“A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party”:

Revolutionary Songs in *People’s Daily* During
Cultural Revolution China

by

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Notes

Translations

Many phrases I mention here have been known to the West for some time now that they have popularized versions of translations, and I use them here frequently. Some phrases, especially song titles, have no corresponding translations since they were not studied in English before, and therefore my own translations are used. I acknowledge the sources of translations in other cases if the phrase has only been known in limited capacity and I decided to use someone else’s translation rather than my own.

Names

Most Chinese names that appear here have their first names following their last names, per the Chinese convention. However, some authors mentioned have adjusted their names according to the western convention because they have settled in the West or are familiar with western cultural practices. These adjustments are respected here. To distinguish between the two, the last name of a Chinese name is all capitalized at their first appearance in this study if the Chinese convention is followed. (For example, my name would be Yun Li or LI Yun.)
To my parents, whose relentless intellectual pursuit inspired me to do the same.
Introduction

China’s Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966 and lasted until 1976, has sparked widespread interest, especially in the West, with its peculiarity in history – it wreaked havoc on the lives of at least half a million Chinese people and filled the country with dread and fear, all because of political struggles among a few of the country’s top leaders. There is no other event in recent world history that destroyed so much yet was found so unnecessary.

While this particular period of social upheaval took place under the name “Cultural Revolution,” the studies of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, ironically, never quite focused on its “culture.” Often, a brief statement “there was no culture during the Cultural Revolution” was enough to dismiss the artistic attempts during the decade.\(^1\) Indeed, the Cultural Revolution is often viewed as a period of intense political power play, above all else, among Mao Zedong and his colleagues and rivals. However, the cultural dimension was hidden in plain sight as the country wielded culture as weapons for attacks: the most obvious example was a piece of critical review of a popular play *Hai Rui Dismissed from the Office*, which resulted in weeks of intense criticism and persecution of the playwright and ultimately his death in prison. This review was widely regarded as the direct precursor of the Cultural Revolution.

The close relationship between arts and politics should not be news to those who are familiar with China and its history. Since Confucius time, there has been a systematic theory of music and ritual being instrumental in the education and

cultivation of proper social norms. A relatively recent example would be the rise of School Songs (学堂乐歌) during early 20th century, through which school children were taught songs of patriotism. Even though using art forms as a device to guide the people in the “right” direction has been a salient feature in Chinese culture, the degree of entanglement between politics and arts in China has only been theorized but not evidenced by historical records. It would seem that, because such practice is common knowledge, there is little incentive to enunciate it. It is quite possible that there was simply not enough concrete evidence in the past to make a systematic study of the strategies involved. But a study of revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution in their publishing context, which is what the following chapters would entail, would corroborate this common knowledge with detailed, concrete evidence. Since the Cultural Revolution period was a time of unparalleled manipulation of public perception – the fact that a country’s leader could be made into a mortal god, whose words could never be wrong, highlighted an unprecedentedly successful propaganda effort. One that, when examined closely, provides ample detailed evidence to the already stated argument regarding politics and arts. And the publications of revolutionary songs are such a crucial and inseparable part of the entire propaganda effort that by looking at them closely, we can uncover exactly how the government uses arts to achieve certain political ends.

This thesis will examine closely the nature and content of these popular revolutionary songs in hopes of achieving three goals specifically: The first is to

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3 Ibid, 116.
present the historical records of published revolutionary songs - when, how and where they were published. This traces the origins of these songs since often, the original publication in a major Party newspaper was the reason a song became known. The publication, or non-publication in some cases, of a song in a major Party media was also a seal of validation or rejection that decided whether a song’s popularity could continue.

The second and the most important goal is to unveil the specific messages that the Party sent using songs by examining the historical context surrounding the publications of these songs and their musical qualities. Historical contexts include the events around the time of publication, whether an editor's statement was attached and for what purpose, the suggested manner of reception - mandatory learning, appreciation, participation, etc. Also included are manners of performances, which convey valuable information about the purposes of songs in that period as they incorporated both top-down and bottom-up presentations of the politically correct information.

The last and more general goal of this paper is to promote the understanding of the relationship between music/arts and the Cultural Revolution. It is often understood that the Cultural Revolution years caused a suspension of the development of music and culture in China. Yet, judging by the number of songs published during the twelve years investigated, it was probably not so much a suspension as a redirection, when musicians channeled creative energy for prescribed national and political purposes instead of private entertainment. Realizing this redirection helps us understand the continuity of the modernization process of
Chinese music and arts during the Cultural Revolution.

**Literature Review**

There have been countless studies on Cultural Revolution topics in both Chinese and foreign academia. Some of these studies focused on the political history and uncovering of how the Cultural Revolution came to be and how it progressed; some focused on ideology and theory, and how the Cultural Revolution claimed to fit into the Marxist vision; and others wrote about the lasting influence of the Cultural Revolution on modern Chinese society.

Early studies generally took a Marxist point of view. Jean Daubier⁴ argued that the Cultural Revolution erupted as a result of certain societal distortions and contradictions China inherited from capitalism and feudalism, and persisted as new forms of class struggle continued to exist. The analysis was grounded in a detailed account of events and offered insights into the political motivations of those who claimed to be the proletariats or acting on behalf of the proletariats. Livio Maitan⁵ took a similar Marxist route and argued the inevitability of the eruption of an event like the Cultural Revolution: “the triumph of a socialist revolution in China”⁶ was frustrated by an existing bureaucratic system, and the desire of those in leadership to overcome the negative features of the system without giving up their monopoly on power clashed with the general interest of the mass to overthrow bureaucratic

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⁶ Ibid.
system, and the result was an even greater centralization of power.

Studies published decades after the Cultural Revolution tended to be more objectively critical. As a part of a comprehensive look at the entire modern Chinese history, the section on the Cultural Revolution by Jonathan Spence\(^7\) weaved individual stories into the greater political turmoil and showed the readers a picture of a rattled and confused society that fell under the spell of Mao Zedong’s personal agendas, and was only released when the Cultural Revolution ended and economic development was set as a priority. Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals\(^8\) provided a masterful and detailed account of the political maneuvers of the top leaders: Mao was presented as the mastermind of the Cultural Revolution and the struggles among him and his colleagues and rivals were meticulously retold and analyzed.

Some recent studies noted the long lasting impact of the Cultural Revolution, and diverse perspectives started to emerge. Mobo Gao’s book\(^9\) is a rare species in the Cultural Revolution discourse since it attempted to tell the stories of those who remembered the time fondly and argued that the tragic impression that Westerners were familiar with was only one side of the story. The book can be seen mainly as a reaction to the plethora of “scar literature” - a term that refers to biographies and memoirs that focused on hardships and pain, often by intellectuals who suffered

during the Cultural Revolution - which, according to the author, contained exaggerated and misinterpreted accounts of reality. Louise Chipley Slavicek,\textsuperscript{10} on the other hand, recounted the events of the Cultural Revolution critically, highlighting the suffering of people and the destruction of social progress it caused. The author’s view that the Cultural Revolution laid such thorough waste to Chinese society that it might have helped the country to respond more efficiently and positively to the reforms after 1976, also echoes that of many others who struggled to find purpose for the horrifically tragic ten years that may otherwise be completely futile.

Another perspective that studies of the Cultural Revolution also take is a character study of Mao Zedong himself, as many believed that he and his hunger for power was the most important, if not sole, factor in the destruction of millions of lives during the decade. The famous biography by the couple Jung Chang and Jon Halliday\textsuperscript{11} made the claim that Mao was responsible for some 70 million deaths in his lifetime, and that he was essentially a monstrous being with no regard for human lives and the wellbeing of the people under his leadership, and deserved no sympathy, let alone idolization. The authors’ dramatic stance was quite extreme since many China experts would hesitate to say that Mao did not contribute anything to the modernization of China. A more recent work by Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine\textsuperscript{12} drew on Soviet documents to shed light on Mao’s lives and goals. They argued that Mao was extremely dependent on the Soviet Union and Stalin, and

\textsuperscript{11} Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, \textit{Mao: The Unknown Story} (New York: Knopf, 2005).
that many of his decisions, including bringing China to the Korean War, were at least partially to service the Soviet Union.

These are but a few of the representative studies on the Cultural Revolution period, and the abundance of studies on the political and social aspects of the decade is contrasted by the meager amount of studies on the cultural aspect. The only comprehensive look on the culture of the Cultural Revolution, Paul Clark’s The Cultural Revolution: A History\(^\text{13}\) aptly refuted the idea that “there was no culture during the Cultural Revolution.” By attempting a comprehensive historical study of the culture, including Chinese operas, theater works, films, music, etc., during the Cultural Revolution, the book defied the usual approach that treated the ten years as an outlier in the development of Chinese contemporary art, and instead treated the Cultural Revolution products such as model operas as gradual steps toward the modernization of Chinese arts. This book also offered insight into the real lives of the Chinese people in these ten years as the author depicted the performances, which included interviews with performers, or art workers as they were called, on how they studied and prepared for the various performances. Richard Curt Kraus’s 1989 book, Pianos and Politics in China,\(^\text{14}\) used the instrument piano as an example, and gave a fascinating account of China’s bittersweet relationship with westernization in the cultural sphere since the 1930s. He placed this struggle in the larger context of nationalism versus internationalism, with aspiring to maintain unique characteristics on the one hand and “catching up” to international standards on the other. This

\(^{13}\) Clark.

struggle was particularly acute and unusual during the Cultural Revolution, since the Party called for the rejection of western, “bourgeoisie” influences and the old Chinese customs at the same time. Kraus’s other wonderful book, The Party and the Arty in China,15 offered a claim that the Chinese audience had autonomy, and that while the Party had strong hold on the culture, the audience established its own view of the arts that often differed from what the Party intended.16 YIN Shuyuan17 provided a solid overview of the propaganda functions of the revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution. The author traced the theories of the educational and transformative effects of music in the Confucius ideas, the discussed the widespread popularity of quotation songs (语录歌) during the early years of the Cultural Revolution to demonstrate how composers could skillfully use musical devices to enhance the memorability of political messages, thus achieving better and more efficient propaganda results.

While these studies focus on the culture of the Cultural Revolution, they are essentially political or historical studies. This is in some ways inevitable, since the culture of the Revolution served politics, as Mao’s directive in 1942 made abundantly clear.18 Musical studies on the music of the Cultural Revolution are even more limited. Notable contributors to the field include Lei Ouyang Bryant and Isabel K. F.

16 Ibid, 114.
18 Bonnie S. McDougall, “‘Talks At the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Arts’ by Mao Zedong” in Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”: A translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies University of Michigan, 1980).
Wong. Bryant’s “Flowers on the Battlefield Are More Fragrant”\textsuperscript{19} analyzed the five-volume anthology \textit{New Songs of the Battlefield} (战地新歌), which consists mainly of revolutionary songs sung during the Cultural Revolution, and made conclusions such as that the songs mainly had simple meter (two/four time signature) and that the simple melodic features served to put emphasis on the lyrics, which were the main messages the Party wanted to spread. Bryant\textsuperscript{20} also studied the memories of songs from the anthology in “Music, Memory, and Nostalgia.” Her most significant discovery was the emotional attachment people felt toward revolutionary songs, and that such attachment was not limited to those who lived through the Cultural Revolution but passed down from previous generations to those who were not even yet born during the Cultural Revolution. This conclusion speaks volume about the lingering power revolutionary songs still hold, and one can only imagine how much more powerful the songs must have been during their heydays. Wong\textsuperscript{21} analyzed the musical features of some popular revolutionary songs, some predated the Cultural Revolution, and provided an account of how revolutionary songs came to be.

Professionals and amateurs alike contributed to the profusion of revolutionary songs since the 1960s, and this influx of musical materials propelled the progress of propaganda.


Sources and Method

This study will rely heavily on a primary source: the Party newspaper *People’s Daily*. Together with *Red Flag* magazine and *Liberation Army Daily* newspaper, the three were referred to as “two newspapers one magazine” (两报一刊) which were the three major Party media during the Cultural Revolution. They spoke the voice of the Party and top leaders. It was through these three outlets that the messages and directives from the top reached the people, since their delivery to each factory and work team (the most basic unit of organizations) every day was guaranteed and for free.

*Figure 1.1. Sample People’s Daily First Page (above fold)*

During 1966-1976, *People's Daily* was a daily newspaper with 6 pages every
day. Very occasionally, often on a special date such as National Day or Army’s Day, the newspaper would expand to 8 pages. Access to the newspaper was provided to the average member at Shanghai Library, where I was able to browse through the physical copies of every *People’s Daily* published between 1966 and 1976. Additional digital access to the *People’s Daily* database was provided to me at Yale University, where I was able to see the digitized copies of the same newspapers while in the U.S.

Revolutionary songs themselves were all published in numerical notation, or cipher notation, which is a type of musical notation that uses the numbers 1-7 to represent the 7 scale degrees a song is composed in, and broken lines and dots to indicate rhythm and duration of a note. For example, a single number without anything around it means that the note lasts one beat, the equivalent of a quarter note. A number underlined would last half a beat, the equivalent of an eighth note, and a number underlined twice lasts one fourth of a beat, the equivalent of a sixteenth note. A number followed by a dash means that the note is held for one more beat, making [1—] the equivalent of a half note, and [1— — —] means a whole note. The ties function the same way as they do in staff notation, and so do the dots, except that they have an additional function of indicating octaves. There are in fact many similarities between cipher notation and staff notation, but cipher notation is significantly faster to read for the average person.

In most cases, published revolutionary songs could be found on page 6 of the

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22 Revolutionary songs did not use notes beyond the seven in the western diatonic scale.
23 A thirty-second note would have four lines underneath.
24 A dot above a number indicates one octave higher and a dot below a number indicates one octave lower. The more dots stacked, the higher or lower the note is.
25 A brief history of cipher notation in China is discussed in Chapter 1, Section 2.
newspaper, along with other arts and culture content, although some of the most popular and highly regarded songs could appear on the first or second page of the newspaper on special days. To collect the necessary data, I first combed through the newspapers to take note of the date and title of every song published. On those days when there was a song published, I searched for the headlines of the days around the publication date to form the publishing context. I also turn to other sources, such as websites and academic studies, to check whether there were omissions of information in the newspaper on days when there was no apparent correlation between the songs published and the context. Once I had these information on hand, the correlation between the timing and subject of the published songs and its context became abundantly clear, which forms the basis of this study.

Structure

This study starts with this introduction, and is then divided into five chapters, followed by a conclusion. The first chapter provides four categories of relevant background information: an overview of the Cultural Revolution, a history of mass songs in China, an account of arts during the Cultural Revolution, and an introduction to the song publishing practice in newspapers in China. The overview section provides the essential information about the Cultural Revolution that aims to aid understanding of this specific time period. The history of mass songs section introduces the antecedents of revolutionary songs that give a glimpse into how revolutionary songs came to become a highly prioritized form of propaganda. The third section sketches the general artistic landscape of the Cultural Revolution, which
was the backdrop against which revolutionary songs emerged and thrived. The final section traces the history of song publications and discusses the significance of the publication of songs in major Party media.

The second chapter chooses four specific events/time periods of the Cultural Revolution to examine in detail. The first is the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, which spanned from mid-1966 to late-1966. The second is the rise of Model Operas during 1967. The third is the “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement that began in 1969. And the last is a nostalgic return to revolutionary history beginning in 1970 and lasted until 1972. These moments are chosen because of their historical significance and/or the abundance of published songs associated with them. By discussing these four periods and the songs published during those times in detail, I hope to demonstrate the direct correlation between politics and arts during the Cultural Revolution.

The third chapter takes all the songs during the Cultural Revolution in People’s Daily together, and divides them into different categories. The five categories of revolutionary songs distinguished in this chapter were never formally theorized before, though some distinctions among songs have been drawn.26 By systematically look at each different category of songs, we can understand better how diverse topics and issues were addressed through these revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution.

The fourth chapter continues onto analyzing the music and lyrics of selected revolutionary songs. The tonality, rhythm, tempo, and arrangements are all aspects of

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26 Wong, 134-138.
revolutionary songs that served different functions, such as invoking nostalgia or
loyalty, and collectively these musical qualities contributed to the songs’ individual
political purposes. Examples were all drawn from the published songs and represent
the diverse categories stated in the previous chapter, and we can observe certain
common musical devices across categories that were used to enhance the influence of
these revolutionary songs.

The fifth chapter furthers the discussion by exploring beyond the written and
aural dimensions of revolutionary songs and into the visual performance realm. The
existence of revolutionary songs was never limited to newspaper publication or the
melody and lyrics. The songs were almost always performed in a certain way that
elevated a song into an overwhelming experience, with gestures and postures that
corresponded to the content of the songs. By discussing these multi-dimensional
elements of revolutionary songs and attempting to enact them in my recital, I hope to
convey the power and influence of revolutionary songs and their impact on both the
performers and the audience that can serve as part of the explanation of the
unintelligible zeal of the Cultural Revolution.

The final conclusion revisits the points made in the previous chapters, and
reiterates the role this study can play in the greater effort to understand arts and
propaganda, and their unique significance in China. The conclusion also explores the
significance of this study in the preservation of Cultural Revolution memory.
Chapter One: Background

To facilitate a better understanding of the subject at hand, this chapter will provide the necessary contextual knowledge of the Cultural Revolution time period and revolutionary songs. The following sections begin with an overview of the Cultural Revolution - its timespan, major political events and incidents and how it affected the lives of the average people. The chapter will then move on to give a brief history of mass songs in China. Mass songs is the more generic term for all songs that people were taught to sing for inspirational, political, or some other purposes, and revolutionary songs are a more specific type of mass songs that gained prominence later on as the Communist Party prevailed. The third section of this chapter is devoted to an overview of the arts during the Cultural Revolution, which, in addition to revolutionary songs, included other art forms such as operas, films, dances, etc. The last section offers a brief analysis of the song publication phenomenon – its origins and why it was important during the Cultural Revolution. Since a lot of the cultural content influenced one another, sometimes even borrowed from one another in content or format, this background information is indispensable to the understanding of the revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution.

Overview of the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution of China, conventionally dated from 1966-197627

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27 Multiple other interpretations also exist. Some argue that the Cultural Revolution really only covered 1966-1969, with the triumphant declaration of a “decisive victory in Cultural Revolution”; some believe it lasted past Mao’s death in 1976 and remained an influential political force until the reopening of China’s doors in the 1980s.
(with the fall of the “Gang of Four”, was a decade of social upheaval and political struggle that resulted in much deterioration of China in all aspects. It also cost countless lives and inflicted unimaginable suffering on many Chinese people, and thus gained the worst possible reputation. There is no denying the pain caused by the Cultural Revolution, and any attempt to glorify plain death as sacrifice or necessity would be severely mistaken. Yet still, this period was one of the most complicated times in Chinese and world history. Many reasons intertwined and contributed to the eruption and the continuation of the Cultural Revolution: the Communist Party was transitioning from fighting to governing; Mao Zedong and his political rivals vied for power; youngsters tasted rebellion and autonomy for the first time and wanted more; unbalanced economic conditions fueled jealousy and hostility among the people; and the list goes on. Individual memories of the Cultural Revolution would also differ significantly from one another, because what one experienced varied widely according to one’s education, beliefs, regions, profession, and even personality.

Because of the complexity of the Cultural Revolution, it is impossible to present a comprehensive account of this history in this chapter. Instead, this chapter attempts to put more emphasis on movements at the ground level, rather than focusing on the political struggle at the top of the Party leadership, because revolutionary songs, which are the main subject of this study, were much more connected to popular sentiment than to secretive manipulations among the country’s leaders.

28 The “Gang of Four” was a phrase coined toward the very end of the Cultural Revolution, and referred to Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, along with ZHANG Chunqiao, YAO Wenyuan, and WANG Hongwen.
Many studies of the Cultural Revolution, including the official account of events by the Chinese government, would divide the period into roughly three stages: the first stage refers to the first three or four years, when there was little order in the society and violence contagiously spread across the nation; the second stage roughly spanned from 1969 to 1971, when regular activities resumed, though the same rhetoric persisted and deeply influenced the functioning and organization of the country; the last stage was the final years of the Cultural Revolution, during which time the rhetoric was still strong as before, though ordinary lives slowly regained a sense of routine and normalcy. Alternative narratives that treat only the first few years as the entire Cultural Revolution are also prevalent, precisely because the momentum of revolutionary fervor started to wane afterwards. However, since the domain of art and culture remained quite consistent throughout, the discussion of the Cultural Revolution in this chapter will accept the presupposition that it lasted ten years.

I. Precursors

A 1942 speech by Mao Zedong was often cited as the “inspiration” for the Cultural Revolution. Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Arts set the tone for the political and revolutionary purposes of arts in China, namely for whom the arts should work and what the arts should reflect. All arts, it was deemed, should aim to serve the peasants, workers and soldiers, and it should work for the purpose of the proletarian revolution.30

30 McDougall, Talks, 60.
However, this direction for arts that seemed moderate at that time ended up being the direct cause of societal chaos during the Cultural Revolution years. In February 1965, a piece of literary critique appeared in Shanghai’s prominent newspaper Liberation Daily, accusing a previously praised historical drama, Hai Rui Dismissed from Office, of implicitly attacking Mao Zedong. The plot of this play was based on the Ming Dynasty magistrate HAI Rui, who voiced his concerns for the wellbeing of the people in front of the emperor at the expense of his career and freedom as the emperor sent him to prison. The plain message the author of this play, WU Han, sent was to applaud the integrity of a civil servant and to denounce a dictating ruler, but the message the literary critique “exposed” was that Wu was actually criticizing Mao and his treatment of a well-known general in Communist China. General PENG Dehuai rose to a position of power alongside Mao. But as Mao built his personal cult following, Peng turned critical of Mao’s policies, which eventually led to a confrontation between the two, with Mao came out victorious.31 Peng was since then purged from all influential positions in the Party and lived in obscurity, until the Cultural Revolution began. In this historical drama then, the critique implied, historian Wu Han was “using the past to satirize the present,”32 which he had been known to do.

What was ironic about the sudden downfall of the play and the author was that Mao initially praised the play,33 but he was also the one who secretly ordered this critique to be commissioned. This change in attitude was perhaps due less to the play

31 MacFaqhur and Schonehals, 8.
32 借古讽今
33 MacFaqhur and Schoenhals, 15.
itself than to the growing concern of Mao to maintain firm control over the ideological trend in the country, which would become obvious in subsequent years.

This event is regarded as the direct precursor of the Cultural Revolution, which would officially break out in 1966. It gave rise to a type of critiquing method which twisted the meaning of the “enemy” to intentionally find fault in him or her, and this method would soon plague the country and create a depressing and repressive atmosphere. No piece of work that was torn so completely apart could survive, since practically everything could be interpreted to mean something else. This method became a tool, used positively or negatively at the will of those behind the scenes.

II. The First Stage: Red Guards, Violence, and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

May 1966 marked the official beginning of “the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution,” with the “May 16 Notification” and the establishment of a special Central Cultural Revolution Group dedicated to monitoring and leading the Cultural Revolution efforts. The official language of the “mission statement” was to rid the country of bourgeois elements and maintain the purity of “the dictatorship of the proletariat.” Although this language was a well-known Marxian phrase meant to describe the step before an ultimate classless society, the application of it in Cultural Revolution China resembled more of a complete overhaul of any societal

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34 五一六通知. The Notification was a Party document that implied that there are enemies of the Communist cause within the Party, which provided justification for a political campaign to rid the Party of these enemies. It was disseminated within the party structure, but remained classified for a year, until it was published publically in major media outlets in May 1967.

order than of a class struggle aimed at a fair and equal new order. Waves and waves of renewed revolutionary rhetoric swept through the nation since spring and summer 1966, and the most active supporters were “Red Guards” - young students who were declared the vanguard of the new revolution.\(^{36}\) With the help of the Red Guards, who championed the will of Mao himself, movements such as “Destroy the Four Old,” which aimed to attack the old customs, old habits, old culture, and old thinking, went beyond encouraging revolutionary spirit among the people and became a witch hunt of any and every one with the slightest ties to Western influence.\(^{37}\)

It was a time of a strange coexistence of both great euphoria and intense fear, and violence was at the center of it all. Soon enough, in January 1967, started what was called the “January Storm”: Shanghai’s municipal government was overthrown by revolutionary organizations in a call to “seize power.”\(^{38}\) Many other cities and towns soon followed suit, with grassroots organizations trying to take over regional governments and abolishing all forms of private economic activities.\(^{39}\) Success was varied and limited, but the established government branches, schools and factories were definitely shaken. At this pinnacle of wild emotions and ultimate chaos, various radical groups fought as much with each other as with “corrupted” party leaders. Against this background, ordinary families lived under constant fear, scared that the next day they would lose everything.

After “January Storm,” some more pragmatic-minded revolutionaries

\(^{36}\) Spence, 574.
\(^{37}\) Ibid, 575.
\(^{38}\) People’s Daily, January 1, 1967, page 1.
\(^{39}\) Spence, 576.
criticized the violent and extreme methods others took, which led to a new wave of criticism directed against all those who suggested a “milder” route to prove revolutionary fervor. Ironically, the leaders perhaps did not intended for the mass movement to be taken so far initially as well, which was perhaps the reason why a new set of guidelines was released in February that soothed the extreme purging methods radical revolutionaries were using by allowing people to “reform” and “redeem their mistakes.” 40 This event was named “February Adverse Current” since it undercut the dramatic power seizure efforts in the previous month and was therefore criticized by radical revolutionaries at that time. 41

But soon, the sweeping rule of the Red Guards met the policing force of the People’s Liberation Army, and gradually, often violently, order was somewhat restored. 42 The most bewildering chaos gave way to a slightly less confusing status quo: the different fractions of revolutionary groups were united; local authority started to matter again with the establishment of local revolutionary committees. An effective method that contained and pacified the Red Guards was the “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages” movement, which brought the Red Guards to the countryside to work alongside peasants, and more importantly, away from urban environments where they could be disruptive. The movement was publicized as good and character-building, but not everyone adopted this view, since many people were separated from the lives they knew and thrown into the unknown.

40 Ibid, 579.
41 Nowadays it has been legitimized and renamed as “February Resistance” to convey approval for moderate and cautious revolutionary activities that the new guidelines allowed, but at that time, these voices of reason did not gain traction amid the flood of illogical passion.
42 MacFaquhar and Schonehals, 160.
Toward the end of 1968, the fanatic revolutionary zeal of early 1967 finally burned out, and with the purging of “party enemies” such as Liu Shaoqi finalized, there was no incentive for the leaders of the country to allow the radical revolutionaries run rampant still with unforeseeable and uncontrollable consequences. Both the government and the people welcome the restoration of order, and the end of complete chaos brought back some sense of normality in people’s daily lives.

With that, the first stage of the Cultural Revolution would soon come to a conclusion. The most visible and brutal assault on any and every one gave way to a less visible crackdown within the Party.

III. The Second Stage: Hard Labor at the bottom, and Conspiracy at the Top

The second stage of the Cultural Revolution was considerably more peaceful than the first, and for most people, life had some kind of routine, even though the prosecution of those who deviated from Party ideology was still consistently striking fear into people’s hearts. Intellectuals were the main targets this time, as well as cadres, who were sent to “May Seven Cadre School” (五七干校) to be “transformed.” The “School” was really a method of punishing intellectuals and officials by indoctrinating them with Maoist ideology through a combination of hard labor, study sessions, and self-criticism. Its effectiveness at “educating” the intellectuals on Maoist thinking was limited at best, but family separation, and physical labor that these people were not used to, did cause some very real pain. The

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43 Spence, 582.
School was a much less intensive movement compared to “Up to the mountains, Down to the Villages” since only officials and intellectuals were “eligible” to go, and usually the cadres were sent to somewhere closer to home instead of across the country.

What was less apparent to the average people was the political struggle at the top: the hard but regular life of the people was contrasted by the turbulent events within the Party leadership, particularly, between Mao and his second-in-command, Lin Biao. Lin Biao had been hailed as the heir-apparent to Mao’s leadership by April 1969, with the Ninth Party’s Congress writing Lin into the Party Constitution as the successor to Mao. Indeed, the visibility of Lin had been on par with that of Mao, and their relationship had been depicted as “intimate,” “close” and supportive in media. Lin’s role had become so clear in the minds of the Chinese people that some would include a “prayer” for his health as well when they prayed for Mao. Lin’s rise to such a prominent place made his ultimate downfall especially puzzling, and cost the Party its already fragile credibility. There was no clue to be found in the news for Lin’s supposedly treasonous activities, and the details for his crimes and his death were sketchy and vague in 1971. The final verdict issued by the Party after the Cultural Revolution stated that Lin and his subordinates plotted to seize the highest power (replacing Mao), but their plot was discovered and subsequently destroyed,

44 MacFaquhar and Schonehals, 278.
45 In numerous articles of the People’s Daily, the standardized description of Lin had been “Mao’s intimate comrade.”
47 Spence, 586.
and that this event declared the “failure” of the Cultural Revolution\(^49\) because the years of internal fighting and struggling failed to rid the country of anti-revolutionary elements. But at the time, not only was the Cultural Revolution carried on after the Lin Biao affair without pause or clarification, it also took a dramatic turn, one that involved a 180-degree change of attitude towards Lin.

\(IV. \text{The Third Stage: Gang of Four, and the Legacy of the Cultural Revolution}\)

The “Anti-Lin, Anti-Confucius” movement in 1974 highlighted the third part of the Cultural Revolution, but its start was quite sudden for most people. “Anti-Lin, Anti-Confucius” movement headlined Lin Biao and Confucius because, supposedly, they were both wrongfully attacking the heads of state whose rule were essential for the ultimate “dictatorship of the proletariat.” The people were not reluctant to criticize Confucius necessarily, because of the previous “Destroy the Four Old” movement. Much of old, traditional ideology had already been criticized heavily beforehand. But it was rumored that Confucius symbolized Premier Zhou Enlai, and that this campaign was really about criticizing Zhou since he was the only living target. Lin’s placement in the movement not necessarily made sense at first, but that did not prevent it becoming a mass campaign all across the country, even if people were only forced to attend to study groups.\(^50\)

Since the Party’s explanation of Lin’s downfall and death only made the suddenly disillusioned masses wonder how it could be possible for Mao to have missed Lin being a traitor, if Mao was really so wise and always correct, the mass


\(^{50}\) Spence, 603.
“Anti-Lin, Anti-Confucius” campaign, while seemed to be comprehensive and reflected the will of the people on paper, never came close to the type of insane fervor of the early Cultural Revolution years. The need for harsh criticism against Lin after many years of treating him as one of the most revered person in the country caused considerable unease among the people.\textsuperscript{51} However, the transition could not be said to be entirely sudden, as the party attempted to ease the country into the news by planning attacks on unnamed “swindlers like Liu Shaoqi” within the first few months of Lin’s death,\textsuperscript{52} presumably to later categorize Lin as one of such swindlers. Such a broad and unspecified attack, however, likely did not help the public to understand Lin’s crimes like the Party intended, since if Lin was really a swindler like Liu, how come he was not exposed sooner?\textsuperscript{53}

Lin’s death also meant that there was a question of succession since Mao’s health condition was deteriorating, despite the newspapers insisting on his “very good health.” But for a brief period, it was more a question of according to whom national affairs should be conducted. Premier Zhou Enlai came to be the person Mao leaned on the most.\textsuperscript{54} It was under his pragmatic policies, China and U.S. finally took one of the most important steps in normalizing diplomatic relationship.\textsuperscript{55} The monumental Shanghai Communiqué came into being as a result, which had lasting influence on China-U.S. relationship even now. It was also by Zhou’s advice, Mao

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 601.  
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 602.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 602.  
\textsuperscript{54} Slavicek, 90.  
\textsuperscript{55} According to a reading of the news, however, it was not a significant event as it received relatively little attention. It also must have been incredibly confusing for those who follow the news to read “Anti-American-Imperialism” alongside meeting President Nixon.
invited Deng Xiaoping, who would become one of the most celebrated leaders of contemporary China through his economic policies, back to the central government. However, Zhou was not in a better health condition than Mao, and while the public might not have been aware of much of the state affairs, it was later revealed that the public genuinely loved Zhou when the whole nation went into deep mourning over the news of his death.\footnote{Spence, 610-611.}

With Zhou out of the picture in January 1976, another bloc vied for power was the so-called “Gang of Four.” The group became especially powerful towards the end of the Cultural Revolution. The name, which did not become a known expression until late 1976,\footnote{Ibid, 616.} referred to four people, including Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, who had come to wield considerable power within the Party, mainly through their control of the media, and who sought to consolidate that power. The “Gang of Four” pushed for a “radical” line throughout the ten years, such as “learn from the model of Dazhai,” and the classification of “good class elements” and “bad class elements.”\footnote{Ibid, 605-606.} Their insistence on the tight control over the ideological and cultural spheres perhaps was a result of Mao’s reliance on them to keep alive revolutionary spirit,\footnote{Slavicek, 93.} and in doing Mao’s bidding, they hoped to become the successor to Mao, especially after Zhou’s death. The public was unlikely to be privy to the power schemes at the top, although the news of the rise-and-falls of Deng Xiaoping was in fact quite publicized and was presumably done under the direction of Jiang Qing.\footnote{Spence, 612.}
Eventually, however, after Mao’s death in September 1976, HUA Guofeng succeeded Mao as the Chairman with the help of the commander of the PLA. Soon, the “Gang of Four” was brought down with the same ruthlessness as the way they attacked Wu Han at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. At this point, the Cultural Revolution was essentially over, and the eleventh People’s Congress of the next year made the ending official.

A Brief History of Mass Songs in China

I. The Origins and Development of Mass Songs before the Cultural Revolution

Music is an integral part of most societies, but nowhere else is music perceived by a dominant ideology to be as consequential in political life as it is in China. Since Confucius time, the Chinese society has been aware of the educating effects of music on people, but it was not until modern history that songs sung by the masses truly started to occupy a more systematic and serious role in political movements. The modern history of mass songs in China started in the 1860s during Taiping Rebellion, when the leader HONG Xiuquan discovered the power of Protestant hymn singing with the help of a minister, which subsequently led to the singing rituals of the Rebellion. A comparison of song titles of the Rebellion with the recent ones of the Communist China revealed many similarities between the two, suggesting that the hymns of the Taiping Rebellion were the original mass

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61 Spence, 616.
62 Ibid, 616.
63 Wong, 113.
64 Ibid, 114.
songs of modern China, and the precedents of the revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution.

While the formats of the hymns might have been the inspiration of more recent mass songs, large-scale didactic use of songs did not take place until the 1910s. Music was then introduced as a formal curriculum into Chinese schools, though instead of traditional Chinese music and song forms, modern, which usually meant western-style, songs were favored.\(^{65}\) These songs, widely known as “School Songs” (学堂乐歌)\(^{66}\) because they were taught in schools, were generally simple and short, and were often western melodies with newly written Chinese lyrics. They aimed at promoting social and political changes, and they became the most dominant form of musical education for Chinese students for several generations. Gradually, these type of songs became prevalent beyond schools and were sung in other civil gatherings,\(^{67}\) and many of them became widely popular, especially under the dire circumstances of China being invaded by foreign powers. As Japanese aggression infringed upon Chinese sovereignty, the people started to express their outrage and disappointment through protest songs. While the formats of the protest songs resembled that of the earlier “School Songs,” their contents changed from promoting general good citizenship to political issues of the day.\(^{68}\) This shift in content was the critical step in the development of mass songs and the reason why these protest songs can be seen

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\(^{65}\) Wong, 115-116.

\(^{66}\) This system of teaching songs through the school system persisted through the changing circumstances, and this route of dissemination remained active and efficient in the decades to come, if not less emphasized as it became normalized.

\(^{67}\) Wong, 116.

\(^{68}\) Ibid, 117.
as the immediate predecessor of revolutionary songs - later revolutionary songs also preserved this focus.\textsuperscript{69}

For example, one song written by a prominent lyricist in the School Songs movement, SHEN Xingong, was titled “When to Wake Up” (何日醒). The song was set to a Japanese melody and had many versions of lyrics, each addressing a different political issue of the day or in history. The lyrics described the humiliation and destruction of the part of China that was under attack, and aimed to inspire the nationalistic sentiments and served as a call for action against foreign aggression. The song reflected the agony many Chinese, especially students and intellectuals, felt toward the inability of the government to protect the country, and the song’s wide popularity was fueled by a genuine concern for the country’s wellbeing.

The decade of 1920s in many ways resembled the previous one, with defending the motherland against foreign powers high on China’s priority list. Musically, songs such as “Song of the People’s Revolution”\textsuperscript{70} (国民革命歌), which was set to the popular French children’s song, “Frère Jacques,” also continued the theme of calling the Chinese people to rise against invasions. This song was sung by Chinese soldiers as they marched toward the battlefields of Northern Expedition to fight the warlords.\textsuperscript{71}

If the Chinese mass song history until the 1920s had seen little musical innovation since the original Taiping Rebellion mass songs, with most songs

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Translation by Wai-Tong Lau
featuring a foreign melody and Chinese lyrics, the 1930s saw the rise of Chinese composers, who brought the form of mass songs to maturity by uniting western and Chinese elements themselves.\textsuperscript{72} For example, “March of the Volunteers” (义勇军进行曲), which is the Chinese national anthem now, was composed in 1935 by the composer NIE Er, originally to capture the anti-Japanese sentiment across China.\textsuperscript{73} It featured a marching rhythm and strong dominant-tonic movements throughout the song, which gave a heightened sense of righteousness and majesty. This period produced many other songs and music like this, such as the world-renowned “Yellow River Cantata” by XIAN Xinghai, as patriotism ran high and musicians with overseas musical education backgrounds found opportunities and reasons to use and explore their talents.

The repertoire of mass songs continued to grow in the 1940s, with more folk-based songs and music being introduced to the public as a result of Mao Zedong’s 1942 Yan’an “Talks.”\textsuperscript{74} One of the representative songs was “Nanniwan” (南泥湾), a lyrical song singing about a place called Nanniwan in Yan’an, which used to be a completely barren land but was transformed into an agricultural base by people working towards the Communist vision. It was heralded as an example of self-sufficiency on the Communist side during the Chinese civil war. The song’s popularity continued well into the 1950s, and remained one of the most recognizable tunes in China today, no doubt due to its traditional Chinese melodic features.

\textsuperscript{72} Wong, 124.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 123.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, 126.
After the establishment of People’s Republic of China in October, 1949, little progress was made in the innovation of the format of mass songs, but more effort was put into defining and refining the political messages sent using these songs.\(^7^5\) One of the most celebrated and most played songs in the 1950s was “Socialism is Good” (社会主义好), which praised, almost blatantly, the greatness of socialism and the Communist Party. The music of this song featured a familiar upbeat, marching style, and it must be acknowledged that it was very well-written and could easily have been one of the catchiest mass songs written, which made its disappearance from the public a bizarre discovery from today’s point of view. It was rumored that the song’s Utopian portrayal of socialism was confronted by the harsh reality during the Great Leap Forward, and the irony was so obvious that the government decided to stop broadcasting the song altogether. In addition, right before the Cultural Revolution broke out, the imprisonment of some Party veterans who were labeled “revisionists” and hailed socialism led to some association between socialism and revisionism, which could be another reason why the song was no longer sung. The rise and fall of “Socialism is Good” presented a pre-Cultural Revolution example of disappearances of popular songs due to political factors, which would happen several more times during the Cultural Revolution.

From the imported Protestant hymns to the new Chinese-flavored compositions, the mass songs in China certainly had gone through quite some changes. What remained consistent was the way mass songs were presented - they

\(^7^5\) Wong, 128
were songs that aimed to be sung or at least familiarized by a majority of the population (or in the case of the Taiping Rebellion and during the Chinese civil war, participants of those particular movements) and supplied clear political and social visions that the leaders hoped to instill in the people. This feature was preserved and heightened during the Cultural Revolution, when people’s thoughts had to conform to the politically correct and Party-sanctioned views.

II. The Use of Cipher Notation

As previously mentioned, all songs published in *People’s Daily* were published with sheet music, and the notation was cipher notation. The choice was not surprising, given that cipher notation has been the dominant method of notation in throughout the development of mass songs in modern China. Cipher notation’s history in China can be traced back to the newly established schools during the last years of the Qing Dynasty. At the beginning of the 1900s, sheet music books in cipher notation compiled by the Chinese started to appear. Early major uses of cipher notation started with “School Songs” and protest songs that called for unity within the country to rid China of intruders. Many songs with patriotic themes that quickly took roots in the Chinese public at a historically critical time no doubt owe their swift success at least partially to cipher notation. Indeed, the cipher notation was invented with speed and ease in mind. The intention behind the inception of the concept of cipher notation by a French priest was to allow faster learning of psalms

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76 ZHU Shaokun, *People’s Music*, No.4 (Periodicals Publishing House of Chinese Musician’s Association, 1982), 54
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
among his parishioners, and after several hurdles, cipher notation’s easiness was embraced and acknowledged by the French, which was its key characteristic that made it appealing to elementary education or other needs, such as propaganda. Cipher notation traveled into China through Japan, and it would seem that the Japanese learned the system from Germans. During the Cultural Revolution, cipher notation once again became an integral part of swift and potent propaganda, since revolutionary songs were meant to become popular as fast as they could and cipher notation supported such a goal.

The Arts in the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution name emphasized culture, yet the history of events seemed more political than cultural. This may seem the case because culture - literature and arts - were often mere tools in this political struggle, means to an end. However, the cultural policy outlined in the 1942 speech by Mao, apart from being the inspiration for the Cultural Revolution, was also the ultimate guideline for all cultural practice during the period. The speech clarified that “arts should work for the revolution,” and “the production of artistic works should treat the peasants, workers and soldiers as the audience.” The idea was not completely new at that time - it had been the general cultural policy since the beginning of the Chinese Communist Party - but it was in this speech that the idea was first clearly enunciated.79 During the Cultural Revolution, this golden rule was elevated to the extent of becoming the

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79 Yin, 7.
ultimate truth,\textsuperscript{80} and was applied anywhere and everywhere for the sake of “political struggle.” But there is also no denying that this rule was responsible both for the spread of populist art forms, such as quotation songs and folk melodies, and for the spread of what used to be “lofty” and “professional” arts, such as orchestra, in modern China.

The supervision of arts during the Cultural Revolution fell mainly under the purview of Mao’s wife, JIANG Qing, and her tight grip on all things cultural, including the production of artistic works and the media, provided her with a fierce weapon in this political struggle for power. In fact, the direct precursor of the Cultural Revolution, the piece of literary critique that targeted \textit{Hai Rui Dismissed from Office}, was known to be created partially by Jiang. Her official position during the Cultural Revolution was the leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, and she remained in power throughout most of the decade. It was not until the final moments of the Cultural Revolution that Jiang was toppled. The longevity of her “rule,” in all fairness, resulted in a generally coherent cultural practice during the ten years, contrary to the twist and turns of politics.

The most successful cultural campaign led by Jiang was the production of “Eight Model Works” (八个样板戏), which included one symphonic work, two ballets, and five Peking operas. Praising the revolutionary themes in these eight works and a few selected others, Jiang and her colleagues urged the study (watching and listening) of these “core” artistic works across the nation, and eliminated virtually all

\textsuperscript{80} Yin, 7.
other visual and performance art works in the process. It was estimated that over the
course of the Cultural Revolution, the average Chinese citizens saw each of these
“Eight Model Works” at least twice every year.\footnote{Slavicek, 91.} A popular saying “Eight-hundred
million people watching eight shows” illustrated the shortage of cultural productions
during the Cultural Revolution, and the implication of this saying goes beyond major
staged productions such as the model works.

Indeed, even during the ten years, there was already criticism directed at the
repetitiveness and the lack of creativity of revolutionary songs.\footnote{People’s Daily,
September 22, 1966, page 6.} Though abundant in quantity, the songs had all but one central message: Mao and the Party were the
greatest. In spite of the uniformity of topics, the learning of these songs, in addition
to the watching of model works and movies, which were part of the regular activities
in the “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement and “May Seven
Cadre School,” were the most entertaining and least stressful activities during the
Cultural Revolution.\footnote{Clark, 187.} These activities provided a valuable source of entertainment
and a much appreciated break from hard labor and the studying of the “Little Red
Book.” If the grand scheme of Jiang Qing and her colleagues’ were to make people
voluntarily accept propaganda through the promotion of approved arts and the
elimination of alternatives, they succeeded splendidly.

Another campaign that was the result of Jiang’s leadership in culture was the
need to expand touring songs and dance troupes, which led to the new found

\begin{footnotes}
\item Slavicek, 91.
\item People’s Daily, September 22, 1966, page 6.
\item Clark, 187.
\end{footnotes}
demand for talented youngsters. Many artistic young people joined these troupes or “Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Teams” to devote themselves to the Mao cause most likely out of a genuine love for the art and the revolution. Others, such as factory workers, were released from other duties in order to participate in rehearsals and performances of these troupes to stimulate their workmates. Also notable about these troupes was that the performers almost always wore military uniforms, and many of these troupes were in fact under the organization of the Army. This militarization contributed to a heightened sense of national participation and art as a service to the country, which was a crucial component of the revolution rhetoric during the Cultural Revolution.

For all the perils of over-censoring the content of arts, the Cultural Revolution period also brought art forms to unprecedented importance. What used to be a largely commercial or spontaneous endeavor became a nation-wide “sensation” with the full support from the political sphere. For example, ballet dance, which was the form of two of the “Eight Model Works,” previously had no deep roots in the Chinese culture. Yet, they became two of the most important cultural works during the Cultural Revolution and introduced ballet to most Chinese, which could not conceivably happen without the aggressive propaganda and the Party’s desire to modernize and internationalize the Chinese cultural landscape. The first impression many people got when watching the model ballets was bewilderment,

85 Ibid.
86 Kraus, Pianos and Politics in China, 56.
87 Clark, 158.
88 Ibid, 159.
yet by the end of the Cultural Revolution, ballet was no longer such a strange form of
dance anymore. Such a huge change in the Chinese people’s ability to appreciate
ballet in such a short time was the result of none other than the intensive methods of
propaganda during the Cultural Revolution.

Such importance of art during the Cultural Revolution no doubt encouraged
many innovative methods to be used in order to create something “new,” “Chinese,”
and “revolutionary,” since there was in fact an inherent paradox here. A delicate
balance needed to be maintained: something too “new” might border on “foreign”;
and something too “Chinese” might be conceived as “old.” Both of the latter
adjectives were targets of intensive attacks at the height of the Cultural Revolution. It
was therefore very impressive that the cultural sphere flourished as it did, and the
innovations made during this period were really quite creative. A well-known piece of
art work, the “Yellow River Concerto,” which was set on the foreign instrument
piano, achieved wide acclaim by successfully re-imagining a Chinese song about the
communist revolution, the “Yellow River Cantata,” in an international form.89 A later
effort to transplant Peking opera contents onto local art forms90 could also be seen as
a Cultural Revolution creation, even though the policy was a reaction to the severe
strain local art forms experienced while Peking operas dominated the cultural
sphere.91

The Cultural Revolution was also a time when amateurs could criticize and
topple the authority of professionals, since all out criticism was encouraged during

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89 Clark, 185.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid, 253.
the first stage of the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, for a brief period, the art landscape almost looked like a monopoly of amateurs, with amateurs criticizing the political correctness of art works and amateurs singing and performing extremely vernacular songs. It was during this time, arts and literature spread from cultural elites to the general public.\(^92\) Although this trend constituted part of the destructive force during the first few years of the Cultural Revolution, it perhaps did ultimately contributed to preservation of at least some cultural activities for the average Chinese in the long run.

**The Publication of Songs**

*I. Origins*

While publishing songs in newspapers, especially major newspaper that primarily reported news, may seemed like an odd occurrence from a western point of view, it was in fact quite common in China even before the Cultural Revolution. A song named “The Song of Lei Feng” (雷锋之歌) was published in *Wenhui Newspaper* in 1963 in honor of Lei Feng’s life, which later led to the fame of the nationally known singer ethnic Tibetan Cai Dan Zhuo Ma.\(^93\) In 1965, a year before the Revolution broke out, a song called “To Forge Oneself in Wind and Storm!” (大风大浪里去锻炼！),\(^94\) singing “uniting the country” and “liberating Taiwan,” was published. In the months leading up to the Cultural Revolution in 1966, ten songs

\(^{92}\) Ibid, 254.


were published. These were but a few of the examples of how print media had been some of the biggest promoters of songs since the Communist Party consolidated its rule, and this attention to the publication of songs only intensified during the Cultural Revolution, with sophisticated synchronization between the timing of publication and political events.

The practice of publishing songs in the didactic but endearing manner typical of the Cultural Revolution began in February 1965, when one of the main Party media outlets, *Red Flag* magazine, which was one of the three major media outlets, published thirteen songs that were deemed to be the “most welcomed revolutionary songs by the people.”95 The lack of any data or concrete evidence supporting this claim was not at all relevant to this claim being made, since the magazine spoke the voice of the Party, and the Party represented the people, and the same tone would recur over and over during the Cultural Revolution. The editorial attached to the publication of these thirteen songs suggested that the publication aimed to encourage the singing and learning of revolutionary songs, which would encourage people to fight for revolution and inspire the revolutionary spirit among the masses.96 Similar editor’s notes were published with songs during the Cultural Revolution as well. The publication of these thirteen revolutionary songs, in addition to pioneering the practice, also had some real influence, since one of the thirteen songs, “Sailing the Sea depends on the Helmsman” (大海航行靠舵手), gained immense popularity during the Cultural Revolution. The song compared Mao to a helmsman, which

95 Original source could not be obtained, but this publication was known by many people and passed around orally.
96 Yin, 10.
metaphorically emphasized the instrumental role Mao’s personal leadership played in China. It became one of the most iconic songs of the Cultural Revolution, republished in the *People’s Daily* over a dozen times.

**II. The Role of Publication**

Songs cannot exist solely on paper. They are meant to be sung, performed, danced to, and with emotion. So much about a song is not conveyed in a song’s sheet music, which might make people wonder why study the publication of songs rather than the recording or performance of them. This is because while common sense nowadays might tell us that a song’s path to fame and popularity begins with a recording or a live performance, for most revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution, their existence began with their publication in the newspaper. Most songs published during the Cultural Revolution were newly commissioned products that functioned similarly to editorials and news reports in the propaganda, which was why the occasion of their publications spoke volumes about their purposes and significance. Certainly, there were many revolutionary songs that had been popular before their publication in the Cultural Revolution. “The East is Red,” for example, which evolved from a folk tune and had its lyrics rewritten many times, enjoyed popularity long before it was published during the Cultural Revolution. In fact, the publications of “The East is Red” was due to its popularity, not vice versa. But these songs were the minority when compared to the number of news songs whose publications were their inceptions.
Chapter Two: Selected Moments and Their Songs

This chapter offers a detailed analysis of one primary method of synchronization between political events and song publications, which was timing the songs to correspond to the events. Four specific moments or periods during the Cultural Revolution were selected and examined closely because they represent the diverse themes the movements during the Cultural Revolution took on. The beginning of the Cultural Revolution witnessed an intensification of revolutionary activities, from high-profile persecutions of those who were deemed “evil” to the violence Red Guards brought to the streets and homes. The Party took May 1967, the 25th anniversary of the momentous *Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Arts* as an opportunity to re-emphasize the purpose of cultural works, and in the process, the eight model works emerged, which had lasting influence on modern Chinese art. The mass migration caused by the “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement was one of the biggest China has ever seen, but for many, the experience had been pointless and inflicted considerable suffering. As the Cultural Revolution plateaued in 1969 and early 1970s, song publications were suddenly limited to a few classics, but several publications of revolutionary history songs despite the nationwide halt on revolutionary songs, suggesting that there might be a more subtle connection of songs to political events.

The Very Beginning: May-December 1966

The summer of 1966 would have been ordinary in China, if it were not for the swift and sudden outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. The “May 16 Notification”
that threw the country into a witch-hunt frenzy was generally considered to be the official start of the Cultural Revolution, though the actual publication of this Notification did not appear publicly until May 17th, 1967 when it was apparently declassified. The rhetoric made available to the public instead started with a critique of two well-known columns in two publications, Front Line and Beijing Daily, on May 10th, 1966, titled “Review of “Three Family Village.””\(^97\) The critique was written by none other than Yao Wenyuan, whose review of Wu Han’s play ignited the battle on the cultural ideology of the Cultural Revolution. Like the previous review, this critique vehemently questioned the motives of the column writers DENG Tuo and LIAO Mosha, “exposing” their “deliberate and devious” plan to poison the minds of the Chinese people because they initially praised Wu Han’s *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, and attempted to protect Wu when the play became a target. This piece of critique received the utmost attention - it was simultaneously published in Liberation Daily and Wenhui Newspaper, two major newspapers based in Shanghai with nationwide circulation, and was also immediately reprinted in People’s Daily the next day, and led to the high profile persecution of the three intellectuals involved and the deaths of two of them.

This was perhaps the very first wave of persecution of the Cultural Revolution, and similar stories would repeat countless times throughout the next ten years. Some might have higher profiles than others, but the method of tearing someone down was the same: anything with the slightest deviation from whatever trend the Cultural Revolution was boasting at that time could be ruthlessly taken

\(^97\) “Three Family Village” was the name of a column in Beijing Daily.
apart to “reveal” the monster behind the words. There is therefore little wonder that the period saw a dramatic rise of the use of Mao’s quotations in all situations: if using one’s own words put one at risk of misinterpretation, then using someone else’s words, especially that of the great leader who could not be wrong, shielded one from random persecution as much as possible.

Since this new wave of literary critique, the Cultural Revolution was quickly in full swing. In a matter of days, *People’s Daily* published numerous editorials with inciting words that called for the continuation and escalation of the “Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution”: June 1st editorial “Sweep Away All the Cow Ghosts Snake Spirits” (打倒一切牛鬼蛇神),98 was an abstract attack on bourgeois influences and it reassured the public that the Cultural Revolution was here to stay;99 June 2nd marked the date of the first “Large Character Poster” (大字报) in Peking University, which was a much more specific attack on the above mentioned intellectuals and their colleagues, and *People’s Daily* lent it full support with an editorial; June 4th editorial “Tear Down Capitalists’ Fig Leaves of ‘Freedom, Equality, Fraternity’” (撕掉资产阶级“自由、平等、博爱”的遮羞布) made clear the target of this new internal struggle were suspected capitalists, and it declared that the notions of freedom, equality, and fraternity were outdated slogans used by capitalists to exploit the proletariat;100 on June 5th, another editorial recounted the so-

98 *People’s Daily*, June 1, 1966, Page 1.
99 “Sweep Away All the Cow Ghosts Snake Spirits”, *People’s Daily*, June 1, 1966, page 1, paragraph 9-11.
called crimes of the leaders of Peking University and implied that the rest of the intellectuals in all of China had to take a firm socialist stance to avoid persecution.

As if on cue, these editorials were quickly followed by the publication of several songs on June 5th: “Chairman Mao’s Works Shine a Golden Light” (毛主席著作闪金光); “Chairman Mao’s Books Are the Treasure of the Revolution” (毛主席的书是革命的宝); “Father Is Dear, Mother Is Dear, but Neither Is as Dear as Chairman Mao” (爹亲娘亲不如毛主席亲); etc. The theme of these songs was obvious, which was to express the love for Chairman Mao and faith in his thoughts. After the attack on the intellectuals and their swift downfall, these songs sent a clear message: the key to avoid such persecution would be to closely follow Mao’s thoughts and not deviate from approved political ideology. To mark the importance of the publication of these songs, the page even included an editor’s note, which was only reserved for special occasions:101

In the fiercely surging climax of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers, revolutionary cadres, and revolutionary intellectuals hold high the great red flag of Mao Zedong thought…, exposing and criticizing [the cow ghosts snake spirits]’s anti-Party and anti-socialism words and actions. In this fighting moment, the masses really need to sing to our hearts out, to praise our great Party, our great leader Chairman Mao, and the invincible and all-conquering Mao Zedong thought…

Today, we recommend a newly written batch of songs to our readers. These songs reflect the sentiments of the [people], express their boundless loyalty and love for Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong thoughts, and convey their strong fighting will for the proletariat revolution…102

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101 Typically during the Cultural Revolution, information published with songs were their titles, composers, lyricists, sheet music and instructions, and lyrics. Only on special days or events would the songs be accompanied by words, serving as “instructions.”
The editor’s note assumed an endearing tone, dictating what the country should do while positioning itself as representing the masses, which was a technique commonly used in People’s Daily throughout the Cultural Revolution. The note’s carefully crafted language effectively guided the readers to believe in the righteousness of the attacks on the previously mentioned intellectuals, but at the same time subtly nudged the readers to forget about the specific people and incidents in the attacks by singing praises to Chairman Mao, which essentially meant to abandon one’s own opinions and to believe in the Party’s decisions purely based on faith. If the content of these songs seemed somewhat disconnected to the political movements described in the editorials, it was most likely because the onslaught of the Cultural Revolution appeared to have happened aggressively and hastily - for the first time, the political struggles within the leadership became publicly known open assaults - and singing praises to Mao and the Party to solidify the faith the people had was high on the Party’s priority list.

The next song published, “Cultural Revolution Marching Song” (文化革命进行曲), on the other hand, was perfectly timed and aptly titled to fit into the larger narrative of the Cultural Revolution gaining momentum. However, it was not nearly as significant a publication as the June 5th songs, for it lacked an editor’s note, was published in its lonesome, and did not enjoy much popularity during the Cultural Revolution. This song, along with many to be published in the years to come, seemed to have but one purpose, which was to offer something musical to correspond to the

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103 Maitan, 89.
events of the time. But this seemingly superficial purpose could grant legitimacy to the political events it referred to, because the songs were built on a more powerful vehicle for emotions than simply words and slogans, which was music. Furthermore, even if a published song was not sung widely, its very existence at least proved the serious attitude toward a particular event the Party had, which, in the time when the Party was always “great, glorious, and correct,” was itself reason enough to believe in the righteousness of the event.104

Then since August 1966, Mao started to meet and greet the ever-growing number of Red Guards all over the country in Beijing, which further raised the status of Red Guards, who were already the most potent force in the Cultural Revolution because of Mao’s previous endorsements on their behaviors.105 The Red Guards saw the height of their influences because of Mao’s public support, and this support was backed by song publications. The first song with “Red Guard” in its title appeared on August 27th, a mere nine days after Mao first met with Red Guards atop Tiananmen Square on August 18th.106 One September 15th, Mao met with Red Guards the second time. Promptly, Mao’s quotations, which the passionate Red Guards used to accompany and legitimize their searching, looting, and destroying the homes of suspected “capitalist-roaders,” were set to music and appeared as songs in People’s

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104 This is of course, the circular logic of propaganda: because the Party must be correct, what the song sang about must also be correct; and because the song could powerfully convince the people of its contents, the Party’s legitimacy was further elevated since the songs were about its correctness.


Daily the first time on September 30th. The publications were also accompanied by an editor’s note:

In this excellent situation of the further development of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, the creative study and application of Chairman Mao’s works by the revolutionary masses reached a new climax. … Everywhere there is the moving image of people studying fervently Chairman Mao’s works; everywhere there is the sound of reading Chairman Mao’s quotations. The mass movement of the people of our country studying Mao Zedong thought more extensively and deeply is an unprecedented pioneering work in proletariat revolution history; it is the guarantee of a secured victory of socialism revolution and socialism development in our country.

…In the movement to study Chairman Mao’s works, following the instructions of comrade Lin Biao, the masses formed the fervor to read and apply Chairman Mao’s quotations. They urgently hope to spread Chairman Mao’s quotations to every family and let it be recited everywhere. The revolutionary music workers composed many melodies for the quotations to satisfy the demand of the masses. This is a brand-new format…

…We believe, with the effort of revolutionary music workers, the singing of Chairman Mao’s quotations will be all over the entire country…

Clearly, knowing the violence the Red Guards had caused everywhere, the purpose of quotation songs, in addition to raise Mao to further height, was to fuel their actions even more. Undoubtedly, this new support for Red Guards was directly related to Mao’s meeting Red Guards. This batch of quotations songs was the first of several, and as Mao met with the Red Guards a third and a fourth time in October, the publication of quotation songs continued: October 12th saw the publication of four more quotation songs; and October 25th, nine more. Such timely publications of songs could only have been done intentionally by the Party leadership, and judging by the prevalence and popularity of quotation songs during this period of the Cultural

Revolution, the strategy to use songs as part of the propaganda was a very competent one.

It is hard to measure exactly how much the publication of revolutionary songs boosted the dissemination of political messages the Party sent, but with these few examples of the synchronization in timing of the publication of songs, it is clear that the Party believed in the efficacy of this practice. In turn, the popularity these published songs enjoyed among the masses, whether voluntarily or not, at least indicated that the songs, along with their politically-enabled lyrics, were able to be delivered to the most grass-root units successfully, which was the purpose of revolutionary songs all along.

Commemorating Yan’an Talks and the “Eight Model Works”

The year 1967 was in many ways similar to the previous one: the country was still in chaos, Mao was still worshipped “like the sun”. It was also very different from 1966, since the Red Guards gradually lost their use to Mao as they already served their purpose of mobilizing the country\(^{108}\) and therefore saw their power slowly diminished throughout 1967, and eventually to the point in 1968 when Mao’s gift of mangos to a worker’s propaganda team transmitted a clear message that he valued the workers more than he did the immature students.\(^{109}\) But the movement that had the most long-lasting influence in Chinese society was the development in the arts, and more specifically, the consolidation of the “Eight Model Works.”

\(^{108}\) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 248.
Under the banner of the 25th anniversary of the publication of Mao’s famous “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art,” a series of efforts in May 1967 were made to emphasize the cultural dimension of the Cultural Revolution. Among them was the selection of eight representative works, including five Peking operas, two ballets, and one symphony, to become what was known as the “Eight Model Works.”

The “Eight Model Works” was presented by Jiang Qing, as a triumph of the Cultural Revolution, but she started the project prior to the Cultural Revolution. In fact, already in July 1964, she had the famous talk “On the Revolution of Peking Opera,” in which she discussed the necessity for appropriate socialist art based on the reality of the masses, which she believed to be the proper direction for the modernization of arts and culture. Evidently, her endeavors were approved and accepted three years later, as her model works became the absolute dominant works in theaters. Her success came at the expense of other regional cultural varieties, since Peking opera was the only type of opera out of many regional varieties to be included in the “Eight Model Works.”

Some argued that Jiang’s inclination towards jealousy and the considerable power she wielded on the cultural front enabled her to eliminate her competition, which must have been partially responsible for the “Eight-hundred million people watching eight shows” phenomenon during the Cultural Revolution. This may very well be true, but the model works themselves must have also had considerable merit.

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110 Ibid, 49.
to gain the wide popularity they enjoyed. Indeed, studies on the modernization of Peking opera would note the innovative methods the model works used to incorporate western sounds and techniques,\textsuperscript{113} which greatly enriched the opera’s sound. Departures from traditional style included the use of western instruments even a full orchestra to play the music of the operas,\textsuperscript{114} and the storylines, just like Jiang envisioned in 1964, contained much more updated - which, during the Cultural Revolution, meant revolutionary - themes rather than the usual ones about the feudal dynasties. Excerpts from “The Red Lantern” (红灯记), one of the original eight model works, was even later reworked with piano accompaniment and hailed as a great innovation. The two ballet pieces, “The White-Haired Girl” (白毛女) and “Red Detachment of Women” (红色娘子军), along with the symphonic suite “Shajiabang” (沙家浜) were even more obvious steps towards expanding the style and repertoire of Chinese arts by reworking western dance and music styles in the Chinese revolutionary framework. Further merit of the “Eight Model Works” were found in the two ballets: since they featured strong female leads, they can also be considered as feminist works,\textsuperscript{115} Therefore, although the “Eight Model Works” were propaganda tools that perpetuated the same messages as other propaganda during the Cultural Revolution, such as the greatness and correctness of Mao Zedong Thoughts, their place in the history of the development of modern Chinese arts should not be lightly dismissed.

\textsuperscript{113} Clark, 12.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
However, at the time of their presentation, the “Eight Model Works” were quite indistinguishable from other grandiose Cultural Revolution propaganda rhetoric - it appeared that the model works got its moment in the spotlight as part of the effort to bring focus onto arts during the commemoration of Mao’s “Talks.” And Jiang’s talk also received unprecedented attention for something not created by Mao during that time, presumably because it fit perfectly into the larger “Talks” narrative - it was republished simultaneously in People’s Daily and Liberation Army Newspaper on May 10th, 1967, and in the sixth issue of the Red Flag magazine that year. This manner of publication was reserved for only the most important messages from the top, and her talk being published as such no doubt elevated her status in the Cultural Revolution in the public eye. After publishing Jiang’s talk, People’s Daily then published an editorial on May 16th, which called on the masses to study and apply the spirit of Mao’s “Talks,” and on May 21st the army was called on to do the same.

The cluster of front-page-worthy editorials was followed immediately by a cluster of songs of the same theme, in the same timely manner quotation songs of action appeared in support of Red Guards in 1966. These songs, such as “We Also Need a Cultured Army” (我们还要有文化的军队), “The Ideological and Artistic Struggles of the Revolution Must Obey the Political Struggles” (革命的思想斗争和艺术斗争，必须服从政治的斗争) and “Our Literature and Arts Serve First and Foremost the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers” (我们的文学艺术首先是为工农兵的), were again quotation songs, only that this batch of quotations were all taken from Mao’s “Yan’an Talks” to celebrate its 25th anniversary, as the title on the page
of their publication indicated. Once again, we know that the publications of these songs must have been important because there was an editor’s note attached to it:

Our great leader Chairman Mao’s genius glorious work “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Arts” has been published for 25 years. “Talks” innovatively developed Marxism-Leninism, correctly and comprehensively laid down the theory, path, guideline and policy for proletarian literature and arts. …

To help the masses of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers, and revolutionary art workers better use and apply the “Talks,” thoroughly criticize those capitalist-roaders in the regime… we specially selected the quotation songs from the “Talks” for everyone to sing and spread.116

A close reading of this editor’s note revealed that its tone was considerably more authoritarian than that of the previous ones in 1966. If in previous notes, the editors of one of the most important Party media were insinuating they were part of the masses, then in this one and the ones that followed, they no longer posited themselves as such. This corresponded to the temporary power shift to the voices of reason in the leadership, who sought to restore order, after an extended period of encouraging chaos and confusion by Mao and the radicals. The implication of the change of tone in editor’s notes is that the manner of the publication of songs was not immune to the political trend of the day, just like the content of songs published were by and large determined by development of political events.

“Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” and the “May Seven Cadre School”

Toward the end of the first stage of the Cultural Revolution, the “Up to the

Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement served both as a way to diffuse excess energy, especially among the Red Guards, in the city to prevent further violent outbreaks and as an opportunity for the urban youths and intellectuals to learn from the peasants. Interestingly, the movement did not start in the Cultural Revolution; the phrase and the idea had already been in place since 1955, when Mao declared that “All those intellectuals who could go to the countryside to work should happily do so. The countryside is a vast land, where people can achieve great things.”\textsuperscript{117} The movement’s close association with the Cultural Revolution, then, stemmed not from its origins in the Cultural Revolution, but from the fact that the idea was not fully implemented until 1968-1969, when the mass migration of urban youths and intellectuals away from the cities became an organized effort, and hailed under the banner of the Revolution.

The first time the phrase “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” appeared in \textit{People’s Daily} after the Cultural Revolution began was on July 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1967, in a second-page article titled “Maintaining the Correct Direction of Intellectual Youths Going Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside,” which for the first time publically circulated several segments of Mao’s 1955 talk on the subject. But even those who gave only a cursory reading of the article would notice that the point of the article was not so much to call for a serious revival of the idea, but to criticize, without naming names, those “capitalist-roaders” within the leadership, or more specifically, Liu Shaoqi, whose quote appeared in the article as evidence of “capitalist-

\textsuperscript{117} “Maintaining the Correct Direction of Intellectual Youths Going Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside”, \textit{People’s Daily}, July 9, 1967, page 2.
roaders” poisoning the minds of intellectuals.

The next time the phrase appeared in *People’s Daily* was in a summary of the success the movement had achieved so far. The entire front page of the December 25th, 1968 issue of the newspaper was filled with the news of cadres gladly sending their children “up to the mountains, down to the countryside” to receive re-education on revolutionary traditions. Above the reported progress in various provinces was Mao’s new instruction “It is very necessary for intellectual youths to go to the villages and receive reeducation from poor and lower-middle peasants” in big bold characters. By mid-November, the article declared, all children of cadres in the PLA’s Zunyi District had been sent down to the countryside, and the district was thus praised as an excellent example for the rest of the country. The article also indicated that since March, the cadres had already started to follow Mao’s instructions and began to send their children to the countryside. The fact that there was no mentioning of the movement being set in motion in *People’s Daily* before this day was apparently conveniently ignored, to create the illusion that this movement did not happen on a whim, and that Mao’s instructions had been followed closely.

However, the glory of going up to the mountains and down to the countryside portrayed in the media was contrasted by the reality, which was that the Red Guards were sent under the directive of Mao to the rural areas to do their “penance.”

punished not by immediate violence, but by the cancellation of *hukou*,\textsuperscript{119} which would then result in the person’s loss of food ration and job. Despite resistance from some, the public opinion previously built up by the media also had its influence and use in motivating youngsters to leave their urban homes. Many young people, who had been raised in the atmosphere of idolizing Mao and the Party, really did believe in the value of experiencing rural life and agricultural work.\textsuperscript{120} (The idea that manual labor builds character is still very much alive in China today, as students are required to go through at least one “learning agricultural production” experience in high school or college that would last several days to several months, thought the intensity is nowhere near that of actually leaving home and living in a rural village for years.) It was estimated that by 1969, this mostly compulsory migration resulted in at least 20 million people moving out of cities.\textsuperscript{121}

A parallel movement at that time was the cadre schools movement, which started slight earlier than the “Up” movement in October. Because its target were officials and cadres, not Red Guard youths, this movement differed from the “Up” movement, although they shared some similarities such as relocating urban population and requiring physical labor. They were also somewhat similar in that the cadre schools movement also resulted in the displacement of countless families and individuals. The official call for joining the “May Seven Cadre School” came from an

\textsuperscript{119} The closest English understanding of the word would be “resident registration.” It is a way for the government to keep track of people and different types of *hukou*, such as city or agriculture, have different limitations and benefit.


\textsuperscript{121} An, 59.
editor’s note on October 5th, calling on cadres and officials to follow Mao’s directive and join the cadre school to receive reeducation. The media was, expectedly, describing the necessity and glory of this movement, but most officials and cadres were not easily coaxed. Separation from family and pointless laboring were only a few of the reasons why the cadres and officials found this movement undesirable.\textsuperscript{122} Although when comparing to the “Up” movement, the cadre school was probably a less harsh experience and less physically intensive with shorter time requirements, those who were sent to the schools were relatively older than strong young people and did not have nearly the tolerance for manual labor, making the cadre schools no less painful and demanding than the mountains and the countryside.

The stark reality of both movements was probably the reason why few songs were ever published to praise them. Both movements were supported by the leadership since the early years of the Cultural Revolution and lasted until it was over, but throughout the years, merely two songs about them were published, both during late 1968. The first one, published on October 7th, was a quotation song about the necessity of the cadre schools; and the second, published on December 28th, which had original lyrics and music, was about the “Up” movement. Neither publication was accompanied by much acknowledgement or “fanfare”: no editor’s notes or other songs were published with them. They were not even found on the usual page of cultural contents - page 6 - where most other song publications were located. Their appearances seemed to be only half-hearted attempts at influencing popular opinion, if that was the purpose of publishing these two songs, in contrast with some more

\textsuperscript{122} YANG Jiang, \textit{Six Chapters in Cadre School}, chapter 1-2.
authoritarian directives in previous years, as if the leadership did not truly believe that they could turn the tide on public sentiment with a few songs. In addition, the Red Guards, who were the most avid consumers of revolutionary songs, especially quotation songs, were the ones sent away from cities, where most political actions happened. There was then less demand for fresh song materials to keep up with the events. Therefore, the effort to commission new songs might simply have become unnecessary. Another plausible explanation would be that Jiang Qing drastically tightened her control over arts during 1969-1971,\(^ {123} \) which was evidenced by the sudden decline of song publication. The rise of these two movements merely coincided with Jiang’s political move, leaving them unfortunately neglected by songwriters.

The absence of songs praising a movement that was glorified in multiple editorials seemed unusual during the first stage of the Cultural Revolution, but the later years would see a much reduced fervor in revolutionary songs, especially newly composed ones, both among the people and in the media. But since this absence appeared toward the very end of the first stage, it suggested a broader case of song publications synchronizing with political events that fit in the larger arch of the Cultural Revolution decade, since the need for violence or inciting the masses was greatly reduced at that time.

A Revival of Early Revolutionary Songs

Beginning in 1969, there appeared to be a revival for the early days of the Communist Party and the pure ideology it stood for. This revival was not presented by any specific series of editorials; instead, it was the songs published during this time that told this story.

On February 16th, 1969, without being preceded by any relevant editorials, five songs were published with the title “Long Live the Victory of Chairman Mao’s Revolutionary Path” (毛主席的革命路线胜利万岁). Each song had an iconic place in its title: “The Road of Jinggangshan Leads to Everywhere” (井冈山道路通天下), “Golden Rays Flashes at the Top of the City Wall of Zunyi” (遵义城头金光闪), “Red Sun Shines over Yan’an” (红日照延安), “A Red Sun Rises from Shaoshan” (韶山升起红太阳), and “Chairman Mao Mounts Tiananmen” (毛主席登上天安门).124 People familiar with the early years of the Chinese Communist Party would have no trouble recognizing these five places - they were what was known as the “Five Milestones” of Chinese revolutionary history, which traced the path Mao took to lead the Communist Party into victory and China into a new republic. One might also notice that Shanghai, the place where the first ever People’s Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, was missing from these places. This was because Shanghai did not hold significance for Mao, and during the Cultural Revolution, the rhetoric was more focused on Mao than on the Communist Party in general.

These songs had no editor’s note that instructed people to learn or explained

124 Emphases added by author.
their appearance, even though the five songs took up the entire page 6, and they appeared amidst the sudden halt of song publications - the only other songs appeared in People’s Daily in 1969 were the classics such as “The East is Red.” Furthermore, they were new songs instead of existing ones, although their theme might have caused some confusion. These factors made the publication of these five songs a peculiarity at the time of its appearance because up until then in the Cultural Revolution, songs published in People’s Daily were always somewhat relevant to the political events. Yet zooming out from this particular publication, we realize that these songs were published a mere two months before the Ninth People’s Congress, where some of the old cadres who were previously denounced started to see a shift of attitude of Mao.\textsuperscript{125} Given the lengthy preparation and unprecedented secrecy of this People’s Congress,\textsuperscript{126} there should be no doubt to its importance, and the publication of these five songs that commemorated the milestones of Mao’s path at this time suggested the possibility that Mao wanted to make the Ninth People’s Congress a new milestone in his life and in the Party’s history.

The mysterious publication circumstances of these five songs was repeated by other songs publications. On February 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1970, another five songs were published, with the title “Revolutionary Historical Songs” (革命历史歌曲). Like last time, this publication was not related to any editorials or significant dates. But this time was accompanied by an editor’s note - “The Explanation for Republishing Five Revolutionary Historical Songs”:

\textsuperscript{125} MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 290.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, 286-288.
The five revolutionary history songs above came from Anti-Japanese War and Liberation War period. The melodies are familiar to many revolutionary masses. Today, under the glory of Chairman Mao’s proletarian path of literature and arts, these revolutionary songs were given new or modified lyrics.\textsuperscript{127} This is very meaningful work. The lyrics are based on class perspectives, which highlight the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Community Party, and the great thought of Chairman Mao on the People’s Army and people’s war…\textsuperscript{128}

But this publication was not the last we see of the revolutionary historical songs. On May 5\textsuperscript{th}, another five songs were published, this time without an editor’s note but the songs were given new lyrics as well. Likely this publication was a sequel to the Feb. 1\textsuperscript{st} one.

Finally on February 6\textsuperscript{th}, 1972, the last batch of revolutionary historical songs was published. This time the theme was revolutionary folk songs, including “Our Leader Mao Zedong” (咱们的领袖毛泽东) and other folk songs that were popular during the Anti-Japanese invasion period, plus a newly composed folk-style song “Coral Lilies Blossoms Brilliantly Red” (山丹丹开花红艳艳). These five songs were published with a title “A Selection of Revolutionary Folk Songs from Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Areas” (陕甘宁边区革命民歌选) and a short editor’s note:

These five revolutionary folk songs emerged and became popular during the second domestic revolutionary war and the Anti-Japanese War period in Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border areas. After the liberation of the country, they became even more widely circulated. Now we republish these songs with rewritten or new lyrics and melody by the art workers in Shaanxi.

The editor’s note obviously misconstrued the fact that all of these five songs were

\textsuperscript{127} Emphasis added by author.
existing folk songs that were already popular during the early years of CCP, since
“Coral Lilies Blossoms Brilliantly Red” was irrefutably a new creation, even though it
borrowed heavily from existing folk songs. It was unlikely that the editors of the
People’s Daily made a mistake - in fact, we now know that it was no mistake.
According to anecdotes, the new song was intentionally disguised as a pre-existing
revolutionary folk song so that it could be published even with the dictatorship Jiang
Qing was posing on Chinese arts.129 With the whole country only allowed ten songs
or so to sing during early 1970s,130 there was an unspoken demand for entertainment
materials, and publishing revolutionary songs from the Party’s early days was one of
the few politically sound ways to satisfy that demand.

But publishing songs only for the enjoyment of the people was too simplistic
a stance to take when examining the publication of revolutionary songs - as previous
sections demonstrated, it was never done carelessly or unintentionally, even when it
did not seem to have a big impact. To uncover the motives behind these seemingly
bizarre cases of song publications, it is useful and informative to zoom out and think
of the years 1969-1972 as a whole.

Since 1969, the primary participants of the Cultural Revolution activities
started to shift from the masses to the politicians at the top. The 1969 movement
“Cleansing the Class Ranks”131 (清理阶级队伍) was perhaps the last major
movement that still persecuted average citizens. The 1969 Ninth People’s Congress,

Color of Coral Lilies”.
130 Ibid.
131 Translation by MacFarquhar and Schoenhals.
which reconstructed many political infrastructure destroyed in previous years, and the establishment of local Cultural Revolution Committees, which were charged with the governing duties, both helped to stabilize the country. 1970 and 1971 saw major power struggle within the leadership, especially between Mao and the PLA, which was evidently a dramatic affair that ended with Lin’s death in September 1971, but not much was disclosed to the public. Soon after that, the Cultural Revolution entered a “wooing the old guard” phase, which was marked by Mao’s exoneration of many previously persecuted veteran leaders and the reversal of verdicts on wronged leaders such as Deng Xiaoping. The political trend since the Ninth’s People’s Congress was therefore one that gradually rehabilitated the old cadres who were previously neglected or denounced.

Taking these developments into account, the publications of revolutionary history songs became less puzzling. These songs could be seen primarily as an attempt to win back the old cadres, many of whom were treated unfairly since the Cultural Revolution. The huge following Mao and the Communist Party were able to gain was mostly a result of the early years of the Communist Party, when many of the Party members and soldiers of the Red Army were motivated by a pure devotion to the communist ideology and vision. By publishing revolutionary songs, the leadership was apparently appealing to the people’s sentimental side; and by rewriting the lyrics to some of the most popular songs during previous wars, the leaders appropriated the fond memories of the past so as to distract the masses from the bleak situation

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132 MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 336.
133 Ibid, 339.
134 Ibid.
brought forth by the Cultural Revolution. It was therefore no coincidence that the only songs published apart from the classic Cultural Revolution anthems during this time were songs of revolutionary history.

This chapter presents three methods the Party utilized to intentionally synchronize song publications to political events during the Cultural Revolution: the first was using songs as a more subtle way to dictate what the people should do at the time, and the second was using the existence of a song to “prove” and legitimize the existence and progression of an event. These two methods were more frequently deployed during the first year of the Cultural Revolution than after, since they were especially useful during shifting political trends as a way to keep up with events. The third method was to suit the manner of publication, most notably the tone of an editor’s note, to political needs. This method was used throughout the Cultural Revolution – the latter two sections of this chapter demonstrate that editor’s notes were especially useful in speculating the Party’s intentions.
Chapter Three: The Categories of the Songs

During 1966-1977, People's Daily published over two hundred songs. Their topics ranged from the exaltation of Chairman Mao to the beauty of the country’s landscape. The sheer number of songs published and the diversity of their topics were unprecedented in Chinese history; and in no other country do songs regularly appear in a major newspaper. The myriad of songs can make the task of understanding these songs seem daunting. However, there are several definitive categories that most of the songs can fit into, and examining how each of these categories of songs function during the Cultural Revolution is key to uncovering how the Chinese propaganda machine utilized songs of different topics to promote their messages. This chapter therefore also outlines five major categories to discuss in detail, demonstrating that each categories of songs served different political needs, such as to anchor the revolutionary rhetoric, or to incite the masses.

I have divided the themes of these 200 published revolutionary songs into the following five categories: 1) Revolutionary Classics, which consisted of three songs that transcended the different political trends and maintained their superior status throughout the decade; 2) Praise of Mao himself and his leadership, which were the 39 songs that directly addressed people’s devotion to Mao; 3) Situational motivation songs, which were published according the specific political and social needs of the time, and there were 73 excluding the overlap with quotation songs; 4) Quotation Songs, which were the 101 songs with Mao’s words verbatim as lyrics; and 5) Praise of the People’s Liberation Army – the 14 songs that elevated the Army’s status during the Cultural Revolution. This rough categorization of the published
revolutionary songs allows each type of songs to be studied in depth, and it would reveal that each served different functions in working towards a common goal, which was to secure Communist rule in China.

**Revolutionary Classics**

Three songs fell under the category of Revolutionary Classics: “The East is Red,” “Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman,” and “The Internationale.” The reason why these were considered the “classics” of the Cultural Revolution was because they were broadcasted on almost every occasion and acquired the status and exposure that no other song had. Each morning, the nationally programed radio and televised new programs started with “The East is Red”; and each evening, they closed with “The Internationale.” And at the end of many public gathering events, Premier Zhou Enlai would conduct the crowd to sing “Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman” together as one big chorus. These three songs were also published repeatedly during the entire Cultural Revolution decade. Two of them, “The East is Red” and “Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman,” were published multiple times together on important dates, such as National Day (October 1) and the New Year’s Day (January 1) as “recommended” celebratory songs. They were sometimes joined by another song, such as “Wish Chairman Mao Live Forever Long” (祝福毛主席万寿无疆) in order to form a proper set. “The Internationale” was sometimes

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used in a similar way, but not as often as the other two. When published in this manner, these songs often accompanied a photo of Mao.

*Figure 3.1. Sample first page, above fold. July 1, 1966.*

These three songs are so closely connected to the Cultural Revolution that they deserve a close look.

The melody of “The East is Red” was originally a folk song from the Shaanxi region. The original version, titled “Sesame Oil,” was in fact a love song, talking about the most normal little things in daily life and a sense of longing. Later, new lyrics was put to the melody during the Anti-Japanese War, and the song was
renamed “Riding a White Horse.”\textsuperscript{136} The tune went through several changes after that before transforming into an idolization song of Mao. Interestingly, its special status began before the Cultural Revolution. Its appearance in the historical musical epic of the same name was the start of its supreme importance,\textsuperscript{137} and its unique position became more and more obvious during the Cultural Revolution when it essentially became the default entrance song for Mao whenever he appeared in public.\textsuperscript{138} Its importance was elevated to unbelievable height through many special occasions, such as when it was selected to be broadcasted from space on China’s first satellite, which was also named “The East is Red No.1.” Exactly how big a difference such flamboyant demonstrations made to the status of this song was perhaps not as important as the fact that there can be no doubt to its supremacy, both culturally and politically.

“Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman” was perhaps the most popular song among the masses during the Cultural Revolution. Certainly, “The East is Red” probably had the most exposure and was the song that everybody listened to multiple times every day, but “Sailing the Sea” was most people’s favorite song with its upbeat rhythm and easy to follow melody, unlike that of “The East is Red,” which was more majestic. Although the forms of the songs were very different, the essence was the same. The lyrics of this song “Conducting revolution depends on Mao Zedong Thought” and “Mao Zedong Thought is a sun that never sets” highlighted the

\textsuperscript{136} He, 27.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
extreme idolization of Mao as well. And singing and listening to this song countless times every day must have achieved considerable brainwashing effect.

But this unbelievably popular song managed to completely disappear from official channels and gradually fade from people’s memories after the Cultural Revolution. Nobody seemed certain about the reason, although the timing of its decline coincided with the Lin Biao affair of 1971. Paradoxically, people often thought there was a close connection between this song and Lin Biao, when in fact there was none. In 1967, Lin wrote an inscription of these words: “Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman; conducting revolution depends on Mao Zedong Thought.” Coincidentally, those were also the lyrics to the song, which, however, were written in 1964. There seemed to be no mentioning of this coincidence at the time of Lin’s inscription, but as he went down for his betrayal of Mao, the song’s exposure also dramatically declined in official channels. In fact, after 1971, the song was never published again in People’s Daily.139 Although the song remained to be sung among the people after 1971, the lack of political motive to keep up its momentum perhaps contributed to its eventual fade out when the Cultural Revolution ended.

“The Internationale,” unlike the previous two, did not originate in China. Its irreplaceable status in the Cultural Revolution had to do with the international aspect of the socialist movement. Throughout the Cultural Revolution, there was never a lack of revolutionary rhetoric about uniting the world under the socialist banner. For example, if we glance over the 1970 news reports of China’s first manmade satellite in the space, there was no lack of mentioning how it was a symbol of China’s leading

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139 Refer to Appendix I.
technological ability in the world, and how the broadcast of “The East of Red” spread China’s voice all over the world.\textsuperscript{140} If we zoom out further, we would notice a coherent theme. Details such as the countless languages the “Little Red Book” was translated into, the resolution to “defeat American Capitalism” and “Soviet Revisionism” for people all over the world, or the subtle mentioning of international support for the socialism movement, collectively made clear a pattern of China being the definitive leader in this global class struggle, at least in the Cultural Revolution rhetoric.

The emphasis on “The Internationale” was an important part of this rhetoric, and the reason for this particular song to carry such weight was by no means a coincidence. Songs such as those titled “The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious” (全世界人民一定胜利)\textsuperscript{141} and “Our Friends Are All over the World” (我们的朋友遍天下)\textsuperscript{142} also highlighted the global dimension of the socialist movement, to which the Chinese Communists were supposedly the leader of, but none of them had the international legitimacy “The Internationale” inherited. Originated in France, “The Internationale” was the “worldwide anthem of the working-class movement”\textsuperscript{143} and was sung by people who believed in socialism all over the world at one point. In some sense, China had to emphasize it, even though it was foreign and had considerable difficulty to learn, but the singing of this song also brought a sense of the global scale of the socialist mission to the Cultural

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} \textit{People's Daily}, April 26, 1970, page 1.
\item \textsuperscript{141} \textit{People's Daily}, May 19, 1971, page 6.
\item \textsuperscript{142} \textit{People's Daily}, May 21, 1972, page 4.
\end{itemize}
Revolution that no other song, or even words, could bring. This created something of a self-fulfilling prophecy - because we lead the world-wide working-class movement, we sing this song; and because we sing this song, we lead the world-wide working-class movement - that put “The Internationale” on the list of revolutionary classics.

**Quotation Songs**

Quotation songs were songs whose lyrics were taken directly from Mao’s talks and essays, with newly composed melody. They were the most unique song inventions during the Cultural Revolution. Unlike the revolutionary classics, however, quotation songs did not enjoy much longevity. While “The East is Red” can still be heard from the bell tower at Shanghai’s famous tourist site, The Bund, the use of quotation songs was almost entirely limited to the period, or more specifically, the first few years of the Cultural Revolution. While “The Internationale” has been rearranged as a rock song and many members of the younger generations have surprisingly great familiarity with it, the knowledge of quotation songs was usually limited to those who experienced the Cultural Revolution first hand.

This is not a surprising phenomenon, if we look at the context during which quotation songs flourished. The first batch of quotation songs appeared on People’s
Daily on page 6 of its September 30, 1966 papers. Ten quotation songs were
published that day, with several short paragraphs of editor’s notes praising the studying activities of Mao’s quotations and arguing that learning Maoist thought using artistic means was a “fundamental mission” of revolutionary culture.144 In October, People’s Daily published the second and third batch of quotation songs, with topics such as supporting the rebellion. The publication of quotation songs continued over the next few years, with less frequency and emphasis, and faded out completely in 1969.

What was intriguing about these publications of quotation songs was that the choice of which quotations to put on paper was carefully coordinated with the events in history. The first ten songs published, for example, were aimed at inciting the revolution. Quotations such as “To Rebel is Justified” (造反有理) and “A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party” (革命不是请客吃饭) contained strongly worded sentences to show the absolute legitimacy and necessity of violence in order to achieve a successful revolution. The quotation songs that appeared in January 1967 further included quotes such as “All Revolutionary Struggles Was to Seize Power and Consolidate Power” (一切革命斗争都是为着夺取政权巩固政权) to encourage the power seizure movement. These songs, which used the radical words and enhanced them with powerful music, were so inciting that the singing and chanting of these quotations toward the end of 1966 and during the beginning of 1967 was perhaps at least part of the reason for the “January Storm” fiasco in 1967. Support for violence and rebellion quietly retracted when in 1969, the Ninth People’s

Congress established proper government hierarchy, with Mao as the supreme leader and Lin as his second in command,\(^{145}\) which was mirrored by a period of void in song publishing where pretty much nothing was published except for the revolutionary classics and a few songs that prayed for the longevity and health of Chairman Mao.

While quotation songs went through a period of nation-wide popularity, their relatively short-lived popularity might be attributed to not only a withdrawal of support for violence and chaos on the part of the Party but also their inherent flaw as arts. Throughout the learning and singing of these songs, one might take notice how awkward many of them sound. These songs were, simply put, Mao’s words put to music. While a song can have lyrics before music or vice versa, or simultaneously, there is usually an understanding the lyrics would be somewhat poetic. But the challenge to composing for Mao’s words was that those words were sentences spoken, and naturally, most of them did not rhyme or contain a similar number of characters between breaks. A sentence might have a thirteen-character segment before a comma and then have a three-character segment. For example, the last two sentences of “A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party” was five characters followed by seventeen characters. Another one of the more popular quotation songs, “The Force at the Core Leading Our Cause” (领导我们事业的核心力量), had only two sentences: the first 17-character long, and the second 19-character long. Neither sentence could really be broken down to more song-friendly phrases. As one can

\(^{145}\) He, 19.
imagine, this created some incredibly awkward musical phrases when the quotations became quotation songs, and those singing them probably could not enjoy these songs as much as songs that were meant to be songs. Certainly, with the overzealous idolization of Mao and fervor for revolutionary actions, people learned these songs and learned to sing them well, but the lack of basic musicality probably set these songs for doom. Some of the best remembered quotation songs were often the ones that happen to be more musical than others. Composing the music for quotations was arguably one of the hardest tasks the musicians had to face, and one must admire the ingenuity and perseverance of those musicians who wrote the music for these songs.

Situational Songs

Every now and then, *People’s Daily* would publish some songs that were extremely relevant to the specific movements of the day, or even songs that were related to the seasonal work schedule of peasants. Some of these occasions were ones the Party could plan beforehand: the New Year, the spring sowing season, the National Day, etc. Others were movements that happened and lasted a period, therefore warranted a song to encourage the revolutionary spirit of people even further. These situational songs can be considered one of the most significant song categories in the study of Cultural Revolution propaganda because they were the most telling about what the Party hoped to achieve at a point in history. They derived their births almost completely from their specific context, as opposed to the revolutionary classics that occupy the soundscape of China whenever and wherever.
One of the early and biggest example of such songs would be in early 1966, when there was quite a big movement surrounding “Learning from Comrade Jiao Yulu” (向焦裕禄同志学习) as the central government sent out the notice to do so. JIAO Yulu was a Communist Party member who worked as a party secretary at a town called Lankao in central China. He dedicated himself to saving his town from hunger and despair, but soon succumbed to liver cancer. He soon became a national model in the newspaper with the help of aggressive campaigning. This movement to learn from Jiao became so big that there were four songs dedicated to it during that time: “Learn from Jiao Yulu” (学习焦裕禄), “Jiao Yulu is Our Confidant” (焦裕禄是俺们的知心人), “Jiao Yulu - Our Good [Party] Secretary” (焦裕禄 俺们的好书记), and “Learn from Jiao Yulu’s Good Model” (学习焦裕禄好榜样).

These songs ranged from slow to fast tempo, and some were more colloquial and others were more refined, but the commonality across these songs was that in paying respect to Jiao and expressing the people’s gratitude to him, all of these songs found it necessary to add something about Jiao being a good servant because of Mao. For example, in “Learn from Jiao Yulu,” the last sentence was “Learn from Jiao Yulu, and be Chairman Mao’s good student forever.” When putting ourselves into the context, which was a time of extreme idolization of Mao, such a “footnote” did not seem out of place. But these lyrics did reflect a twisted need to attribute anything good to Mao during that time: the songs made it as if it was because and only because of Mao and studying Mao’s works that Jiao became an official who cared deeply about his people.
This tactic to praise Mao through praising his “students” was quite common during especially the early stage of the Cultural Revolution. After Jiao Yulu, a similar movement repeated before long, when a young soldier named LIU Yingjun was praised for his Lei-Feng-like heroism. Liu reportedly used his body to intercept a spooked horse to save six children, but sacrificed himself in the process. Liu’s story was published extensively and Liu was made into a saint. On July 28, 1966, two songs appeared on People’s Daily about learning from Liu - which, much like songs about Jiao Yulu, ultimately praised the greatness of Mao.

Of course, situational songs did not appear only when the Party decided to put up a role model. At the time of the 1967 “January Storm,” which was the movement that sought to overthrow local governments, a song titled “The Storm of January Revolution Takes over the Country” (一月革命的风暴席卷全中国) appeared on People’s Daily on February 21, when voices that criticized the extremely chaotic “January Storm” began to appear. While there was no definitive proof that the song’s appearance was an attempt at preventing the “January Storm” from dying out, the context of its publication seemed to suggest at least a relationship between the criticism of the “February Adverse Current” (二月逆流) and the need to keep up the “Seize Power” rhetoric. Similarly, towards the end of the first stage of the Cultural Revolution, when many intellectuals and cadres became caught up in the “Up in the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement, songs also appeared\(^{146}\) in People’s Daily to praise the legitimacy of this mode of retraining, even though the

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\(^{146}\) People’s Daily, October 7, 1968 and December 28, 1968.
reality was simply that many young people were sent across the country to engage in hard labor.

Examples of situational songs were only too numerous. Songs about “spring sowing” would appear in late winter or early spring, presumably to encourage agricultural productivity. Songs about the importance of women in this country would appear around March 8 “International Women’s Day.” Towards the end of the revolution, after Mao’s death and Hua Guofeng became the new Chairman, a song praising him as the leader was published. The seasons, festivals, special occasions and holidays were all valid reasons for a publication of a situational song that was deemed suitable by the Party. Perhaps exactly because of their specificity to a point in history, these songs were never really the more popular ones. Yet they function as an integral part of the song publishing history of the Cultural Revolution. They demonstrated that songs were an important part of an organized and deliberate propaganda that went on in all other areas of China during the Cultural Revolution.

Personal Praise Songs of Mao

The most prevalent topic among the songs published in People’s Daily would definitely be songs that sang praises to Mao personally. Certainly, all of the songs at that time were essentially praises of Mao, but there were also numerous songs that did so more directly, such as “Chairman Mao, We Are Forever Loyal to You” (毛主席，我们永远忠于您) or “Closely Following Chairman Mao Is Victory” (紧跟毛主席就是胜利). These songs are perhaps the hardest to understand from today’s

point of view, because their relevancy has decreased significantly over time and people nowadays probably cannot fathom a time when Mao was really believed to be the sun in a life of darkness.

It is in fact remarkable how overt the idolization of Mao was during the Cultural Revolution. People who have never lived during that time would probably never completely understand the intense, crazy, cult-like following of Mao. Many of those who did participate in the worshiping of Mao would either still believe in his greatness, or have trouble remembering exactly why Mao was the great leader, the sun, and savior of all. But during the Cultural Revolution, Mao was raised to unbelievable height and there was a genuine and almost universal love for him across the country. If it were not for this intense, religious-like love for Mao, there perhaps would not be so many songs singing nothing but the praise of Mao.

The number of songs dedicated to praise Mao’s greatness was only too big, and listing these songs would be futile since they talked about the same thing in many different words: Mao was the great leader and savior; Maoist thought was the absolute truth; people loved and were loyal to Mao; people wished Mao health and longevity/immortality; and many more. One of the most extreme examples of endearment would be a popular song called “Father and Mother Are Not as Dear to Me as Chairman Mao” (爹亲娘亲不如毛主席亲), which essentially rejected the natural love for family and called for absolute devotion to Chairman Mao. As incredulous as it sounds, the Cultural Revolution years did in fact see many instances

148 An example would be my great aunt, who is approaching 90 and lives in Wuhan. During one dinner in 2010, she declared that Chairman Mao invented the computer. And she wholeheartedly believed in the truth of that statement, even when we tried to tell her otherwise.
where a child would “snitch out” his or her parents for their political mistakes. The authorities also seemed to have encouraged this behavior, and the song provided legitimacy for betraying family, which was to be loyal to Chairman Mao.

Songs about the People’s Liberation Army

A category that cannot be neglected in revolutionary songs would be songs that had to do with the People’s Liberation Army. In fact, one of the most published and emphasized songs during the later years of the Cultural Revolution was “Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points” (三大纪律八项注意), which was a song based on the disciplines of the Red Army. Throughout the entire Cultural Revolution period, the military rhetoric was maintained constantly and strongly, such as wearing the military uniform in all kinds of revolutionary activities and calling the people to learn from the PLA soldiers who exemplified Mao Zedong Thought.

The importance of the Army during the Cultural Revolution was obvious for most because the soldiers were pictured as tough, kind, and politically correct, but in addition, the Army was also a power instrument that the politicians at the central government vied for and protected. When the revolution was at its most violent and chaotic stage, virtually all order was destroyed and all existing rankings of any kind was overthrown, but the Army was shielded from the national crackdown because

149 This behavior was public knowledge, and its portrayal in the movie “Coming Home” (2014) was especially authentic. The daughter snitched out her disgraced father’s reappearance to the surveillance members to show her correct political attitude, in order to increase her chances of getting the lead role in her school’s new ballet production.
“people should trust the Army,” and eventually it became the policing force that saved the country from further disorder.  \(^{150}\)

The military rhetoric in revolutionary songs was especially noticeable when performers on stage also wear uniforms. Surely, some theater or dance productions, such as “Shajiabang” (沙家浜) or “The Red Detachment of Women” (红色娘子军) were in fact about the Army (in fact, six out of the “Eight Model Works” were about the Red Army, which was evidence of the strong military presence in culture) and therefore warranted the military uniform, but the revolutionary songs were not always about the military. Wearing uniforms when singing was a choice, albeit a small one since everybody wore uniforms everywhere, and this choice subtly influenced people’s perception of culture - which was indeed to serve the country and the Party, just like soldiers fought for the country. The visual image combined with the lyrics praising the righteousness of the Army significantly contributed to the idea of the Army being the models of the revolution and Mao Zedong Thought, which decreased the possibility of people harassing the Army and consequently destabilize an important instrument of Communist Rule.

These categories present a rather complete picture of what the revolutionary songs published in *People’s Daily* in Cultural Revolution sang about, and are indicative of the ways in which the Party had conducted propaganda. However, they are not an exhaustive list, nor are they completely independent of one another. There were

\(^{150}\) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 255.
many songs that could have belonged in more than one category, and songs that
covered some topics other than these five,\textsuperscript{151} such as praising Lin Biao alongside the
Chairman Mao and the Party.\textsuperscript{152} But these categories present a clear picture of what
the leadership valued during the Cultural Revolution: Mao’s irrefutable status,
perfectly timed propaganda, the PLA’s stability, and more generally, a positive
attitude toward the Cultural Revolution, even when it brought about violence and
suffering.

\textsuperscript{151} 21 songs published in People’s Daily between 1966 and 1976 were excluded from these
categories. Two of them were published before May 1966 and one was published in December
1976. Ten of them were published in or after 1974, suggesting a weakening of correlation
between published songs and political events.

Chapter Four: Song Analysis

The revolutionary songs of the Cultural Revolution are not generally considered as a superior art form. Many people in China now would dismiss them as “just propaganda,” or compliment them sarcastically. Despite the lack of enthusiasm for artistic appreciation, the music of the revolutionary songs were as integral a part of the songs’ effectiveness as propaganda tools as the lyrics and the timing. In this chapter, musical analysis of a few selected songs reveals that there was a set of musical devices that composers utilized to perform specific functions that highlighted certain key words, such as “revolution,” to enhance the meaning and feeling of the lyrics. There was also a set of literary devices that were employed in the lyrics that transformed the songs’ lyrics into easy-to-memorize vehicles for political messages. The songs selected in this chapter are: “A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party,” “Three Alliance’ Revolutionary Committee,” “Coral Lilies Blossoms Brilliantly Red,” “Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao,” “Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman,” “The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious,” and “Long Live People’s China! Long Live Mao Zedong!”

The musical analysis performed in this Chapter are based on the published sheet music, which only notated the melodic line of each song. Also included in the sheet music were key signatures, time signatures, lyricists and composers if applicable, tempo markings and performance direction.

Quotation Songs

The first two songs to analyze closely here are two quotation songs: “A
Revolution Is not a Dinner Party” and “Three Alliance’ Revolutionary Committee.”

The first one was significantly more popular than the second, primarily because of it provided justification for the Red Guards’ violence. But in addition to its content, the

Figure 4.1. “A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party”

Lyrics: A revolution is not a dinner party/Or writing an essay/Or painting a picture or doing embroidery/It cannot be so refined/So leisurely and gentle/So temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous.
A revolution is an insurrection/An act of violence by which one class overthrows another.

former was also much more musical, since the quotation happened to be consisted of similar length phrases.

“A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party”\textsuperscript{153} was written in major pentatonic scale with notes C, D, E, G, A. The song could be thought of as made up of units of 2

measures, with most units marked by a measure of syncopated eighth and quarter notes followed by a measure of two quarter notes. It could be divided into two sections, with the second beginning at measure 20 with the second sentence. Most notes in the second section were an octave higher those in the first section. Although the sheet music contained no repetition, the song was usually sung in its entirety twice.

In order to make the song more musical, here the composer cleverly divided the first phrase, which consisted of eight characters, into a two characters and six, which made the subsequent phrases quite uniform and therefore significantly easier to compose for. There was no such work-around for the second sentence, but measures 20-23 kept the basic format of quarter notes in the second measure of a unit, giving the song a generally coherent rhythmic pattern, which anchored the otherwise “freestyle” phrases.

Another observation of this song was the way it shifted between higher notes and lower ones in perfect synchronization with the action words in the quotation. The song opened with a C in the higher octave and moved one step upward to the D, which corresponded to the first two characters 革命 (gé ming), meaning “revolution.” The first two characters also occupied three beats, longer than any other two characters in the rest of the song, with the exception of the ending characters of sentences. Obviously, the high notes and longer durations served to get people’s attention at the beginning of the song, as well as emphasizing the word “revolution,” as the melody dipped into the lower octave after the first two characters, when the quotation started to talk about what revolution was not. But the
second sentence went right back to the higher octave, corresponding to the content of the second sentence, which talked about what revolution was. Therefore, the high notes were clearly associated with affirmations while the low notes with negations.

To further intensify the message of violent revolution, the second section also utilized syncopation regularly. The melody ended on the same note as the opening C, which nicely enveloped the melody in between.

This song is an example of a more musical quotation song, and it was in no small part due to the quotation being relatively uniform in phrase length. The composer’s effort lied mainly in using easy to follow rhythm and melody contour to emphasize the violent words of the quotation. But this seemingly innocent creative endeavor gave the quotation song new meanings when compared to the quotation: it drew attention to affirmative parts of the quotation that did not necessarily stood out when spoken or read. In doing so, the popularization of the quotation song would mean the popularization of the composer’s version of interpretation of the quotation, which may or may not be different from each individual’s interpretation of the original. The message for violence, for example, seemed to have become stronger in the song because of the syncopation and higher range of notes. In fact, the most well-known part of this quotation was its first eight characters, which merely stated “A Revolution Is not a Dinner Party,” and did not contain the assessment of violence. The song effectively changed the focus from this milder statement to the second sentence. It is impossible to quantify the difference this change made in terms of encouraging violence, but the fact that those who sang the song might have had a different relationship to the quotation from those who recited the words, courtesy of
the composer, should nevertheless be brought to attention and factored into the efficacy or functions of quotation songs.

Figure 2. “Three Alliance” Revolutionary Committees

Lyrics: “Three Alliance” Revolutionary Committees/are the creation of the working class and the masses in this Cultural Revolution.

A second example of quotation song, “Three Alliance Revolutionary Committees,”154 was one about the newly established political structure called revolutionary committees, which were designed as an alliance among the Army, the cadres, and the masses.

Like the previous one, this song was also composed in the major pentatonic

scale in C key. Unlike the previous song, there is no determinable phrase length or basic unit in this song, since the quotation itself only had one sentence, divided into a 9-character and another 24-character parts, and was improbable to be broken down further. This song followed a somewhat similar contour: opening and ending in the higher octave with the middle section revolving around the lower octave. The song was to be repeated once, with a different ending.

There is significantly less analysis that could be done on this quotation song: there was no discernible structure or intentional phrasing, other than beginning and ending on the same C. The wording and awkward phrase lengths of the quotation was apparently to blame, and the composer seemed to have done his best to make the song sing-able. Even with such difficult material to work with, the composer still managed to put emphasis on “revolution” by giving the two characters 革命 the highest notes in the song, excluding the ending. Another detail that showed the composer’s finesse was the way the melody tried to imitate the four tones of the Chinese language. For example, the first beat of the fourth measure went up from an A to the C above, creating an upward tone, which was the tone of the character 人 (rén). Despite the composer’s great effort, the song did not catch on in any substantial way, and its specific content about the three alliances in revolutionary committees was also a long forgotten topic.

The two examples were on the opposite ends of the popularity spectrum of quotation songs, and they exhibited many musical differences, despite them being composed by the same person using the same scales and the same marching rhythms. Their musical differences were largely predetermined by the given quotations, and
the probability for either to catch on was also influenced by the applicability of its contents, in addition to its melody. Other quotation songs composed by the same musician, Jie Fu,\textsuperscript{155} were similarly constrained, as some of his compositions became widely known while others faded into history and left no mark. Quotation songs in general, therefore, were unlikely to succeed based on their own musical merit, as too much of the song was determined by non-music factors.

**Folk Style Songs**

The second type of musically distinct songs are songs written in the folk styles. The most prominent example would be “The East is Red,” the melody of which originated in the Shaanxi region. Interestingly, most of the folk style songs during the Cultural Revolution that posed to represent the traditions of Han ethnicity were songs in the Shaanxi regional style, despite Shaanxi being only one of the many Han folk styles in China. This was likely because Shaanxi acquired the status of the headquarters of the revolution after Mao designated the region as the destination of the “Long March” and led the PLA there in 1936. The Shaanxi style, which was a northern folk style, differs significantly from the styles from the south, such as that of the world famous “Jasmine Flower” (茉莉花), in that it was bold, unconstrained, and sometimes rough, while the southern styles were more delicate and refined. The stylistic differences might have also contributed to the Shaanxi style being preferable.

\textsuperscript{155} Jie Fu was the most prolific composer for quotation songs during the Cultural Revolution. He rose to prominence during the early years of the Cultural Revolution, during which time his songs were widely sung; but he was soon incriminated due to his alleged close connection and loyalty to Lin Biao when Lin was denounced. He died in 1967 as a political criminal, and his reputation was only rehabilitated in 1994.
during the Cultural Revolution because, using a Mao’s quotation, “A revolution is not a dinner party,… it cannot be so refined.”
Figure 4.3.1 “Coral Lilies Blossoms Brilliantly Red”

山丹丹开花红艳艳

宽广、热情地

(2) 2 = D

Lyrics: A) Ranges of mountains and surging waters/Our Central Red Army arrives at northern Shaanxi/Our Central Red Army arrives at northern Shaanxi/So many poles of flags/So many barrels of guns/Our army’s force is strong.

B) Thousands of families and households/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Opening the doors/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Quickly welcome our kins in/Yi Er Ya Er Lai Ba Yo;/

Yongao so hot/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Put them on the table/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Warm rice wine for our kins/Yi Er Ya Er Lai Ba Yo;/

Gather around our kins/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Sit on the hot brick bed/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Sincere talks fly from our hearts/Yi Er Ya Er Lai Ba Yo~; /

Dark clouds cover the sky/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Blown away by the wind/Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo/Chairman Mao’s arrival brings out the sun/Chairman Mao’s arrival brings out the sun.

A’) Thunders from a thousand miles away/Lightnings from ten times more/The strength of our revolution has big developments/The strength of our revolution has big developments/Coral lilies blossoms brilliantly red/Chairman Mao leads us to take over the land/Chairman Mao leads us to take over the land.
The example to be analyzed here is “Coral Lilies Blossoms Brilliantly Red,” which was in the style of the Shaanxi region. The sheet music indicated that the song

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156 *People’s Daily*, February 6, 1972, page 6. Credits: Shaanxi-Gansu Folk Song
was in *shang* mode (similar to Dorian mode), which was a rare modal configuration among all the songs published during the Cultural Revolution. It was written in a heptatonic scale - D, E, F, G, A, B, C - with an additional C# functioning as a neighbor tone in two measures. The entire song can be seen as adopting a type of ternary form, ABA’, similar to those of 19th century European music, though there was no modulation in the B section. Instead, the B section sped up the tempo (tempo marking changed from approximately *adagio* to *allegro*) and the singing style changed from warm and passionate to swift and fervent. Also unusual was that this song had several time signatures, including free tempo, 2/2, 3/2 and 2/4, though tempo variations were limited to only the first sentence of the song and between the sections. The B section of the song had four verses (the fourth in the extended ending of this section) and they were all repeated to the same melody. The final verse of B section featured a different ending, to transition into the A’ section. The strophic form was typical of Cultural Revolution songs, as most songs with multiple verses only featured different endings. The A’ section mirrored the A section in both melody and lyrics: the B section described details such as giving the soldiers wine, but the A and A’ section concerned itself with more general statements, such as “The strength of our revolution has big developments.”

The entire song had a relatively strong tonic-dominant relationship throughout, with the A section mostly revolving around the tonic. The lyrics here intentionally included some transition words that had no literal meaning, such as the fifth and sixth characters 那个 (nà gè), highlighting this regional flavor. The section described the scene of the Red Army arriving at northern Shaanxi, setting the
background for the development in later sections. The lyrics featured a description of the landscape “Ranges of mountains and surging waters” first, followed by a more concrete statement “Our Central Red Army arrives at northern Shaanxi.” This combination were to be repeated throughout the song, with the first part setting the stage for the second. This arrangement reflected the classic Chinese literary device called *bi xing* (比兴) which uses a metaphor or a simile to introduce and foreshadow the main subject. Although the correlation between the two might not seem strong in every case, the first part always subtly supported the statement in the second. The A section also featured several melismatic lines which was typical of the Shaanxi *xìntiányòu* (信天游) style. While there is no harmony in Chinese folk and traditional music, the end of each section can be interpreted to be an authentic cadence, which marked the sections with a sense of finality. The B section began with the change in time signature from 2/2 to 2/4, and ended with the change back to 2/2 from 2/4. If the A section was the introduction of background, B section described the actions the local people took to welcome the arrival of the Red Army. The most notable word used here was “kin” (亲人), which recurred in each verse to refer to the soldiers of the Red Army. Combined with the description of the enthusiastic manners with which the locals welcomed the soldiers, the B section portrayed a harmonious picture of the people supported and loved the Red Army, which implied the justice of the Army’s cause. The lyrics here also indicated a call and response pattern: the call parts were in solo, alternating between male and female voice in different verses; the response parts were in chorus. The lyrics to the response parts, “Ai Hai Ai Hai Yo” (哎咳哎咳哟) and “Yi Er Ya Er Lai Ba Yo” (依儿呀儿来吧哟
), had no literal meaning, but were used to convey the enthusiasm of the people and give the song additional momentum.

Compared to most revolutionary songs emerged during the Cultural Revolution, this was a much more musically complex product with many rare features, such as the ternary form, the ré mode, and a range of time signature. It was also significantly more difficult to sing well because the song demanded a vocal range of two octaves, from the A3 to A5. The musical configurations of this song, then, determined it was not meant to be performed by amateurs, in contrast with typical mass songs, which were meant to be easy to follow and execute. But the song was also sufficiently memorable that most people could sing or hum the first sentence, which contributed to its success after its publication. But the lasting popularity of this song till this day is evidence that it was one of the modernized folk songs with a variety of complex musical and literary devices that persisted through the changing of aesthetics, and that the modernization of Chinese music did not completely stop during the Cultural Revolution.

Ethnic Minority Songs

During the Cultural Revolution, songs from the ethnic minorities were some of the most popular ones since they usually featured different modes and much more lively and danceable melodies and rhythms compared to the militant songs common during the Cultural Revolution. They portrayed different lifestyles and landscapes,

![image]

which appealed to the masses who liked the variety and their exotic sounds. But underneath the presentation, what was curious about these songs was that they might not be songs from the ethnic minorities at all, but composed by Han musicians who imitated the styles of ethnic minorities. One of the favorites during the Cultural Revolution was “Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao,” which featured the stereotypical motifs such as
Lyrics: We are Chairman Mao’s red guards/We come to Tiananmen from the grassland/The sea of flags is limitless and red as fire/The songs of fighting loud into the sky/Great leader Chairman Mao/Lead us into revolution
Ah he hey~ Ah he hey~/Dear Chairman Mao, the never-setting sun/People on the grassland love you fervently/Oceans may dry up and rocks may crumble, our hearts remain the same
The red sun rises from the east/Golden sunrays cover the earth/Why is the sun so warm?/Why can we not contain our tears?/Chairman Mao comes to our side/He is with us forever more
Ah he hey~ Ah he hey~/Dear Chairman Mao, the never-setting sun/People on the grassland sing praises for you/Long live, long live Chairman Mao
Ah he hey~ Ah he hey~/Dear Chairman Mao, the never-setting sun/People on the grassland sing praises for you/Long live, long live Chairman Mao
grassland and the sound of horse galloping, but the song was published without the standard lyricist and composer information, as if it was a spontaneous creation of the red guards from the grassland - which was a stereotypical reference of ethnic Mongolians. The version that can be found now credited GAO Shiheng as the composer, but the melody was slightly different from the 1968 version published in Figure 4.4.2. “Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao”
Another ethnic minority song published without the lyricist and composer information was one titled “Long Live Chairman Mao” (万岁毛主席), which was in the Uigur style. The dubious publication context aside, these songs sounded sufficiently exotic that people accepted and welcomed them as songs from ethnic minorities, which for the current purpose of musical analysis, is enough reason to treat them as such.

The song\textsuperscript{158} was written with notes from F minor scale, and like the previous song, it was in a mode rather than in major diatonic scale. The mode here was \textit{yu}, which is similar to \textit{Aeolian} mode. We should take notice of how modes were commonly associated with folk styles (which broadly includes ethnic minority styles), and they were commonly used in other revolutionary songs to evoke a folk sense to add variety. This song included the tempo marking \textit{allegro}, which set it apart from the steady, marching tempo of most songs, and the danceable rhythm made the song stand out. The song featured a verse-chorus form with two verses, and the chorus started with the last beat of measure 26. The entire song had a range from F4 to B5, which was much higher than that of the average revolutionary songs, and it was even higher than other folk style songs, such as the previous “Coral Lilies Blossoms Brilliantly Red” and “Long Live Chairman Mao.” (The latter ranged from A3 to G5.) The reason for this high range was probably because it was meant for female vocals, as the recordings of this song suggested, but the published sheet music failed to reflect this consideration. The phrase lengths in this song were quite consistent: four

or five measures per phrase, and each set of two consecutive phrases were of the same length. The lyrics of each phrase were also nicely symmetrical in most cases, and wording was somewhat poetic.

One of the noticeable features of this song was the amount of ornamentation involved, especially in the verse part. For example, the second, third, seventh, eighth, ninth measures all had ornaments that were non-essential to the overall melody but added distinct ethnic flavors to the music, which resulted in some syllables occupying several notes in a melismatic style. Ornamentations were not common in other types of revolutionary songs, and was perhaps even frowned upon because they disrupt the strong, militant quality of revolutionary songs. But ornamentations were featured extensively in folk style songs and ethnic minority songs, and the wide popularity this song enjoyed during the Cultural Revolution suggests that, in addition to the masses finding this song musically desirable, the Party leadership allowed and perhaps even encouraged this song to flourish. The different attitudes toward ethnic minority songs and other revolutionary songs was a small window into the racial bias that was deep-rooted in contemporary Chinese society: ethnic minorities were often perceived to be naïve in political or intellectual matters, and therefore easier to control; and any “mistake” they made in their music was not an attempt to degrade the seriousness of the Cultural Revolution, but an adorable expression of their sincerity, which should be encouraged.

Typical Mass Revolutionary Songs

For the lack of a better term, this section deals with the typical and common
revolutionary songs of Cultural Revolution, which included most songs that were not quotation songs or folk style songs. “Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmsman” was

Figure 4.5. “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman”

Lyrics: Sailing the seas depends on the helmsman/The growth of all living beings depends on the sun/Rain and dew nourish young seedlings/Conducting revolution depends on Mao Zedong Thought.
Fish cannot leave the water/Melons cannot leave the vine/The revolutionary masses cannot do without the Communist Party/Mao Zedong Thought is a sun that never sets.
Fish cannot leave the water/Melons cannot leave the vine/The revolutionary masses cannot do without the Communist Party/Mao Zedong Thought is a sun that never sets.
one of such examples. It featured a simple melody and vernacular lyrics.

The music was written using notes from the C-major scale. The tempo of this song was steady and moderate - a comfortable speed to sing along to. The lyrics also consistently rhymed with an open mouth -ang final, which is a sound often associated with brightness and strength, and brought additional positive aural quality to the song in addition to its own major key framework. The phrases were of relatively consistent lengths, with four measures each for the most part. The song was usually sung its entirely twice in performances, as indicated in the sheet music, but sometimes the performers might repeat it more than once to suit the circumstances.

The song began with two parallel sentences, each with seven characters:

“Sailing the seas depends on the helmsman, The growth of all living beings depends on the sun.” The melody for the first sentence revolved around the C-major triad, which reliably opened the song with a sense of righteousness, but the music of the second sentence added an interesting twist: the perfect fourth movement from the 3rd to the 7th was noticeably folksy, because there was no leading tone resolution following the 7th. In that brief one beat, the composer moved away from the major scale to produce a modal sound, which subtly added a folk flavor that instantly departed from the militant songs such as quotation songs. The second time the music again ventured into modes was at the second to last sentence, in the movement from the supertonic to the leading tone, which would happen again at the third to last measure. These alterations, however small, differentiated this song from the more serious and uptight marching songs such as “PLA Is a Big School for Revolution”
The song’s first and last sentences were written with notes in the higher octave, corresponding to the emphasis on “Mao Zedong Thought,” while the middle of the song generally remained in the lower octave. This seemed to be a characteristic shared by many revolutionary songs, since the quotation songs in the first section of this chapter also featured this similar “envelope” style. It was an effective method of composition: the first sentence demanded attention while the last pushed the song into climax.

As one of the most popular songs during the Cultural Revolution, “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman” was often praised for its catchy music and its simple but vivid lyrics. Its popularity was in no small part due to its modernized, but also slightly folksy music. Another popular song composed several years later would also exhibit similar characteristics.

“The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious” was another successful revolutionary song during the Cultural Revolution in that it was quite well-received even when people had become weary of songs that called for fighting and action.

The song was written in the major diatonic framework, but the presence of the 7ths again added some modal variations to the song, which resulted in the song

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161 He, 31.
sounding slightly folksy. In the 7th and 11th measures, the 7th were followed by

*Figure 4.6. “The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious”*

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**Lyrics:**

The east wind is blowing/The war drums are sounding/Who fears who in today's world?/It's not the people who fear American imperialism/But American imperialism who fears the people/
A just cause enjoys great support/An unjust cause enjoys none/The laws of history can't be broken, can't be broken!/American imperialism will certainly perish/And the people of the world will surely be victorious/The people of the world will surely be victorious!
downward steps but not the tonic. But the 7th also retained its function as the leading tone in this song: the 7th in measure 29 and 33 were both resolved to the tonic, which was why the last two sentences did not sound folksy even with the presence of the 7th. Unlike the previous song, such configuration might have been motivated by a necessity to incorporate folk, thus Chinese, elements rather than purely aesthetic preferences, since the label under the song title read “Chinese revolutionary song” and it was published with five other revolutionary songs from Laos, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia.

In addition to folk elements, this song’s phrases were also divided symmetrically: each two measures formed a basic unit, and every two units constituted a longer phrase, which was in turn half the length of an entire sentence. The entire first sixteen measures then formed the first part of the song, and the next seventeen formed the second. There was even noticeable similarities between the two parts, such as they both started with short phrases and gradually built up to longer ones. This dichotomy structure not only pleased the Chinese preference for things in doubles, it also made for a straightforward melody that took little effort to learn.

These two songs were among the most representative and popular revolutionary songs that were not composed for quotations or with specific ethnic designation in mind. They shared some crucial similarities such as tonality and wording of lyrics, which suggested that writing songs in this style might have been the key to success during Cultural Revolution. Neither song has been passed down to younger generations nowadays, which, in addition to them being songs from a now negated time, must have also been a result of shifting aesthetics after the Cultural Revolution.
Revolution.

Foreign Songs

The final distinct musical category of revolutionary songs was foreign songs. The most prominent song of foreign origin was “The Internationale,” which was sung by the people almost as diligently as they did “The East is Red.” But “The Internationale” was not the only foreign song published during Cultural Revolution, or the only one exempted from being labeled “anti-revolutionary” or “capitalist.” Another song, titled “Long Live People’s China! Long Live Mao Zedong!”162 was written by the then King of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, as a symbolization of the friendship between the Chinese and the Cambodian people.

This song was notated by WANG Shuangyin, who wrote the popular “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman,” for King Sihanouk during his May 1972 visit to Heilongjiang Province.163 At first glance, it seemed similar to a Chinese melody, constructed also within the diatonic framework but left out the sub-dominant, but the big leaps, such as the one between the first and second measures, which were rare in Chinese compositions but appeared regularly in this song, gave an exotic feeling to the music. The lyrics of this song were more similar to spoken sentences, since it did


not rhyme or contain the parallelism and symmetry that the Chinese people liked, but it was not nearly as awkward as some of Mao’s quotation songs.

The song began with a pickup - another feature rarely seen in Chinese compositions during that time - and the first part was sung in a slow tempo. The
tempo changed to a faster pace at the pickup before measure 15, and at the same
time, the melody seemed to be tonicizing around the 3rd, which temporary shifted
the mode to 宮. As the tempo returned to the original one, the tonicization ended and
the melody returned to the major sound. The ending of the song sounded somewhat
similar to a plagal cadence, and the song’s finality was implied more from the slowing
of tempo than from the notes.\footnote{The analysis of this song based on the published sheet music may not be the most reliable, since the song was notated and there was no evidence about whether the original lyrics were in Chinese. The degree of modification by Wang Shuangyin was unknown.}

The song could be sung quite beautifully, but the triplets and pickups made it
rhythmically more complex than the average Chinese revolutionary song, which
meant that it was probably too difficult to become popular among the masses. The
primary reason for the publication of this song must have been it was written by the
King of Cambodia, who represented one of the few countries that maintained a close
and friendly relationship with the Communist government during the Cultural
Revolution.

King Sihanouk was quite a prolific song writer, it would seem, since he had at
least one other song that achieved some popularity within China.\footnote{He, 30.} But for the most
part, his songs were not notably influential during the Cultural Revolution, and they
have been long forgotten now. But the fact that his song appeared in People’s Daily
meant that there was a diplomatic message to the Cambodia people about China’s
respect and friendship for their country, and a political message to the Chinese
people, which was to prove that China was not alone in the international fight against
Excluding foreign songs, some musical generalities can be drawn about Chinese revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution. Most songs were in pentatonic or major diatonic scale; almost all songs were in simple meters; and actual song lyrics all attempted to achieve some level of poetic quality. Also common was the use of higher notes to draw attention and emphasize important sentences of a song, which were often direct praises of Mao that mentioned him by name. And although the rhythmic patterns in most revolutionary songs were quite simple, songs regularly relied on syncopated rhythms to add variety and build momentum. These seemingly rudimentary techniques were quite capable at achieving their purposes, and since the songs were primarily propaganda tools rather than artistic pursuits, these efficient musical devices were the key to the success of a revolutionary song.
Chapter Five: Beyond Publication

Because of the nature of revolutionary songs – they are often performing arts and thus requiring performance to thrive - the discussion of these songs are not complete without talking about the performance side. To better build on the discussion of the publication of the songs, it is helpful to think of the songs as possessing multiple dimensions: the printed sheet music being the first; the music and spoken words constitutes the second aural dimension; and the performance that includes physical presence being the third visual dimension. These dimensions held closely together the package of musical propaganda that perpetuated Chinese society during the decade of Cultural Revolution, and it is the whole, rather than the parts, of the revolutionary songs that elevated the songs to the political importance that few other popular songs could achieve.

This chapter, building on this idea, explores the elements of the revolutionary songs that could not be presented on paper: the songs as part of the sound of the Cultural Revolution and as the accompaniment and justification for actions; the singing styles and them being broadcasted via loudspeakers; the movements accompanying the songs, including gestures and dance steps; and if performed on stage, the interaction between the performers and the audience. A section of the discussion is dedicated to my recital and the lessons it taught me about the preparation, implementation, and influences of performing revolutionary songs.
Sound of Revolution

The aural dimension of the revolutionary songs has a few components. The melodies of songs is the most obvious one, for without which, songs could not be called songs. But the sounds of the songs went beyond just melody, and a frequently mentioned and noticed but seldom discussed component was the sheer presence of sound when these revolutionary songs were sung, broadcasted or performed, in conjunction with other shouting, smashing or broadcasting sounds, which constituted the greater revolutionary soundscape.

I. Shouting, Singing, Smashing

Memoirs detailing the lives during the Cultural Revolution did not fail to take notice of how loud and noisy the streets often were. Between the chanting of the Red Guards, the clamoring of gongs and drums, and the loudspeakers broadcasting news mixed with propaganda,¹⁶⁶ the sound of the Cultural Revolution was ostentatiously unavoidable. One of the producers of the sound were Red Guards.

To announce their presence, create a scene for the dissemination of revolutionary messages or signal their move to search a place, the Red Guards often marched down the streets shouting slogans and singing quotation songs, sometimes with the help of gongs and handheld loudspeakers or megaphones to get people’s attention. The majority of the people who lived modestly were spectators at that point, since they were still safe from persecution, and the spectacle created by the street activities was somewhat entertaining, which was why people were willing and

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even eager to see what the Red Guards had to say. The Red Guards also enjoyed making these sounds, since they felt entitled and emboldened to guide the masses and perform revolutionary actions as the “small generals” of the Cultural Revolution. To them, the shouts of slogans and the singing and playing of revolutionary songs made the street bustle with excitement. But these sounds stroke fear into many people’s hearts. One of the Red Guard activities during the early months of the Cultural Revolution was to search the houses of “suspicious” personnel and confiscate everything that had to do with “Four Olds”: old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas. Teams of Red Guards would march into people’s homes uninvited and ransack the place room by room. Sometimes, the Red Guards would even tear walls apart because there might be “weapons and gold” stashed away. Those who had done nothing legally wrong but had connections to “bad elements” and were therefore targets of such “inspection” were deeply worried and disturbed by the sounds of the Red Guards, fearing that one of those days, one of the teams might be coming for them.

Clearly, the same street sounds were experienced very differently by different people at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. And during the later years of the Cultural Revolution, when the activities on the streets gave way to more organized study sessions, the sound of the Revolution became more subdued on the streets. Loudspeakers, which were so common at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution

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167 Ibid, 63.
168 Ibid.
169 Inspection is really too neutral a word here. The Chinese word was “抄家”, which literally meant take everything in a house that was of even little value away.
170 Jiang, 130
that there was one in practically every street corner, ceased to be useful or prevalent as inciting the crowd was no longer a priority. However, the less disturbance the sounds caused did not equate a significant reduction of their presence. “The East is Red” was still sung at gatherings\textsuperscript{171} and slogans were still frequently shouted to show support of the current political situations. What essentially changed in the later years of the Cultural Revolution for the sounds, including the songs, the announcements, and the slogans, was that they were taken back from the center stage and were incorporated into daily lives as routines with appropriate \textsuperscript{172}times and places rather than spontaneous outbursts.

\textit{II. The Voices in Songs}

The voices in the recordings were another discrete component of the aural dimension of the revolutionary songs. Although revolutionary songs were sung by the masses and therefore had no single standard of singing, the recorded versions were the ones that were broadcasted all over the country for people to learn and thus represented the “official” opinions on how a given song should be sung. And interestingly, while people might assume the revolutionary songs would all be sung in a forceful, righteous, firm manner, not every song was sung this way.

Most songs, including classics such as “The East is Red” and quotation songs such as “To Rebel Is Justified,” were sung by a mixed chorus with both men and

\textsuperscript{171} Cheng, 400.
\textsuperscript{172} I experienced significant difficulties in obtaining the recorded versions of revolutionary songs, since there is no consolidated database for them. Most of what I did find came from videos or audios shared online, with no reference to how the uploader obtained his/her copy. While some more popular songs had several versions on the Internet, which created a problem of identifying the “originals” from the Cultural Revolution, most songs seemed to have been forgotten and had only one version or no recording at all. The comments offered here are therefore generalized from the songs that were popular at least to the degree that a recording is available.
women, in exactly the manner people might assume. The voices were strong and unyielding, sometimes augmented by full orchestral accompaniment. The singers’ voices evoked a sense of authenticity, as if they completely believed in and were passionate about the words they sang, which was no doubt a quality desired by the leaders when reviewing the recordings.

But some other songs were sung differently. “Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao,” for example, was sung by female voices and in a lively, carefree manner thought to be typical of ethnic minorities. The voices were not as strong and forceful as that of most others, but they expressed a level of sincerity that could make the audience feel the personal connection to Mao in the lyrics. “A Revolution Is not Dinner Party” was sung also by female voices, and the voices sounded slightly nasal, high-pitched, and old-fashioned by today’s standards. But this rustic, folksy quality reminded people of the singing styles of Peking opera or other folk traditions, and since the accompaniment sounded like it was performed by an ensemble of Chinese traditional instruments, the selection of this type of voices was perhaps intentional, since the people might be more attracted to what they were familiar with.

The differences in how the “official” versions of the revolutionary songs sounded like were probably only a minute point in the grand scheme of the Cultural Revolution, but the variety mirrored the needs of propaganda: the forceful voices projected the image of the country uniting firmly under the same goal while the folksy voices conveyed a sense of the songs were sung by the real people of the masses. The designation of what type of voices should be used in a song seemed to be random in that there was no automatic correlation between a type of song and a
type of voice, even with folk songs. For example, "Love Live Chairman Mao" was written in the style of the Xinjiang regions and yet was sung in a very serious and ceremonial voice.

The Visuals of Performances

To better illustrate the holistic approach that should be taken to interpret these Cultural Revolutionary songs, I have arranged, with the help of volunteers, to put on a performance that bears resemblance to a staged performance of revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution on March 29th, 2015 in World Music Hall at Wesleyan.173

The lack of proper documentary of what performances of revolutionary songs looked like led to a lot of guesswork during the preparation. Most of my inspiration came from talking to people around me who remembered those performances, and online videos of similar performances from recent years, though the repertoire has changed significantly from that of the Cultural Revolution period, since the official channels has completely negated the Cultural Revolution, which led to many songs popular during that time becoming taboos now. Despite the confusion, a few elements about the Cultural Revolution performances of songs were very clear: the costume performers wore were green army uniforms (hats, long-sleeve shirts, pants, belts); a red flag always appeared on stage, preferably waved by one of the performers, but sometimes hang from the wall or stood stationary; and a portrait of Mao appeared in many performances, hang high in the background.

173 For Recital Program please refer to Appendix II.
There are very obvious reasons for the presence of these specific elements. The army uniforms symbolized the militant nature of a revolution and represented the PLA’s status above the masses. The red flag was the symbol of the socialist/communist movement, and its presence on stage was a reminder of the direction of the revolution, though during the Cultural Revolution and even now, most people in China perhaps took the color red to mean the Chinese Communist Party rather than the socialism in general. The portrait of Mao appeared in every possible place during the Cultural Revolution to show the people’s love and devotion to him, and the stage was no exception. In the recital, these elements were recreated to the best of my abilities, though I was unable to obtain a portrait of Mao.

The selection of the set list was a careful balance between what was historically accurate and what deserves to be seen nowadays. Opening with “The East is Red” and ending with “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman” while waving a Little Red Book was common practice in most occasions during the Cultural Revolution and therefore preserved in my recital, but they were not necessarily performed on stage with other songs as a set at that time. The quotation songs were often preceded by reciting some sentences to express loyalty to Mao and the Cultural Revolution, but I did not include such recitation because the words were often too specific to a performance and did not fit into a generalized version that I tried to present. The chanting of slogans that followed some of the quotation songs, on the other hand, were standardized, and was therefore reflected in the recital. For

174 This refers to The Quotations of Mao Zedong, but in a smaller print, which made the book palm-sized and easy to carry.
the performance of “The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious,” I believed it would be more interesting to show that sometimes people sing revolutionary songs while they walk or march towards a destination. For example, groups of youths who were sent away from cities during the “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement were known to sing to keep up morale when they journeyed. Therefore, for this songs, the performers marched in a semi-military style following the one holding high the red flag. The next song performed was “Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao.” The most authentic way to perform this song was to have a group of people singing, while a group of dancers wearing ethnic Mongolian costumes danced on stage, because it was an ethnic minority song and the choreography was essential to the overall image. Due to various limitations, however, in my recital the performers danced a highly simplified version of the choreography while singing, which preserved the gist of the performance but was regrettably not nearly as polished as a real Cultural Revolution performance was.

During the rehearsals, a few critical realizations proved to be crucial to understanding the performances of revolutionary songs. First, the quality of the singing was nowhere near as important as the volume of the voices, for the louder the sound, the more forceful it appeared. Since the performers during the Cultural Revolution training were required to walk a significant distance in groups. Another group was actually singing this “The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious” when they marched.

175 In fact, even I had firsthand experience with this song being sung while marching. All students in China are still required to go through “military training,” when students are sent to bases of patriotism education nearby the cities for week-long or month-long trainings in discipline, patriotism, revolutionary history, and weapons under the guidance of real soldiers. Once in my middle school training, we were required to walk a significant distance in groups.
Revolution were often amateurs, my performers were also a mix of people who could and could not sing. Their voices might not always be pleasant, but pleasantry was not the point of revolutionary songs. The singing might be occasionally pitchy and the voice could be ugly, as long as the performer sang with all of his or her energy, the performance would be charged with power and that was what could make the impact on the audience.

Second, the steady poses that the performers held were just as important as, if not more important than, the singing. While initially I believed that the singing part must be the most important one in songs, I soon realized that the performance of revolutionary songs was really about the theater. Certainly, there must still be singing involved, but the performances were really more similar to musicals than choirs: the movements and the facial expressions of the performers should all convey their resolution to follow Mao and the Party into revolution. Videos online that recorded similar performances nowadays also showed that there must be specific poses that corresponded to the lyrics, so that the performance could really act out the messages in the revolutionary songs.

Last, the performances of revolutionary songs were really only effective at further inciting the masses during the Cultural Revolution. No matter how much we tried to imitate the seriousness, the sincerity, and the passion, we can no longer perfectly recreate the performances of that time. The lack of the same rhetoric in Chinese society now meant that we inherently rejected the premises of what was written in these songs. What must be remembered is that during the Cultural Revolution, especially the early years, there were many people who genuinely loved
Mao and believed in him. The general atmosphere of the society of the time determined that any performance that sang praises to Mao and the Party was already welcomed by the masses, which was why many songs that tried to spread specific political messages legitimized those messages by connecting themselves to Mao. By capitalizing on Mao’s already established “fan base,” the songs and their messages could be more easily accepted by the masses. Therefore, during the performances of revolutionary songs, there was essentially a performer-audience interaction that went both ways: the performers sang about subjects using the prevailing rhetoric that the masses already believed in, and the support from the audience further motivated the performers to more sincerely and forcefully deliver the songs. For the recital, however, there was neither belief in the content of the songs on the part of the performers nor the supporting responses from the audience. There was no excitement, but only curiosity and confusion, as the performers struggled to pretend that the lyrics of the songs were near and dear to their hearts, and the audience failed to have any empathetic responses because what was presented was so foreign.
Conclusion

This project began with the idea that the revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution were more than just an art form whose quality and quantity suffered due to circumstances or a source of entertainment in a time saturated by political struggles. They were entrusted with the mission of propaganda and their efficiency and efficacy at carrying out that mission was so valued by the country’s top leaders that they were regularly published, and therefore publicized, in one of the biggest newspapers in China during the Cultural Revolution.

To uncover how songs functioned as and fit into the highly coordinated propaganda efforts during the Cultural Revolution and achieved their missions successfully since many revolutionary songs were tremendously popular, I decided to go back to the original publications in the People’s Daily. Close examination of the publication of revolutionary songs during the Cultural Revolution reveals that synchronization, between the timing of publication and political events, between the music and the lyrics of the songs, and between the contents of the songs and the choreographed gestures during performances, was the keyword in the function and efficiency of revolutionary songs. The revolutionary songs were in fact deeply intertwined with the People’s Daily, owing their origins to the publications while providing the newspaper with a large reservoir of propaganda materials.

Through the exploration of political events surrounding a publication, we learned that the publication of songs were deliberate acts aimed to support the political narrative elsewhere. The publications were often very time-sensitive, and many songs had no obvious utility once the specific moment passed. Through the
examination of musical devices used in these revolutionary songs, we find that the melodies, which were of less importance than the lyrics in revolutionary songs, used simple techniques to highlight the messages in the lyrics. The songs were also somewhat diverse in styles so as to keep the musical materials fresh and interesting for the people to learn. Through the discussion of how the songs were "acted out" in real life and on stage, and through the performance where I try to recreate such on stage performance, we observed that the whole experience brought by the revolutionary songs went beyond singing. The songs demanded a physical representation of its messages, and it was through the movements and gestures that the songs became further empowered with the ability to affect people during the Cultural Revolution.

The discoveries made in this project were not necessarily groundbreaking, since there has long been casual remarks among the Chinese people about revolutionary songs being merely propaganda or having little artistic merit. But this implicit knowledge has only now been grounded in the abundant correlations discussed in this project. The point of current effort is therefore to supply a crucial missing piece to the literature on the Cultural Revolution, a piece that has not received its fair share of attention in historical or musical studies when it was important in both disciplines.

This project is only a small step toward uncovering the many truths untold of the Cultural Revolution. The memory of this decade that impacted so many lives is slowly disappearing from the Chinese society: the government does not want people discussing this period, and individuals are also reluctant to share their stories. The
serious studies of the period remain dominated by western scholars, and the few memoirs written are circulated outside of China. If this negligence continues in China, before long, those who experienced the Cultural Revolution firsthand would pass away, and the Chinese people might forget all about it soon. And that saddens me to the core.

Revolutionary songs were an important phenomenon during the Chinese Cultural Revolution that should not go unnoticed because it had a huge impact on the political events and daily lives of the people, but what is so much more important and what this study of revolutionary songs ultimately wants to raise awareness for is the preservation of the memory of the past. The denial of history compromises the truth, and without the truth, we cannot fully understand ourselves, our society and our future.
Bibliography


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## Appendix I – Song List

### 1966

1.15 大寨红花遍地开  
Dazhai’s Red Flowers Blooms Everywhere

1.22 大海航行靠舵手  
Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman

1.30 文化工作队之歌  
Song of Cultural Work Teams

2.13 学习焦裕禄  
Learn from Jiao Yulu

2.17 焦裕禄是俺们的知心人  
Jiao Yulu is Our Confidant

2.26 焦裕禄 俺们的好书记  
Jiao Yulu - Our Good [Party] Secretary

3.10 学习焦裕禄好榜样  
Learn from Jiao Yulu’s Good Model

3.16 五年计划放光彩  
Five-year Plans Shines Bright

3.19 掏尽红心为人民  
Pour the Red Heart for the People

4.22 来一个学习大竞赛  
Let’s Have a Big Learning Contest

6.5 毛主席著作闪金光  
Chairman Mao’s Works Shine a Golden Light

### 牧人的心和毛泽东思想紧相连  
The Hearts of the Shepherd Are Closely Connected to Mao Zedong Thought

### 毛主席的书咱们最爱读  
Chairman Mao’s Books We Love the Most

### 突出政治第一条  
Stress on the Politics First Principle

### 工农兵 革命路上打先锋  
Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers, the Pioneers on the Path of Revolution

### 爹亲娘亲不如毛主席亲  
Father Is Dear, Mother Is Dear, but Neither Is as Dear as Chairman Mao

6.13 文化革命进行曲  
Cultural Revolution Marching Song

7.28 刘英俊最爱毛主席  
Liu Yingjun Loves Chairman Mao the Most

### 歌唱刘英俊  
Praise Liu Yingjun

8.2 解放军是个革命大学校  
The PLA Is a Big School for Revolution

8.27 红卫兵战歌  
Red Guards Fight Song

8.29 三大纪律八项注意  
Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention

9.4 伟大的领袖毛泽东  
Great Leader Mao Zedong

9.10 三八作风歌  
Three-Eight Discipline Song

9.14 毛主席的战士最听党的话  
Chairman Mao’s Soldiers Listens to the Party the Most
9.23 毛主席，您是全世界人民心中的红太阳 Chairman Mao, You Are the Red Sun in the Hearts of All the People in the World

毛主席著作像太阳 Chairman Mao’s Works Are Like the Sun

我们是毛主席的红卫兵 We Are Chairman Mao’s Red Guards

毛主席和我们在一起 Chairman Mao Is With Us

伟大的祖国 Great Motherland

9.28 毛泽东思想阳光照草原 The Rays of Mao Zedong Thought Shines over the Grassland

9.30 领导我们事业的核心力量 The Force at the Core Leading Our Cause

政策和策略是党的生命 Policy and Strategy Are the Life of the Party

我们应当相信群众 We Should Believe in the People

我们应当相信党 We Should Believe in the Party

我们的教育方针 Our Education Direction

工作就是斗争 Work Is Struggle

什么人是革命派 What Kind of People Are Revolutionaries

什么人是反革命派 What Kind of People Are Anti-Revolutionaries

什么人是口头革命派 What Kind of People Are Revolutionaries in Speech

凡是敌人反对的我们就要拥护 Anything Our Enemies Oppose We Must Support

凡是敌人拥护的我们就要反对 Anything Our Enemies Support We Must Oppose

分清敌友 Distinguish Clearly between Enemies and Friends

争取胜利 Strive for Victory

希望寄托在你们身上 You Are The Hope

10.12 “造反有理” “To Rebel Is Justified”

革命不是请客吃饭 A Revolution Is not A Dinner Party

你不打他就不到 If You Don’t Fight, He Won’t Fall

决不能让它们自由泛滥 Absolutely Cannot Let Them Run Wild

10.25 永远学习“老三篇” Forever Study “Old Three Passages”

完全彻底为人民 Completely Thoroughly For the People

毫不利己专门利人 No Self-Interest All Altruism

因为我们是为人民服务的 Because We Serve the People

纪念白求恩 Commemorate Bai Qiu’en (Bethune)

要提高我们的勇气 We Should Raise Our Courage

我们都是来自五湖四海 We Are All From Five Lakes Four Seas

我们大家要学习他 We Should All Learn from Him
为人民而死，就是死得其所 To Die for the People Is Worth It

11.7 工人爱读“老三篇” Workers Love to Read “Old Three Passages”
社员爱读“老三篇” Commune Member Love to Read “Old Three Passages”
战士热爱“老三篇” Soldiers Love to Read “Old Three Passages”

1967
2.1 一切革命斗争都是为着夺取政权巩固政权 All Revolutionary Struggles Are for Seizing Power and Consolidating Power
我们不说谁说 我们不干谁干 If We Don’t Say, Who Will? If We Don’t Do, Who Will?
一切反动派都是纸老虎 All Anti-Revolutionaries Are Paper Tigers
革命的思想斗争和艺术斗争必须服从于政治的斗争 The Ideological Struggles and Cultural Struggles of the Revolution Must Follow the Political Struggles
政治工作是一切经济工作的生命线 Political Work Is the Lifeline of All Economic Work
把群众斗争从经济斗争迅速提高到政治斗争 Bring the Masses from Economic Struggles up to Political Struggles
没有正确的政治观点就等于没有灵魂 Without Having Correct Political Views Is the Same as Without A Soul
绝不可忘记了工人阶级的远大利益 Absolutely Cannot Forget the Long-term Benefits of the Working Class
把农民权力长上来 Bring Up the Power of the Peasants
2.4 革命造反派联合起来 Revolutionary Rebels, Unite!
2.6 解放军坚决支持无产阶级革命派 The PLA Resolutely Supports the Revolutionaries of the Proletariats
把一切权利夺过来 Seize All Power
2.9 凡是要推翻一个政权 总要先造成舆论 The Toppling of One Political Regime Must Always Be Preceded by Building Public Opinion
组织千千万万的民众 Organize Thousands and Millions of People
革命的专政 The Dictatorship of the Revolution
我们必须牢牢地掌握这个武器 We Must Hold On Right to This Weapon
敌人是不会自行消灭的 The Enemies Will Not Perish On Their Own
革命战争是群众的战争 Revolutionary War is the War of Masses
加强纪律性 革命无不胜 Strengthen Discipline, Revolution Will Be Invincible
社会主义制度终究要代替资本主义制度 Socialism Will Ultimately Replace Capitalism
全世界人民团结起来 The People of the World, Unite
2.11 无产阶级革命派联合起来 Revolutionaries of the Proletariats, Unite
打倒经济主义 Down With Economicism
2.19 (No Title)
2.21 "一月革命"的风暴席卷全中国 The Storm of the January Revolution Sweeps Across All of China
2.24 你们要政治挂帅 You Must Let Politics Be in Command
2.27 目前正当春耕时节 Now Is the Time for Spring Sowing
3.2 政治路线确定之后 After the Political Path Has Been Settled
没有多数德才兼备的领导 干部是不能完成其历史任务的 Without Leaders of Wisdom and Character in the Majority, the Cadres Cannot Finish Their Historical Mission
必须善于识别干部 We Must Be Good At Distinguishing Cadres
对于在工作中犯过错误的人们 To Those Who Made Mistakes During Their Work
使他变为一个好同志 Make Him into a Good Comrade
领带骨干的积极性和广大群众的积极性相结合 Ally the Enthusiasm of the Leaders and Key Personnel and the Enthusiasm of the Masses
3.5 立即为做好春耕生产而积极工作 Immediately Make Active Preparations for Spring Sowing
3.9 全国妇女起来之日 就是中国革命胜利之时 The Day When All the Women in this Country Rise Is the Victory Day of China’s Revolution
中国的妇女是一种伟大的人力资源 Chinese Women Is a Great Human Resource
3.21 工人阶级要成为抓革命促生产的模范 The Proletariats Should Become the Models of Grasping Revolution and Promoting Production
5.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
万岁毛主席 Long Live Chairman Mao
国际歌 The Internationale
5.21 我们还要有文化的军队 We Also Need a Cultured Army
革命的思想斗争和艺术斗争，必须服从政治的斗争 The Ideological and Artistic Struggles of the Revolution Must Obey the Political Struggles
文学艺术属于一定的阶级 Literature Arts Is For A Certain Class
我们的文学艺术首先是为工农兵的 Our Literature and Arts Serve First and Foremost the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers
团结人民、教育人民、打击敌人、消灭敌人 Unite the People, Education the People, Fight the Enemies, Annihilate the Enemies
Go Among the Masses of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers
We Should Move the Foothold to the Side of the Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers
Be the “Cow” for the Proletariats and the Masses
Cheer for the New Era of Mao Zedong Thought
Red Guards Are Forever Loyal to Chairman Mao
The Internationale
Great Mentor Chairman Mao
The East is Red
Closely Follow Chairman Mao’s Strategic Arrangements
The Army and the People Unite as One, Wonder Who Can Stand A Chance?
Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
Within the Working Class, There Is no Fundamental Conflict of Interest
Revolutionaries of the Proletariats, Unite
Shout Loudly Long Live Chairman Mao
Be the Good Soldiers of Chairman Mao
Grasp the Revolution and Promote Production
The Force at the Core Leading Our Cause
Hold High the Flag of Revolutionary Criticism
We Must Follow Chairman Mao’s Path, That’s that!
Great Great Wall
Forward, Heroic Red Guards
The Red Sun Shines All over the Motherland
Long Long Live the Great Motherland
Praise Chairman Mao’s Big Character Post
Seeing the Great Chairman Mao Is Happiness
Forever Loyal to Chairman Mao
The Situation of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution Is Great Nation-wide
Education Revolution Depends on Revolutionary Students, Faculties, and Workers
We Should Struggle Against Individualism and Criticize Revisionism
各自多做自我批评 Each Conduct More Self-Criticism
求大同，存小异 Seek Greater Commonalities, Preserve Small Differences
这个运动规模很大 This Movement Has a Big Scale
要很好地解决上下级关系问题 We Should Solve the Problem of the Relationship between Ranks Well
要实现革命的大联合 We Should Realize the Great Alliance of the Revolution
自己有了错误，要做自我批评 If One Makes a Mistake, One Should Self-Criticize
军队办学习班要有战士参加 The Army’s Study Classes Should Have Soldier Participants

1968
1.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
祝福毛主席万寿无疆 Wish Chairman Mao Live Forever Long
1.30 全国的无产阶级文化大革命形势大好 The Situation of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution Is Great Nation-wide
军民团结如一人 试看天下谁能敌? The Army and the People Unite as One, Wonder Who Can Stand A Chance?
革命的红卫兵和革命的学生组织要实现革命的大联合 The Red Guards of the Revolution and the Student Organizations of the Revolution Should Realize the Great Alliance of the Revolution
正确地对待干部 Treat Cadres Correctly
把无产阶级文化大革命进行到底 Follow Through the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution
团结—批评 和 自我批评—团结 Unite-Criticize and Self-Criticize-Unite
党组织应是无产阶级先进分子所组成 Party Structure Should Consist of Pioneer Members of the Proletariat
按照系统实现革命的大联合 Follow the System to Realize the Great Alliance of the Revolution
目前正当春耕时节 Now Is the Time for Spring Sowing
2.1 解放军来到咱车间 The PLA Came to Our Workshop
4.30 无产阶级文化大革命 实质上是政治大革命 The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution Is In Fact a Great Political Revolution
"三结合"的革命委员会 Three Alliance Revolutionary Committees
国家机关的改革最根本的一条就是联系群众 The Most Basic Principle of the Reform of National Offices Is to Connect with the Masses
革命委员会的基本经验 The Basic Experience of Revolutionary Committes
5.1 毛主席，我们永远忠于您 Chairman Mao, We Are Forever Loyal to You
6.30 三个根本区别 Three Basic Distinctions
7.1 毛主席啊，我们永远忠于您 Ah Chairman Mao, We Are Forever Loyal to You
8.13 我们见到了伟大领袖毛主席 We Saw the Great Leader Chairman Mao
8.28 工人阶级是领导阶级 The Working Class Is the Leading Class
工厂里的斗、批、改 大体经历这么几个阶段 The Struggle, Criticize, Reform in Factories Usually Go through These Phases
实现无产阶级教育革命 必须有工人阶级领导 To Realize Proletarian Education Revolution, the Working Class Must Be In Charge
9.7 全国山河一片红 The Mountains and Rivers of the Country Are All Red
9.8 紧跟毛主席就是胜利 Closely Following Chairman Mao Is Victory
9.13 这样的知识分子，工农兵是欢迎的 This Type of Intellectuals are Welcomed by the Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers
9.20 日本革命的胜利就是毫无疑问的 There Is No Doubt about the Victory of the Revolution in Japan
9.25 工人阶级是领导阶级 The Working Class Is the Leading Class
这样的知识分子，工农兵是欢迎的 This Type of Intellectuals are Welcomed by the Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers
农业学大寨 Study Agriculture from Dazhai
中国人民解放军是战无不胜的队伍 The Chinese PLA Is an Invincible Army
人民江山红万代 People’s Land Is Red for Thousands of Generations
我们一定要解放台湾 We Must Liberate Taiwan
认真搞好斗、批、改 Diligently Conduct Struggle, Criticize, and Reform
草原上的红卫兵见到了毛主席 Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao
9.28 我们伟大的祖国 Our Great Motherland
10.1 国际歌 The Internationale
祝福毛主席万寿无疆 Wish Chairman Mao Live Forever Long
东方红 The East is Red
歌唱社会主义祖国 Sing Praises to Socialist Homeland
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
我们走在大路上 We Walk on the Great Road
10.4 工人毛泽东思想宣传队员之歌 The Song of Workers’ Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Team
10.7 广大干部下放劳动 The Majority of Cadres Go Down to Labor
11.6 这次无产阶级文化大革命 是完全必要的，是非常及时的 This Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Is Completely Necessary and Very in Time
无产阶级江山万年牢 The Land of the Proletariats Are Solid for Ten Thousand Years
12.28 知识青年上山下乡 Intellectual Youths Go Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside

1969
1.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
祝福毛主席万寿无疆 Wish Chairman Mao Live Forever Long
2.16 《毛主席的革命路线万岁》: Long Live the Victory of Chairman Mao’s Revolutionary Path
毛主席登上天安门 Chairman Mao Mounts Tiananmen
韶山升起红太阳 A Red Sun Rises from Shaoshan
井冈山道路通天下 The Road of Jinggangshan Leads to Everywhere
遵义城头金光闪 Golden Rays Flashes at the Top of the City Wall of Zunyi
红日照延安 Red Sun Shines over Yan’an
4.19 大海航行靠舵手 干革命靠毛泽东思想 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman, Conducting Revolution Depends on Mao Zedong Thought
5.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
祝福毛主席万寿无疆 Wish Chairman Mao Live Forever Long
7.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
5.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
歌唱社会主义祖国 Sing Praises to Socialist Homeland

1970
1.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
2.1 《革命历史歌曲》: Revolutionary Historical Songs
工农一家人 Workers and Peasants Are One Family
毕业歌 Graduation Song
抗日战歌 Anti-Japanese Fight Song
大刀进行曲 The Sword March
战斗进行曲 The Fight March
5.1 国际歌 The Internationale
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman
5.5 《革命历史歌曲》: Revolutionary Historical Songs
前进歌 Forward Song
大路歌 Great Road Song
工农革命歌 Workers and Peasants Revolution Song
新的女性 New Women
到敌人后方去 Go to the Back of the Enemies
7.1 东方红 The East is Red
大海航行靠舵手 Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman

1971
5.19 《全世界人民团结起来，打败美国侵略者及其一切走狗！》: The People of the World Unite, Beat American Intruders and Their Lackeys!
誓死保卫祖国 Protect the Motherland to Death
行军歌 Marching Song
反对美帝国主义侵略老挝 Oppose American Imperialism Invade Laos
保卫国土 Protect Motherland
我们高举反帝旗帜前进 We Hold High the Flag of Anti-Imperialism and Move Forward
全世界人民一定胜利 The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious
7.31 歌唱伟大光荣正确的中国共产党 Sing for the Great, Glorious, and Correct Chinese Communist Party
10.1 毛主席您是我们心中的红太阳 Chairman Mao, You Are the Red Sun in Our Hearts
万岁！伟大的中国共产党 Long Live! The Great Chinese Communist Party
10.28 国际歌 The Internationale
三大纪律八项注意 Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention

1972
2.6 《陕甘宁边区革命民歌选》: A Selection of Revolutionary Folk Songs from Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Areas
咱们的领袖毛泽东 Our Leader Mao Zedong
山丹丹花开红艳艳 Coral Lilies Blossom Brilliantly Red
军民大生产 Great Production of Armies and the People
工农齐武装 Workers and Peasants All Wear Armors
翻身道情 Relieved from Oppression, Express Our Feelings
5.21 毛主席走遍祖国大地 Chairman Mao Traveled All over the Motherland
我们的朋友遍天下 Our Friends Are All Over the World
6.1 万岁人民中国！万岁毛泽东！Long Live People’s China! Long Live Mao Zedong!
10.4 前进！伟大的社会主义祖国 Forward! Great Socialist Motherland

1973
1.1 伟大祖国胜利前进 Great Motherland March Forward in Victory
2.11 颂歌一曲唱韶山 A Song of Praise for Shaoshan
5.9 光荣属于阿拉伯和非洲兄弟 Glory Belongs to Arabic and African Brothers
6.3 要做共产主义接班人 We Should be the Successors of Communism

1974
1.4 三大纪律八项注意 Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention
4.30 毛主席率领我们反潮流 Chairman Mao Leads Us Against Mainstream
批林批孔当闯将 Be the Pioneers by Criticizing Lin and Criticizing Confucius
无产阶级文化大革命就是好 The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution Is Just Good
独立自主 自力更生 Independent and Autonomous, Depend on Oneself
8.31 林彪、孔老二都是坏东西 Lin Biao and Confucius Are Both Bad Stuff
红小兵参加批判会 Little Red Guards Participate in Criticize Meeting
"五七"路上向前跑 Run Forward on the Path of “May Seven”
9.20 工业学大庆 Learn Industry from Daqing
9.26 我们的祖国在前进 Our Motherland Is Moving Forward
全国人民团结紧 People across the Country Unite Closely
把批林批孔斗争进行到底 Follow Through with Anti-Lin Anti-Confucius Struggle
石油工人铁打的汉 Petroleum Workers Are Iron-forged Man
学大寨要大干 Learn from Dazhai and Do Many Things
11.15 红星歌 Song of Red Star

1975
1.1 前进在社会主义大道上 Going Forward on the Great Road of Socialism
12.15 社会主义新生事物好 New Things in Socialism Are Good

1976
4.25 团结战斗 百战百胜 Unite and Fight, Win All the Time
5.25 《深入批判邓小平 反击右倾翻案风 歌颂文化大革命》: Thoroughly Criticize Deng Xiaoping, Fight Back the Rightist Rehabilitation Trend, Sing Praises of the Cultural Revolution:
党中央两个决议威力大 Party Central’s Two Resolutions Have Great Power
歌唱无产阶级文化大革命 Sing for the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution
翻案不得人心 Rehabilitation Has No Popular Support
贫下中农不信邪 Poor Low Middle Peasants Do Not Believe in Evil
举起革命的铁拳头 Raise the Iron Fists of Revolution
誓让红旗万代飘 Pledge to Let the Red Flag Float for Ten Thousand Generations
6.1 我们和文化大革命同岁 We Are the Same Age as the Cultural Revolution
7.2 《为毛主席词二首谱曲》: Compose the Melodies for two of Chairman Mao’s āi
重上井冈山 Mount Jinggangshan Again
鸟儿问答 Interlocution Among Birds
8.14 抗震战歌 Resist the Earthquake Fight Song
---------September 9, 1967 The Death of Mao Zedong---------
10.22 《最紧密地团结在华国锋主席为首的党中央周围，一切行动听党中央指挥》: Closely unite around Party central with Chairman Hua Guofeng as the leader, All actions follow (the directives of) the Party Central
国际歌 The Internationale
三大纪律八项注意 Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention
东方红 The East is Red
10.31 我们永远向太阳 We Face Toward the Sun Forever
11.21 华主席率领我们走向胜利 Chairman Hua Leads Us to Victory
12.12 华主席和咱心连心 Chairman Hua and Us Share a Connection of Hearts
12.23 抗日军政大学校歌 Anti-Japanese Military-Political University School Song
12.25 绣金匾 Embroider a Silk Banner in Gold

1977
1.8 怀念周总理 Yearn For Premier Zhou
1.17 Ten Miles of Streets to Goodbye to the Premier
2.13 Soldiers Miss Chairman Mao
战天斗地学大寨 Fight Heaven and Earth and Learn from Dazhai
歌唱敬爱的华主席 Sing for the Dear Chairman Hua
毛主席放心咱放心 We Are at Ease If Chairman Mao Was at Ease
歌唱敬爱的周总理 Sing for the Dear Premier Zhou
党中央英明除四害 Party Central Wisely Eliminates the Four Bad Elements
6.18 I Sing a Song
6.26 The Road of Dazhai
8.21 Look Up to the President’s Podium of the Eleventh People’s Congress
9.18 The Never-Setting Sun, The Evergreen Pine
5. Sailing the sea depends on the Helmsman (1964)

Sailing the sea depends on the helmsman,
The growth of all living beings depends on the sun.
Rain and dew nourish young seedlings.
Conducting revolution depends on Mao Zedong Thought.

Fish cannot leave the water;
Melons cannot leave the vine.
The revolutionary masses cannot do without the Communist Party.
Mao Zedong Thought is a sun that never sets.

Another classic revolutionary song, this was a personal praising song to Mao. It was vastly popular during the Cultural Revolution because of its easy to follow melody and vernacular lyrics. Like The East is Red, this song was also broadcasted everywhere and was often sung at the conclusion of events.

A Show from the Cultural Revolution

- Senior Recital by Merry Li

Sunday, 3pm, March 29th, 2015
World Music Hall
at
Wesleyan University
Performers

Isis Chen ('15)  
Angel Guo ('15)  
Merry Li ('15)  
Siqi Zhao ('15)  
Ming Zhu ('15)  
Louise Lv ('16)  
Haofan Xu ('16)  

My sincere gratitude to all my volunteer performers, without whom my vision could not become true.

Foreword

Thank you for coming to my recital! This brief performance aims to transport you through time and space, to China in the late 1960s to early 1970s, when the notorious Cultural Revolution took place. The Cultural Revolution affected practically every single person at that time, and tales and memoirs by those who lived through the time would remember it as a period of the utmost chaos and confusion that filled the mass with a fervor that is almost incomprehensible now. An important part of that memory would be singing, and sometimes dancing to, the revolutionary songs. I humbly ask that you imagine yourself in the middle of the national frenzy to idolize a leader and to rebel against and destroy order, so that you may begin to understand the power these song held during that specific time.

4. The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious (1971)

Music: Central Philharmonic Orchestra  
Lyrics: Central Philharmonic Orchestra

The east wind is blowing,  
The war drums are sounding,  
Who fears who in today's world?  
It's not the people who fear American imperialism,  
But American imperialism who fears the people!

A just cause enjoys great support,  
An unjust cause enjoys none  
The laws of history can't be broken,  
can't be broken!  
American imperialism will certainly perish,  
And the people of the world will surely be victorious,  
The people of the world will surely be victorious!

This was another incredibly popular song during the Cultural Revolution, and it is one that reflects the prevailing anti-American Imperialism sentiment. This song is also representative of the international dimension of the socialist revolution in the Chinese Communist vision.
3. Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao (1968)

We are Chairman Mao's red guards
We welcome Tiananmen from the grassland
The sea of flags is limitless and red as fire
The songs of fighting lead into the sky
Great leader Chairman Mao
Lead us into revolution

Ah he-hey - Ah he-hey -
Dear Chairman Mao, the never-setting sun
People on the grassland, love you for eternity
Oceans may dry up and rocks may crumble, our hearts remain the same

The red sun rises from the east
Golden sunrays cover the earth
Why is the sun so warm?
Why can we not touch our hands?
Chairman Mao comes to our side
He is with us forever more

Ah he-hey - Ah he-hey -
Dear Chairman Mao, the never-setting sun
People on the grassland sing praises for you
Long live, long live Chairman Mao

This song was often praised for its musicality and was a favorite among the people because of its ethnic flavors that were different from the matching melodies of other songs. People from the grassland is a stereotypial reference for the ethnic minorities, typically ethnic Mongolians. Therefore, this song also served to represent the country's unity across races in the Cultural Revolution.

Program List

1. The East is Red 東方紅
2. Three Quotation Songs 追記言三首
3. Red Guards from the Grassland Saw Chairman Mao 草原上的紅衛兵
4. The People of the World Will Surely Be Victorious 全世界人民一定勝利
5. Sailing the Sea Depends on the Helmstman 大海航行靠舵手

Note on Costume

The performers wear green military uniforms, completed with hats and belts, while holding or carrying a copy of the "Little Red Book" - a collection of quotations from the Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-dong and wearing a badge of Mao's portrait. The military uniform was the fashion standard of the time, as the Army was seen as the most glorious organization. Even average citizens wore clothes of the same style, though green was a privileged color that was hard to come by, so many could only wear blue.

The Little Red Book was another item that every Chinese owned during the Cultural Revolution, when it was mandatory to idolize Mao. It would be a crime not to have a copy during gatherings and study sessions, which could result in punishment ranging from scolding to prison, depending on the circumstances of the individual. Every one was required to memorize his quotations, and carrying this Little Red Book at all times was the physical symbol of one's devotion to Mao.
1. The East is Red (1940s)

Eastern Sun, Sun Rising
China has brought forth a Mao Zedong
He works for the people's happiness,
He is the people's great savior
Chairman Mao loves the people,
He leads us forever forward
The Communist Party is like the sun,
Bringing light wherever it shines.

Chairman Mao, he is our guide.
To build a new China, hu erh hai ya,
He leads us forever forward.
To build a new China, hu erh hai ya,
He leads us forever forward.

2. Three Quotation Songs (1966)

1) A Revolution is not a Dinner Party
A revolution is not a dinner party,
Or writing an essay,
Or painting a picture or doing embroidery;
It cannot be so refined,
So leisurely and gentle,
So temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous.
A revolution is an insurrection,
An act of violence by which one class overthrows another.

2) The Force at the Core Leading Our Cause
The force at the core leading our cause
forward is the Communist Party.
The theoretical basis guiding our thinking
is Marxism-Leninism.
[Long Live Chairman Mao! Long live the Communist Party!]

3) To Rebel Is Justified
In the last analysis,
all the truths of Marxism can be summed up in one sentence:
"To rebel is justified." To rebel is justified.
This principle leads us to fight,
To struggle, to do socialism.
[Revolution is innocent! To Rebel is Justified!]

Music: Shaanxi Folk Song
Lyrics: 李有源 LI Youyuan

The East is red, The sun is rising
China has brought forth a Mao Zedong
He works for the people's happiness,
He is the people's great savior
Chairman Mao loves the people,
He leads us forever forward
The Communist Party is like the sun,
Bringing light wherever it shines.

Chairman Mao, he is our guide.
To build a new China, hu erh hai ya,
He leads us forever forward.
To build a new China, hu erh hai ya,
He leads us forever forward.

Music: 中央乐团 Central Philharmonic Orchestra

The East is red, The sun is rising
China has brought forth a Mao Zedong.
He works for the people's happiness,
He is the people's great savior
Chairman Mao, he is our guide.
To build a new China, hu erh hai ya,
He leads us forever forward.
To build a new China, hu erh hai ya,
He leads us forever forward.

Quotation songs were songs composed for Mao's quotations. The very existence of them demonstrates the ultimate status Mao held at that time. The quotation songs were sung mostly by the Red Guards (youth who championed the cause of Mao), and were often used to accompany and justify their violent behaviors.