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The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Movement *by Dingxin Zhao. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001. 456 pp. $35.00.*

The Perils of Protest: State Repression and Student Activism in China and Taiwan *by Teresa Wright. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2001. 192 pp. Cloth, $45.00; paper, $17.95.*

In the immediate aftermath of the 1989 Chinese student movement and its brutal repression, a series of articles and books appeared in quick succession seeking to explain what had happened, why it had happened, and what it meant for the future of China. There were translations of movement documents, discussions of civil society development (or the lack of it), and analyses of struggles between moderates and hardliners in the leadership. Much of this work was useful and some of it—including memoirs from participants—was essential to our understanding of this complex series of events. Although a number of valuable books on the subject have appeared in the intervening years, it has taken more than a decade for important doctoral dissertations to be completed and to appear in print. Dingxin Zhao became so emotionally caught up in these events that he decided in 1990, after completing his Ph.D. in entomology, to enter a second Ph.D. program in sociology so that he might comprehend the movement in less emotional terms.

While the two books under consideration share obvious similarities, including the use of interviews with participants to supplement analysis of documents, their different emphases and approaches make them quite complementary. In the end, both authors appear to see the 1989 movement's failure as "inevitable," but they reach their conclusions by following different paths. Teresa Wright sees her book as part of the new wave of scholarship that extends social movement theory from its origins in cases of popular protest in Western countries to examine the success and failure of protest in more overtly illiberal and repressive political systems. She argues that the strikingly similar behavior of Beijing students in 1989 and Taiwan students in March 1990 led to almost diametrically opposed outcomes. The Taiwan student action ended peacefully, voluntarily, and successfully, having all its demands addressed by the government. Wright undertakes her comparative case study to examine the reasons for this divergence. Her key variable is the political environment, particularly the political opportunity structure. She suggests that in both places student behavior was both predictable and rational, but the more oppressive political environment in Beijing made any effective reform-oriented political protest close to impossible. Thus, she notes the Catch-22 faced by protestors in the most oppressive and exclusive regimes. To have a chance of success, they would need to forge strong links across varied social groups, such as workers. Yet the attempted mobilization of such groups that the regime finds threatening will provoke a rapid crackdown.

Dingxin Zhao's book, although it focuses only on the 1989 movement, is nevertheless theoretically more ambitious. As does Wright, he takes issue with previous analyses of the movement. But whereas Wright's criticism focuses on those who blame the students for isolating themselves from other groups, which she feels was essential to avoid repression and may even have prolonged the movement, Zhao's critique is broader. He takes issue with those who see the movement in terms of reformer-hardliner factional struggle within the government, those who stress the rise or lack of civil society development in China, and those who emphasize Chinese culture. Wright's political opportunity approach, a common one in the social movement literature, is rejected because of its unfalsifiability; one cannot form alternative hypotheses to test the theory's validity. Zhao instead suggests that a state-society relations model offers the greatest explanatory power. He models the development of the 1989 movement as a "structured contingency" (p. 350). He emphasizes how social structures patterned people's activities and how these activities gradually closed off other possible outcomes, making the final confrontation between the people and the state increasingly inevitable.

His analysis focuses on three sets of embedded structural factors, including the nature of the state (encompassing state behavior, its strong repressive capacity, and the decline in control over students), the nature of society (the weakness of intermediate associations and the spatial layout of university campuses), and the linkages between the state and society (differing conceptions of state legitimation). In effect, the state was authoritarian, society was poorly organized, and state legitimation was based on its moral and economic performance.

More specifically, Zhao notes three prominent features of the 1989 movement: frequent government policy changes; quick and successful participant mobilizations; and dominance of traditional forms of language and action. Each of these phenomena is explained using his state-society model. Thus, government policies were ineffective and required repeated alteration because top state elites and the general public, including movement activists, had different understandings of state legitimation. Student mobilization was greatly facilitated by the physical environment of the campuses, which placed a large number of students in a small area with a unique spatial distribution. Campus ecology was able to offset organizational weaknesses. In one of many insights that appear in the book, Zhao notes how the 1950s policy of concentrating students in the Haidian district of Beijing as a means of social control had been successful, because the public at that time shared a belief in the state's ideological legitimation. When this was replaced in the 1980s by legitimation based on economic performance and moral conduct, other avenues of status attainment outside the realm of the state opened up; this concentration of students became damaging to regime interests. Thus, social pressure, so effective in the Maoist era in motivating activism in support of the regime, could now be used to mobilize antiregime activism. Finally, in noting, counter-intuitively, that movement

activities in 1989 had a more traditional outlook than the most prominent pre-1949 student movements (4 May 1919 and 9 December 1935–1936), he suggests that cultural forms of activity dominated the movement because the students judged their government on the basis of moral conduct and were outraged. At the same time, culturally accepted forms of collective action were seen as less likely to lead to immediate repression.

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Gender and the Political Economy of Development *by Shirin M. Rai. Oxford, UK, Polity Press, 2002. 264 pp. Paper, $32.95.*

Shirin Rai's complex and comprehensive book threads gender throughout an analysis of nationalism, globalization, global restructuring, and government in the twentieth century. With breathtaking scope, her analysis will appeal to specialists in international political economy, comparative politics, and gender studies. Rai spans from global to local simultaneously, moving women/gender and development approaches into mainstream and core conceptions of political science and international relations. She has grounded experience in, from, and with voices and field research from the South, where global restructuring has made a larger imprint on analysis than abstractions from the North, heretofore more insulated from the consequences of privatization and global corporate power over states.

Consider the following scenario. A giant energy corporation negotiated with a party in power to assure high profits. The arrangements seemed to foster "growth" and "development," always loaded terminology. The heavy-handed corporation manufactured shortages in a public utility. Did this crisis occur recently in the United States through Enron and other corporate giants implicated in California's electricity shortages and skyrocketing prices before it declared bankruptcy, displaced workers, and lost pension funds to executives' compensation schemes? Midway through Rai's book, readers encounter the section, "ENRON and Electricity." India's trade liberalization policies attracted considerable foreign investments in the power sector. In 1992, Enron secured a contract to "manage the world's largest—though nonviable—electricity-generating plant in Dabhol, near Bombay" and in so doing affects the "lives of people in rural communities by shaping and reshaping, privatizing and destabilizing local environments . . . " (pp. 104–05).

Rai's ambitious book grounds debates in the lives of men and women in places wherein both class and North-South divides perpetuate obscene inequalities. The bibliography alone, with readings far beyond U.S. authors, is valuable: Rai includes in more than 600 citations. Those inequalities, Rai argues,