

May 4th vs june 4th movement essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources.

The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material. Journal of Contemporary China (1997), 6(14), 79-99 May 4th and June 4th Compared: a sociological study of Chinese social movements CHIDING HAY* There has been much talk about a link between the May 4th and June 4th Movements, but there is rarely a systematic study of it.

This paper compares and contrasts the two movements in terms of structural conduciveness, the acceptability of goals, organizational effectiveness, and the independent nature of social movements. It demonstrates that these four variables work in concert to determine the success or failure of any such movement. The Hundred Flowers Movement is examined to strangle ten ethnocentric nepotisms. In the end, I discuss ten legacies of these intellectual movements and offer a few comments on the future of the Chinese democracy movement.

Historical and comparative methods are used in the analysis. It is hoped that an exploration of the genesis and direction of these movements will help us

understand how Chinese social movements have effected and will continue to effect social change in China. Downloaded by [New York university] at 23:28 07 May 2013 This paper is a historical and comparative analysis of the May 4th and June 4th Movements, but I will also examine the Hundred Flowers Movement as a test of our heretical model.

A full treatment of any social movement may entail a study of the causes of collective behavior, the stages of development, and its decline, involving many factors that determine each outcome along the way. L This article, however, analyzes only four variables that seem to contribute significantly to the success or failure of the these intellectual movements. The variables are structural conduciveness in the political, economic and educational spheres, the acceptability of the goals, organizational effectiveness, and the independent nature of the movement.

The basic hypothesis is that these variables worked in concert to * Chiding Hay received his Ph. D. In Sociology from the Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, and is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Whittier College. He had his M. A. Degree in English from East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, and had been teaching at Huber Teacher's University before he came to the US in 1988. While in China, he translated, together with a friend of his, Line You-tang's My Country and My People into Chinese.

This new translation was first published in 1988 n China, and the complete edition was published later in 1995. This article is based on a paper the author delivered at ' Cultural China and Chinese traditional culture: a

symposium on current Chinese statue's East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, May 1991. But it incorporated new studies and thoughts in the past few years. The author would like to thank S. H. Aaron's, the late historical sociologist, for his help and encouragement at the start of the project. He also thanks the anonymous reviewer and Editor Sunshine Zoo for their critical comments. Special thanks to Judith C.

Protest and Eva H. Richter, whose editorial comments and weighing of every word greatly helped in the final edit. Please direct correspondence to Chiding Hay, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, Whittier College, Whittier, CA 90608, USA; e-mail: aha @ Whittier. Deed. 1 . For various theoretical assumptions, see the works on social movements cited hereafter in this article. 1067-0564/971140079-21 0 1997 Journals oxford Ltd CHIDING HAY determine the success or failure of these social movements. I will first briefly define the two movements, and then I will discuss the influence of the above variables in ACH of them.

Thirdly, I will use the Hundred Flowers Movement as an example to further illustrate my theoretical argument. Lastly, I offer a few comments on Chinese social movements. The methods I use will be historical and comparative. The oenology AT ten movements nee May TN Ana June TN Movements can can De defined in both a narrower and a broader sense. The current paper will focus on the movements in their narrower sense although the broader movements will also be discussed when necessary. The May 4th Movement in its narrower sense refers to an incident that took place in 1919 in Peking.

On May 4th of that year, students took to the streets to protest the government's humiliating decision to grant Japan special privileges in China, and to demand the resignation of three leading officials responsible for the diplomatic negotiations. The ensuing strikes by students, workers, merchants and others all over the country lasted from 4 May to 10 June, when the three officials' resignations were finally accepted by the government. In its broader sense, the May 4th Movement refers to the whole period from 1915 to 1921, a period that includes both the incident itself and the ' Renaissance', or ' Enlightenment', that ricketed it.

The broader May 4th Movement was chiefly characterized by the New Literature Movement and the New Culture Movement, and is mostly remembered by its effort to advance Mr.. Democracy and Mr.. Science. 2 The June 4th Movement is more generally called the ' 1989 democratic movement', and only occasionally the June 4th Movement. I have adopted the latter name for purposes of comparison and contrast. In the narrower sense, it refers to the democratic movement that lasted from 15 April 1989, when Huh Yapping, the former Party General Secretary, died, to the 4 June sacred in 1989, when the government cracked down on the student movement.

In its broader sense, however, the June 4th Movement can be referred to as the second Chinese Renaissance or Enlightenment, displaying as its main appeals strikingly the same goals of democracy and science as the May 4th Movement. It is a movement that began in the sass and has lasted to the present time, and it represents mainly a striving for liberalizing and demagnification of Chinese society. 3 The Hundred Flowers Movement in

1957 was launched by the ICP and appropriated by intellectuals and others who were critical of the ICP dictatorship.

It had a relatively short life, due to the severe suppression and isolation of the so-called ' Rightists', and therefore is not generally distinguished into narrower and broader senses. But during this movement the intellectuals' appeals to democracy and freedom again resonated with those of the broader May 4th Movement; in the 2. For this definition of the movement, see Chow TTS-tutus, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 1. 3. For a history of the June 4th Movement, see Merle Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press, 1994); Ill Banyan, ' Tell the World' (New York: Random House, Inc. , 1989); *Attainment Ye Juju Baa Juju* (Attainment 1989) (Taiwan: Lillian Publishing House, 1989); Sheen Tong, *Almost a Revolution* (Boston: Houghton Muffin Company, 1990) as well as reminiscences by democracy activists in *China Spring*, *Beijing Spring*, and *Democratic China*, all of which are published in Chinese in the US. Downloaded by [New York University] at 23: 28 07 May 2013 MAY 4TH AND JUNE 4TH COMPARED same way, ten June TN Movement resonates Walt these former intellectual movements. N ten democratic appeals AT

Don Structural conduciveness We will first examine the importance of structural conduciveness, one of our four influential variables in the social movements under discussion. According to Smeller, structural conduciveness refers to ' certain structural characteristics . [that] permit or encourage

episodes of collective behavior'. He further divides conditions of conduciveness into their economic, political, expressive and religious spheres. 4 In this paper, however, we concentrate on the political, economic and educational aspects, three of the most significant in both periods.

Structural conduciveness: the political picture As one might recall, the May 4th period was characterized by the lack of a central authority that could command the country; it was an era of warlords who fought one another constantly. A central government still existed in Peking, 5 but it had three presidents in the three years from 1916 to 1919, including one restoration of the Munch boy emperor to the throne by Change Hush, the warlord of Annum Province, which ended in twelve days. Meanwhile, in 1917 Sun Hatseen had established a rival military government in Canton to oppose the Peking regime.

It was no doubt a time of chaos and ferment, a time when there was no De facto central government with authority over the entire country, so that not only the provincial governments but also the media and ordinary citizens could dissent from the Peking regime, as in the example of the outcry over the notorious Twenty-One Demands. 6 It is this political volatility, a kind of pluralism, that insured when students were up against the government, they would have a sympathetic ear from the opposition parties of, for example, Committing and Chanting, even several warlords like We Pet-if and Change Icing-hay, and anarchists like Gang You-wee.

The Chancellors of thirteen of the universities and colleges involved took responsibility for rescuing the student prisoners; the Minister of Education

refused to sign the order to close schools and instead presented his resignation. Newspapers and magazines, citizen's societies and chambers of commerce all over the country showed their support for the students; merchants even threatened to withhold taxes if the government remained stubborn. An informal coalition of various social and military forces was formed. It is when faced with all this rebellion that the 4. Neil J.

Smeller, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: The Free Press of Glance, 1963), up. 15-17. 5. Now called Beijing. For names in the May 4th Movement and the Hundred Flowers Movement, we use the Wade-Giles Romanization in order to be consistent with the historical literature on the period. Otherwise, pinyin is used. 6. For a good account of the May 4th Movement, including the political and economic conditions preceding and following it, see Chow TTS-Tutus, *The May Fourth Movement*; and Penn Mining, *We Is Young Shih (A history of the May 4th Movement)* (Beijing: People's Press, 1984). Ferment finally accepted the students' demands to oust the officials responsible for the diplomatic disaster. Such open, confrontational and unanimous protests against the government, such unified support for the students by various organizations and institutions throughout the country were, however, very much mitigated in the June 4th period seventy years later. Indeed, the later period was characterized by much less openness, although there was enough of it to enable a number of democratic movements to take hold.

Since the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of ICP in 1978, what once was water-tight ideological intro of the Party was loosened and 'practice' became the sole criterion of truth'. The National People's Congress (NP) became a bit more than just a rubber stamp and was now no longer

able to pass a bill 'unanimously' as it could in the past. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (SPEC) seemed more outspoken than before. In 1979, a completely new Electoral Law was adopted, providing for competitive elections: there could be more candidates than places to be filled in any election. The next year, 1980, in time for the election of local party representatives, students in Beijing University were able to launch an election campaign, in which Huh Ping could debate freedom of speech, Wang Juntas could launch a critique of Mao, Fang Iguana could discuss democracy, Ghana IL the role of the middle class, and Yang Backup socialist commodity. 8 Many of these student activists have become leading figures in the democracy movement in China.

In addition, the Party leadership was to some extent divided between more political lenience, a view held by Huh Yapping and later Zoo Gazing, and tight totalitarian control, a view represented chiefly by Eden and IL Penn. This split was one of the conditions that determined the fates of various mini movements before the June 4th massacre, including the 1979 Democracy Wall Movement, the debate over humanism and alienation, and the wave of academic democracy and the beginning of some press freedom in much of the sass. Even informal gatherings were allowed.

By the end of 1986, students in southern China were beginning to create posters and taking to the streets to show their grievances against corruption. Comparing the two periods for political openness, however, we will find that the June 4th period enjoyed only a very limited freedom. The only viable opposition to strict totalitarian control was from within the Party, from softeners like Huh and Zoo. There was no pressure from rival governments, <https://assignbuster.com/may-4th-vs-june-4th-movement-essay/>

or warlords or any other social institutions as there was in the May 4th period.

At the end of the narrower June 4th Movement, intellectuals and even some of the NP members petitioned the NP Standing Committee to hold an emergency conference to repeal martial law and resolve the situation, but they received no response. The NP resumed its 7. In the SPEC conference in March 1989, for example, Xx Simian, a representative from Hong Kong, leveled harsh criticisms against the ICP. He believed that stability could be achieved only through a true democracy. He wanted Eden to learn from Chiang Jingo, former president of the Republic of China. In Allan, Ana Tit ten Dan on ten parties Ana ten press.

He suggested the Conference should admit people like Fang Liz and Yang Jiao. (See World Journal, (25 March 1989).) A speech of this kind was absolutely unprecedented, though it was never published in the press in China. 8. For a historical account and some of the original election campaign speeches, see Huh Ping, Wang Juntas, et al. , Kuwait: Abide Queen Weaning (To cultivate: the documents on the student movements at Beijing University) (Taipei: Funny Said Press, 1990). 82 role as a rubber stamp, and so did the SPEC.

The openness had made the movement possible, but its limitedness contributed to its abrupt end. Structural conduciveness: the economic picture During the May 4th period, China's self-sufficient agrarian economy began to change. Particularly after the outbreak of World War I, China entered its so-called Golden Age of industrial history. In the major cities, the rich began to shift their investments from land to industrial, commercial and

uncial enterprises, new Joint-stock corporations set up to foster industry began to grow faster, and new merchants, industrialists, and urban workers began to emerge.

All these changes were, however, not without strains. As the agrarian economy began to give way to a modern economic system, Japan increased its influence in China, and other powers began to return to the Chinese markets. As a result, conflicts between native and foreign economic forces tended to be acute. When the news of the massive arrests and the maltreatment of students in the month following the May the incident spread across the country, merchants, industrialists, and urban workers began to join the pressure for a strike. It was also the first workers' political and patriotic strike in Chinese history. Beggars, thieves, prostitutes, and sing-song girls also went on strike. The point should be made that the participants in the strike went out of their way to maintain order and to fight for freedom within the limits of the law, as was also the case in 1989. Hobos, robbers, and even underworld gangs and societies such as Icing-hung Pang all expressed loyalty to the movement and worked to keep peace and order.

An association including merchant and labor organizations, the press and the student unions was established. Thus, in addition to the political diversity, an economic diversity existed at the time which made it possible for the economic strata of society, including merchants, workers and industrialists, to turn quickly into a political force against the government. Interestingly enough, the later June 4th period was also characterized by the beginnings of agrarian reform and a surge of industrialization.

A contract responsibility system replaced the overly rigid commune system in the countryside. Peasants still did not own the land, but they did have some freedom as to what to plant and how much to sell and in what way. Furthermore, village township enterprises had bloomed to account for 51.4% of the value of the total rural output. In the cities, even though state-run enterprises were still ten Dockland AT ten economy, collective Ana Uninominal enterprises In Industry and commerce had also flourished.

The urban self-employed already numbered 5 million. 10 Foreign capital had rushed into China to buy land, to run their own enterprises, or to set up Joint ventures: China had undoubtedly entered the world arrest and was enjoying a resurgence of capitalism. One might even say that it had entered another industrial golden age. 9. In Shanghai, for example, the Chamber of Commerce held meetings with student representatives from Peking to discuss a strike. Students went from shop to shop asking them to sign a promise to strike on 5 June 1919.

Almost all the shops visited did so. 10. Gao Shanghai, ' China's economy after 10 years of reform', China Reconstructs, Unary 1990). However, the comparisons end there. Because the Party controlled all organizations, the free merchants and industrialists, still a very small number, were unable to erasure the government as they had in the May 4th Movement. Workers and entrepreneurs in state owned enterprises were even more restricted by the Party stationed in each working unit.

At most, they could only donate money, food and tents to the students, which they did. A few workers, peasants and even police and army personnel

participated in the demonstrations, but only a few. After the massacre, though there was an effort to mobilize the workers for a strike, they showed almost no response. The political and economic pressures were too great; it was now a life and death issue. By contrast, during the May 4th period the economic system was such that industrialists, merchants and workers were independent of the government.

Understandably, they were able to express their opinions without as much worry about their political and economic well-being as there was during the June 4th. In the latter period, the majority of these people were working for the government; their jobs, their businesses, even their lives were on the line. Thus, as in the political sphere, the economic openness of the June 4th period helped foster the students' democratic movements, but its limited economic conduciveness restricted their success because the support from other strata of society was constrained and limited.

This further proves that as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of democracy, of any democratic movement, a relatively large and independent middle class must exist that can stand up to the state and provide the movement with both political and economic resources. 11 Structural conduciveness: the educational picture Educational policies in the May 4th period underwent great changes, including abolition of the examination system and the willingness on the part of the government to send students abroad.

According to a 1906 government statistic, there were over 12, 000 students in Japan alone, 12 a hotbed of revolutionary movements among young

students. 13 In America, ten essence students Ana tenet own Alliance, and they put out publications in which they debated the problems of cultural and political reform at home. Huh Shih, for example, was the Home News editor. In France, the Chinese students helped the Chinese workers who had been sent there to assist the Allies in the First World War, contributing to both their welfare and their education.

When they returned home, students established magazines to advance their ideas. Chem.. Tu-hiss started New Youth in 1915 and later was joined by Chine Hausa-tuna, Huh Shih and IL Ta-chaos; in 1918, Chem.. And IL founded the Weekly Critic, devoted mainly to political criticism. At the same time, a group of able students founded the New Tide Society and, with the help of 11. For a discussion on the conditions necessary for democracy, see Seymour Martin Ellipse, 'The social requisites of democracy revisited', American Sociological Review 59(1), (February 1994). 2. See Penn, We Is Young Shih, p. 113. 13. From 1905 on, Chinese students in Japan staged several protests against Japan's policies toward Chinese students. It was students home from Japan who organized one of the first students' unions in 1906, whose aims were to carry out social, cultural, economic and political reforms in China. Many revolutionary intellectuals had either studied or worked in Japan, including Chem.. Tu- hiss, IL Ta-chaos, former reformist Liana Chi-chaos, and above all, Sun Hat-Seen, who organized the Committing in 1914.

Chem., Huh and IL, published a monthly, the New Tide magazine, which bore the English subtitle 'Renaissance'. Even more important, most of the members of the society were later student leaders in the May 4th Incident. In 1917, upon returning from France, Tsar Yuan-pie was appointed Chancellor

<https://assignbuster.com/may-4th-vs-june-4th-movement-essay/>

of Peking University, and announced his principles of education: academic research for a new civilization combining both Chinese and Western cultures, academic freedom, freedom of thought and expression. 4 It was under this policy of freedom in education that he brought Chem., Huh, and IL to the university and gave them important positions. Similarly, from the opening to the outside world after the Cultural Revolution and on to 1989, the Chinese government had sent over 100, 000 students abroad, half of them to the US. Like their predecessors in the May 4th period, some of these students abroad organized themselves to promote democracy in China. For example, the Chinese Alliance For Democracy was established in the US although it was quickly termed reactionary by the ICP and has remained so labeled ever since.

In addition, there were thousands of foreign teachers working in China. As in the May 4th period, a number of intellectuals were promoted to leading positions. Fang Liz, for example, was appointed Vice President of Chinese University of Science and Technology. On his appointment, he declared that even though he could not provide adequate housing for the intellectuals, he would at least allow freedom of thought. 1 5 The gesture was not unlike that of Tsar at Peking University during the May 4th era, and he did have some influence in the 1986 student demonstrations.

But compared with Wang Dan, the impact on the government's octagons, Wang Dan virtually gave up his leadership in 1989. Student organizations existed before the June 4th Movement in some universities in China. They included the Democratic Solon headed by Wang Dan, the Action Committee headed by Fen Conge, Ill Gang and Sheen Tong, and the Olympia
<https://assignbuster.com/may-4th-vs-june-4th-movement-essay/>

Academy headed by Sheen Tong. These groups often invited professors like Fang Liz as their advisors. 16 Their student leaders also became student leaders of the June 4th Movement, as had student leaders in the May 4th period.

But they had had little time to prepare themselves for a mass movement, either politically or organizationally, and the Party's totalitarian control would not allow them to get very far. They cannot therefore be compared in maturity with the student leaders of the May 4th Movement. Nor did the students who were trained abroad have much impact. When the Spring 1989 movement started, some overseas students and scholars, such as Ill Kabob, did go back. But not many others did for a variety of reasons, among them political and economic ones. As I have shown, the political situation offered far fewer opportunities than it had during the May 4th period.) Those students and scholars who remained overseas could do no more than donate money and coordinate demonstrations in other parts of the world. Student organizations at home were few, and the impact of overseas students was minimal compared with 70 years earlier. The educational openness of the June 4th 14. See Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, p. 52. 15. See Fang Liz, *Bringing down the Great Wall* (New York: Alfred A. Knops, 1991), up. 97-98. 16.

See Sheen Tong, *Almost a Revolution*, p. 135. 85 movement certainly prepared students for a democratic movement, but the period's limited political and economic conduciveness limited its scope. To sum up, in the May 4th period the structural openness of the political, economic and educational press was so great that it not only made the movement possible

but was one of the most important conditions for its success. The ten years before 4 June 1989, when Eden was in the process of establishing his dominant rule and Huh and Zoo were relatively independent, were much freer than the Moist era.

As a result, dissenting activity was often possible, with little danger of leaders being arrested, and intellectuals felt free to a great extent to express their opinions. But the June 4th openness in the three spheres we have analyzed was very limited; it could not remotely be compared with the May 4th period. This is one of the underlying reasons why the government was bold enough to carry out the massacre, and why the intellectual movements were bound to have only limited success, if not fail outright. We will now discuss the second variable that also influenced the outcomes of these movements.

Nine conceivable TTY AT goals or targets Goals or targets AT a movement are one of the elusive elements of study for students of social movements, for they may be as large as overthrowing an entire political system, as the Communist Revolution in China did, or so small as to gain recognition from the ruling power. 7 Goals are elusive also because they may be formed and reformed as the movement unfolds. Lauer identifies three immediate targets of change, individuals, groups and the social structure, 'immediate' because 'ultimately the change will affect all three'. 8 We might say that these are also three kinds of goals" individual change, group change and social structural change. The formation of the goals, however, has to do with the social strains at the time. And whether they are achievable under the political and social circumstances seems to determine to a great extent the

strategies of event organizers and thereby the success or failure of the movement. We will examine now the strains that determined the goals and whether the specific goals of these movements were achievable.

In the narrower May 4th Movement, the chief strain was between patriotic students and a warlord government that wanted to sign the Paris treaty giving Japan all the privileges formerly granted to Germany in Shantung. Of course, it was not only students who were unhappy with Pekingese's Japan policy: the whole country was outraged" student groups, Journalists' groups, merchant and industrial organizations. Anti-Japanese demonstrations and boycotts against Japanese goods had been going on since 1915, when Japan presented China with its infamous Twenty Demands.

What happened at the Versailles Peace Conference in Spring 1919 was just one more example of government corruption and foreign injustice. 19 Out 17. See Joy Freeman, *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Longhand, 1983), p. 191 . 18. Robert H. Lauer, *Perspectives on Social Change* (Boston: Allan & Bacon, Inc. , 1982), p. 337. 19. There were also strains between the new intellectuals on the one hand and the old intellectuals and officials n the other, demonstrated in the debate over the use of vernacular language in literature and the introduction of Mr.. Democracy and Mr.. Science.

These strains gave rise to goals of structural change for example in the institutions of of these sentiments developed two immediate targets of change as demonstrated in the slogan ' nee chug guy zee, way gang kiang quant', or ' get rid of the traitors in the country and resist the foreign

powers'. The first target was the dismissal of three government officials, Tsar, Change and Lu, who were responsible for the negotiations on the Twenty-One Demands and the pro-Japanese foreign policy. 0 The second target was to resist foreign powers by refusing to sign the Paris Treaty. These targets are both specific and individual: if the officials were dismissed and the Chinese delegation refused to sign the treaty, the goals of the narrower movement would be achieved, which is exactly what happened later. The immediate target of the June 4th Movement was, however, not entirely clear. At the beginning of the movement, students simply wanted to mourn Huh, to protest his treatment by the Party.