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China Unbound: A New World Disorder

Joanna Chiu. House of Anansi, \$19.99 trade paper (368p) ISBN 978-1-4870-0767-6

Journalist Chiu debuts with a grim primer on China's rise in the 21st century and its troubling implications for the world. Citing copious examples of the Chinese government's ability to quash dissent both internally and abroad, Chiu forcefully debunks the theory—which formed the basis for China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2000—that rising living standards would lead to political liberalization. On the contrary, Chiu writes, "as China became richer, it became more authoritarian." She details the Chinese Communist Party's curbing of press freedoms and "steamrolling of civil rights" in Hong Kong since the 1997 handover from British colonial rule; lucidly explains how China's New Silk Road initiative threatens to ensnare financially weak nations such as Greece and Italy; and documents extensive espionage operations in Australia and the harassment of Uyghur exiles in Turkey. From Chiu's perspective, the volatile mix of Chinese leaders' "thin-skinned" sensibility and the country's global economic clout is at the heart of growing tensions between China and the U.S., a fraught relationship further damaged by President Trump's bluster and the Covid-19 virus. Doggedly reported and fiercely argued, this cri de coeur offers essential insight into Beijing's "aims and activites." (Oct.)

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