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## 18 join exodus at newspaper <sup>29.14</sup>

EIGHTEEN *Wen Wei Po* employees resigned yesterday in protest over the sacking of the newspaper's director, Mr Lee Tze-chung.

And a member of the paper's board of directors, Mr Kam Yiu-yu, claimed the dismissal was illegal.

The resignations came from 10 reporters, four editors of supplements, a deputy public relations manager, an assistant general manager, a printing technician and a computer technician.

They all protested against last Saturday's "il-

legal and unreasonable" sacking by Xinhua News Agency of Mr Lee, who is still chairman of paper's board of directors.

The agency took action claiming the paper was owned by the government.

"The paper has taken the side of the people during the recent student patriotic democratic movement in Beijing. We are proud of its clear-cut attitude," said a declaration by staff.

"Under immense pressure, the paper's position can no longer be main-

tained and we regret that."

Earlier reports said more than 30 management and editorial members - about 10 percent of the paper's staff - had resigned or planned to quit.

On Monday, five editorial staff members, including the deputy editor-in-chief, Mr Ching Cheong, resigned.

Mr Kam Yiu-yu, a veteran special commentator on *Wen Wei Po*, said he supported Mr Lee and those who resigned.

"The direction of the paper has turned around.

There's nothing worthwhile for them to stay for," Mr Kam said.

He said China's intervention was unjustified and illegal.

"Under Hongkong law, Xinhua has no right to intervene in staff appointments," Mr Kam said.

"Staff changes should rest with the board of directors, which has not delegated its authority to Xinhua."

Mr Kam said he would support Mr Lee if a board meeting was called.