



Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949-1976

By Harry Harding



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Since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, Chinese Communist leaders have constructed an administrative apparatus that has exercised broader and tighter control over Chinese society than any previous government in the country's history. This is a history of the development of Chinese organizational policy - a topic of constant concern and often strident debate - from 1949 to the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976. The author argues that Chinese organizational policy has been controversial because of the complexity of administrative problems, the effects of policy changes on the distribution of power and status, and the philosophical dilemma of whether the efficiency of modern bureaucracy outweighs its social and political costs. He also shows how extreme approaches, such as demands during the Cultural Revolution that bureaucracy be destroyed altogether or proposals during the 1950s that the bureaucracy be rationalized, have been repeatedly rejected in favor of a policy more in keeping with much of Chinese tradition: to recruit officials on the basis of their political views, subject them to ideological indoctrination, and rely on mass campaigns to implement Party policy.



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