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1,000 at peaceful Victoria Park rally

MORE than 1,000 people yesterday gathered in Victoria Park attending a mass rally organised by four Trotskyite groups to protest against the Peking government's handling of the Tienanmen Square incident.

The organisers, the Young Militants, the Young Socialist Group, The Seventies Front and the Combat Bulletin, demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the people arrested at Tienanmen Square in Peking on April 5.

They told the large crowd that the Chinese people had the right to speak out on what they thought.

At the beginning of the rally, which started at 3pm, it was briefly interrupted by a middle-aged man who shouted from the back of the crowd: "You are not Chinese. Down with Soviet spies. Long live Chairman Mao."

This man, together with two other youths, was taken to the police reporting centre at the park for allegedly attempting to stop some photographers taking their pictures and to have beaten them up.

They were released after being told by the police not to make further trouble.

During the two-and-a-half hour public debate, six onlookers came up to speak. Only one of them spoke for the Chinese government and said the Tienanmen masses were counter-revolutionary elements.

VIOLENCE

The speaker said the Peking government had to suppress the people gathering at the Tienanmen Square as the crowd had used violence and burnt cars to disturb public order.

A member of the Young Socialist Group, Tang Ching-chuen, said they were not against communist system but only against those who only followed Peking's instructions blindly without their own opinions.

Tang said they also strongly objected to the present party struggle and a real proletarian government should be established so that China would be ruled by the people themselves.

Large red banners protesting against the Peking government were raised at the park.

The four organisers had earlier sent invitations to the student unions of the University of Hongkong, the Chinese University, the Polytechnic and other post-secondary schools, the Federation of Trade Unions and the Chinese Human Rights Association to attend the rally.

Apart from the Chinese Human Rights Association, none of the other invited parties sent their representatives to the meeting.

The rally ended at 5.30pm with the crowd singing the "International

Song" led by the organising groups.

The police had sent small units of policemen with walkie-talkies to the park to avoid any possible incident. Some of them, equipped with strong telescopes, watched the event from the rooftop of a nearby building.

On April 5, a crowd of 100,000 gathered in Tienanmen Square to commemorate the late Premier Chou En-lai.

Rioting broke out when security officials removed wreaths dedicated to Chou. Peking called the disturbance "the counter-revolution incident at Tienanmen."