Policing Chinese Politics
A History
Beginning with the bloody communist purges of the Jiangxi era of the late 1920s and early 1930s and moving forward to the wild excesses of the Cultural Revolution, *Policing Chinese Politics* explores the question of revolutionary violence and the political passion that propels it. "Who are our enemies, who are our friends, that is a question germane to the revolution," wrote Mao Zedong in 1926. Michael Dutton shows just how powerful this one line was to become. It would establish the binary division of life in revolutionary China and lead to both passionate commitment and revolutionary excess. The political history of revolutionary China, he argues, is largely framed by the attempts of Mao and the Party to harness these passions.

The economic reform period that followed Mao Zedong's rule contained a hint as to how the magic spell of political faith and commitment could be broken, but the cost of such disenchantment was considerable. This detailed, empirical tale of Chinese socialist policing is, therefore, more than simply a police story. It is a parable that offers a cogent analysis of Chinese politics generally while radically redrafting our understanding of what politics is all about. Breaking away from the traditional elite modes of political analysis that focus on personalities, factions, and betrayals, and from "rational" accounts of politics and government, Dutton provides a highly original understanding of the far-reaching consequences of acts of faith and commitment in the realm of politics.

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**Praise**

"[A] comprehensively-documented book that pushes us to reconsider the basis of politics in twentieth-century China." — Lisa Fischler, *Canadian Journal of History*

"[A]s a history of Chinese policing this book is a remarkable achievement and should be required reading on the subject for many years." — Gregor Benton, *Pacific Affairs*

"Dutton's history of Chinese law enforcement sets a new standard for research in this area. It is the most detailed and well-researched piece of scholarship to date on the subject." — William Hurst, *Asian Affairs*

"Evaluating this important book will be the work of years: it makes a unique structuralist contribution in a field too often dominated by court politics and political psychology. It clearly explains the urgent priority that current Chinese leaders give to deradicalized politics, and to technocratic and market based problem solving. But its biopolitical themes give the book a significance well beyond the study of Chinese politics. To cite but one example, many themes resonate powerfully with the politics and policing of the current "war on terror." Anyone concerned about the implications of friend/enemy politics for the fate of democracy and popular politics should read this book." — Feng Xu, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*

"Readers will find the book thought-provoking, informative, and a welcome addition to any collection of titles that deal with CCP history and recent Chinese politics." — Thomas D. Curran, *Journal of Asian History*

"The result is a well-written, provocative, and informative history of Chinese communist policing from its roots in 1927 through the 1990s. Dutton does not simply relate the story of policing: he links it to the story of what he calls 'the political.'" — Harold M. Tanner, *American Historical Review*

"The theoretical framework of this story of Chinese Policing is extremely solid. The empirical exploration of the antinomy 'amicus'—'hostis' through the analysis of the content provided by the Ministry of Public Security is carefully defined and manageable, and the analytical rigour is remarkable." — Marizio Marinelli, *History*

"The work is grounded in a rich array of Chinese language sources, while also engaging intellectually with international academic discourses in Chinese studies. At a time when the tension between human rights and political domination remains at the forefront of analysis of the Chinese legal system, Dutton's book invites a sober recollection of the Party's past history of politicization of law, while also permitting a cautiously optimistic view of the future of legal institutions." — Pitman B. Potter, *The China Quarterly*

"This is an excellent and stimulating study that takes a fresh look at the history of Communist politics and offers new illuminating explanations." — Klaus Mühlhahn, *The China Journal*
Michael Dutton is a reader in political science at the University of Melbourne. He also has an appointment as a professor of politics at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is the author of Policing and Punishment in China: From Patriarchy to “The People” and The Crisis of Marxism in China and the editor of Streetlife China.

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Vibrant Matter

a political ecology of things

Jane Bennett
Nonetheless, analysts consider China’s political system to be neither monolithic nor rigidly hierarchical. Jockeying
among leaders and institutions representing different sets of interests is common at every level of the system. The report opens with a brief overview of China’s leading political institutions. Michael Dutton. Beginning with the bloody communist purges of the Jiangxi era of the late 1920s and early 1930s and moving forward to the wild excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Policing Chinese Politics explores the question of revolutionary violence and the political passion that propels it. “Who are our enemies, who are our friends, that is a question germane to the revolution,” wrote Mao Zedong in 1926. Michael Dutton shows just how powerful this one line was to become. After 30 years of development and opening-up, Pudong in east China’s Shanghai Municipality has been given two new roles in the country’s overall development in the next three decades. Politics. 14:00, 12-Nov-2020. 00:56. Xi Jinping inspects Nantong City, east China’s Jiangsu Province. China. 20:52, 12-Nov-2020. Xi Jinping inspects Nantong City, east China’s Jiangsu Province. China. 20:52, 12-Nov-2020. 00:43. Xi calls for global solidarity to tackle challenges, safeguard peace. China. 21:55, 12-Nov-2020. A place to discuss Chinese politics, including international relations, domestic affairs, defense, trade, and other topics. Discussions, debates, and analysis regarding current and future events in the realm of Chinese politics are welcome! Content accessible to non-Chinese speakers. Rules: All submitted links and discussions must be related to Chinese politics (domestic or international). Use English links when possible; please provide a translation if none is available. No memes/jerks. “Michael Dutton’s Policing Chinese Politics is a work of deeply committed political scholarship. It will be of great interest to scholars of Chinese politics and to historians and critics of the socialist movement.”—Piers Beirne, Department of Criminology, University of Southern Maine. From the Back Cover. "Eric Hobsbawm, with some irony and much love for the history profession, once remarked that ‘theoreticians of all kinds circle around the peaceful herds of historians as they graze on their rich pastures of primary sources.'