



Alexander Cook, ed. *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xvi + 287 pp. \$80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-05722-7; \$27.99, ISBN 978-1-107-66564-4.

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A. Cook (Hrsg.): Mao's Little Red Book

Mao's Little Red Book famously remains only second to the Bible in its astonishing print-run. Despite its meteoric domestic and international rise in circulation in only one decade, the book has again become a rare commodity today. The articles in Alexander C. Cook's splendid collection of essays for the first time shed light on the turbulent history of the Little Red Book in a global perspective. The volume's 15 chapters are the result of a conference that took place at the University of California, Berkeley in 2011. In his introduction, Cook unfolds the ideological potential of Mao's quotations as the "spiritual atomic bomb" of its time. He highlights Mao's belief in the power and ability of the (Chinese) masses to bring about world revolution despite living in the atomic age.

Cook thus points to the intriguing function, which the Little Red Book played in sparking social unrest and violence both in China and abroad. Examining the history of Maoist ideology from the perspective of a commodity central to the propagation of Mao Zedong Thought, he raises the important question whether the spread of Maoism through the Little Red Book represents the "appropriation of radicalism by the commodity form or the appropriation of the commodity form by radicalism." (p. 19) The articles follow this central question in either centering on the Little Red Book as an eye-catching commodity and its dissemination in various national contexts or on radical movements adopting Maoist ideology to further their political agendas. The authors discuss the function of quotations in the spread of Maoist ideology (functioning as an entry point to further study of Mao's

ideology), the material culture surrounding the Little Red Book as a commodity, and the question of radicalism and violence sparked by Maoist ideology.

The volume highlights the Little Red Book's role as commodity conceived to operate as an ideological weapon and the major Chinese intervention into Cold War confrontations. Daniel Leese roots the production history of the Little Red Book in the long-standing Chinese tradition of quotation works (yulu). He draws attention to the secrecy surrounding the book as source of ideological inspiration for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the early stages of its history, its competitors edited by the Communist Party's Propaganda Department, and the explosion in domestic and international circulation once the regulation to shield the book from foreigners' access was lifted and the Cultural Revolution was under way. When statistically every Chinese owned a copy in 1968, the role of the Little Red Book had fundamentally changed inside the People's Republic. Leese stresses the fact that the book had already been used to discipline the masses under the auspices of the PLA when Western audiences discovered the Little Red Book as a symbol of youth rebellion and world revolution.

Andrew F. Jones adds the dimension of radio dissemination. His article points to the importance of mass media in the dissemination of ideological messages, which challenged fixed networks of the party state and in many ways displaced the "headquarters." The uneven and initially unchecked spread of Mao's quotations, as Gubin

Yang highlights, supported the development of factionalism among Red Guard groups across the country. This led to an interpretation war of how Mao's words had to be understood and sparked actual violence, which needed to be reigned in by PLA troops. Lanjun Xu's contribution finally points to the important role of the Foreign Language Press and Radio Beijing in transporting Mao's quotations into the global arena. Following the Sino-Soviet split, the Foreign Ministry used the governmental distribution networks to establish Chinese soft power abroad.

The impact of Maoist ideology abroad manifested in state-led, counter-cultural, and guerilla warfare attempts to shape political and militant action after the Chinese model. Priya Lal and Elidor M'hilli's articles showcase the uneasy relationship between the Tanzanian and Albanian governments and Maoist China. Both states accepted Chinese aid in economic and ideological form. While Tanzania accepted development aid to build railways, there soon was concern about too much Chinese influence. M'hilli describes Enver Hoxha's fear of bringing down his party rule by adopting the Cultural Revolution model. Yet, both Tanzania and Albania chose to remain aligned with Maoist China for geopolitical reasons in the 1960s. Adopted by non-state actors, the Little Red Book sparked guerilla warfare as part of the Third World liberation struggle. Sreemati Chakrabarti emphasizes the importance of key actors in the spread of Maoism. The Naxalite leader Charu Majumar introduced the Little Red Book to the Indian context. Majumar's focus on Lin Biao rather than Mao himself led to a sudden downfall of adherence to the Little Red Book once Lin Biao was killed in 1971. In a similar perspective, David Scott Palmer emphasizes Abimael Guzman's central role in transforming Maoism into a guiding influence on the Peruvian Shining Path.

Julian Bourg and Bill V. Mullen's contributions discuss the spread of Maoism to Western countries. Mullen's study of Afro-Asian radicalism in the US illustrates why the Little Red Book appealed to subcultural militant factions abroad. In the case of the Black Panther movement, Maoist thinking served to stress issues related to race and nationalism. Conversely, Julian Bourg shows the reception of Maoist writings in Louis Althusser's work and its lasting intellectual impact on the French left.

Quinn Slobodian and Dominique Kirchner Reill go on to investigate the impact of the Little Red Book and Maoism on border regions of the Cold War. Reill's comparison of Italian and Yugoslavian contexts shows the stark difference in attention Beijing directed to different European countries. While the Chinese government had already intervened in Italian left-wing debates in 1963 with the help of Italian translators and later flooded Italian activist networks with free propaganda materials, Yugoslavia merited considerably less attention in the eyes of the Chinese government. The Yugoslavian government nonetheless published a competitor to the Little Red Book in the form of a pioneer little red book. The Chinese targeted only selected in-between countries following Mao's conception of foreign policy at the time.

Slobodian stresses the importance of materiality of the Little Red Book as a badge or brand. He shows that Maoism was seen as a serious danger in divided Germany with both German governments attempting to suppress any adherence to Maoist ideology. Elisabeth McGuire highlights similar fears of a substantial impact of Maoist ideology on the USSR. The People's Republic sparked fears of re-Stalinisation and forced Soviet ideologues to distinguish key-concepts such as revolution, culture, and socialism from Chinese ideological attacks. However, in contrast to the GDR, for example, the Soviet leadership tried to fend off Chinese assaults through mockery and satire. Ban Wang's conclusion finally reflects on the Little Red Book's impact on Chinese notions of people's democracy.

This excellent volume is of great interest to specialists working on Maoist ideology and will also make a wonderful addition to class syllabi. It opens many exciting avenues for future research. How, for instance, did the Little Red Book influence Western conservative elites' perspectives on China? Especially international networks and exchanges between Maoist China and the outside world, which the authors repeatedly mention, merit further systematic investigation. Such networks enabled the Peruvian guerilla leader Guzman to travel to Maoist China for training, made it possible for the English economist Joan Robinson to advocate the benefits of the Cultural Revolution in India and Europe, and helped organize the international circulation of the Little Red Book.

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