Book Reviews

Democratization in China and Taiwan: The Adaptability of Leninist Parties. By BRUCE DICKSON. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 276 pp. Hard cover £37.50, ISBN 0-19-8292694.]

To explain why China's leaders were unwilling to accommodate popular pressure for political change, Bruce Dickson compares the adaptability of the Leninist ruling parties on either side of the Taiwan Straits and shrewdly applies general rules on adaptability found in organization theory to both the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Adaptability is understood as a strategy of survival. To the extent that these two theoretical approaches do not fully explain the data, Dickson then compares China with Eastern Europe and adds *ad hoc* explanations particular to China, such as the traumatic experience of the Cultural Revolution. The result is a solid and deeply satisfying first-rate study of China's non-democratization, including reasoned judgements on why it is unlikely that CCP leaders will opt for democratization in the near future.

The best part of the book covers the role of the KMT in Taiwan's democratization, with its satisfying explanation rooted in the truth-enhancing consequence of this process. With political freedom has come a flourishing of excellent Taiwanese scholarship on Taiwan's politics in the Chinese language, and Dickson utilizes this superbly. In addition, since Taiwan is now an open society, Dickson has obtained much new and important data through insightful interviews with people who were central to the process of democratization. Far better than any previous attempt, Dickson explains the pivotal role of Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan's peaceful transition to democracy.

The continuation of dictatorship in the People's Republic of China denies Dickson access to similar data. Consequently, he relies more on theory and on the work of non-Chinese scholars in exploring the failure of political adaptation on mainland China. Employing theories of democratic transition as well as organization theories, he finds that moments of generational succession are most conducive to a successful democratic transition if the environment – both domestic and foreign – is least threatening.

But Dickson also finds that environments are multivalent and ambiguous, such that a diverse set of actors interpret the same environmental moment differently. Hence, in 1989, with a Beijing–Moscow reconciliation and a surging economy (i.e. in the context of a non-threatening environment), one might expect Deng Xiaoping to be capable of accommodating forces of political change. That Deng would not compromise on popular calls for political change requires an explanation in terms of particular and contingent Chinese experiences, and Dickson is limited in his explanations by the opaque quality of the Chinese polity which leaves crucial variables, such as the balance of power between hard-liners and moderates, unclear. Nonetheless, he adds greatly to our

understanding of why Deng opted for repression rather than democratization in 1989.

Dickson concludes that the KMT was inherently easier to democratize and that Chinese contingent factors, such as ideology, the Cultural Revolution and the strength of veteran hard-liners, made the CCP far more difficult to reform politically. While nothing rules democracy absolutely out of China's future, Dickson regards it as quite unlikely that Jiang Zemin's generation of Chinese leaders will risk opening to democracy. Dickson has produced a data-rich, theoretically informed, tremendously insightful book of excellent scholarship.

My major complaint concerns coverage of the legitimation of nationalism. Dickson fails to note that, during Taiwan's 1970s–1980s legitimation crisis, it was the most passionate opponents of the KMT who could embrace the surging emotions of nativism. The KMT could not re-legitimate itself in a nationalistic way, while the CCP, in contrast, could. Dickson does not see that the CCP could legitimately consider its international environment hostile because its ambition of regional primacy was challenged by the extant weight of both Japan and the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region. In relying on self-interested manoeuvres in terms of organization theory, Dickson under-estimates the weight of ideational factors.

EDWARD FRIEDMAN

The Roles of the United States, Russia, and China in the New World Order. Edited by HAFEEZ MALIK. [London: Macmillan, 1997. xix + 333 pp. Hard cover £47.50, ISBN 0-333-65012-3.]

The ghost of the strategic triangle, that dubious hegemonic paradigm of the late Cold War era, haunts this pot-pourri of 13 essays by academic and think-tank analysts from a conference at Villanova University in April 1994. Professor Malik, invoking the traditional realist approach to international relations, asks us to believe that among the U.S., Russia and China, "the struggle for power has already started in earnest ..." (p. 12). Henry Trofimenko's tart essay on Russian–American relations, pulsing with wounded Russian national pride, suggests otherwise. Maya Chadda's fine contribution on Indo–Russian relations likewise highlights Russia's weakness, though Mohiaddin Mesbahi correctly reminds us that at least in Central Asia, where Russia's imperial ambitions flourished during the tsarist era, Moscow remains a vital if diminished actor. Richard Thornton's self-referential essay on Russo–Chinese *détente*, freighted with platitudes, is mostly an exercise in that distinctive brand of American triumphalism which survives from the Reagan-Bush years.

Readers primarily interested in Chinese politics can begin this book on p. 238 where Eden Naby's crisp survey of Xinjiang reviews both the internal and external factors bearing upon this region's likely future. Naby sensibly concludes that rebellious Uygurs and other local nationalities unhappy with Chinese control have virtually no chance of loosening Beijing's grip on Xinjiang, barring a collapse at the centre. The