



The Cultural Revolution on Trial: Mao and the Gang of Four (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University)

By Alexander C. Cook

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The trial of Cultural Revolution leaders, including Mao's widow and her Gang of Four, was the signal event in China's post-Mao transition. In its wake, Chinese socialism emerged from the rubble of the Cultural Revolution to create the China that we know today. This spectacular show trial was a curious example of transitional justice, marking a break from the trauma of the past, a shift to the present era of reform, and a blueprint for building a better future. In this groundbreaking reconstruction of the most famous trial in Chinese history, Alex Cook shows how the event laid the cornerstone for a new model of socialist justice; at the same time, a comparison of official political and legal sources with works of popular literature reveals the conflicted cultural dimensions of this justice. The result, Cook argues, saved Chinese socialism as ruling ideology, but at the cost of its revolutionary soul.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This book is an excellent exploration of the cultural politics of post-Mao China as well as an important contribution to the study of the global unfolding of legal modernity. Drawing on an exceptionally wide-ranging archive, Cook analyzes the contradictions between legality and humanity at a critical point in China's transition.' Teemu Ruskola, Emory University, Atlanta

About the Author

Alexander C. Cook is Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of California, Berkeley. Previously a Stanford Humanities Fellow and Fulbright Student, he holds a PhD with distinction in History from Columbia University, New York. His research focuses on the history of Maoism in its global and domestic contexts. He is editor of the volume *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, and has contributed chapters to the volumes *Law and History* (2004), *A Critical Introduction to Mao* (Cambridge, 2010), and *Scripting Revolution* (2015), as well as the forthcoming volumes *Political Trials* and *The Cambridge History of Communism, Volume 3*.

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