UNENDING CAPITALISM

How Consumerism Negated China’s Communist Revolution

"A brilliantly researched and analyzed account of consumerism during the Mao era. It richly documents the survival of consumer impulses and behavior amid the puritanical ideology of the early People’s Republic. This is a crucial book for understanding the social, economic, and political history of the Mao era, and the tensions and tragedies resulting from the Communist Party’s state capitalism."

Julia Lovell, author of Maoism: A Global History

"This outstanding book demands that we look again at an entire period and reassess it from top to bottom. Gerth examines the period of Mao’s China and asks how we would re-read the period if we were to think of it as driven by consumerism. This project means that if you want to engage in the scholarly discussion around consumerism in China – a huge topic – you have to read and deal with Gerth. To understand why Chinese consumers have behaved as they have, and to understand the continuities between the sharply contrasting historical periods that they have lived through, Karl Gerth’s is now the scholarly standard work – without question."

Rana Mitter, author of China’s Good War: How Memory of the World War II Past Is Shaping a Nationalist Future

"Hugely stimulating and deeply researched, this book shows just how important material possessions and desires were in Mao’s China. Essential reading for anyone who is trying to understand how consumption became as powerful as it is."

Frank Trentmann, author of Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First

Illustration and design: Deividas Jablonskis