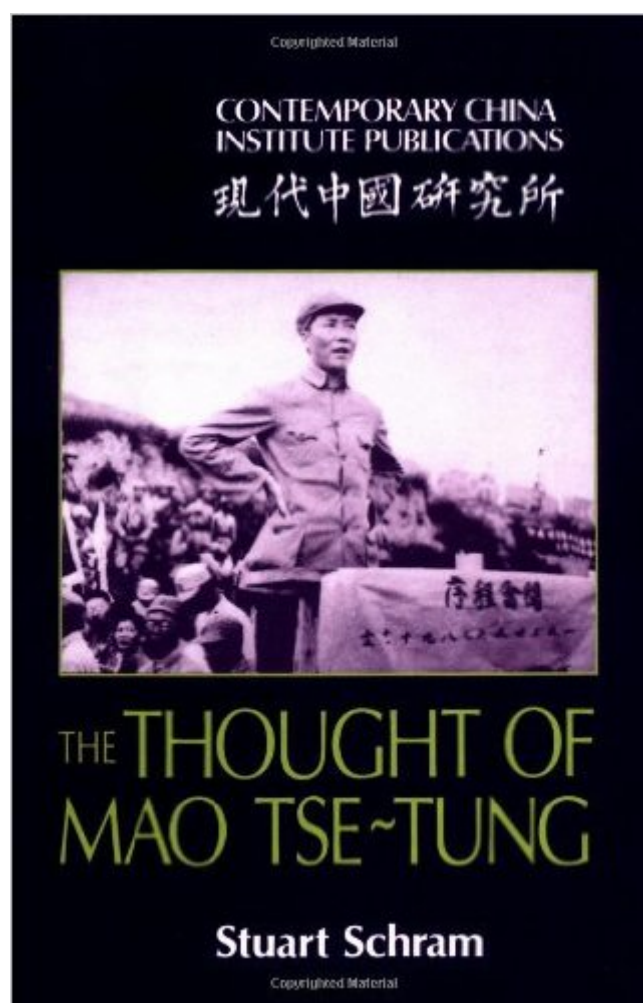


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The Thought Of Mao Tse-Tung (Contemporary China Institute Publications)



Synopsis

The most general and probably the most lasting expression of Mao Tse-Tung's contribution to the Chinese revolution was his thought. Stuart Schram's new book examines the unfolding of Mao's ideas, and in doing so sheds new light on other aspects of Mao Tse-Tung's life and times. The author traces the stages in the formation of Mao's thought from the May Fourth period through the Peasant Movement, the long years of armed struggle against the Kuomintang and the Japanese invaders, the foundation of a new state, his efforts to devise a "Chinese road to socialism," the Sino-Soviet split, and the so-called "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." The author offers a fascinating and sure-footed analysis of Mao's intellectual itinerary, recognizing the positive value of the participatory and anti-bureaucratic thrust of his thought, and of his efforts to link Marxism with Chinese reality. This authoritative text is drawn from Volumes 13 and 15 of The Cambridge History of China, with the addition of a new Introduction and Conclusion written especially for the volume.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stuart Schram's 200-ish page monograph on Mao's thought is a summary of the passages on this topic contained in the Cambridge History of China (vols. 13-15), and has been separately published by the Contemporary China Institute of University of London's SOAS. This book is a very information-dense but quite readable overview of Mao's thought in politics, dialectics, economics, strategy and so forth, as it developed from the earliest stages of the May Fourth Movement to the

Cultural Revolution. Schram describes objectively and with an eye for subtle details the various stages of development of Mao's thought, including but not limited to his view on the relation between countryside and city, the idea of the 'mass line', his changing views on the principal contradiction in society, the theory of the productive forces, and the attitude towards the Party and its status. Schram shows both Mao's utopian-rebellious and his tempered, imperial aspects, not denigrating either but showing how their constant tension revealed itself in his thought and policy. Most particular these tensions not only appeared in Mao's often changing conceptions of what the true and principal contradictions were, whether "among the people" or "antagonistic", but the rapid back-and-forth in policies itself was a sign of Mao's difficulty in reconciling contrary political ideals. That is not to disparage Mao's achievements, and although this book is about Mao's thought only and does not discuss policy and results in detail unless directly relevant to it, Schram certainly has no intent of holding Mao in contempt or dismissing him as a lunatic, as so many have done. His attitude is rather that of a somewhat disappointed sympathizer. There is not much on the relation of Mao's thought to that of other important people at the time, such as Deng, Liu or Peng, but the conclusion adds some reflections on the new course set out by Deng Xiaoping since he gained power in China (this book having been published in 1989). Schram's open-ended and objective approach and conclusions about Mao make this book an excellent general overview of Mao's intellectual contributions to Marxism and revolution.

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