Shibao, or as it called itself in English, The Eastern Times, was a daily newspaper published in Shanghai from 1904 to 1939. During the first eight years, when it was edited by Chen Leng, it was, according to Judge, “[t]he most influential reform organ of its day” (31). This book is an analysis of its political stance, focusing upon its role in the creation and expansion, during the period of Chen’s editorship, of what the author calls a “new middle realm,” one that lay between the common people below and the officials above. Thus, as did like-minded publications of the time, Shibao saw its mission as, on the one hand, elevating the cultural and intellectual level of the masses and, on the other, demanding that the Qing government be responsive to the newly emerging public opinion. Based upon a close reading of its editorial commentaries and organized topically into three sections, the book examines the concept of this middle realm, the effort to forge a new public-minded politically active citizenry, and the concurrent confrontations between the press and the official power holders. It is a significant contribution to the literature on late Qing reformism and its relationship to the onset of the republican revolution. It confirms, for example, that the reformers of the expanding middle realm did not become irretrievably estranged from the incumbent regime until the end of 1910 or the beginning of 1911.

The book, particularly in the introduction and the first chapter, also makes a significant contribution to comparative press history and to the debate about civil society in China. Drawing on the recent works of such scholars as Curran (for England), Popkin (France), Moran (Germany) and Huffman (Japan), it compares and contrasts the political press in late Qing China with that in the West and Japan at a similar point in their national histories. Thus, it finds that “The Chinese newspapers were not part of a political structure that included other autonomous political bodies, as the foreign papers were” (26). Or, more broadly, “in China—where there had been no centuries-long development of an independent noble class, a regime of estates, or a church independent of political authority—journalism was not supported by a well-established civil society.” Consequently, “Because China did not have a genuine structure of fundamental rights, one can at most speak of late Qing society as a civil society in formation.” Indeed, referring to Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Cambridge, 1989), the book stresses the importance of the press in the formation of a civil society in China.

Mass., 1989), the book contends that “Whereas the development of the public sphere in Europe was premised on the existence of civil society (Habermas wrote of the public sphere of civil society), in China it was the organs of publicity [like Shibao] that served as the impetus for the creation of the institutional infrastructure that constitutes a civil society” (emphasis in the original). This, it concludes, was “an important distinction between the course of Chinese and Western history” (11–12).

Despite the book’s overall excellence, there are three issues that need amplification or clarification. One concerns the unexplored implications of the finding, based on Japanese consular reports, that Shibao received financial support, as well as diplomatic protection, from the Japanese government. To what extent did such support and protection affect the editorial policy of the newspaper, particularly with regard to the several anti-Japanese agitations of the period? Another is the hazy distinction between the “officials” (guan) or “the government” (zhengfu) on the one hand and the monarch (jun) on the other. Shibao was unrelenting in its condemnation of the Qing government, but did such criticisms encompass the supreme ruler? The book at one point has a lengthy discussion that states explicitly that they did not, “at least until late 1911.” Thus, “The journalists portrayed the emperor as devoted to the welfare of the people and critical of venal and self-seeking officials” (147). Elsewhere, however, it quotes Shibao as describing a railway dispute in 1907 as “the first phase of the struggle between the emperor and the people” (186). A final issue concerns the extent of Shibao’s political influence. If, as the book states, “the Shibao journalists were among the first to express their support” for the Wuchang uprising on October 10, 1911, why did it take so long—three and a half weeks—for Jiangsu and Zhejiang, “the two provinces most closely linked to Shibao,” to declare their independence from the Qing (193–194)?

Edward Rhoads
University of Texas, Austin

Aryans and British India. By Thomas R. Trautmann (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997) 260 pp. $35.00

In the past few decades, the historiography of the beginnings of Indian civilization has become the subject of ever-hotter debate between indologists, historians, linguists, amateur scholars, and even politicians. The focus of this debate is the Aryan invasion theory, whereby the destiny of Indian civilization is explained by the arrival in South Asia of a group who called themselves Aryans, who spoke an Indo-European language, and who progressively expanded their domination over the indigenous peoples, presumably the Dravidians.

In Aryans and British India, Trautmann makes an original and useful point that bears on this debate; he directs our attention to the intellectual circumstances in which the invasion theory became a racial theory. Until