

*My Life in Prison: Memoirs of a Chinese Political Dissident.* By JIANG QISHENG. Translated by JAMES DEW. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. xv, 223 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

*No Enemies, No Hatred: Selected Essays and Poems.* By LIU XIAOBO. Edited by PERRY LINK, TIENCHI MARTIN-LIAO, and LIU XIA. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012. xxii, 366 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).  
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Both of these books focus our attention on ugly aspects of contemporary China, including injustice, inequality, arbitrary authority, violence, and lies. Both offer a moral vision that will remind many readers of Vaclav Havel, who appropriately wrote a preface for the collection of Liu Xiaobo's essays. Both authors' message is that the only way to find dignity in the face of an oppressive system is to maintain steadfast moral resistance.

Jiang Qisheng's book is a memoir of his four years in prison. It begins just prior to his detention in 1999 at which time he had just published an article commemorating the tenth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations. The first 150 pages recount about a year he spent in the Beijing Detention Center awaiting his trial and sentencing. The next fifty pages are about conditions in the terrible Transfer Center where he spent fifty-three days awaiting assignment to a regular prison. He spent the remainder of his four-year sentence in Beijing Prison No. 2, but only discusses this in passing.

Jiang's struggle is, above all, to retain personal dignity. He writes and publishes in order to have the dignity of being able to speak the truth as he knows it. During his trial he condemned the authorities for conducting a "literary inquisition" and pointed out the inhumanity of defining words as crimes. He is acutely aware of the considerable gap between formal law and actual practice (according to Jiang, this gap is wide enough that even guilty prisoners with sufficient money and connections can bribe their way out of prison) and often quoted relevant rules and regulations back to the authorities in an attempt to shame them into following their own rules. With a background in philosophy and careful attention to Chinese law, he enjoyed verbal tussles with interrogators and prison authorities, and, at least in his account, often won the upper hand. In daily life in prison, he steadfastly resisted rituals and linguistic practices that construed him as a criminal. While walking through the prison, for example, he refused to obey commands to adopt a submissive posture and keep his eyes down but instead kept his back straight and his head high. He even contested the manner of his release from prison, angrily rejecting the authorities' attempts to compel him to be driven to his home by the police rather than collected by his wife and friends.

Jiang also succeeds in finding humanity in his fellow inmates. He includes portraits of individuals ranging from perpetrators of grisly murder to Falun Gong believers to a businessman framed for financial crimes. As his cell was in a block also used as a death row, there are intermittent references to the condemned being led to their execution. Jiang finds enough humanity in his

cellmates that after leaving the Detention Center he experiences a measure of nostalgia.

As Perry Link points out in a useful introduction, the conditions Jiang faced were not as harsh as those faced by intellectuals incarcerated during the Mao years. But conditions were still difficult. In the Detention Center, the food was bad, the cell was crowded, sleeping was difficult, there were humiliating searches, he was denied medical care even as he began to lose sight in one of his eyes, and he had to cope with occasional fights among the inmates that in at least one case resulted in a fatality. Conditions were much worse in the Transfer Center. There, guards were abusive and prisoners were required to do long hours of uncompensated labor, were denied adequate water, and were even not allowed sufficient time to defecate.

Liu Xiaobo's essays offer a systematic moral analysis of contemporary China. He covers a wide range of the problems and indignities faced by Chinese, but has much less to say about his own circumstances. Liu has thought a great deal about the need for personal sacrifice. It is not clear that he is a Christian, but he has carefully contemplated and draws inspiration from Jesus's story. However, when he does mention his own incarcerations, it is mostly to downplay his contribution. He is profoundly aware of the people who were killed by the regime in the crackdown that ended the 1989 demonstrations, of the suffering of families who were not allowed to mourn their lost children and relatives, and that ordinary people were often given much harsher punishments than famous intellectuals. The most personal parts of this collection are poems found throughout the book, most of which express appreciation for the love and support of his wife, Liu Xia.

The editors of this book—Perry Link, Tienchi Martin-Liao, and Liu Xia—have selected about 275 pages of essays and another fifty pages of documents. One of the essays was written in the early 1990s, but most are from the few years preceding Liu's third incarceration in 2008. The topics will be familiar to those who followed news from China during this period of time, including land rights, the rise of Chinese society and the Internet, the need for political reform, corruption and violence in Chinese politics, the uses of Confucius in contemporary China, entertainment and the pursuit of wealth in contemporary China, the Beijing Olympics, Hong Kong, Tibet, and Taiwan. The documents include the proclamation of a hunger strike Liu launched on the eve of the June 4 crackdown, the *Charter 08*, his self-defense and final statement at his most recent trial, and the verdict against him.

Liu offers vivid and persuasive accounts of inhumanity and cruelty in contemporary China. As noted above, he is painfully aware of the massacre on June 4 and the lies told to cover it up. He also offers analysis of farmers whose land is seized by officials seeking to profit from real estate development, minorities unable to find any meaningful autonomy, and many other problems. Inequality is an overarching theme.

While he is outraged by the abuse of authority, "no enemies, no hatred" is a consistent theme. Liu is troubled both by the suffering of the victims and the loss of moral dignity suffered by those who perpetrate these offenses. Liu finds

China's authoritarian system rather than individual leaders to be source of this corruption. In part, this develops from his earlier project to use Western philosophy to assess China. However, by the time he completed that project, he had concluded that it was based on an incomplete understanding of the West. Not only is "the West" an unfinished project, as Habermas might say, but Western thought, like all other human thought, is limited by culture and in need of criticism from a more broadly human perspective. Liu has left space to regret simplistic evaluations of the impact of the West. Nonetheless, he finds the political forms presently found in many Western (and Asian) societies healthier and more dignified than the current Chinese system. *Charter 08*, the project that resulted in his current incarceration, unambiguously recommends a liberal political system with individual rights, competitive elections, and majority rule. It is not hard to understand how the authorities could view this as a threat to their style of governance.

Holding the system to be the source of corruption means that he views most Chinese and not just officials as complicit. Consequently, the remedy he proposes is a general and gradual moral awakening rather than a single act of violent revolution. Exactly where China is in this process is ambiguous. On the one hand, he celebrates the Chinese people's increasing awareness and, in particular, how much has been gained since the death of Mao. He finds the Internet to be an enormous boon for the Chinese people. But, on the other hand, he is clear that society remains weak. He writes eloquently about the seductions of making money, of the temptations of China's "erotic carnival" and the dangers of extreme nationalism. In one of his darker moments, he writes that the transformation may take longer than anyone imagines.

In sum, *No Hatred, No Enemies* offers a compelling moral vision. I would urge anyone who is concerned that the Nobel Committee's choice of Liu as the 2010 Peace Prize winner was arbitrary to read this book before passing final judgment. It could be that Liu has completely misunderstood the direction of history and that the "China model" will be a leading force in global politics for decades to come. But, even in that case, our understanding of the meaning of that model will be much impoverished if we fail to take careful account of Liu Xiaobo's thoughtful critique.

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*A Springboard to Victory: Shandong Province and Chinese Communist Military and Financial Strength, 1937–1945.* By SHERMAN XIAOGANG LAI. Leiden: Brill, 2011. xxxiii, 341 pp. \$179.00 (cloth).

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Sherman Xiaogang Lai, a former soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), looks in this book at the role Shandong played between 1937 and