Democratizing Oriental Despotism: China from 4 May 1919 to 4 June 1989 and Taiwan from 28 February 1947 to 28 June 1990. By C. L. CHIOU. [Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995. xiii + 178 pp. £40.00. ISBN 0-333-62672-9.]

This ambitious book draws on Joseph A. Schumpeter's competitive elite democracy model to present a provocative thesis for why Taiwan has democratised but mainland China has not. After 1949, Taiwan's opposition elite adhered to a vision of democracy based on establishing competing political parties and a free press. They became skilled at participating in local elections and advertising their political goals and tactics while discrediting the Kuomintang's rule based on martial law. In fact, so successful was the opposition that in spite of many setbacks it illegally formed a small political party and got away with it, only to become a legal party after martial law was lifted in 1986 and a new law in 1989 required all parties to register. It then had enough influence to be invited to join the Kuomintang's leaders and other elite in June–July 1990 at a National Affairs Conference and participate in democratic reform. The reforms that followed expanded national elections, eventually produced coalition politics in parliament, and established checks and balances to reduce the power of the Kuomintang.

In mainland China the story was different, because the opposition elite adhered to a different vision of democracy. Instead of promoting an opposition party and political advertising that could modify the political centre's behaviour, they tried to change the moral behaviour and political ideology of the ruling elite through what the author refers to as the politics of "remonstration." They used this tactic from the May Fourth movement in 1919 until the bloody suppression of students and their supporters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989.

According to Chiou, the 28 February 1947 uprising in Taiwan, rather than the May Fourth movement, inspired the opposition movement to eschew the "remonstration" approach and instead participate in local elections and the ideological market-place to develop their political opposition identity. This interpretation is interesting, but the analysis is simplistic and polemically one-sided.

First, the author lumps the KMT and Communist regimes into the same category of "oriental despotism" and never distinguishes fairly and accurately their goals, use of power and relationship to civil society. He refers to Thomas A. Metzger and this reviewer's concepts of "uninhibited" and "inhibited" political centre to analyse the differences between Communist China and the Republic of China on Taiwan but misunderstands their analytical power. Moreover, Chiou dismisses the historical evidence confirming the Kuomintang's "inhibited" regime's successful promotion of "limited democracy" under martial law and that party's commitment to develop democracy. He also brushes aside the evidence that the "uninhibited" Communist regime never promoted local elections or allowed an ideological market-place to promote even "limited democracy." As he fails to understand how these two political

centres interacted so differently with their societies, he cannot appreciate and understand why and how the KMT allowed the political opposition a hospitable environment for "limited democracy," whereas on the mainland the Communist Party never nurtured a civil society.

Secondly, the author dismisses the importance of cultural change to explain how and why Taiwan's ruling elite ever tolerated an opposition in the first place. Nor does he explain why the political opposition increasingly played by the rules to reform a constitution they despised. In other words, Chiou ignores significant political cultural changes in the martial law era that facilitated the ruling elite's tolerance of an opposition and the opposition elite's compliance with political rules. Similarly, he ignores complex political cultural and ideological changes in mainland China since the Second World War. He does not understand that the regime's persecution of the opposition might have made many elite passive and unwilling to criticize the political centre. There is also the issue of why so many of today's elite express little interest in democracy and embrace much of Mao Zedong's thought to affirm the current Communist Party reforms.

The author also undervalues the role of leadership to manage and avert political crises. During the March 1990 crisis, President Lee alone decided to convene the National Affairs Conference. Moreover, his leadership alone overcame the resistance in his own party and from the opposition to achieve a political reconciliation and initiate constitutional reform.

In summary, the author's flawed explanation of the political differences between Taiwan and mainland China today merely serves as a reminder of the task that still remains.

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Protest Your Loyalty: An Analysis of the Right of Assembly, Procession and Demonstration in the People's Republic of China. By GEORG HINTZEN. [Leiden: CNWS, 1994. xi + 185 pp. Fl.35.00. ISBN 90-73782-31-7.]

In an era of instant and varied means of communication, the right to freedom of assembly, including the freedom to hold processions and demonstrations in public places, might seem to be an increasingly unnecessary threat to the order and continuity of public life. However it remains one of the essential guarantees of personal freedom. Beyond its protections for the social and commercial use of public spaces, its importance lies precisely in its guarantee of the right to disrupt the public appearance of consensus and express depths of feeling and commitment which cannot be adequately communicated in any other way.

It is because freedom of assembly is so important to the functioning of a liberal democracy that Georg Hintzen's study of the constitutionally protected right to hold assemblies, processions and demonstrations in