At the beginning of 1992 the term of office of Governor Sir (now Lord) David Wilson was to expire. Normally a Governor would be given a second five-year term of office, and this we all expected. However, rumour spread that some unnamed persons were dissatisfied with Sir David because he had not shown a tough enough line on China. If the rumour was true, I would not have agreed with that assessment of the Governor. He was a cultured person, with a good understanding of Chinese affairs, had lived in China, and took a balanced view.

China had suffered one and a half centuries of colonial humiliation by the west as well as by Japan, and further confrontation was the least likely method of winning China's friendship and cooperation. That is where many western politicians and colonials go wrong. China was no longer ready for bullying by the west, and the days of gunboats were over.

Hong Kong's most recent Governors, since the early 1970s, as well as members of the British Foreign Office who had worked with, and in, China, understood China well and were in my estimation doing a good job in keeping the lines of communication open.

When it was finally announced on New Year's Eve, 1991, that the Governor in the remaining five years of British rule, 1992 - 97 would not be Sir David, there was an outcry because the new Governor had not been named. There were also many who opposed the removal of Sir David.

On 22 January 1992, Councillor Howard Young moved a motion in the Legislative Council: "In view of the wide interest by the public on the subject of the appointment of the next Governor of Hong Kong, this Council requests the Government to convey the views of the general public to Her Majesty's Government for consideration." This motion left it open to members to express approval or disapproval of the decision to retire Sir David.

Mr. Young began his speech by reminding members that constitutionally Hong Kong people had no say in the matter of choosing their Governor, but when it came to selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the people would have some say in the matter. Even then, the Chief Executive would be appointed by the Government in Beijing after his selection in Hong Kong. It would be the first time that the Hong Kong people would have the right to take part in and to decide on choosing of the candidate. Mr. Young added, "According to a number of surveys, Hong Kong people are well satisfied with the (present) Governor."

The British Government had stated that the new Governor would not be named until after the British elections that year. The reason for that now seems clear, that the Prime Minister was probably reserving the posting for someone who might lose his seat in the elections. Howard Young made it clear that he would have favoured Sir David for the post, and most other members seemed to agree.
Martin Lee had an amendment to make to Mr. Young's motion, a
typical amendment along his usual political lines. He wanted
to stress that "the next Governor should be a person who is
committed to defending the Joint Declaration, establishing a
democratic political system in Hong Kong, working on behalf of
all citizens to improve our standard of living, and placing the
interests of Hong Kong first and foremost at all times." Martin
had not shown an interest in any of these principles during the first
fifty years of his life. It is worthwhile pointing out that
in all his speeches Mr. Lee has repeatedly expressed support
for the Joint Declaration, probably because he does not want to
be seen opposing an agreement involving British proposals, and
because the Joint Declaration offers a framework around which
he could build up his own ideas. He has always omitted to mention
agreement with the Basic Law, except when it happened to offer
a point which suited his own political views, which was very rare
indeed. The fact is that his party had rejected the Basic Law
when it was first enacted in 1990, and his party members had
taken part in burning it publicly. He personally never took part
in these rowdy demonstrations, but no one could doubt that he
was the mastermind behind all party policies, while Szeto Wah
was a past master at organising demonstrations. I have no
objection to people disagreeing with some parts of the Basic Law,
because no constitution is guaranteed to suit everyone, but in
this case he knew that the Basic Law had been studied with input
by Hong Kong people for many years, and that to reject it would
stop the through train. If he wanted to stop the through train
he had that dubious right though he knew it would make the transition
more difficult, but what I objected to was that Martin would
never accept majority opinion and always insisted on his own.
Yet, he had never objected to having Governors appointed without
consultation with the Hong Kong public under the colonial system,
nor had he ever shown an interest in improving the standard of
living of the Hong Kong people. Martin's party wanted the support
of those with similar political views, but as they were relatively
few in number, his party had to "make a show" of interest in all
matters of public interest to gain support for the party. Some
of the members indeed were working in the public interest, but
they were not the policy makers for the party. However, they did
have their use in attracting votes.

Chim Pui Chung, who always calls a spade a spade with a brutal
frankness that has made him unpopular in some quarters, proposed
an amendment to Martin Lee's amendment to the motion of Howard
Young. Chim's main point was that the political system should be
in line with the Basic Law, and he criticised Lee for not calling
for a smooth transition. He declared that Mr. Lee was expressing
the views of his own party, not those of the Hong Kong people as
Lee had claimed. Chim was probably right in that.

Mrs. Selina Chow's speech suggested that a movement by unnamed
persons in London had tried to discredit Sir David Wilson as
Governor because he did not show enough support for British business interests. She considered Sir David had been shabbily treated for his hard work. The point she made was probably near the truth. In fact there were some in London who would have preferred a Governor with stronger colonial views.

Emily Lau, in her speech, said, "I got a distinct impression in London that both major parties intend to use the post of the Hong Kong Governor to pension off a senior politician whom they do not want to appoint to the cabinet. ... Hong Kong is in danger of ending up with a Governor who knows little about Hong Kong and cares even less." In fact she proved to be right on the last point at least, because we ended up with a Governor who knew little about Hong Kong and who was obsessed with his own image, caring little about the effects of his actions on the people of Hong Kong. Yet Emily soon became one of the staunch supporters of the "pensioned-off politician" when she found he intended to confront China. That he knew nothing about Hong Kong she no longer seemed to care, and she appeared to become his chief adviser next to Martin Lee, until he found her too radical to handle.

Lee's amendment ended in a tied vote, which meant, according to the rules of procedure, that the President had to vote to maintain the status quo by negating it. Finally Howard Young's motion was adopted. I personally abstained on this motion because I had not reconciled myself to the fact that David Wilson had to go. He was the ideal person to see Hong Kong through the transition to Chinese rule, and the new Governor was to prove the one who smashed all hope of a through train, then blame everyone except himself.

The change of Governor at the eleventh hour seems from hindsight to have indicated a change of mind on the part of Britain, and that it intended to backtrack on the agreements made between Foreign Ministers Qian and Hurd in 1990. Was it that the British Government had not yet given up hope of continuing to administer Hong Kong as once proposed by Mr. Luce about ten years earlier, and if Britain could not herself remain in power, she might control through pro-colonial sympathisers like Martin Lee known to be inimical to China? That would have tied in with Jardines original intention of hanging on to Hong Kong, an intention borne out by Jardines' involvement in the voting on the Patten political package on 29 June, 1994, as described in a later chapter.

One may wonder how Sir David Wilson himself felt about the non-renewal of his governorship. It must have been a severe blow to him, one utterly undeserved. Unlike his successor, he was too much of the cultured gentleman to make his feelings known publicly. I happened to meet him a day or two after the news of impending "retirement", and I expressed my condolences. I could see he was deeply hurt, but he merely smiled and said that a much more qualified person had been named as his likely successor. Indeed three persons had been rumoured as possible successors, but even he did not know who had been selected. He named one of these three as a possibility. I have forgotten the name but I recall he had a military title and a French-sounding name.

"In what way could he be more qualified than you?" I asked. The Governor smiled sardonically and replied, "Well, he speaks
Arabic perfectly." In fact, Sir David had hit the nail on the head. This was surely a time when Hong Kong more than ever needed someone who could not only speak Chinese (and Sir David was a Chinese scholar), but also one who could understand Chinese feelings. However, the British agenda seemed not to include understanding and cooperation at the change of sovereignty. In the end, Hong Kong did not get the Arabic-speaking gentleman who might at least have had some inkling of eastern thought. The post was given to someone who knew even less about the east and who saw no difference at all but expected the east to adopt his western views or be damned.

The frequent visits of Martin Lee to Britain, and Martin's attempts to persuade the European community that he represented all Hong Kong people, raised suspicion that he was cooking something up with the British Government that would satisfy his own political interests as well as some of the business interests of companies like Jardines who aimed at sweeping up some big business contracts from Hong Kong's new infrastructural projects since they had failed to keep Hong Kong in their hands. My own suspicion was that there was some liaison between the three: the British Government, Jardines and Martin Lee, and consequent events suggest that that was not far wrong. Martin Lee's party had been contacting Chinese "dissidents", and Szeto Wah has gone on record as having used the services of a triad society known as the "Yellow Bird" to assist escapees from China to pass through or even remain in Hong Kong. I do not deny the right of politicians to seek political asylum or to have their own political views, but at the same time we all knew that the Joint Declaration stipulated "one country two systems", and if trouble in China was to be stirred up by anti-China elements in Hong Kong, it was likely to destroy that agreement. If one side could break an agreement, that left the other side free to do likewise. It says a great deal for China that in spite of the many breaches made by the British side in the agreement, China kept her side of the bargain.

China has said repeatedly that her priority is not a democratic system, but the feeding and clothing of her 1.3 billion people, a mammoth task that cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of political instability. In fact, if democracy means anything at all surely it is not just abstract principles, but must aim at the welfare of the people. Bread-and-butter issues need to be first on the agenda, and any democratic progress should be aimed in that direction. One-man-one-vote may achieve that end but is not an end in itself. What does a vote mean to a man whose children are starving? After the Russian people obtained the democratic vote, they were crying out, "Give us bread, not democracy". And after several years of democracy all reports indicate that there the welfare issues are worse than before.

Democracy is a fine ideal, but it has long lost its original purpose as a voice for the people. Instead of politicians using their votes to serve the people, they are now using the people to serve their political ends, or their political parties. Many foreign governments that have come to power on a democratic ticket have now become military dictatorships or corrupt régimes. The United States' call for "democracy and human rights" has become a meaningless cliche. Boris Yeltsin came to power with the assistance of the United States, taking the name of democracy. Soon after he had the army firing on his own Parliament in contradiction to democracy and human rights, and in that disgrace-
ful action he was supported by the United States. Now for at least the second time he has dismissed his government to take autocratic control, so what difference does one-man-one-vote make if the "democratic" leader can dismiss all the elected members, while the people starve. Yet the United States continues to support him, and any other "democrats" who kow-tow to America. There are numerous examples found worldwide. An ambitious person sets up an opposition party, calls himself a democrat, kow-tows to the American President, holds corrupt elections, takes over with the assistance of the army, and gains the blessing of the extreme right-wing of the United States politicians, and the people gradually become worse off than they were before. If they rebel, the new dictator can easily seek assistance from his United States allies, preferably in the name of the United Nations to make it look more respectable. If the dictator becomes so blatant that the world begins to condemn, he can then be replaced by the same method. Among these dictators figure men like Marcos of the Philippines, Suharto of Indonesia, and Pol Pot of Cambodia.

Democracy and human rights are used only as an issue to deceive the American people that they are leading the world on a righteous cause. In the past, when I was young, Christianity was used to grab world colonial power. Desmond TUTU put it well when he said of his native country, Africa: "When the missionaries came, we had the land, and they had the bible. They taught us how to pray, so we closed our eyes to pray, and when we opened our eyes, they had the land and we had the bible." Most of those Christian missionaries did not know that they were playing into the hands of unprincipled traders, such as those who brought opium to China and bought bibles to save the souls of those they were killing and robbing.

If Martin Lee would read the history of modern times instead of living on ideals and playing into the hands of the new economic colonials, he would realise that the democracy he preaches, western democracy, is the post World War II opiate of the people. For the cause of controlling the world economy, the American war machine has killed over eleven million people worldwide, all in the name of democracy and human rights. Has he, for example, considered where human rights came into the picture in the missile attack in the Sudan? Without knowing who carried out the bombing atrocity in Nairobi, without knowing what was being produced in the factory they destroyed, without seeking the agreement of the United Nations, or even the people of the United States they bombed to death an unknown number of people as a revenge attack. As a lawyer, I am sure that Martin would agree that a person is considered innocent until found guilty. Is he likely to speak out against this denial of human rights to Muslims, who are the butt of American revenge in their protection of Israeli extremists, who deny the Arabs the right to live on their own land? I have never heard him speak a word against these abuses of human rights. Why? We may well ask.

Unfortunately, Hong Kong's new breed of politicians preaching western democracy wear blinkers. They still live in the days of China's cultural revolution, when many of the present leaders suffered persecution and are not likely to repeat the error.
This conversion to phony western democracy followed in the wake of Governor Wilson's departure from Hong Kong. He was the first casualty in fact, a casualty of Britain's change of heart on the carrying out of the Joint Declaration. Once Governor Wilson was out of the way, and a new known anti-socialist "commie-basher" was installed, the field was open for Martin Lee and his core members to grab support from the colonial government in Hong Kong, along with the Government Information Services of that time under David Ford, and, the biggest coup of all, a Governor who knew how to use his considerable oratorical ability to damage China and ignore the harmful effects on the minds and fears for the future of the people of Hong Kong. It was a case of all stops out to boost the power of the anti-China elements in Hong Kong.

When Sir David Wilson left, Hong Kong had lost a faithful friend. In his place we were given a community-splitting enemy of China. The people of Hong Kong were the innocent victims sandwiched between a revengeful Governor and his local supporters, and an angry China frustrated at the sudden change of heart towards the transition. Sir David remained loyal to the end and attended the ceremony on 1 July that was boycotted by the still intransigent British Government.