

An Historical Examination of the Concepts of Freedom and Democracy in *Free China* Magazine:

A Study of the History of Thought on Taiwan in the 1950s

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Abstract

Free China magazine is viewed as a representative magazine of the liberalism and democratic movement on Taiwan in the fifties. The concepts of freedom and democracy in *Free China* were not formatted from the beginning but developed with the political changes. This article, by using the articles in *Free China* magazine as raw data, clarifies the thread of its thought. This article also illustrates its position in Taiwanese history of thought at the time and the limitations of its view in comparison of the concepts of classical liberalism and democracy in the West.

The result of this article shows that the idea of *Free China*, whether freedom or democracy, is opposite to the authoritarian regime. With the arrest of Lei Chen, *Free China* was eventually shut down. Therefore, the concept of *Free China* was in the vanguard and played a perceptive role in Taiwan at the time.

From theoretical point of view, *Free China's* concept of *state instrumentalism* is close to classic liberalism; however its advocacy of human rights is not as forceful, when facing the laws violating the constitution or human rights. Its concept of democracy is far from the ideal types of democracy in the West. Nonetheless, its advocacy of establishment of an opposition party made it unable to exist in Taiwan at the time. This also implies the lack of external condition for its concept of democracy to develop further.