

Commemoration of Tiananmen Square
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Dozens of activists gathered in Washington's Farragut Square on Friday to remember the tragic end of one powerful grassroots movement in modern China- the student movement cruelly squelched on June 4, 1989- and looked ahead to a new one.

"There are heroes in China today who are risking their lives to publicly withdraw from the Chinese Communist Party... we are here to say thank you," said Court Pearman, organizer of the rally.

The rally members gathered to mark June 4, the day 16 years ago when Chinese government tanks and soldiers killed hundreds- maybe thousands, some members said- a moment indelible to the millions who viewed it.

"Among miscarriages of government and authority, [the massacre at Tiananmen Square] was huge, epic, monumental, egregious, and not to be forgotten by history," said John Patrick, director emeritus of the China Support Network.

Timothy Cooper, director of the Worldrights NGO, pointed out that the Chinese government has yet to own up to its acts on that day.

"It has been 16 years and counting since the Government of the People's Republic of China refused to acknowledge, let alone apologize for, its unconscionable and deadly acts- acts that shocked the conscience of the world and shattered the hopes of a generation," said Cooper.

"16 years is 16 years too long."

Yet organizers said that 2 million people had quit the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the past few months, creating a new grassroots movement that gave Tiananmen massacre witnesses new hope.

Dong Xiang said that after personally witnessing "blood flowing like spring water" from the bodies of student demonstrators, he vowed to leave China and never come back until the Communist Party was out of power. Dong said that after hearing about the millions quitting the CCP, he believed that the Party would soon collapse, giving him a chance to return to his homeland.

Ever since the Epoch Times published its Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party, a series of articles describing the uncensored history of the CCP, Chinese people have posted statements of resignation from the Party on the newspaper's Chinese-language website, which receives roughly 20,000 each day.

Ciping Huang, a representative from the Wei Jingsheng Foundation, named after a well-known Chinese dissident, encouraged all Tiananmen Square demonstrators to publicly resign from the CCP and to channel their idealistic energy from the 1989 demonstrations into the recent CCP-quitting movement.

Kusumi mentioned that the movement to quit the CCP has shown the Chinese people's newfound hope.

"Chinese people seem to be getting over their fear-expressions of free speech are seen throughout the internet; and two million Chinese have now joined the Jiuping movement, where they are resigning, quitting, and leaving the Communist Party en masse," he said.

"The resignations are public statements, and gathering them has been like collecting two million personal stories- stories of violence and loss at the hands of the Communists."

Tim Britt, guitarist for the band Nomanzero, which played a song commemorating the Tiananmen Square demonstrators during the rally, hoped that their music would help bring the Chinese people greater freedom.

"Rock and Roll and music [is] free expression, and freedom to be an artist, be a musician, and [to] let the public decide what they like, as opposed to letting

the government decide what the public is going to like," he said.