,³ a systematic analysis of it is still lacking. In the 1980s the *Weekly* was not as influential as the *Herald*, but its reputation gradually began to rise after March 1988 when its editorship was taken over by Chen Ziming’s Beijing Social and Economic Sciences Institute (BSESI). The post-1988 *Weekly* represented a new phase in the development of the intellectuals’ public space in Communist China: the emergence of the non-official newspaper.

This article first examines the institutional conditions under which the *Weekly* was born. It then points out some fundamental differences

* The author is grateful to Woei Lien Chong for her help with English.

1. See George Black and Robin Munro, *Black Hands of Beijing: Lives of Defiance in China’s Democracy Movement* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1993), which has much information about Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao.

2. See Kate Wright, “The political fortunes of Shanghai’s *World Economic Herald*,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 23 (January 1990), pp. 121–132; Seth Faison, “The changing role of the Chinese media,” in Tony Saich (ed.), *The Chinese People’s Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), pp. 145–163; and Li Cheng and Lynn T. White III, “China’s technocratic movement and the *World Economic Herald*,” *Modern China*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (July 1991), pp. 342–388.

3. See Tang Tsou, “The Tiananmen tragedy: the state–society relationship, choices, and mechanisms in historical perspective,” in Brantly Womack (ed.), *Contemporary Chinese Politics in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 280; David Kelly and He Baogang, “Emergent civil society and the intellectuals in China,” in Robert F. Miller (ed.), *The Development of Civil Society in Communist Systems* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), p. 30; Merle Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); and X.L. Ding, *The Decline of Communism in China: Legitimacy Crisis, 1977–1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

between the semi-official and the non-official media through a comparison of the *Herald* and the *Weekly*. Based on a content analysis of the *Weekly*, it analyses the expression of opinions in the independent public space created by independent intellectuals. Finally, the responses of the *Weekly* to the 1989 People's Movement are discussed.

The Emergence of a Non-Official Newspaper: Its Institutional Basis

By June 1989 when it was banned, the *Weekly* had a seven-and-a-half-year history. Before the BSESI took over the editorship, it was an official newspaper of the Chinese Union of Economic Societies (CUES), a group of academic associations engaged in economic research.⁴ In China, most of the so-called "mass academic associations" were established by high-ranking Party theoretician-officials to serve party-state enterprises and were controlled by official organs. Unusually, the CUES enjoyed privileges that other academic associations did not possess: it had its own publishing house, the Economic Science Press, and its own mouthpiece, the *Weekly*. The CUES had obtained this privileged status thanks to the influence of its main founder Yu Guangyuan, Vice-Director of the State Scientific and Technological Commission. The *Weekly* began in January 1982. According to the "editor's preface" to its first issue, its aims were "to publish essays, information and data about economic theories, economic policy, economic management and technological economy; to report the research trends and viewpoints among economic circles, as well as the activities of various economic societies and other economic research sectors; to popularize the knowledge of economics; and to introduce foreign economic theories, currents and related economic information."⁵

The *Weekly* had almost no influence before 1988, with its readership limited to a minority of economic researchers and teachers. By comparison, the Shanghai-based *Herald* was very influential among the whole intellectual community and governmental officials at various levels. The average distribution of the *Herald* normally exceeded 100,000, while that of the *Weekly* was around 5,000.⁶ Despite this, the *Weekly*, since the CUES was a stable financial sponsor, continued to publish.

However, at the end of 1987 it was suddenly confronted with a financial crisis. A company run privately by an editor of the *Weekly* in the name of the newspaper office lost a lot of money, and the funds for running the newspaper had to be used to pay the debts. The editors contacted the former editor-in-chief of the Worker's Publishing House, He Jiadong, and asked him to provide help in raising money and to participate in running the newspaper. As an adviser of BSESI, He Jiadong

4. Author's interview with Feng Lanrui in December 1994. Feng Lanrui was the former general secretary of the CUES.

5. See the *Weekly*, the first issue, 4 January 1982, p. 1.

6. The information about the circulation of the *Herald* is available in Li and White, "China's technocratic movement," p. 351. The information about the *Weekly* is provided by Feng Lanrui, former head of the newspaper's editorial office.

discussed with Chen Ziming, leader of the BSEI, the possibility that the institute could invest in the *Weekly* and take over its editorship.

The emergence of the group around Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao and their organizational base, the BSEI, has widely been regarded as a sign of the beginnings of a civil society in China.⁷ The BSEI was a *minban* (literally meaning "run by people," equivalent with "non-official") institute, and it achieved complete financial independence from the state. The core members of the institute decided to run the BSEI as a non-official think-tank.⁸ By 1988 it was becoming well-known among pro-reform intellectuals, although it did not yet possess its own periodicals. Because of a variety of institutional restrictions, it was nearly impossible for a *minban* institute to get a licence to run a periodical or newspaper. Thus, He Jiadong's idea to take over the editorship of the *Weekly* provided Chen Ziming with a good solution to bypass all the institutional barriers.

On 29 February 1988, an agreement on the handing-over of the editorship was signed between the office of the *Weekly* as party A and the three *minban* institutes (including the BSEI) as party B. The main content of the agreement was as follows: as of 1 March 1988, party B would make an investment in and take over the editorship of the *Weekly*; the board of directors jointly organized by the two parties would serve as the top organ in charge of managing the *Weekly* on the basis of shareholding; the assets of the former office of the *Weekly* would be evaluated by the two parties and then taken as the share capital, and all the funds invested by party B would be also taken as the share capital; party B would not be responsible for resolving any debts incurred by the sub-branch organs of the *Weekly*'s office; and the agreement's period of validity would be two years which could be prolonged at the end of this period if the two parties agreed.⁹ After the takeover, He Jiadong took the post of editor-in-chief of the *Weekly*,¹⁰ Wang Juntao that of vice-editor-in-chief, and Chen Ziming that of manager. Table 1 lists the post-takeover *Weekly*'s board, showing that many of the important positions were held by the staff members of the BSEI.

As manager, Chen Ziming was in charge of handling the financial affairs of the *Weekly*. He was almost never involved in concrete editorial matters and rarely published any essays. Of the BSEI staff, Wang Juntao most frequently contributed to the *Weekly*. Apart from determining the editorial policy, Wang was also the author or co-author of 24 essays, most of which were published on the front page. These were written in a sober,

7. See Kelly and He, "Emergent civil society and the intellectuals in China," p. 30; He Baogang, "Dual roles of semi-civil society in Chinese democratization," *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 1994), pp. 154–171; and Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds*, pp. 358–360.

8. See Min Qi, "Cong zhinangtuan dao sixiangku" ("From the [establishment] brain trust to the [non-establishment] think-tank"), *Ming bao* (Hong Kong), 26 July 1993.

9. See "The agreement on investing and running the newspaper." This archival material would be kept in the library of the Sinological Institute, Leiden University.

10. Merle Goldman's statement that He was the publisher is inaccurate, see Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds*, p. 341.

Table 1: **Board of Editors of the *Economic Weekly* (after March 1988)**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Position in the newspaper</i>	<i>Working unit (or former one)</i>
Cui Shaolin	59	Director of the Office of the Newspaper (concurrently a member of the EC and the head of the board of directors)	Former Office of the Newspaper
He Jiadong	61	Editor-in-Chief (concurrently a member of the EC)	Worker's Publishing House
Wang Juntao	33	Vice-Editor-in-Chief	BSESI
Luo Diandian*	36	Vice-Editor-in-Chief	A Clinic at the General Staff Department of the PLA
Gao Yu*	43	Vice-Editor-in-Chief	China's New Agency
Chen Ziming	37	Manager	BSESI
Sun Yu	34	Vice-Manager	<i>Beijing Youth Weekly</i>
Fei Yuan	33	Vice-Director	BSESI
Bi Yimin	37	Vice-Director of the Board of Directors	BSESI
Zheng Di	33	Head of the Office of the Editor-in-Chief	BSESI

Notes:

*Luo Diandian and Gao Yu were affiliated to the Board of Editor from the second half of 1988.

Source:

Author's interview with Chen Ziming, 20 December 1994.

critical style, some commenting on the problems of economic reform, others criticizing Chinese economists and the state of economic research. Wang held his post on the *Weekly* for only three months. As a tireless social activist, his frequent participation in intellectuals' public activities brought him to the attention of the party-state's security organs, and also took up most of his time. For the sake of political safety and editorial effectiveness, Wang resigned his post of vice-editor-in-chief in the summer of 1988, but continued to take part in the newspaper's editorial activities. Following this, two other vice-editors-in-chief, Gao Yu and Luo Diandian, were recruited. Gao was a former senior journalist at China's News Agency and Luo Diandian was a daughter of General Luo Ruiqing, former General Chief of Staff of the PLA during the early stage of Cultural Revolution.

The first issue of the post-takeover *Weekly* was published on 20 March 1988. It rapidly became famous among intellectual circles, giving rise to the saying that "South China has the *Herald* and North China the *Weekly*." This quick success was the result of an editorial policy aimed

at differentiating it from the *Herald*. First, the core editors decided to make the *Weekly* a forum for independent intellectuals rather than an organ closely in line with the intra-Party reformers. To be "independent" intellectuals did not mean that they did not work in the party-state institutes, but that they held independent opinions. Secondly, the editors of the *Weekly* wanted to play the role of commentators rather than advisors. While criticizing the so-called "leftists," they rejected the formulation that "reformers are good in everything and conservatives bad in everything," and kept a detached attitude to ideological struggles. Finally, they were acutely aware of the heavy influence of non-economic elements upon economic reform, and intended to devote more space to articles that discussed China's modernization from the historical and cultural angles.

Some Fundamental Differences between Semi-Official and Non-Official Media: A Comparison between the Herald and the Weekly

The *Herald* and the *Weekly* both focused on economics and the economic reform, and hence seemed largely similar in content. However, a detailed analysis demonstrates that there are many subtle differences between them.

Content analysis. The following content analysis of the *Weekly* generally runs parallel to that of the *Herald* by Li Cheng and Lynn T. White III,¹¹ containing a comprehensive content analysis, and analyses of the "top stories" and "important articles," but with a significant change in statistics. Li and White's survey provides only a thematic distribution by numbers of items, not by their importance. In contrast, this survey of the *Weekly* tries to provide a thematic distribution by importance, through the calculation of the length of every item. Theoretically, the length of a piece of writing is not a perfect indicator of its thematic importance, but in this case it does to some extent demonstrate what kinds of topics were among the editors' favourites. If such a comprehensive survey is combined with the content analyses of the "top stories" and the "important articles," relatively reliable qualitative conclusions can be derived from the quantitative data. Table 2 surveys the contents of the post-takeover *Weekly* from 20 March 1988 to 18 June 1989. Altogether, 1,382 items are categorized in six large groups. Tables 3 and 4 provide the thematic distribution of the top stories and the important articles respectively.

The following differences are evident. First, the *Weekly* scarcely published essays on foreign affairs and international relations, which occupy only 2.1 per cent of the total space. Furthermore, in this small category, nearly half the space was used to report views of foreign authors on China's reforms. By comparison, the percentage of items on international affairs in the *Herald* reached 38.9. Even in 1988 and 1989,

11. See Li and White, "China's technocratic movement," pp. 356–369.

Table 2: Content of the *Economics Weekly* (percentage of space)

Subject	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	Fifth quarter	Total
<i>Economic</i>						
Economy (general)	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.8
Macro-economics situation and policies	3.3	2.6	6.7	7.0	7.0	5.0
Economic reform (general)	6.7	6.5	9.1	13.4	5.5	8.1
Price reform	1.8	2.9	1.2	3.6	1.7	2.2
Enterprise reform	6.6	5.6	4.0	2.2	4.4	4.6
Rural economy and reform	4.9	1.6	3.9	4.0	4.4	3.7
Finance/taxation	2.8	1.2	2.7	1.5	1.7	2.2
Banking/capital markets	3.4	1.5	1.2	2.4	3.5	2.4
Non-state economic sectors	2.4	1.6	0.4	0.9	0.0	1.0
Special economic zones	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Regional economy	2.7	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.8	1.1
Industrial structure and policies	0.7	0.1	0.6	2.2	1.0	0.8
Labour	1.4	1.2	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.9
Investment	0.7	2.1	0.4	1.4	0.4	1.8
Income distribution	0.8	2.0	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.7
Government functions	0.0	1.1	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.3
Urbanization	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1
Population/environment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.1
Transportation/energy	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.3
Hong Kong/Taiwan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 2. Continued

Foreign direct investment and joint ventures	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Trade and economic opening	3.6	0.0	0.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Management	1.7	5.1	3.9	3.6	8.6	0.0	8.6	4.4
Entrepreneurs	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Comments of China's economics	13.3	5.7	4.0	8.3	5.6	0.0	5.6	7.6
Special column for Chinese economists	6.8	10.4	8.8	6.3	2.3	0.0	2.3	7.0
Subtotal	68.5	53.4	52.4	61.9	48.5	0.0	48.5	57.5
<i>Political</i>								
Politics (general)	0.2	1.0	1.2	0.2	3.8	0.0	3.8	1.1
China's political reform	0.0	4.1	8.5	0.4	3.9	0.0	3.9	3.4
Neo-authoritarianism	0.0	0.0	0.5	4.8	3.5	0.0	3.5	1.1
Freedom/liberty	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.7	0.7
Democracy	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.5
Legal issues/rule of law	0.6	1.2	1.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.7
Ideological issues	0.5	6.4	2.5	2.8	3.4	0.0	3.4	3.1
People's Movement of 1989	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	0.0	5.4	1.1
Subtotal	1.3	14.7	14.1	8.3	23.2	0.0	23.2	11.7
<i>Social</i>								
Education	0.4	2.4	0.3	0.6	1.1	0.0	1.1	1.0
Social mentality	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Social security	0.1	0.2	1.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Social morality and habits	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.5
Social justice	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Social structure	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.5

Public opinion polls	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1
Housing	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.5
Other social problems	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.2
Subtotal	3.3	5.1	3.2	2.6	4.7	3.8
<i>Cultural</i>						
Reforms and culture	7.5	7.9	8.7	3.9	2.0	6.2
Intellectuals/talents	3.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
Science/technology	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3
History	1.1	0.2	1.1	3.3	6.0	2.2
Subtotal	12.4	10.6	9.8	7.2	8.7	9.9
<i>International Affairs</i>						
Diplomacy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.6	2.0	0.7
Foreigners' views on China's reforms	2.3	0.9	1.2	0.8	0.1	1.1
Foreign economy and management	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
Subtotal	2.9	1.4	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.1
<i>Other</i>						
Academic information and book reviews	1.0	0.8	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.5
Photographs	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.1
Readers' responses	1.8	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.5

Table 2. Continued

Advertisements	6.3	7.7	8.9	6.0	1.7	6.2
Notices by the newspaper's office	1.4	0.1	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.4
Titles of the important articles	0.2	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.1	1.2
Introductions of successful enterprises	0.8	4.2	6.4	7.9	6.8	5.1
Subtotal	11.6	14.8	18.5	18.1	12.8	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of issues	15	13	13	12	11	64
Number of pages	120	104	100	92	88	504

Notes:

The first quarter is from 20 March to 26 June 1988; the second from 3 July to 25 September 1988; the third from 2 October to 25 December 1988; the fourth from 1 January to 26 March 1989; and the fifth from 2 April to 18 June 1989. Most of the items are one entry to one subject, with few exceptions. For instance, an article published on 10 April 1988, written by Qian Jiaju, a veteran economist and later famous as a dissident columnist in Hong Kong, deals with price, education and the general mood of society. This article is categorized into three subjects.

Source:

The data comes from the calculation of all the items on all the pages of the *Weekly* (from 20 March 1988 to 18 June 1989), except the content on the narrow space between pages.

Table 3: Contents of the Top Stories* of the *Economics Weekly* (percentage of space on the front page)

Subject	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	Fifth quarter	Total
<i>Economic</i>						
Economy (general)	1.3	0.8	4.1	2.2	2.3	2.1
Macro-economic situation and policies	9.2	4.6	14.7	22.3	10.1	12.0
Economic reform (general)	18.8	18.7	22.7	22.8	8.8	18.6
Price reform	4.4	10.9	1.9	2.3	0.8	4.2
Enterprise reform	3.9	3.2	1.9	0.7	0.0	2.1
Rural economy and reform	3.7	1.5	8.0	0.0	0.0	2.8
Comments on China's economics	9.8	9.4	1.3	0.0	0.0	4.5
Others	13.1	6.8	7.4	16.9	9.3	10.6
Subtotal	64.2	55.9	62.0	67.2	31.3	56.9
<i>Political</i>						
China's political reform	0.0	12.7	10.6	4.1	11.5	7.5
Neo-authoritarianism debate	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.3
Ideological issues	1.7	5.2	0.0	0.0	2.7	1.9
People's Movement of 1989	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.3	4.7
Others	1.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.5	0.7
Subtotal	2.7	17.9	11.5	5.9	43.0	15.1

Table 3. Continued

<i>Social</i>						
Education	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Social mentality	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.6
Social morality and habits	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.7
Social structure	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Public opinion polls	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Housing	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.6
Other social problems	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Subtotal	4.3	3.9	2.8	1.1	7.5	3.9
<i>Cultural</i>						
Reforms and culture	2.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	1.0
Intellectuals/talents	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Science/technology	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
History	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	1.0
Subtotal	5.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	5.7	2.7
<i>International Affairs</i>						
Reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe	0.0	3.8	2.6	4.8	0.0	2.2
Foreigners' views on China's reforms	9.4	6.2	4.3	3.3	0.7	5.1
Foreign economy and management	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.1
Subtotal	9.4	10.0	7.6	8.1	0.7	7.4

<i>Other</i>						
Academic information and book reviews	6.9	0.0	4.3	0.0	3.4	3.1
Readers' responses	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2
Advertisements	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.5
Notices by the newspaper's office	3.4	0.2	1.5	2.5	0.0	1.6
Titles of the important articles	2.9	12.1	8.0	12.7	8.4	8.6
Subtotal	13.7	12.3	14.3	17.7	11.8	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Space on the front page (each page = 100)	1,500	1,300	1,300	1,200	1,100	6,400

Note:
*The top stories are defined as all the items published on the front pages.

Table 4: Contents of the Important Articles* in the *Economics Weekly* (items)

<i>Subject</i>	<i>First quarter</i>	<i>Second quarter</i>	<i>Third quarter</i>	<i>Fourth quarter</i>	<i>Fifth quarter</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Economic</i>						
Macro-economic situation and policies	1	1	1	4	0	7 (4.6%)
Economic reform (general)	5	9	4	5	3	25 (17.2%)
Price reform	2	1	2	4	0	9 (5.9%)
Enterprise reform	0	0	3	1	1	5 (3.3%)
Rural economy and reform	0	0	2	1	2	5 (3.3%)
Banking/capital markets	3	0	0	2	0	5 (3.3%)
Comments of China's economics	2	5	1	1	2	11 (7.3%)
Others	4	0	4	5	0	13 (8.7%)
Subtotal	17	16	17	23	8	81 (53.6%)
<i>Political</i>						
Politics (general)	0	0	1	0	2	3 (2.0%)
China's political reform	0	1	3	0	2	6 (4.0%)
Neo-authoritarianism debate	0	0	1	3	2	6 (4.0%)
Ideological issues	1	3	0*	1	1	6 (4.0%)
Others	0	0	0	0	2	2 (1.2%)
Subtotal	1	4	5	4	9	23 (15.2%)

<i>Social</i>									
Education	1	0	0	1	1	3	(2.0%)		
Social morality and habits	1	0	0	1	0	2	(1.2%)		
Others	0	2	1	0	0	3	(2.0%)		
Subtotal	2	2	1	2	1	8	(5.3%)		
<i>Cultural</i>									
Reforms and culture	1	6	3	7	0	17	(11.2%)		
Others	1	5	1	2	1	10	(6.7%)		
Subtotal	2	11	4	9	1	27	(17.9%)		
<i>International Affairs</i>									
Reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe	0	1	3	0	2	6	(4.0%)		
Others	1	0	0	1	0	1	(1.3%)		
Subtotal	1	1	3	1	2	8	(5.3%)		
<i>Other</i>									
Academic information and book reviews	1	2	1	0	0	4	(2.7%)		
Subtotal	1	2	1	0	0	4	(2.7%)		
Total	24	36	31	39	21	151	(100.0%)		

Notes:

*The important articles are defined as all the items whose titles are listed on the front pages.

the more comparable years, this percentage in the *Herald* showed no decline, being 36 and 39 per cent respectively.¹²

Secondly, from the very beginning the *Weekly* published essays about social and cultural affairs which filled a relatively large amount of the total space (13.6 per cent), more than the space filled by items on political affairs (11.7 per cent). It also published a number of historical articles examining what lessons China's current reforms could learn from the history of modernization in China and around the world. Articles of this sort increased greatly in 1989, with a large amount of the space devoted to discussions of the historical meanings and lessons of the May Fourth Movement. The social and cultural content of the *Herald*, by comparison, was almost insignificant, only 3.5 per cent of all items. This remarkable difference is a clear indication of the *Weekly's* editors' intention to devote more attention to the social and cultural aspects of the reforms.

Thirdly, political contents occupied a large portion of the *Herald* of 1988 and 1989, respectively 12.7 and 29.4 per cent of all items. If the factor of length were considered, the percentage figures would probably be larger. The *Weekly*, which devoted only 11.7 per cent of its total space to political discussions, was less politically coloured than the *Herald*. Even in the most politicized quarter, from April to June 1989, the proportion of the *Weekly* devoted to political issues did not exceed 25 per cent.

Fourthly, the technological revolution as a theme occupied 2.9 per cent of all the items in the *Herald*, but only 0.3 per cent of the total space in the *Weekly*. Based on their analysis of the related content, Li and White argue that the *Herald* was "the main journal of China's technocratic movement," or "the most obvious institutional representative" of the technocratic movement.¹³ This conclusion, however, as Ding says, "is to place the subject on the procrustean bed."¹⁴ Moreover, it is submitted that the argumentation through which they reach this conclusion is also problematic. It was indeed true that the vast majority of the Chinese elite, whether political or intellectual, was strongly inclined to technocracy in various forms. This inclination was best illustrated in the grand discussions of the so-called "Western new technology revolution," a *de facto* ideological campaign waged by Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang in 1984, aiming against the conservative "anti-spiritual pollution" campaign and providing legitimacy to the open-door policy. In line with its consistent support of the pro-reform faction within the party-state, the *Herald*, like other newspapers and magazines, published a great number of pieces on the "technological revolution." Thus, the technocratic trend was not unique to the *Herald*. What was unique was that it, in an increasingly conscious manner, served as the mouthpiece of the most radical members of the establishment reformist elite (what Goldman calls "democratic elite"), most of whom became dissidents after the 4 June massacre.

12. All the data about the *Herald* quoted here are taken from Li and White's article.

13. Li and White, "China's technocratic movement," pp. 344, 380.

14. X.L. Ding, *Decline of Communism*, p. 61, n. 27.

Li and White's selective content analysis ignores the radical dimension of the *Herald*.¹⁵

Finally, most of the *Weekly*'s space was naturally devoted to economic affairs. Within the economic category, its focal points were mainly as follows: comments on the theories, strategies and processes of the economic reform; analyses of the macro-economic situation of the time; criticisms of the state of economic research in China and the performance of Chinese economists; and interviews with famous Chinese economists.

Compared to the *Herald*, the *Weekly* paid little attention to economic news. While the *Herald* published enormously on such topics as regional economy, special economic zones, Hong Kong, Taiwan, foreign investments in China, population, environment, energy, transportation and communication, in the *Weekly* this kind of news merely served as embellishment. The major function of the *Weekly* was to comment on economic policies, theories and reform proposals.

Interviews. Like the *Herald*, the post-takeover *Weekly* interviewed a great number of famous and influential figures, in order to attract readers. Table 5 surveys the *Weekly*'s interviewees. In the first quarter there were interviews with 24 Chinese and foreign figures, and they became more frequent over time. But in the last quarter the number of interviews sharply decreased because the People's Movement attracted more attention.

Quantitatively speaking, there is no notable difference between the two newspapers, although the frequency of the *Weekly*'s interviews was slightly greater than that of the *Herald*. In 1988, the *Weekly* conducted on average 8.6 interviews per month, and the *Herald* 7.3. In 1989, the *Weekly* interviewed 45 figures altogether, and the *Herald* 30. Seen from the point of view of the interviewees' status, however, there are a number of differences.

First, the *Herald* "interviewed more foreigners than Chinese."¹⁶ In the *Weekly*, however, the proportion of foreign interviewees was less than 10 per cent of the total number. This difference was, of course, related to the natures of the two newspapers, one being purely non-official, the other semi-official. Because of its non-official nature, it was impossible for the *Weekly* to get permission to send correspondents abroad, as the *Herald* used to do. All the interviews with foreigners conducted by the *Weekly* were thus carried out in China, and most of the interviewees were scholarly experts in the social sciences, in particular American economists such as J. C. H. Fei, T. N. Srinivasan, Lawrence Klein and Theodore W. Schultz. These scholars are so famous that their views on China's reforms were naturally all carried as front-page top stories.

15. According to their own quantitative analysis, there was only one item on science and technology in the *Herald* of 1989. See Li and White, "China's technocratic movement," pp. 366-67, table 7.

16. *Ibid.* p. 353.

Table 5: Status of the Interviewees in the Economic Weekly

<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>First quarter</i>	<i>Second quarter</i>	<i>Third quarter</i>	<i>Fourth quarter</i>	<i>Fifth quarter</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Chinese</i>						
Officials	3	4	1	3	1	12 (9.8%)
Middle-aged/young economists	11	8	12	14	2	47 (38.2%)
Middle-aged/old economists	3	9	8	13	2	35 (28.5%)
Other scholars	4	1	1	2	3	11 (8.9%)
Entrepreneurs	0	1	1	3	1	6 (4.9%)
Subtotal	21	23	23	35	9	111 (90.3%)
<i>Foreign</i>						
Officials	0	0	2	0	0	2 (1.6%)
Economists	2	2	2	1	0	8 (6.5%)
Other scholars	1	1	1	0	0	2 (1.6%)
Entrepreneurs	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0.0%)
Subtotal	3	3	5	1	0	12 (9.7%)
Total	24	26	28	36	9	123(100.0%)

Secondly, among the *Weekly's* Chinese interviewees, the proportions of officials and entrepreneurs were much lower than the corresponding figures in the *Herald*. The *Weekly* never interviewed workers, peasants and soldiers, while among the *Herald's* interviewees the proportion of people who can be identified as belonging to these social groups amounted to 2 per cent. The *Weekly's* interviews with entrepreneurs (4.9 per cent) were only ornamental, and all of them were linked to the advertisements of successful enterprises, which mostly appeared on the last pages. As for interviews with officials, not only did the *Weekly* conduct just a small number, but the interviewees were also mostly low-ranking, generally local or departmental officials, and the interviews mainly dealt with marginal points of concern. In contrast, the *Herald* had much more access to top politicians such as Li Tieying and Chen Muhua, as well as provincial and ministerial leaders.

Thirdly, the majority of the *Weekly's* interviewees were Chinese scholars (75.6 per cent), in particular economists. No scientists or engineers were interviewed. It is worth noting that the largest group of interviewees, 38.2 per cent of the total, consisted of middle-aged and young economists (below 45 years old) who were mostly affiliated to the various intra-establishment institutes that provided economic advice to Zhao Ziyang. Of the non-economists interviewed by the *Weekly*, middle-aged and young scholars also constituted the overwhelming majority.

The age of interviewees was significant. In its final two years of publication, the *Herald* interviewed more elite intellectuals than governmental officials, and most of them were members of what Merle Goldman labels the "democratic elite," such as Yan Jiaqi, Su Shaozhi, Li Honglin and Yu Haocheng, as well as their disciples such as Zhang Zonghou, Wang Yizhou and so on. Many of the "democratic elite," mainly those middle-aged and old theoreticians who attended the 1979 Theory Conference hosted by Hu Yaobang and informally formed "Hu Yaobang's intellectual network," were active in 1980s Chinese public life.¹⁷ In early 1987, Hu Yaobang was forced to resign his post of General Secretary. From the second half of 1988 onwards, the members of the "democratic elite" who were frustrated by the stepping-down of their political patron began to play the role of vanguard of the reformist faction in the ideological battles. They were widely regarded abroad as dissidents, but in China at that time they were seen as the ideologues of the reforms. They often expressed concern that China's reforms would be obstructed by the strong conservative force, arguing in favour of deepening reforms and emphasizing the combination of economic and political reform. By the latter, they meant the immediate democratization of China's political system. However, they would not discuss issues such as the complicated nature of the reforms, the mistakes made in previous policies and strategies, and the shortcomings of the reform theories and their theoreticians. They merely called for more reforms, trying to defend and propagate them. Reform itself became an ideology. All these ideological

17. See Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds*, ch. 2; also Ding, *Decline of Communism*, pp. 83–113.

arguments had something to do, in one way or another, with the factional struggles then taking place among the leadership.

In early 1988 Li Peng, who had just taken over the premiership from Zhao Ziyang, implied in his governmental work report on the National People's Congress that Zhao's reform had been out of control, calling for the introduction of a macro-economic readjustment policy. Many articles and reports published by the *Herald* were aimed to oppose, implicitly or explicitly, the economic measures of the Li Peng administration.¹⁸

In the interviews conducted by the *Weekly*, by comparison, there was much less of the sense of anxiety for more reforms as revealed by the *Herald*. Although the interviewees of the *Weekly* certainly supported the proposal of deepening reforms, most of them, in particular the middle-aged and young economists, maintained a detached position in the ideological struggle between the reformers and the conservatives. The former veteran vanguards in the "emancipate the mind" movement appeared much less frequently in the *Weekly* than in the *Herald*. In the meantime, the comments on Li Peng's economic policies by the *Weekly* were relatively moderate. For example, on 19 January 1989, the *Weekly* published a full-page article written by a well-known middle-aged economist, Dr Guo Shuqing, stating that Li's policy of macro-economic readjustment could create the conditions necessary for further institutional transition.¹⁹

Readership and authorship. Both the *Herald* and the *Weekly* were run by intellectuals, and primarily about and for intellectuals. However, the *Herald's* scope of the readership and authorship, which included pro-reform officials at different levels as well as undergraduate and graduate students,²⁰ seemed to be wider than that of the *Weekly*. Although the exact scope of the *Weekly's* readership is uncertain, it is safe to say that it was influential mainly among the middle-aged and young intellectuals who were concerned with, or engaged in, economic, political, social and cultural problems. In fact, it never published any essays written by high-ranking officials, and there was no evidence whatsoever that the Party reformers were interested in it.

The difference between the two newspapers in terms of readership is also brought out by their circulation figures. In 1988 and 1989, the *Herald's* circulation was on average 300,000 per year.²¹ In contrast, the pre-takeover *Weekly* had a circulation of only a few thousand. After the takeover, it jumped to 35,000 in the first quarter, and reached 50,000 from October 1988 onwards. This latter figure, however, is just one-sixth of the *Herald's* comparable circulation figure.

18. See Li and White, "China's technocratic movement," p. 378.

19. See the *Weekly*, 19 January 1989, p. 2.

20. See Li and White, "China's technocratic movement," p. 350.

21. *Ibid.* p. 351, table 3.

Towards an Elitist Plurality: Commentators and Critics in the Public Space

As stated above, a major theme of the *Weekly* was the critical and multi-dimensional reflection on the past decade of economic reform, specifically from the political, cultural and historical angles. But what was the characteristic of contents of these reflections? In particular, were there any differences in the critical reflections on the past process of reforms between those whose views were carried in the *Weekly* and the opinions voiced by the "democratic elite"? This section attempts to answer the above questions by focusing on the contents in the three fields of economy, politics and culture.

Reflections on the lessons of the reforms from 1978 to 1988. According to the content analysis shown in Table 2, some themes always occupied a significant part of the *Weekly*'s space on economic affairs, while others fluctuated over time. Enterprise reform, price reform and rural reform were all focal points of the whole reform, and constituted the main themes of all newspapers on economy. The fluctuating themes were mostly related to particular economic policies proposed by reformist leaders.

After the second half of 1988, the *Weekly* came to be flooded with essays and interviews on the theme of the lessons that should be drawn from the past ten years of reforms (1978–88). This took up about 8.2 per cent of the total space. Moreover, the discussions usually covered a full page, even a page-and-a-half, while in content they touched on almost all the aspects of the reform. Focus on the reflections on the process of reform started on 10 July, when Wang Juntao hosted a small meeting on this theme. More than ten middle-aged and young economists were invited, and the speeches by Wu Jiaxiang, Liu Liquan, Cao Yuanzheng, Gao Shan and Shi Xiaomin were headlined by the *Weekly*. All of them considered that it was necessary to conduct sober and objective studies of the reforms in a detached manner, and they all emphasized the importance of a goal-directed, comprehensive plan for reform. As Shi Xiaomin put it, the issue at stake then was not "whether or not we dare to reform, or whether or not we want to reform, but whether or not we are good at working on reform."²² In other words, the focus was on the technical rather than the ideological elements.

Shi Xiaomin's view was echoed in several of Wang Juntao's essays published after this meeting. A unique viewpoint repeated again and again by Wang was that the predicament which confronted the reforms in 1988 was to a considerable extent shaped by the mistakes made in the past ten-year reform process.²³ This view differed sharply from, on the one hand, that of the "democratic elite," who mostly viewed the reform setbacks as the result of the conservatives' deliberate obstruction, and,

22. See the *Weekly*, 17 July, p. 1, and 24 July, p. 3.

23. See the *Weekly*, 28 August 1988, p. 1, 9 October 1988, p. 1 and 1 January 1989, p. 1. For the titles of these essays, see Table 6.

on the other hand, that of the core members of Zhao Ziyang's think-tanks who defensively claimed that "there were no major mistakes in the ten years of reform."²⁴ Four specific mistakes were illustrated by Wang Juntao. First, there had not been a reform plan for ten years and, therefore, the reforms always remained in a reactive mode. Secondly, taking administrative decentralization as the main reform strategy failed to shake the foundation of the old system. Thirdly, the balance between reform and development was so badly managed that many reforms had arisen for their own sake, not for the sake of development. Finally, the influence of non-economic factors upon economic reform had been ignored, so that political reform and the renewing of values had lagged behind, impeding the whole reform process.²⁵

Wang's critical stands influenced the selection of the related essays to be published in the *Weekly*. The prevailing idea of the reflections on the 1978–88 reforms in the *Weekly* was much more critical than defensive. The best example of this was probably the interview with Hua Sheng, which was published in the "column for Chinese economists." Hua Sheng was one of the major proponents of the "dual-track price system," which had been adopted by the Zhao Ziyang administration in the mid-1980s. By 1988, however, it was widely condemned as a hotbed of high-level inflation and serious corruption. Although denying this simplistic allegation, Hua Sheng admitted that the goal of the dual-track price system had not been achieved.²⁶

In search of a path to China's political modernization: neo-authoritarianism versus democratization. The content analysis in Table 2 shows that the *Weekly* scarcely published anything on political issues in the first quarter. This was obviously the result of a considered political choice: not to let this newly emergent non-official newspaper enter the political minefield immediately. From the second quarter onwards there was a dramatic increase in discussion of political affairs, and in the last quarter the increase was so great that nearly a quarter of the newspaper's space was devoted to politics. This is not surprising since 1989 was a "politics year" in China, and many Chinese media increased their coverage of political issues.

Careful examination reveals that the *Weekly*'s political content was rather moderate in tone. It was clear that the editors did not identify with the opinions of the "democratic elite" since the active columnists of the *Herald*, such as Yan Jiaqi, Su Shaozhi, Wang Ruoshui, Wen Yuankai, Li Honglin, Yu Haocheng and Zhang Zonghou, very rarely published in the *Weekly*. It also scarcely published writings directly advocating freedom, liberty, democracy and human rights (see Table 2).

Another manifestation of the *Weekly*'s moderate political stand was that it kept silent on the petition campaigns which took place in

24. See the *Herald*, 23 January 1989, pp. 1, 11.

25. See the *Weekly*, 28 August 1988, p. 1, 1 January 1989, p. 1.

26. See the *Weekly*, 11 September 1988, p. 2.

early 1989. During those campaigns, the political discussions in the *Weekly* focused on the debate over neo-authoritarianism. Fourteen essays and reports on this topic, including two articles written by Chen Ziming, were published. The authors can be divided into two groups: opponents of and sympathizers with neo-authoritarianism. The former were very much inclined to invoke historical comparisons and to stress that the historical trend has always been the victory of democracy over authoritarianism.²⁷ The camp of the sympathizers consisted exclusively of the middle-aged and young economists, sociologists and political scientists, some of whom were very close to the Chen–Wang group. They disagreed to varying degrees with neo-authoritarians, but acknowledged that neo-authoritarianism had prompted many significant questions. They criticised the populist democratic outlook held by the proponents of democracy, and were inclined towards elitist democracy. They were concerned with the institutional and cultural conditions of neo-authoritarianism, but were pessimistic about the existence of these conditions in China.²⁸

Chen Ziming published two essays on neo-authoritarianism. In the first he made a critical analysis of the irrational method of argumentation used by the proponents of democracy in this debate. In his observation, some pro-democracy intellectuals, while advocating democracy on the one hand, engaged in the undemocratic “revolutionary criticisms” on the other. Their depiction of the exponents of neo-authoritarianism as “rats running across the street” was reminiscent of the “big-character posters” of the Cultural Revolution.²⁹ Chen suggested that the two sides, particularly the pro-democratic one, should adhere to a norm of rationality and proper academic debate.³⁰

Chen Ziming was certainly not an advocate of neo-authoritarianism. In his second essay, he criticized it from a methodological perspective, in which the influence of Karl Popper was evident. Chen demonstrated that the methods used by the neo-authoritarians were historical determinism and utopianism. First, they treated democracy as an end, not a process, means or dynamic mechanism of social change, arguing that neo-authoritarianism was a universal “political pattern” in the “transition period of modernization” that was inevitable on the road towards democracy. Secondly, neo-authoritarianism was not an operational or procedural design for political reform, but a thought experiment, as it presupposed the so-called “duality of social life,” that is, the separation of business and politics. It was apparent that this presupposition did not match reality: in the existing system economy and politics were integrated. Thirdly, the

27. See the *Weekly*, 5 March 1989, pp. 5–6, 12 March, p. 5, 26 March, pp. 5, 7.

28. See the *Weekly*, 26 March 1989, p. 7, 9 April, p. 5, 23 April, p. 7.

29. This depiction was presented by Xu Liangying, a member of the “democratic elite” and an unremitting fighter against any forms of elitism. See his “Anti-democratic counter-current in China,” which was published in the *Herald*, 8 May 1989, p. 18. As a Chinese saying says, “when a rat runs across the street, everybody cries, ‘kill it!’”

30. See the *Weekly*, 30 April 1989, p. 5. This article has been never mentioned in any existing studies of the neo-authoritarianism debate. It also has not yet been translated into English.

proponents of neo-authoritarianism hoped that the separation of politics and economy and the marketization of economic life could be promoted by a "political strong man." But Chen Ziming was worried about "whether the political strong man will have the necessary authority vested in him by neo-authoritarianism to realize his historical mission; whether the political strong man really is modernization-orientated; whether the emergence of the political strong man is beneficial to the social order and administrative authority needed for the modernization process; and whether there are at this moment favourable conditions for the emergence of a political strong man."³¹

Chen himself supported the middle position between neo-authoritarianism and radical democracy: the elitist democracy.³² This position was held by many authors of the *Weekly*, in particular Chen Ziming's and Wang Juntao's friend Sun Liping, a lecturer in sociology at Peking University and a part-time researcher of the BSEI. In a very long article published on 4 June, Sun suggested that elitist democracy should be the short-term goal of China's democratization, as "a stage that cannot be sidestepped in the process of democratization."³³

Probing into the cultural aspects of China's modernization. The *Weekly* was specifically concerned with the social and cultural aspects of the economic reforms. Table 3 shows that, in the first quarter, 12.4 per cent of the total space was devoted to the discussion of cultural issues. This figure underwent a slight decline over time, but still averaged 9.9 per cent.

Soon after the BSEI's take-over of the editorship of the *Weekly*, Chinese intellectual circles and media were caught in a cultural whirlwind following the broadcast of the iconoclast television series *River Elegy*, which was the climax of a grand ongoing debate over cultural issues, known as the "culture fever." During this debate, which attracted a vast number of Chinese intellectuals, an old question raised by May Fourth intellectuals 70 years before on the relationship between tradition and modernity aroused wide attention once again. The "cultural fever" also resembled the New Culture Movement of the May Fourth era in that it gave rise to various kinds of anti-traditionalism and neo-traditionalism.

Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao were not active participants in the "cultural fever." Nevertheless their views on Chinese traditional culture were shaped by it, and, to a great extent, they in turn influenced the cultural debates in the *Weekly*. Chen and Wang disagreed with both the radical anti-traditionalism of which Liu Xiaobo was the most vocal

31. See the *Weekly*, 30 April 1989, p. 7; also see FBIS-CHI 89-095 (18 May 1989), pp. 83-86.

32. See Chen Ziming, *Chen Ziming fansi shinian gaige* (Chen Ziming's Reflections on the Ten-year Reforms) (Hong Kong: Dangdai yuekan, 1992), pp. 232-38, 265-274.

33. See the *Weekly*, 4 June 1989, pp. 6 and 7; also see JPRS-CAR 89-071 (7 July 1989), pp. 3-6.

exponent³⁴ and the proposal for total Westernization advocated by both Liu and Fang Lizhi. But Chen and Wang agreed that China's traditional culture lacked certain elements that were indispensable to a "modern cultural pattern."

In the first post-takeover issue of the *Weekly*, Wang Juntao published a short essay in which he held that China's economic reform and development had to be underpinned by a specific pattern of the so-called "economic culture," which is epitomized by the conception of "economic man," that is, a type of person with a utilitarian, secularist and rational consciousness. The "economic man" as a norm of social behaviour could guide individuals and enterprises to behave correctly in a market system.³⁵ It is not difficult to see that Wang's conception of the "economic culture" is an economic version of Almond and Verba's "civic cultures," combined with the views of Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Max Weber.

The content of the cultural column of the *Weekly* was as diverse as the "cultural fever" itself, although the dominant position was elitism. The elitistic orientation was best expressed in Yang Fan and Jian Ye's article entitled "China's modernization and the ideological trend of populism." This full-page article argued against populism, which, the authors claimed, was deeply rooted in both Chinese traditional egalitarianism and Russian Marxism, and manifested in the post-May Fourth leftist political and social movements led by the Chinese intelligentsia. According to the authors, the populist intellectuals only formed opposition parties, which played a critical role and had a negative effect. Only elitism could have a positive and constructive effect. The pillars of China's reforms and modernization should be the intellectual, political and entrepreneurial elite.³⁶

The Economics Weekly in the People's Movement of 1989

The death of Hu Yaobang on 15 April 1989 sparked off the People's Movement, in which Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao were deeply involved. At the same time, the *Weekly*, as a forum of independent intellectuals, expressed non-conformist but rational opinions, even after the declaration of martial law on 20 May. On 4 June, the day of the crackdown, a signed essay was published on the front page of the *Weekly*, which called upon all sides to remain calm, in particular the government (see Table 6). At that moment, the *Weekly's* vice-editor-in-chief Gao Yu had been arrested, and Wang and Chen were preparing to leave Beijing to avoid arrest. Unfortunately, the *Weekly* has been almost completely

34. See Liu Xiaobo, *Mori xingcunzhe de dubai: guanyu wo he liusi* (*The Monologue of a Survivor in the Doomsday: I and the June Fourth Incident*) (Taipei: Shihao wenhua chubanshi, 1992), p. 155.

35. See the *Weekly*, 20 March 1988, p. 6.

36. See the *Weekly*, 22 January 1989, p. 5.

Table 6: The *Economics Weekly's* Responses to the Tiananmen Movement of 1989

<i>Date</i>	<i>Authorship</i>	<i>Title</i>
7 May 1989	Commentator	To achieve political stability in social progress*
14 May 1989	Fei Yuan	The student strike quietening down and the situation tending to calm
	Editors	An on-the-spot report of the Beijing student strike
	Wang Xiaotian**	Reconstructing the civilized model
21 May 1989	Commentator	Written on the fifth day after the university students' hunger strike started*
	Yu Guangyuan	An important page on the history of the Republic The May 16th statement (with signatures) The letter of appeal by the CUES The emergency letter of appeal to the CCP's Central Committee, the State Council, and the Standing Committee of the National Congress by well-known figures in social sciences Correctly dealing with the social divergence by abandoning the old model of "class struggle"
	Cao Siyuan	The way out lying in actively speeding up the political reform
4 June 1989	Chen Fei	China: calm is needed***

Notes:

*These two essays were written by He Jiadong, Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming. ** Wang Xiaotian was a pen-name of Wang Juntao. ***This essay was drafted by an editor attached to the Workers' Publishing House, and finalized by He Jiadong.

ignored in recent studies of the role of the media in the Tiananmen movement.³⁷

During the early stage of the movement, the *Weekly* was very cautious. In April, no pieces related to the situation at that moment were published. After the successful demonstrations on 4 May, the day of 70th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, the political atmosphere seemed to be relaxing. On 7 May, the *Weekly* published, on the front page, an import-

37. For example, see Seth Faison, "The changing role of the Chinese media," in Saich, *The Chinese People's Movement*, pp. 155–161. Merle Goldman in her *Sowing the Seeds* has written a great deal on the *Weekly*, but has not presented a systematic analysis of its response to the movement.

ant article entitled "To achieve political stability in social progress," written by He Jiadong, Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming. The article asked the government not to treat the students' strikes as a source of political turmoil harming China's modernization, but to pay particular attention to the rich and valuable political information they conveyed on working for political reform, promoting anti-corruption measures, mediating the conflict of different interests within society and establishing a stable situation via a new way of political thinking. In a moderate tone, this article reflected what Chen, Wang and their colleagues had learned from Western theories on political modernization, in particular Huntington's theory of political institutionalization. The article argued that the formation and institutionalization of the bottom-to-top channels of political communication and participation are the key to effective mitigation of social conflicts.

This Huntington-type argument of political institutionalization was reiterated in the 14 May *Weekly* by a front-page essay written by Fei Yuan, executive director of the BSEI. He stated that although the student strikes were quietening down and the situation was becoming more relaxed, the problems remained unsettled. According to Fei, the fundamental way to achieve political stability was "to endow intellectuals with the rights to conduct public, institutionalized criticisms and evaluations of the policy measures in regard to the national economy and the people's livelihood, and to give suggestions," and in so doing, "intellectuals and experts could design feasible plans for carrying out genuine reforms and for promoting the cause of modernization."³⁸

On the fifth page of the issue, Wang Juntao published an essay entitled "Reconstructing the civilized model," which has been widely neglected by researchers, probably because Wang used a pen-name. In the same style as Wang's other writings, this essay, nearly half a page in length, summed up the appeal of the student movement, and pointed out the correct direction for the future, namely, the establishment of a "new civilized model" which was to engage in "the clarification and determination of property rights, the making of a perfect legal system, the establishment of democratic constitutionalism in a modern sense, and the promotion of the [modernized] spiritual cultures like humanitarianism, rationalism, scientism and utilitarianism." Wang's elitist thinking was very apparent in this essay. He repeated a viewpoint he had already expressed in the *Weekly* many times, that intellectuals should take the responsibility for reconstructing this "new civilized model":

Chinese intellectuals should renew their theoretical thinking that still consists of old conceptual frameworks, approaches, and viewpoints. They should clarify the fundamental values in and principles for the development of human society; present the objective descriptions of China's current situation and conduct an evaluation based on the values and principles they have found; and work out realistic, feasible, perfect,

38. See the *Weekly*, 14 May 1989, p. 1.

mutually integrated and operational plans. To fulfil their cultural duties, intellectuals should rapidly establish rules for the intellectual community, and insist on a rational spirit; however emotional the society, the intellectual community should remain calm, rationally grasping the situation and amiably exchanging ideas. We should not let the intellectual circles be demoralized by the vulgar mood existing in other spheres of social life, but rather remould it in a rational spirit. We should be opposed to mutual hostility, we should get along with each other tolerantly, and we should reconstruct China not only in regard to civilized thoughts, but also in civilized manners.³⁹

Wang probably drafted this essay on 9 May since the printing date of this issue was 10 May. However, just when he and others felt relieved to see the increasing calming of the student movement, there erupted the hunger strike, which has been viewed as a turning-point leading to the radicalization of the student and mass movement.⁴⁰ From 13 May onwards, Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao took a new political stance, giving up the position of maintaining detachment and becoming actively involved in the student movement.⁴¹

In the *Weekly's* 21 May issue, seven pieces related to the People's Movement (see Table 6) were published. Among them, two pieces are of specific significance to this analysis because they to a considerable extent reflected the opinions of the *Weekly's* editors. One was the commentator's article entitled "Written on the fifth day after the university students' hunger strike started," published as the lead item on the front page and written by He Jiadong, Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao. It strongly criticized the government for acting in an old-fashioned way dating from the revolutionary wars and for looking at social dissatisfaction in terms of class struggle. While accusing the government of lacking responsibility, the article also cautioned all sides against the dangerous spreading of radical behaviour and irrational mentality. It called upon scholars "to come up with convincing arguments, explain the reasons for the crisis and how society should proceed, and produce feasible programmes. Based on scholars' works, the government will make a final decision." It appealed on the one hand to university students "to persist in rationality and adopt a wise and flexible attitude," and "to end their hunger strike so as to break the deadlock," and demanded on the other that "an emergency session of the National People's Congress be called immediately and the student movement be assessed in accordance with the principles defined by the Constitution and the legitimate procedures." The argument raised by Chen and Wang a couple of months before that democracy should be ushered from the street into the Great Hall of the People was restated.⁴² The last point of their proposals was echoed in Cao Siyuan's article, published on the eighth page. Cao

39. See the *Weekly*, 14 May 1989, p. 5.

40. See Tang Tsou, "The Tiananmen tragedy," pp. 302–316.

41. From the angles of the rational choice and new institutionalism, I present a detailed analysis of the involvement in the People's Movement by Chinese intellectuals, including Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, in my forthcoming article "Towards the new institutional pluralism: an analysis of the intellectual groups and their relations to the state in China (1979–1989)."

42. See the *Weekly*, 21 May 1989, p. 1.

suggested that the Party should actively promote his proposed "socialist parliamentary democracy," carrying out a public debate on the problem of the student movement in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.⁴³

Subsequent events proved that the editors had overestimated the possible role of the National People's Congress. Just one day before the publication of their articles, the Li Peng administration, placing itself above the National People's Congress, declared martial law. Due to stringent censorship, there was no item related to the movement in the *Weekly* of 28 May. However, a week later, a signed article entitled "China: calm is needed" was published on 4 June. Written by a young editor from the Worker's Publishing House, its main content was determined by He, Chen and Wang. It once again required the government to analyse calmly the demands expressed by the students' and mass protests to punish the spreading corruption within the party-state, and to employ democratic and legal ways of alleviating the conflict between various social interests. The authors had obviously foreseen the possibility of a violent crackdown. It seemed they were doing their best to issue a serious warning to the whole society.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The emergence of the non-official newspaper *Economics Weekly* in Communist China was unusual. In the late 1980s, Chen Ziming, Wang Juntao and their colleagues, a number of middle-aged and young political scientists, established a non-official institute BSESI, which took over the editorship of the *Weekly* from the CUES, a state-corporatistic organization. From March 1988 onward, the *Weekly* was actually controlled by Chen Ziming's BSESI, although it was nominally published as the official newspaper of the CUES.

Under the BSESI, the *Weekly* became an influential independent Chinese newspaper. Its distinctiveness resulted from its non-official nature. Compared with the *Herald*, an influential and important semi-official newspaper, the *Weekly* maintained a relatively detached stance from the factional struggles between the pro-reform groups and the conservative cliques. It published numerous essays and interviews providing critical reflections on the past decade's process of reforms as well as viewpoints from the economic, political, social, cultural and historical angles. Although its content was pluralistic, the keynote of its reflections was highly anti-populist and elitist. It criticized the populist trend and the radical democratic attitude among the Chinese intelligentsia, and emphasized that the role of the "genuine" intellectual elite in China's modernization should be technocratic.

During the Tiananmen Movement of 1989, the editors of the *Weekly*

43. *Ibid.* p. 8. For a brief discussion of Cao Siyuan's proposal of the so-called "socialist parliamentary democracy," see Andrew J. Nathan, *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 172.

44. See the *Weekly*, 4 June 1989, p. 1.

tried to play a double role: both as critical commentators of the party-state's policies, and as interpreters of the implications of the student movement. In several of the *Weekly's* special comments on the situation, the firm conviction that the intellectual elite should and could play a pivotal role not only in resolving the crisis but also in building a new and civilized institutional model for China's future was reiterated by Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao. In a sense, the Tiananmen tragedy and the personal fates of Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao proved that the institutional room for independent intellectuals was still small, even after ten years of reforms. Intellectuals could be independent for a short time, but would soon be faced with the need to choose between entering into the establishment or becoming a dissident. The members of the Chen-Wang group chose the former, but most of them have unintentionally become dissidents. Some of them (such as Wang Juntao) have been forced into exile.