



Language

There has been a gradual but unpredictable relaxation of controls over freedom of speech and publication and some evidence of a developing civil society. The abandonment of former socialist policies has increased the wealth of some but encouraged corruption, and left many workers, peasants and those dependent on state benefits economically insecure. As a result there has been a dramatic increase in worker unrest, public protests by pensioners, and some criticism of economic globalization. In particular, the displacement and environmental problems caused by China's massive hydropower programme, beginning with the Three Gorges Dam, has met with opposition. There is in addition evidence of rising rural unrest over sale of land to developers, local corruption and destruction of the environment. Campaigners are both putting up candidates in local elections and demonstrating. The government admitted that there had been 74,000 'mass incidents' in 2004.

The incorporation of Hong Kong into China in 1995 created a zone with a special status and a lively democracy movement that had sprung up in the period leading to Britain's transfer of control to Beijing. Nationalist dissent has not prompted the kind of problems experienced in the USSR because, in the China created in 1949, over 90 per cent of the population were ethnic Chinese. But reports have emerged of significant dissent among the Muslim population of Xinjiang. ([Tibet](#) [1] is here treated as a separate country.)

Chase, Michael S. ; Mulvenon, James C., [You've Got Dissent! Chinese Dissident Use of the Internet and Beijing's Counter-Strategies](#) [2], Santa Monica CA, RAND, 2002, pp. 132

Dongfang, Han, [Chinese labour struggles](#) [3], New Left Review, issue 34 (July/August), 2005, pp. 65-85

Interview with a former railway worker involved in trade union activity at time of Tiananmen, who now directs the China Labour Bulletin and broadcasts from Hong Kong to promote independent union activity in China.

Fayong, Shi ; Cai, Yongshun, [Disaggregating the State: Networks and Collective Resistance in Shanghai](#) [4], The China Quarterly, Vol. 186, 2006, pp. 314-332

Study of Shanghai home owners' resistance that suggests that fragmentation of state power at local level provides opportunities for resistance, and that its success may be helped by social networks between participants in collective action and officials or media workers. See also Fayong, Shi , [Social Capital and Collective Resistance in Urban China Neighborhoods: a community movement in Shanghai](#) [5] Singapore, Dept of Sociology, National University of Singapore, , 2004, pp. 43 , online.

Friedman, Edward ; Pichowicz, Paul G. ; Selden, Mark, [Revolution, Resistance and Reform in Village China](#) [6], New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 2005, pp. 368

Jianrong, Yu, [Social Conflict in Rural China](#) [7], China Security, Vol. 3, issue 2 (spring), 2007, pp. 2-17

O'Brien, Kevin J., [Popular Protest in China](#) [8], Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2008, pp. 278

O'Brien, Kevin J. ; Li, Lianjiang, [Rightful Resistance in Rural China](#) [9], Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 201



Based on fieldwork since 1994 on local instances of rights-based opposition. Chapter 4, 'Tactical Escalation', pp. 67-94, is especially rich in examples

Perry, Elizabeth J. ; Selden, Mark, [Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance](#) [10], [2000], 2nd edition, London, Routledge, 2003, pp. 296

Analyses reactions to government reforms, including both covert and open resistance. Distinguishes between intellectual dissidents and popular rebellion. See especially 'Rights and resistance: The changing context of the dissident movement' (pp. 20-38); 'Pathways of labour insurgency' (pp. 41-61); and 'Environmental protest in rural China' (pp. 143-59) which includes reference to direct action against a factory polluting water. Second edition has added chapters on Falun Gong, Christianity and land struggles.

Qinglian, He, [China's listing social structure](#) [11], New York Review of Books, issue 5 (September/October), 2000, pp. 69-100

A critical assessment of Chinese society by a Chinese social scientist, widely discussed within China, indicating the context for unrest. Inset is an article describing a pensioner campaign led by a former Party official (pp. 82-83).

Stalley, Phillip ; Yang, Dongning, [An Emerging Environmental Movement in China?](#) [12], The China Quarterly, Vol. 186, 2006, pp. 333-356

Tai, Zixue, [The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society](#) [13], London, Routledge, 2006, pp. 365

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N., [Student protests in fin-de-siecle China](#) [14], New Left Review, issue 237 (September/October), 1999, pp. 52-76

Discusses 1999 student demonstrations against the NATO bombing of Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, comparing them with earlier 1919 and June 1989 protests. Argues that, despite official support and encouragement, the 1999 protests did reflect significant degree of student autonomy and included allusion to 1989.

Xueqin, Jiang, [Fighting to organize](#) [15], Far Eastern Economic Review, 06/09/2001, pp. 72-75

Gives examples of strikes and sit-ins and role of unofficial trade unions.

Yan, Huang ; Qeqing, Guo, [The Transnational Network and Labor Rights in China](#) [16], China Rights Forum, issue 3, 2006, pp. 57-62

See also:

Journal of Democracy, [China since Tiananmen](#) [17], Journal of Democracy, 2009, contains a section on 'China since Tiananmen', covering different sources of opposition – labour, rural, human rights activism, and online activism, pp. 5-40

New Internationalist, [Mao or never. China's people speak](#) [18], New Internationalist, 2004, pp. 9-28. On pp. 16-17, Yu Jianrong charts the growth of direct action among farmers resisting heavy taxes, protesting against irregularities in village elections or challenging corruption among local cadres



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