

STRAINS AMONG THE LEADERS

On the morning of May 13 Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang and PRC President Yang Shangkun went to Deng Xiaoping's home and reported on their recent work. Yang was Deng Xiaoping's closest confidant and business manager within the leadership. Zhao explained the positions he had taken at several Politburo meetings.

Excerpts from memoranda of conversations

supplied by a friend of Yang Shangkun who

cannot be further identified:

Zhao Ziyang: ... I've noticed that this movement has two particular features we need to pay attention to: First, the student slogans all support the Constitution; they favor democracy and oppose corruption. These demands are basically in line with what the Party and government advocate, so we cannot reject them out of hand. Second, the number of demonstrators and supporters is enormous, and they include people from all parts of society. So I think we have to keep an eye on the majority and give approval to the mainstream view of the majority if we want to calm this thing down.

Deng Xiaoping: It was obvious from the start that a tiny minority was stirring up the majority, fanning the emotions of the great majority.

Zhao Ziyang: That's why I think we have to separate the broad masses of students and their supporters from the tiny minority [who are] using the movement to fish in troubled waters, stir up trouble, and attack the Party and socialism. We have to rely on guidance. We have to pursue multilevel, multichannel dialogue, get in touch with people, and build understanding. We mustn't let the conflicts get nasty if we expect things to settle down quickly.

Deng Xiaoping: Dialogue is fine, but the point is to solve the problem. We can't be led around by the nose. This movement's dragged on too long, almost a month now. The senior comrades are getting worried. ... We have to be decisive. I've said over and over that we need stability if we're going to develop. How can we progress if things are in an utter mess?

Yang Shangkun: Gorbachev will be here in two days, and today I hear that the students are going to announce a hunger strike. They obviously want to turn up the heat and get a lot of international attention.

Deng Xiaoping: Tiananmen is the symbol of the People's Republic of China. The Square has to be in order when Gorbachev comes. We have to maintain our international image. What do we look like if the Square's a mess?

Zhao Ziyang: I'll stress the importance of the Gorbachev visit one more time in the media this afternoon.