

17 Feb 1990

# 3,000 students denounce Basic Law

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ABOUT 3,000 students last night tore apart copies of the Basic Law draft and its consultative report in front of the Xinhua News Agency to protest against the final version of the Basic Law.

Five student representatives threw what they called the "trash" against the front door of Xinhua as the students shouted support.

"This is to show that we, Hongkong people, do not want your Basic Law and are now returning it to you," a student leader said before throwing the copies against the door.

Raising clenched fists, the students vowed to start a new campaign to fight for the amendment of the Basic Law until it became more democratic.

The students also condemned remarks made by the deputy director of Xinhua, Mr Zhang Junsheng, saying it was the drafters instead of them who confronted the wishes of Hongkong people.

The students also accused London of betraying Hongkong people and condemned the agreement between Britain and China on the future political structure of Hongkong.

They applauded as two big cartoons, featuring the Basic Law and the British and Chinese governments shaking hands under a table, were burned to ashes.

The three-hour rally outside the Xinhua office was the climax of a series of protests by students that started with a general class strike in tertiary institutes from noon yesterday.

A student leader at the Chinese University, Mr Chung Pui-kuen, estimated a vast majority of the university's students responded to the strike call and left lectures.

At the Hongkong University more than 1,000 students also left their classrooms to join a campus rally, resolving to reject the Basic Law discussed in Beijing.

Hundreds of students in other institutes such as the Hongkong Polytechnic, the City Polytechnic and the Baptist College appeared in similar activities before uniting in Chater Garden in the afternoon.

About 400 City Poly students marched down a busy section of Nathan Road to Mong Kok MTR station after attending a campus rally.

"We had no intention of disrupting the community life, we just wanted to tell the public why we were doing it," the External Vice-President of City Poly Students' Union, Miss Annie Chiang, said.

Other students on Kowloon side gathered on the campus of Hongkong Polytechnic.

The Star Ferry company arranged extra boats to ferry the demonstrating

students from Hung Hom, where the Hongkong Polytechnic is sited, to Central.

The students, marching under the flags of their respective unions, chanted "Student movements must not be disregarded, democracy will come one day", and sang democracy songs on their way to Chater Garden.

By 4 pm, about 2,000 students had gathered in Chater Garden, while at the same time the students at Hongkong University were finishing their rally. The two groups united outside Xinhua shortly after 7 pm.

As the rally started, one of the student leaders said through a mobile public address system that they had boycotted classes because they wanted to see a "more beautiful" society.

"It is not because we don't want to attend classes. We want to learn more. But we'll never forget the Beijing students," he said.

"Long life to democracy, student movements will never die, long life to democracy," the crowd chanted with clenched fists.

A spokesman for the 1,900-member Hongkong Polytechnic Staff Association, Dr Chan Cheong-ki, said yesterday the association had earlier issued a circular to members calling for their understanding towards the class strike.



Angry protesters at the Xinhua offices.

Dr Chan, who was sitting with students in a campus rally in the Hongkong Polytechnic, said he believed the students had a justified cause for the strike.

"Through participating in the class strike and the rally this time, they will be able to understand their responsibility and role in the society better," Dr Chan said.

Some passers-by said

they supported the student demonstration.

But a man waiting for bus in Hennessy Road was heard cursing the students after he was told by a Kowloon Bus Motor inspector that the bus had been rerouted.

The police yesterday deployed 200 uniformed officers along the route of the parade. Half of the east-bound side of Hennessy Road was closed.