

Leiden, 22 February 2006

IIAS/MEARC LECTURE

## *Hua Guofeng and the End of Mao's Cultural Revolution*

Dr. Warren Sun

Monash University, Chinese Studies Program, Melbourne, Australia

IIAS Affiliated Fellow

15.00-17.00 HRS

According to conventional wisdom, the elite politics of the period from the purge of the radical "gang of four" in October 1976 to the Third Plenum in December 1978 was driven by a succession struggle between Hua Guofeng, Mao's anointed successor, and Deng Xiaoping, with Hua trying to prevent or at least delay Deng's return to office, and Deng quickly devising a program designed to undermine Hua. The origins of reform, moreover, are seen in this struggle, either as part of Deng's emerging program, or due to the political space it gave local elites to pursue change. In this interpretation the power struggle was linked to pronounced ideological and policy divisions between "neo-Maoists" around Hua and Deng's reform coalition, with Deng emerging victorious at the December 1978 Third Plenum (widely regarded as the start of the reform era).

Based on new materials, both documentary and oral, the speaker will argue for a radically different picture along the line that although the elite politics surrounding Hua and Deng was complex, it was not polarized, that Hua was more instrumental than any other leader in physically removing the radical's platform for continuing Mao's Cultural Revolution, thus making the reform of the new era possible, that he was no less proactive than other leaders in exploring and pushing for China's reform, and that Deng's reform measures were largely made in piecemeal fashion while making policy on the run. In short, the speaker will question and challenge many of the misperceptions about Hua, which are largely the unfortunate consequence of the highly politicised and moralized Chinese official historiography manufactured by victorious power holders, in which the winner takes all and historical truth is ultimately the casualty.

### Venue

Lipsius building  
room 148  
Cleveringaplaats 1  
Leiden University

### Information

info@mearc.eu  
iiasfellowships@let.leidenuniv.nl

www.mearc.eu



MODERN EAST ASIA  
RESEARCH CENTRE

