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100,000 protest for June 4 anniversary

By ANDY HO
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MORE than 100,000 people yesterday took to the streets to mourn the victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre, demanding an end to what they denounced as the communists' one-party tyranny in China.

Organisers of the parade hailed the unexpectedly huge turnout as evidence that local people's aspiration for democracy and freedom had not subsided, despite increasing pressure from Beijing.

The march, organised by the Hongkong Alliance in Support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement in China, was part of rallies worldwide in commemoration of the first anniversary of the June 4 killings.

The chairman of the Alliance, Mr Szeto Wah, told the crowd before the march that the 200-group coalition had helped hundreds of dissidents to flee China during the past year.

He pledged the Alliance would continue to press for democracy in China and help free mainland activists.

Unlike a year ago, however, the organisers refrained from shouting slogans which demanded the removal of Beijing leaders.

Alliance leaders, branded by China as subversive, claimed 250,000 had joined the march by the time it reached the headquarters of the New China News Agency in Happy Valley.

A sociologist, Dr Stephen Tang Lung-wai, who observed the whole procession at several spots, said: "There were at least 120,000 or 130,000 at about 5.30 pm. But people just kept joining and I would not be surprised if the number was 200,000."

The tail of the procession was still at Chater Garden, 75 minutes after Mr Szeto, legislator Mr Martin Lee Chu-ming, film director John Shum Kin-fun and other leading liberal activists linked arms and set out towards Happy Valley.

The procession, the biggest since last summer's series of rallies, covered a route of about 3.2 kilometres from Chater Garden to North Point before it turned back to the NCNA headquarters.

The protesters, mostly

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young people dressed in mourning colours of black or white, demanded that Beijing leaders responsible for the military crackdown on the student-led pro-democracy movement on the mainland be put on trial.

They chanted names of political detainees in China and called for their release.

Also among the crowd was a group of about 20 blind people.

One small group, waving Taiwanese national flags, carried banners calling for the removal of Chinese Prime Minister, Mr Li Peng, and other high officials in Beijing.

After the march, Mr Szeto said he was surprised and moved by the enthusiastic response.

"Hongkong people have been under pressure in the past year. We can see how great the support for China's pro-democracy movement is. There are people who have shifted their stance on the June 4 incident due to their personal interests. But I am glad they are only a small minority," he said.

"I was most impressed when I heard people shouting they will support the Alliance. They know that the Alliance is under a lot of pressure but they do not want us to back down."

The sea of protesters dispersed peacefully outside the NCNA after the Alliance ended the parade at 8 pm by singing *For Freedom*, the popular theme song of the local solidarity action for the Beijing students last year.

Alliance spokesman, Mr Cheung Man-kwong, said: "The march today has come to an end, but our long battle has just begun. We cannot tolerate our compatriots in China continuing to be arrested and persecuted."

The Alliance will stage a candlelight vigil at Victoria Park tonight.

Asked whether such protest action would provoke China, Mr Cheung said: "It was the Chinese authorities who started the sour relations between Hongkong and the mainland."

"When we talk about Sino-Hongkong relations,

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100,000 join protest for anniversary

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China should first review relations with its own people. If the Beijing Government cannot keep its people satisfied, how can it be in a position to talk about Sino-Hongkong relations."

Sino-Hongkong relations would improve quickly, Mr Cheung added, if the Chinese Government freed all political prisoners and officially recognised the pro-democracy campaign as a patriotic movement.

After the march, about 130 members of the Hongkong Federation of Students held an overnight sit-in outside the NCNA. The police, however, did not allow the students to come close to the *de facto* Chinese embassy.

A separate group of about 200 residents, including several dozen April 5 Action Group activists, staged a sit-in outside the Queen Elizabeth Stadium opposite the NCNA office.

Twenty-four Hongkong tertiary students took part in a 55-kilometre relay run to carry a torch, symbolising the spark of democracy, from Sheung Shui to Central.

Several of the participants completed the entire 5½-hour marathon run organised by the 30,000-strong Hongkong Federation of Students.

Meanwhile, a group of 32 local lawyers has compiled a volume of 48 eyewitness accounts of the June 4 massacre, entitled *The Eyes Have It*.

The group says it will present it to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and other international human rights bodies.

Half of the 48 people who had come forward were journalists, 15 were students and the remainder were businessmen, tourists and foreigners.

More than 2,000 people took part in a march, memorial services, masses and seminars in Macau yesterday.

The march was organised by the Macau Democracy Development Alliance, which was established in May last year.