

Shanghai residents urged to stage strike

From GEOFFREY CROTHALL in Shanghai
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RADICAL student leaders are urging the people of Shanghai to stage a one day general strike and turn out in force this morning to block all the city's main intersections in an attempt to provoke a confrontation with the Government.

Posters from the student committee of Tongji University advocating strike action in factories, shops and offices have been widely circulated.

Students have also sent delegations to Shanghai's major factories, including the massive Baogang iron and steel works, to ask for support.

Workers in return have visited student organising committees asking for guidance and leadership.

Many workers at Baogang have openly said that if there is any bloodshed during any of the student demonstrations, strikes will ensue.

If the students are successful in blocking intersections early enough in the morning to stop buses running, the whole city could grind to a halt.

Students hope that by causing such wholesale disruption the Government will have to take firm measures to restore order, thereby provoking a city-wide uprising.

However, up until now the municipal government has given no indication that it is willing to order a crack-down or send in the military.



Students hold up a poster of the Statue of Liberty during a demonstration in Shanghai yesterday.

There have been no threats along the lines of Mr Li Peng's in Beijing: "Chaos has come to the city and we will take measures to put an end to it."

A meeting of more than 80 officials resolved that the best way to maintain order in the city was to continue dialogue with students and cooperate with them during protest marches.

So far the strategy has worked. The few police officers on duty outside the main government building sit around and joke as protesters climb up on to window sills and hang out of trees

overlooking the balcony. The police only take action when traffic is blocked.

Disruption to everyday life in Shanghai is now reaching the proportions that existed in Beijing before the declaration of martial law and many students and citizens feel one decisive push is all that is needed to force the Government's hand.

Other students urge restraint, using what limited channels of communication exist, while keeping up the pressure with peaceful demonstrations.

"The people of Shanghai

will not thank us for causing disruption and instigating strikes," said Mr Zou of Fudan University's unofficial students' union.

"The workers can best serve the cause in the factories, not in the streets."

It is far from certain whether all student leaders, let alone enough Shanghai citizens, will support today's planned campaign of disruption.

There are four different organising committees within Fudan University alone and communication between Fudan and the other main universities, Tongji and the

East China Teacher's College, is not all it could be.

There are significant differences in objectives, but the fundamental aims of press freedom and an end to government corruption remain unchanged.

Shanghai students have been in regular contact with Beijing, sending delegations to the capital to liaise with student leaders there and receiving delegations from Beijing and Qinghua universities.

Within hours of the hunger strike ending in Tiananmen Square, Shanghai students called off their own protest.

Reuter