

I HAVE NO ENEMIES: MY FINAL STATEMENT

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by

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Read by Liv Ullmann

In the course of my life, for more than half a century, June 1989 was the major turning point. Up to that point, I was a member of the first class to enter university when college entrance examinations were reinstated following the Cultural Revolution (Class of '77). From BA to MA and on to a PhD, my academic career was all smooth sailing. Upon receiving my degrees, I stayed on to teach at Beijing Normal University. As a teacher, I was well received by the students. At the same time, I was a public intellectual, writing articles and books that created quite a stir during the 1980s, frequently receiving invitations to give talks around the country, and going abroad as a visiting scholar upon invitation from Europe and America. What I demanded of myself was this: whether as a person or as a writer, I would lead a life of honesty, responsibility and dignity. After that, because I had returned from the US to take part in the 1989 Movement, I was thrown into prison for "the crime of counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement." I also lost my beloved lectern and could no longer publish essays or give talks in China. Merely for publishing different political views and taking part in a peaceful democracy movement, a teacher lost his lectern, a writer lost his right to publish and a public intellectual lost the opportunity to give talks publicly. This is a tragedy, both for me personally and for a China that has already seen thirty years of Reform and Opening Up.

When I think about it, my most dramatic experiences after June Fourth have been, surprisingly, associated with courts: My two opportunities to address the public have both been provided by trial sessions at the Beijing Municipal Intermediate People's Court, once in January 1991, and again today. Although the crimes I have been charged with on the two occasions are different in name, their real substance is basically the same – both are speech crimes.

Twenty years have passed, but the ghosts of June Fourth have not yet been laid to rest. Upon release from Qincheng Prison in 1991, I, who had been led onto the path of political dissent by the psychological chains of June Fourth, lost the right to speak publicly in my own country and could only speak through the foreign media. Because of this, I was subjected to year-round monitoring, kept under residential surveillance (May 1995 to

January 1996) and sent to Reeducation-Through-Labour (October 1996 to October 1999). And now I have been once again shoved into the dock by the enemy mentality of the regime. But I still want to say to this regime, which is depriving me of my freedom, that I stand by the convictions I expressed in my “June Second Hunger Strike Declaration” twenty years ago – I have no enemies and no hatred. None of the police who monitored, arrested and interrogated me, none of the prosecutors who indicted me and none of the judges who judged me are my enemies. Although there is no way I can accept your monitoring, arrests, indictments and verdicts, I respect your professions and your integrity, including those of the two prosecutors, Zhang Rongge and Pan Xueqing, who are now bringing charges against me on behalf of the prosecution. During interrogation on December 3, I could sense your respect and your good faith.

Hatred can rot away at a person’s intelligence and conscience. Enemy mentality will poison the spirit of a nation, incite cruel mortal struggles, destroy a society’s tolerance and humanity, and hinder a nation’s progress toward freedom and democracy. That is why I hope to be able to transcend my personal experiences as I look upon our nation’s development and social change, to counter the regime’s hostility with utmost goodwill, and to dispel hatred with love.

Everyone knows that it was Reform and Opening Up that brought about our country’s development and social change. In my view, Reform and Opening Up began with the abandonment of the “using class struggle as guiding principle” government policy of the Mao era and, in its place, a commitment to economic development and social harmony. The process of abandoning the “philosophy of struggle” was also a process of gradual weakening of the enemy mentality and elimination of the psychology of hatred, and a process of squeezing out the “wolf’s milk” that had seeped into human nature. It was this process that provided a relaxed climate, at home and abroad, for Reform and Opening Up, gentle and humane grounds for restoring mutual affection among people and peaceful coexistence among those with different interests and values, thereby providing encouragement in keeping with humanity for the bursting forth of creativity and the restoration of compassion among our countrymen. One could say that relinquishing the “anti-imperialist and anti-revisionist” stance in foreign relations and “class struggle” at home has been the basic premise that has enabled Reform and Opening Up to continue to this very day. The market trend in the economy, the diversification of culture, and the gradual shift in social order toward the rule of law have all benefited from the weakening of the “enemy mentality.” Even in the political arena, where progress is slowest, the weakening of the enemy mentality has led to an ever-growing tolerance for social pluralism on the part of the regime and substantial decrease in the force of persecution of political dissidents, and the official designation of the 1989 Movement has also been changed from “turmoil and riot” to “political disturbance.” The weakening of the enemy mentality has paved the way for the regime to gradually accept the universality of human rights. In [1997 and] 1998 the

Chinese government made a commitment to sign two major United Nations international human rights covenants, signalling China's acceptance of universal human rights standards. In 2004, the National People's Congress (NPC) amended the Constitution, writing into the Constitution for the first time that "the state respects and guarantees human rights," signalling that human rights have already become one of the fundamental principles of China's rule of law. At the same time, the current regime puts forth the ideas of "putting people first" and "creating a harmonious society," signalling progress in the CPC's concept of rule.

I have also been able to feel this progress on the macro level through my own personal experience since my arrest.

Although I continue to maintain that I am innocent and that the charges against me are unconstitutional, during the one plus year since I have lost my freedom, I have been locked up at two different locations and gone through four pre-trial police interrogators, three prosecutors and two judges, but in handling my case, they have not been disrespectful, overstepped time limitations, or tried to force a confession. Their manner has been moderate and reasonable; moreover, they have often shown goodwill. On June 23, I was moved from a location where I was kept under residential surveillance to the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau's No. 1 Detention Centre, known as "Beikan." During my six months at Beikan, I saw improvements in prison management.

In 1996, I spent time at the old Beikan (located at Banbuqiao). Compared to the old Beikan of more than a decade ago, the present Beikan is a huge improvement, both in terms of the "hardware" – the facilities – and the "software" – the management. In particular, the humane management pioneered by the new Beikan, based on respect for the rights and integrity of detainees, has brought flexible management to bear on every aspect of the behaviour of the correctional staff, and has found expression in the "comforting broadcasts," Repentance magazine, and music before meals, on waking and at bedtime. This style of management allows detainees to experience a sense of dignity and warmth, and stirs their consciousness in maintaining prison order and opposing the bullies among inmates. Not only has it provided a humane living environment for detainees, it has also greatly improved the environment for their litigation to take place and their state of mind. I've had close contact with correctional officer Liu Zheng, who has been in charge of me in my cell, and his respect and care for detainees could be seen in every detail of his work, permeating his every word and deed, and giving one a warm feeling. It was perhaps my good fortune to have got to know this sincere, honest, conscientious, and kind correctional officer during my time at Beikan.

It is precisely because of such convictions and personal experience that I firmly believe that China's political progress will not stop, and I, filled with optimism, look forward to the advent of a future free China. For there is no force that can put an end to the human quest for freedom, and China will in the end become a nation ruled by law, where human rights reign supreme. I

also hope that this sort of progress can be reflected in this trial as I await the impartial ruling of the collegial bench – a ruling that will withstand the test of history.

If I may be permitted to say so, the most fortunate experience of these past twenty years has been the selfless love I have received from my wife, Liu Xia. She could not be present as an observer in court today, but I still want to say to you, my dear, that I firmly believe your love for me will remain the same as it has always been. Throughout all these years that I have lived without freedom, our love was full of bitterness imposed by outside circumstances, but as I savour its aftertaste, it remains boundless. I am serving my sentence in a tangible prison, while you wait in the intangible prison of the heart. Your love is the sunlight that leaps over high walls and penetrates the iron bars of my prison window, stroking every inch of my skin, warming every cell of my body, allowing me to always keep peace, openness and brightness in my heart, and filling every minute of my time in prison with meaning. My love for you, on the other hand, is so full of remorse and regret that it at times makes me stagger under its weight. I am an insensate stone in the wilderness, whipped by fierce wind and torrential rain, so cold that no one dares touch me. But my love is solid and sharp, capable of piercing through any obstacle. Even if I were crushed into powder, I would still use my ashes to embrace you.

My dear, with your love I can calmly face my impending trial, having no regrets about the choices I've made and optimistically awaiting tomorrow. I look forward to [the day] when my country is a land with freedom of expression, where the speech of every citizen will be treated equally well; where different values, ideas, beliefs and political views... can both compete with each other and peacefully coexist; where both majority and minority views will be equally guaranteed, and where the political views that differ from those currently in power, in particular, will be fully respected and protected; where all political views will spread out under the sun for people to choose from, where every citizen can state political views without fear and where no one can under any circumstances suffer political persecution for voicing divergent political views. I hope that I will be the last victim of China's endless literary inquisitions and that from now on no one will be incriminated because of speech.

Freedom of expression is the foundation of human rights, the source of humanity, and the mother of truth. To strangle freedom of speech is to trample on human rights, stifle humanity and suppress truth.

In order to exercise the right to freedom of speech conferred by the Constitution, one should fulfil the social responsibility of a Chinese citizen. There is nothing criminal in anything I have done. [But] if charges are brought against me because of this, I have no complaints.

Thank you, everyone.

Translation: Human Rights in China (HRIC), based on a translation by J. Latourelle.

Portrait photo of Xiaobo by photographer Bi Yimin.