

ensuring civilian party control, its effectiveness is questionable. Cheng's data indicate that party-political officers and "purely" military officers share the same political attitudes, concerns, and values: there is no clear line of cleavage between them.

In neither the PRC nor the ROC have the top leaders relied on the political commissar system to control military elites. Cheng believes that, paradoxically, the political commissar system tends to increase rather than curtail the military's influence on the state and society. Staffed with so many experts on political-social affairs, and equipped with abundant facilities for executing their tasks, the political commissar system may at times become a formidable political rival of the civilian party, as happened on the mainland during the 1960s with the "Everyone Learn from the P[eo]ple's] L[iberation] A[rmy]" campaign and in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution.

In Leninist political systems—from which the structures of the PRC and the ROC are both derived—the military is part of the overall party structure. However, this does not mean that the part is limited to a fixed proportion of the whole, nor does it suggest that this part is always in harmony with the other parts. Rather, they are like *yin* and *yang*, simultaneously complementary and opposite to each other. Although conflicts may exist in the waxing and waning of one side, the totality may remain intact. This flexibility renders the concept of "party leadership," or control, unclear. Indeed, the military might stage a coup in the name of, and for, the party at an appropriate time without violating the principle of party leadership. The arrest of the "Gang of Four" in a military-initiated action after Mao Zedong's death in 1976 comes close to this scenario. One regrets that, despite the book's 1990 publication date, there is no analysis of how the PLA's actions at Tiananmen Square in 1989 fit into this scheme. In any case, Cheng argues that it is inappropriate to use the absence of a military coup as a criterion for the success of the party-state as a model of effective civilian control.

Cheng concludes by pointing out that allowing the military to exert its political influence on the government reduces the risks of armed revolts and promotes political obedience. As the military is given its due in the state, it is more likely to become a competent and loyal servant of the state. Those who view the proper role of the armed forces as apolitical executors of civilian-made decisions will not be comfortable with this conclusion. However, despite the attractions of the theory of a military completely divorced from political decision-making, one senses that Cheng's hypothesis more accurately describes reality. The author has given us a thoughtful, well-researched, and provocative work. His conclusions will set the standard for future debate on civil-military relations.

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The Brush and the Spur: Chinese Culture and the Cockfight. By ROBERT JOE CUTTER. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1989. xiii, 255 pp. \$28.00.

This unusual book brings to light references to cockfighting in China from the first recorded contest in 517 B.C. (*Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 25) to the eighteenth century A.D. Most of the references are from poetry, augmented by others from prose sources and by a number of pictorial representations. The author argues that "cockfighting as a belletristic topic and social phenomenon is an excellent reflector of certain

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