What does a repressive government do with a high profile dissident? In the case of China, it has used the State apparatus to imprison him and to treat him as a non-person. When Liu Xiaobo died the Chinese government was unrelenting. The ‘Global Times’ reported that Liu was a criminal and a political agitator.

The Charter was predictable. The authorities detained many of the signatories for questioning and some of them were jailed. Liu won the Nobel Peace Prize while in prison. There was to be no celebration as his wife was placed under house arrest.

Liu’s death saw aggressive censorship by the Chinese government to expunge and erase his memory. This was particularly evident on the internet where many sites were blocked. Only a handful of persons in China know about Liu or his ideas. But the power of ideas cannot be erased easily. At his trial Liu said, ‘I have no enemies, and no hatred. None of the police who have monitored, arrested, interrogated me, the prosecutors who prosecuted me, or the judges who sentenced me, are my enemies.’

Liu Xiaobo explains his ideas on democracy. A free China will be his legacy.