

## Realistic Revolution

Between 1989 and 1993, with the end of the Cold War, Tiananmen, and Deng Xiaoping's renewed reform, Chinese intellectuals said goodbye to radicalism. In newly-founded journals, interacting with those who had left mainland China around 1949 to revive Chinese culture from the margins, they now challenged the underlying creed of Chinese socialism and the May Fourth Movement that there was 'no making without breaking'. *Realistic Revolution* covers the major debates of this period on radicalism in history, culture, and politics from a transnational perspective, tracing intellectual exchanges as China repositioned itself in Asia and the world. In this realistic revolution, Chinese intellectuals paradoxically espoused conservatism in the service of future modernization. They also upheld rationalism and gradualism after Maoist utopia but concurrently rewrote history to re-establish morality. Finally, their self-identification as scholars was a response to rapid social change that nevertheless left their concern with China's fate unaltered.

ELS VAN DONGEN is Assistant Professor of History at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

*Realistic Revolution* changes our understanding of Chinese conservatism in the post-Mao period. Based on a comprehensive and critical reading of Chinese thinkers and writers, van Dongen brings to life the Chinese critique of radicalism during the critical years after Tiananmen. Lucidly written, acutely analytical, this is a wonderfully rewarding read.  
Professor Timothy Cheek, University of British Columbia

Shocked by the violence of Tiananmen and the collapse of the Soviet Union, China's intellectuals began exploring the roots of radicalism and the meaning – or usefulness – of conservatism. In this carefully researched and wonderfully written book, van Dongen excavates the international conversation that unfolded over the next decade. This book should be in every class on contemporary China.  
Professor Joseph Fewsmith, Boston University

# Realistic Revolution

*Contesting Chinese History, Culture,  
and Politics after 1989*

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Els van Dongen

*Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*



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To my friends and family, without whom  
nothing to my name  
一无所有

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## Notes on Transliteration

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For Chinese persons who are commonly known in the English-speaking world by names other than the pinyin transliteration, I have adopted the generally used spelling, for example, Chiang Kai-shek or Sun Yat-sen. For Chinese scholars publishing in English who are known by a name other than that in pinyin transliteration, the common spelling (often Wade-Giles) is used, for example, Tu Wei-ming or Yü Ying-shih.

For Chinese-language publications, mainland Chinese scholars are listed using the pinyin transliterations, citing the surname first, as in Chen Lai. For those scholars who publish both in Chinese and in English, but who are primarily known under a name that follows the Chinese convention (surname first), I have kept the Chinese convention for all publications. I have also kept the Chinese convention for English translations of works by Chinese scholars. For other English-language publications, I follow the Western convention, citing first the given name, followed by the surname. All short citations to Chinese and Western names include only the surname.

## Abbreviations

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CAS	Chinese Academy of Sciences
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CESRRI	Chinese Economic System Reform Research Institute
CLG	<i>Chinese Law and Government</i>
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CYX	Chen Lai, <i>Chuantong yu xiandai: Renwen zhuyi de shijie</i> (Tradition and Modernity: The Scope of Humanism) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006)
EAI	East Asian Institute (formerly Institute of East Asian Philosophies)
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
LOC	Charlotte Furth, ed., <i>The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976)
KMT	Kuomintang
NPC	National People's Congress
PLA	People's Liberation Army
POCS	Samuel Huntington, <i>Political Order in Changing Societies</i> (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968)
XGQJ	Xiao Gongqin, <i>Xiao Gongqin ji</i> (Collected Works of Xiao Gongqin) (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995)
YZLG	Xiao Gongqin, <i>Yu zhengzhi langman zhuyi gaobie</i> (Parting with Political Romanticism) (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000)
ZFL	Li Shitao, ed., <i>Zhishi fenzi lichang: Jijin yu baoshou zhijian de dongdang</i> (Intellectual Positions: The Turbulence between Radicalism and Conservatism) (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1999)