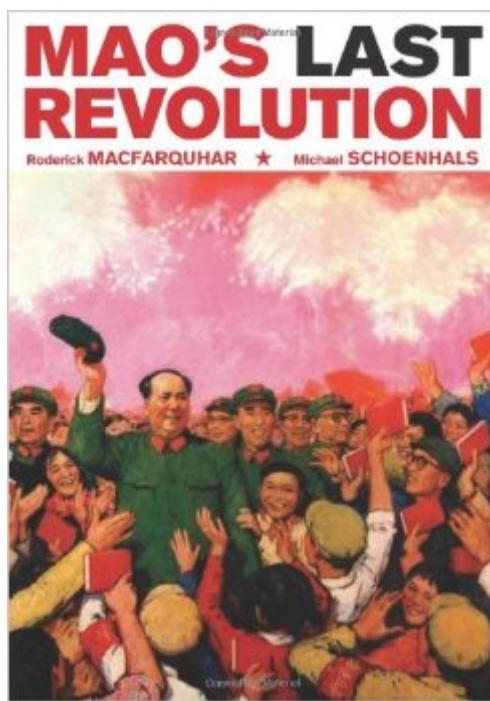


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Mao's Last Revolution



Synopsis

The Cultural Revolution was a watershed event in the history of the People's Republic of China, the defining decade of half a century of communist rule. Before 1966, China was a typical communist state, with a command economy and a powerful party able to keep the population under control. But during the Cultural Revolution, in a move unprecedented in any communist country, Mao unleashed the Red Guards against the party. Tens of thousands of officials were humiliated, tortured, and even killed. Order had to be restored by the military, whose methods were often equally brutal. In a masterly book, Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals explain why Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, and show his Machiavellian role in masterminding it (which Chinese publications conceal). In often horrifying detail, they document the Hobbesian state that ensued. The movement veered out of control and terror paralyzed the country. Power struggles raged among Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Qing - Mao's wife and leader of the Gang of Four - while Mao often played one against the other. After Mao's death, in reaction to the killing and the chaos, Deng Xiaoping led China into a reform era in which capitalism flourishes and the party has lost its former authority. In its invaluable critical analysis of Chairman Mao and its brilliant portrait of a culture in turmoil, Mao's Last Revolution offers the most authoritative and compelling account to date of this seminal event in the history of China.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A lot of experts say that there are four periods in modern times that helped shape present-day

China: World War II, the Civil War & rise of the Chinese Communist Party, the Great Leap Forward & resulting famine, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. I'm not an expert, merely someone who's interested in History, but I tend to agree. This theory explains many things, including why true republicanism is coming so slowly to the People's Republic. But there is one further question everyone asks - How can something like the Cultural Revolution happen? This book attempts to answer that broad question, as well as shows us how the Cultural Revolution is with China even today. The authors are experts in Chinese history and point out how the vision of one man - Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-Tung as romanized in the older British system still used in Taiwan), founder and chairman of the CCP - almost destroyed his own creation through dithering, ruthless crackdowns, and borderline insanity. This isn't an easy read by a longshot, but those who want to find out more about one of the most pivotal events in human history are well-served in reading it. The book dispells a lot of commonly-held views (such as Zhou Enlai (Chou En-Lai) being a moderating force on Mao) and gets the reader into the thick of it. Clearly demonstrated as well is, far from the clear-headed leader of Party propaganda, how indecisive Mao himself was in the direction of his Revolution (one example being the rise, fall, rise, fall, rise and ultimate redemption of Deng Xiaopeng (Teng Hsiao-Ping)). We see how politics apart from, but very connected to, Mao's vision of "continual revolution to route the rightist capitalist roaders" kept feeding the Revolution victims until it consumed those who created the CCP.

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