“Tiny Little Screw Cap” (“*Xiao Xiao Luosimao*”): Children’s Songs from the Chinese Cultural Revolution

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Music is, for children, a port in the storm, a resting spot, a retreat from the madding crowd and their hectic lives. It is their safety valve, an appropriate release of energy at those times when no other channel seems possible.¹

For many, music is a vehicle for the expression of artistry and human emotion; and as Campbell and Scott-Kassner describe above, it is a ubiquitous and memorable part of one’s childhood. So, what happens when children’s music is politicized? What happens when the storm of a political and Cultural Revolution is directly connected to children’s everyday lives? What happens when music is no longer a safe escape from the adult world?

Over the past fifteen years I have studied music from the Chinese Cultural Revolution. I have listened to, documented, researched, and analyzed one influential anthology of songs from different perspectives and at distinct moments.² While several observations continue to pique my attention, I will focus here on children’s songs from the anthology *New Songs of the Battlefield* [*Zhandi Xinge*] published during the second half of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1972–1976). Repeatedly, the children’s songs that appear in the anthology capture the attention of scholars, and especially my undergraduate students, in the United States. When I present my research, many individuals hearing the songs for the first time are taken aback by the unmistakable politicization of a child’s musical world and are curious about how children experienced the songs during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party was intentional in their propaganda to identify all pockets of socialist society, and this included children. Therefore, political propaganda directly identified children in political campaigns designed to educate the masses. In this article, I will introduce select examples of children’s songs of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the cultural policies that informed these works. I will explain techniques used to politicize children’s music in the Chinese Communist Party’s attempt to transform the content and function of music as one part of Cultural Revolution propaganda. Finally, I briefly comment on the impact of the songs on individuals who came of age during the Cultural Revolution.³ Research is based on ethnographic fieldwork in China and the United States, teaching undergraduate students in the United States, and my own observations as a Chinese American scholar and educator of Cultural Revolution culture.

I would like to give special thanks to the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive and detailed comments during the review process.

¹ Patricia Shehan Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood: From Preschool Through the Elementary Grades*, 4th ed. (Boston: Schirmer Cengage, 2014), 13.

² See Lei Ouyang Bryant, “New Songs of the Battlefield”: Songs and Memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution” (University of Pittsburgh: PhD diss., 2004); “Music, Memory, and Nostalgia: Collective Memories of Cultural Revolution Songs in Contemporary China,” *The China Review* 5, no. 2 (2005): 151–175; and “Flowers on the Battlefield are More Fragrant,” *Asian Music* 38, no. 1 (2007): 88–121, <https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.2007.0022>.

³ For in depth ethnographic accounts exploring the experiences of individuals who grew up during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, see Bryant, “New Songs of the Battlefield” (2004) and “Music, Memory, and Nostalgia” (2005), and ongoing research in forthcoming manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

In 1942, seven years before the Communist Party of China (commonly referred to in English as “CCP”) took control of China, Mao Zedong presented a policy for revolutionary culture (*geming wenhua*) at the CCP’s base camp in Yan’an (Shaanxi Province). In his well-known “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art,” Mao outlined how revolutionary culture should be developed *by* and *for* the masses. This is in direct opposition to historical practices of developing arts *by* and *for* the elite or bourgeoisie. Furthermore, he spoke in detail of how literature and art could act as a “powerful weapon” in uniting and educating the people while “attacking and annihilating the enemy” and simultaneously foster solidarity in the struggle.⁴ Accordingly, revolutionary music should focus on the three pillars of socialist society: the workers, peasants, and soldiers. Mao’s policy was a prominent component of the preliminary work that Mao and the CCP developed in the early and founding years of the CCP (1920s to 1930s) as the CCP fought the Nationalist Party or *Kuomintang* (KMT) and planned for eventual control of the nation.

Two decades later (in 1963) Premier Zhou Enlai introduced another cultural policy known as the “Three Processes of Transformation” (“*San Hua*”). The three-part model for socialist art is an extension of the foundation Mao laid out in his 1942 talks. Briefly stated, the three processes include to 1) “revolutionize” (“*geminghua*”), 2) “nationalize” (“*minzuhua*”), and 3) “popularize” (“*qunzhonghua*”); more specifically, the model outlines socialist art to be 1) *of* and *for* the revolution (in content and function), 2) *by* and *for* all ethnicities of Chinese (as opposed to Western or foreign) masses, and 3) *of* the people and widely disseminated throughout the masses (as opposed to the bourgeoisie or elite classes).⁵

When the CCP took power in 1949, the arts were certainly utilized as a tool to educate the masses on political campaigns; however, the level of dissemination, isolation of propaganda and intensity of revolutionary culture took a turn with the Chinese Cultural Revolution (*wuchan jieji wenhua dageming*). In 1966 Mao, along with the CCP, launched the Cultural Revolution in attempts to mobilize the masses to transform China into a socialist society. At the heart of the ideological movement was the criticism of capitalism and a directed attack against the four olds: old customs, old habits, old cultures, and old thinking.⁶ For ten years, across the nation, people suffered great setbacks and hardships as the CCP attempted complete social and political transformation.⁷ The youth were swept up in the mobilization, organized as “Red Guards,” often exercising violence as they carried out Mao’s revolution at the ground level. The Cultural Revolution Group, appointed by the CCP in 1966 and led by Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, was largely responsible for the policies and directives that resulted in the criticism, restriction, and punishment of artists throughout this ten-year period. Later labeled the “Gang of Four,” Jiang Qing, Yao Wen yuan, Zhang Chunqiao and Wang Hongwen attempted to take complete control of the arts

⁴ Bonnie S. McDougall transl., *Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”: A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies: University of Michigan, no. 39, 1980), <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.19066>. For original Chinese text, see Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong), *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature* (Peking: People’s Publishing House, 1967). See also Hon-Lun Yang, “Power, Politics, and Musical Commemoration: Western Musical Figures in the People’s Republic of China 1949–1964,” *Music & Politics* 1, no. 2 (2007): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0001.205>.

⁵ See JU Qihong, *20th Century Chinese Music* (Qingdao: Qingdao Chubanshe, 1993): 73–74, and Bryant, “New Songs of the Battlefield,” (2004): 41–44. In this article I refer to Chinese language scholarship using the Chinese convention of surname (in uppercase) followed by the given name (for example, JU Qihong); well-known Chinese figures such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Jiang Qing appear with only first letter capitalized; scholars published in English language sources appear in the English convention with given name followed by surname (for example, Hon-Lun Yang).

⁶ Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 575.

⁷ Maurice Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999): 315.

throughout the Cultural Revolution. The death of Mao, coupled with the fall from power of the Gang of Four, signaled the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976.

The cultural policies introduced by Mao in 1942 and Zhou in 1963 are acutely relevant as influential works leading up to the 1972 publication of *New Songs of the Battlefield*. The anthology was first published as a commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of Mao's 1942 talks, and as JU Qihong explains, Zhou Enlai's 1963 policies deeply informed the anthology.⁸ Chinese language scholarship on the songs includes LIU Jing, WEI Jun, LIANG Maochun, FENG Zhiping, DAI Jiafang, LI Chunyan, and JU Qihong;⁹ I have written elsewhere about the historical, political, and musical context of the anthology in English.¹⁰ What is important to take away from the complex history leading up to the anthology is that due to the initial burst of political upheaval in 1966 with the official launching of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP clamped down to regain control during the second period of 1969–1972. Thus, the first publication of the *New Songs of the Battlefield* in 1972 appears in what is known as the third stage of the Cultural Revolution. The 1972 issue and the subsequent issues released each year through the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 marked a departure from the earlier two periods of the Cultural Revolution. The anthology ushered in many government-endorsed songs after the earlier period (1969–1972) of great restriction and limited number of songs in circulation. Additionally, the *New Songs of the Battlefield* anthology signaled a shift in attention back to musical aesthetics after a long period of militaristic and lyric-focused songs during earlier periods. In other words, before the anthology most revolutionary music focused on lyrics and were in limited musical styles such as militaristic marches; the anthology brought new musical styles (including traditional, folk, ethnic minority, etc.) and overall increased attention to musical aesthetics previously lacking.¹¹

The anthology began as a call for contributions to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Mao's Yan'an talks.¹² Editorial committees in Beijing (composed of professional musicians, lyricists, and political leaders) worked together in an attempt to represent songs from each province. They collected newly composed songs for the revolution from across the nation for consideration, often composing additional songs to complete the anthology. The result is an anthology that includes songs from a wide range of musical backgrounds, from amateurs to conservatory-trained musicians. Moreover, the anthology was directed toward the three pillars of socialist society: workers, peasants, and soldiers. The editors aimed to provide a means for all sectors of socialist society to find representation of themselves somewhere in the messages,

⁸ JU Qihong, *20th Century Chinese Music* (Qingdao: Qingdao Chubanshe, 1993): 73.

⁹ LIU Jing, “Exploration of Chinese Children's Songs during the 'Cultural Revolution': Taking the 'New Battlefield' as an Example,” *The Border Economy and Culture* 131, No. 11 (2014): 125-126; JU Qi Hong, *20th Century Chinese Music* (Qindao: Qingdao Chubanshe, 1993); WEI Jun, “Historical Origin of ‘New Songs of the Battlefield’ and Analysis to it,” *Journal of Ezhou University* 7, no. 1 (2000): 12-17; WEI Jun, “Exploration of ‘New Songs of the Battlefield’” *Journal of the Nanjing Institute of Arts* 4 (2005): 65-69; WEI Jun, “New Songs of the Battlefield: Historical Transformation of ‘Cultural Revolution’ Music” *Journal of the Wuhan Conservatory of Music* 3 (2009): 111-118; LIANG Maochun, *Contemporary Music of China 1949-1989* (Beijing: Broadcasting Institute Publishing House, 1993); LIANG, Maochun, “On the Phenomena of Songs of Chairman Mao's Quotations,” *Journal of Wuhan Conservatory of Music* 1 (2003): 43-52; LIANG Maochun, “On Art Songs of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ period,” *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music* 1 (2008): 31-43; FENG Zhiping, “‘New Songs of the Battlefield’ Initial Research” *Music Research* No. 1 (March, 2004): 79-87; DAI Jiafang, “Recovery and then Sink-Songwriting from the Cultural Revolution Period's ‘New Songs of the Battlefield,’” *Journal of Central Conservatory of Music* 4 (2004): 71-84; LI Chunyan, “Linguistic Variation during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ Period: The Case of Lyrics from ‘New Songs of the Battlefield,’” *Journal of the Liaoning Institute of Technology* 6, no. 5 (2004): 52-54.

¹⁰ Bryant “New Songs of the Battlefield” and “Music, Memory and Nostalgia.”

¹¹ See Bryant “New Songs of the Battlefield,” “Music, Memory and Nostalgia,” and “Flowers on the Battlefield” for more detail.

¹² See Bryant “New Songs of the Battlefield,” 55–57 for complete details.

images, and music. Thus, the editors explicitly placed children and youth directly within the political ideology to simultaneously bring the next generation into the revolution while highlighting the promise of future generations in China's socialist society. The use of music to educate children, and the children's songs themselves are not unique to the Cultural Revolution. Rather, these children's songs are part of a gradual historical process that peaked during the intensity of the Cultural Revolution period. As FENG Zhiping, LI Cheng, LIU Jing, and ZOU Xia each write, these songs, in their intended function and their content (lyrically and musically) are not exclusive to the Cultural Revolution, but rather, contribute a significant musical chapter in the history of children's songs in China.¹³

The widespread dissemination, censorship of non-revolutionary or counter-revolutionary culture, and political and physical punishment for counter-revolutionary culture results in a unique context for the *New Songs* during the Cultural Revolution. In fact, CHEN identifies a contemporary decline in quality, number, and impact of children's songs as compared to other historical periods and points directly to the decline in dissemination including propaganda.¹⁴ During the Cultural Revolution, children's songs of the *New Songs* were essentially the *only* songs for the generation that came of age during that turbulent time. While some individuals or families may have strayed in private, the punishments were so severe that reports overwhelmingly indicate that individuals would not dare sing anything but revolutionary songs even behind closed doors. Exceptions certainly exist, but the intensity cannot be underestimated. For children, they would encounter the revolutionary songs on a daily and repeated basis. Loudspeakers wired in neighborhood districts played revolutionary music throughout the day before (or as) announcements to signal the beginning and end of a day, lunch, work group gatherings, etc. Groups, for work or study, met repeatedly throughout the day and often started and ended with everyone singing revolutionary songs. Thus, the songs and sounds of revolutionary songs are the soundscape for those who came of age during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

CHILDREN'S SONGS IN NEW SONGS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

New Songs of the Battlefield is a five-volume anthology of songs published from 1972–1976. Beginning in 1972, a new volume was published each year with approximately 100 songs for a total of 556 songs across the entire anthology.¹⁵ There are six thematic categories in the anthology and these categories are evident in how the songs are grouped together in each volume. The categories include:

- Chinese Communist Party Classics (Historical Revolutionary Songs, Revolutionary Folksongs, and Mao Poetry songs)
- Songs of Praise, Battle, or Political Campaigns
- Songs of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers
- Songs of Youth and Children's Songs
- Songs of Ethnic Nationalities
- Songs of International Relations

¹³ See FENG, "New Songs"; LI Cheng, "On Children's Songs and their Creative Features in the 'Cultural Revolution' Period," *Explorations in Music* 3 (2010): 35–37; LIU, "Exploration of Chinese Children's Songs"; and ZOU Xia, "Talking about the Development of Children Songs in the 20th Century," *Northern Music* 11 (2015): 8.

¹⁴ CHEN Chaoxia, "On the Characteristics of the Development of Contemporary Chinese Children's Songs," *Science & Technology Information* 19 (2009): 499.

¹⁵ See Bryant "New Songs" for details (including comprehensive catalogue of songs); Bryant, "Flowers on the Battlefield" for select examples; and FENG, "New Songs" for Chinese language overview of anthology.

Chinese Communist Party Classics are songs from earlier historical periods while the remaining five categories are newly composed songs. Overlap certainly does occur; however, the thematic categories provide a mechanism for understanding the scope of songs as well as the intentional representation of different pockets of a socialist society. For example, a “song of the workers” will certainly include some praise of Mao and/or the Chinese Communist Party; however, the primary focus of the song is on the workers. Whereas a “song of praise” may comprise lyrics exclusively and repeatedly singing praise of Mao and/or the Chinese Communist Party.

Over the five volumes there are 92 songs directed at children or youth; these songs typically appear toward the end of a volume in a group and are either explicitly stated as such (e.g., “children’s song” “*ertong ge*”) or mention youth in the title or lyrics (e.g., “revolutionary youth march” “*geming qingnian jinxingqu*”). Combined, songs for children or youth thus make up roughly 17% of the songs in the anthology; and children’s songs total 65 songs or roughly 12% of the anthology.¹⁶ Characteristic of the time, the children’s songs often cite China’s history of struggles (via the lens of the CCP), ethnic nationality songs, and folk songs.¹⁷ Over half of the songs are one page or less (roughly 30–40 bars of music) in length and 74% (48 songs) are under two pages. The children’s songs are all in major keys with the majority in C Major, D Major, or G Major:

Key Signature	Percentage	Number of Songs
C Major	37%	24
D Major	15%	10
G Major	14%	9
E Major	11%	7
F Major	11%	7
B-flat Major	8%	5
E-flat Major	8%	5

While key signatures from Western European musical systems are used, LI Cheng explains that the children’s songs typically follow traditional Chinese systems of pentatonic scales.¹⁸

Time Signature	Percentage	Number of Songs
2/4	94%	61
Combination of 2/4 and 4/4	1.5%	1
4/4	1.5%	1
3/4	1.5%	1
3/8	1.5%	1

¹⁶ A complete chart of all 65 song titles (Chinese, English transliteration, and English translation) appears at the end of this article.

¹⁷ FENG, “New Songs,” 81–83.

¹⁸ LI Cheng, “On Children’s Songs,” 35–36. See LI Cheng, “On Children’s Songs” for additional discussion of musical modes in children’s songs. For introduction to five Chinese systems of pitch names/notation and Western counterparts see Joseph Lam, “China,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43141>; Yingshi Chen, “Theory and Notation in China,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 7, East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, ed. Robert C. Provine, Yosihiko Tokumaru, and Lawrence J. Witzleben. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 153–64; *Music Online: The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Database*; and MIU Tianrui, JI Lian kang and GUO Naian, eds., *Dictionary of Chinese Music* (Beijing: People’s Music Publishing Company, 1984).

One third of the songs (21 songs) include a tempo marking with a preference for more upbeat and up-tempo songs:

Tempo Marking	Translation (and Italian equivalent)	Number of Songs
稍快 [shaokuai]	A little fast (<i>Allegro</i>)	11
中速 [zhongsu]	Medium speed (<i>Moderato</i>)	7
进行速度 [jinxingsudu]	March speed (<i>Andante</i>)	2
慢速 [mansu]	Slow speed (<i>Lento/Largo</i>)	2

The songs are predominately monosyllabic, and often match linguistic tonal contour with melodic contour as is common with other eras of children's songs as well as other musical traditions.¹⁹

LI describes the children's songs as "stable, bright, and strong...positive, lively and optimistic in spirit."²⁰ Such tones are evident in the musical expressions provided for 71% of the songs (46 songs in total); with some songs including more than one expression.

Musical Expression	English Translation	Number of appearances (some songs include more than 1 expression)
欢快 (地) [huankuai(di)]	Happily	18
活泼 (地) [huopo(di)]	Lively	8
热情 (地) [reqing(di)]	Enthusiastically	6
喜悦 (地) [xiyue(di)]	Delightfully	4
亲切 (地) [qinqie(di)]	Affectionately	4
朝气蓬勃 (地) [zhaoqi pengbo(di)]	Vibrantly	3
自由 (地) [ziyou(di)]	Freely	3

A classic example of a children's song is "I Love Beijing's Tiananmen." The song appears in the first volume of *New Songs of the Battlefield* and is credited to JIN Yueling with lyrics by JIN Guolin. The song is labeled as a children's song ("ertong gequ") with markings "enthusiastically" ("reqing") and "lively" ("huopo"); the song is in 2/4 time in the key of C Major. The lyrics include two simple lines that are each repeated three times (in the published score) and even more repetitions appear in recordings:

I love Beijing's Tiananmen, the sun rises over Tiananmen.
Our great leader Chairman Mao, guides us forward.

The song consists of a simple ABA pattern with an upbeat and playful rhythmic contour in the A section and a slightly more lyrical and elongated melodic line for the B section.²¹ In my interviews with individuals about Cultural Revolution music, this song is most frequently identified and recognized across multiple generations. Furthermore, because of the vague nature of the lyrics (without any specific reference to the Cultural Revolution or any particular political campaign) the song continues to be promoted today; in fact,

¹⁹ See LIU, "Exploration of Chinese Children's Songs."

²⁰ LI, "On Children's Songs," 35–36.

²¹ See also Bryant "Music, Memory, and Nostalgia," 111–112.

the Chinese students (born between 1988–1993) studying at Skidmore College (New York, USA) that I interviewed are all familiar with the song even though they did not directly experience the Cultural Revolution.²² This song is somewhat atypical in its vague lyrics and I personally have not observed any other songs with such wide recognition across generations and historical time periods.

Lyrics: JIN Guolin
Music: JIN Yueling

enthusiastically
vivaciously

7 Wo ai Bei jing Tian an men, Tian an men shang tai yang kai.

13 Wei da ling xiu Mao Zhu xi, zhi yin wo men xian qian jing.

21 Wo ai Bei jing Tian an men, Tian an men shang tai yang kai.

29 Wei da ling xiu Mao Zhu xi, zhi yin wo men xian qian jing.

35 Wo ai Bei jing Tian an men, Tian an men shang tai yang kai.

Wei da ling xiu Mao Zhu xi, zhi yin wo men xian qian jing.

Figure 1: “I Love Beijing’s Tiananmen”

Children’s songs are one of the six thematic categories for the entire *New Songs* anthology, yet the remaining five thematic categories all appear within the children’s songs as well. For example, songs of international relations dedicated to children, songs of ethnic nationalities specifically identifying children, and so forth. As such, LIU Jing identifies five thematic categories within children’s songs of the “New Songs of the Battlefield” anthology. They are:

- Songs of Praise (颂歌 [songge])
- Songs of Political Activities (政治活动 [zhengzhihuodong])
- Songs of Children’s Activities (儿童生活 [ertongshenghuo])
- International Diplomatic Relations and Cross-Strait Relations (国际外交关系 [Guoji waijiao guanxi] 两岸关系 [liang'an guanxi])
- Songs of all Ethnic Groups (各族儿童心声 [ge zu ertong xinsheng])²³

²² I interviewed roughly a dozen undergraduate students originally from China between 2006–2014; the interviews have been a combination of casual, semi-formal, and formal interviews.

²³ LIU Jing, “A Probe into Chinese Children’s Songs in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ Period,” *The Border Economy and Culture* 11,

Taking LIU's analysis one step further, I observe three defining characteristics within the subset of children's songs. These characteristics help reveal some of the primary techniques employed to create revolutionary music for children during the Cultural Revolution. I identify these characteristics as "Politically Explicit Songs," "Action Songs," and "Little Songs."

POLITICALLY EXPLICIT SONGS

Songs containing overt political content and language make up the majority of children's songs in the *New Songs of the Battlefield* anthology. For example:

YEAR	TITLE (COMPOSER and LYRICIST)
1972	"Study Well and Make Progress Every Day" (ZHANG Zoya and ZHANG Lansheng)
1973	"Grow Up to be a Good Member of the Commune" (LIU Delun and CHEN Guanxuan)
1974	"Lin Biao and Confucius are Both Bad Things" (RU Yinhe and XIAO Fengdeng)
1975	"On the '5.7' [May 7 Directive] Road We Quickly Run Forward" (WU Zuqiang and ZHANG Yibin)
1976	"Grow Up to be a New Peasant" (LI Zhigang and LI Caiyong)

These songs are striking examples where the innocence of children is written into explicit political ideology and revolutionary language including references to struggle, weapons, and violence. Such seemingly opposing forces come together in these children's songs as music is utilized as a weapon for the revolution.

While the song "Study Well and Make Progress Every Day" continues the general practice of utilizing songs to educate children on topics of morality (studying every day, reading, etc.), there are overt and explicit directives for instilling patriotism and a commitment to communism and the Chinese Communist Party:

Little Red Guards' hearts are most red,
loyal to the people loyal to the party.

Study well and make progress every day,
carefully reading the revolution.

Study well and make progress every day,
grow up to become the workers, peasants, and soldiers.

Facing the sun to move forward,
we must become the successors of communism.

Facing the sun to move forward,
we must become the successors of communism.

Lyrics: ZHANG Lansheng
Music: ZHANG Zoya

with full confidence
march

Hong xiao bing—— xin zui hong, zhong yu ren min zhong yi dang.

Hao hao xue xi, tian tian xiang shang, ren zhen du shu wei ge ming.

Hao hao xue xi, tian tian xiang shang,—— zhang da yao dang gong nong bing.

Ying zhe zhao yang xiang qian jin, yao zuo gong chan zhu yi jie ban ren.—— Ying zhe

zhao yang xiang qian jin, yao zuo gong chan zhu yi jie ban ren. Hong xiao jie ban ren.

Figure 2: “Study Well and Make Progress Every Day”

Musically the song is in the style of a march (*jin xing*) and shares many characteristics with others found in *New Songs of the Battlefield* (such as the short tunes with didactic or political text). Furthermore, the song places children directly within the revolution and the politics of the day; by doing so, the song provides an image of the children as a recognized member of the political society surrounding them. Songs such as “Grow Up to be a Good Member of the Commune” and “Grow Up to be a New Peasant” likewise emphasize the place in China’s socialist society that awaits these children in their future.

While the general practice of educating the masses through song pre-dates Communist China, the strategy is taken to new ends during the Cultural Revolution.²⁴ Political indoctrination is taken to an extreme level in the children’s songs of the Cultural Revolution with the explicit and overt propagandistic lyrics. A noteworthy example is “Lin Biao and Confucius are Both Bad Things”:

Traitor Lin Biao and Confucius are Both Bad Things.

Mouthing “justice,” while concealing deception in their belly,
advocating “restrain oneself and observe the rites,”
while at heart staging a comeback. Bah!

Little Red Guards are all ready to go into battle,
everyone come ruthlessly criticize!

²⁴ Isabel K. F. Wong, “Gemeng Gequ: Songs for the Education of the Masses” in *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1979*, ed. Bonnie S. McDougall (Berkeley: University of California, 1983): 112.

Lyrics: XIAO Fengdeng

Music: RU Yinhe

a little fast

Pan tu Lin Biao, Kong lao er, dou shi huai dong xi.

Zui shang jiang "ren yi", du li can gui ji,

gu chui "ke ji fu li," yi xin xiang fu bi. Pei!

Hong Xiao Bing qi shang zhen, da jia dou lai hen hen pi!

Hong Xiao Bing qi shang zhen, da jia dou lai hen hen pi! hai!

Figure 3: "Traitor Lin Biao and Confucius are Both Bad Things"

Musically the song is quite simple and somewhat bland. In the key of D Major with the time signature of 2/4 the tempo marking indicates "a little fast" (*"shao kuai"*) (similar to "allegro"). This song has a militaristic tone, more similar to earlier revolutionary songs, as opposed to the upbeat lilt characteristic of many children's songs in the *New Songs* anthology. Indeed, the song is distinguished by its lyrics, and they seem to be the focal point of this song. Explicit lyrics identifying "traitor" Lin Biao and Confucius as two "bad things" provide a clear and precise message of right and wrong according to 1974 Cultural Revolution politics. A designated children's song (*"ertong gequ"*), the lyrics identify children as the "Little Red Guards" (*"Hong Xiao Bing"*), a reference to the mobilized generation of youth who fueled the Cultural Revolution known as "Little Red Guards" (*"Hong Wei Bing"*); the term itself, as well as the propaganda using the term, places young children as the next generation to struggle and fight for revolution. In this song, the lyrics call for children to join the battle of Cultural Revolution political criticism; specifically, the political campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. Thus, here the lyrics not only identify good and bad (according to Cultural Revolution politics), but specifically serve as a call to action for children to join in the "ruthless criticism" (*"hen pi"*).

ACTION SONGS

"Action" songs are songs that place children directly in some type of socialist action. I consider this technique to be a type of musical application of the CCP's use of socialist realism. Whereas monuments and other visual arts represent members of a socialist society eternally in motion (for example, moving forward in a lunge), here children are depicted musically in motion, in some action that benefits the

socialist society.²⁵ While this occurs in songs throughout the anthology, there are six songs in a row in the second volume (1973) with explicit wording in their song title emphasizing a specific action:

TITLE	(COMPOSER and LYRICIST)
"Plant Sunflowers"	(Wuhan Central No. 8 Creative Team/WANG Zhongnong)
"Plant Tree Seedlings"	(JIE Jiaping/DAN Bao)
"Delivering Feed"	(LUO Ruding/TANG Yaohui)
"Feeding the Chickens"	(WANG Jian/WANG Zhi'an)
"Ride the Little Rocking Horse"	(XIANG Zhiqi)
"Calling on the Telephone"	(KANG Shouxin/ZHANG Zhongliang)

In this set of songs, lyrics include references to everyday activities of farmers and peasants such as planting (flowers and trees) and taking care of livestock (feeding animals and delivering feed); they also depict children's everyday activities such as riding a rocking horse and playing telephone. Yet embedded in these everyday activities are the implications for connecting one's everyday life with the socialist revolution such as the promise of growth and prosperity suggested by the planting of flowers and trees.

The six songs appear in succession toward the end of volume two and all refer to children though only "Calling on the Telephone" is listed as a "children's song" (*"ertong gequ"*). Continuing the practice observed in the previous two categories of children's songs, once again political campaigns of the Cultural Revolution are explicitly placed within a child's everyday play:

(B) Pull the wire and make a call.
 (A) Hello, Hello, where do you want to call?
 (B) I want to connect to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
 (Together) to greet the children of many countries
 We have friends all over the world.
 People of the world unite in solidarity
 To fully defeat imperialists, revisionists, and counter-revolutionaries.

"Calling on the Telephone" begins with the first voice directing the players in the children's game of telephone; the second voice then completes the line. The two voices have a musical call and response of sorts to complete their musical lines before joining together for the final four phrases. The expression and tempo markings indicate "enthusiastically" (*"reqingde"*) and "a little fast" (*"shao kuai"*) (or "allegro"); while the song is not terribly remarkable for its musical style or characteristics, the final line is a good example of musically accommodating a mouthful of political jargon.

The song lyrics place the international socialist movement directly into the everyday activity of children playing telephone. Asking children to reach out to unite with children across the world may seem universal and innocent on its own yet two markers politicize this seemingly innocent activity. First, the identification of Asia, Africa, and Latin America is a specific nod to socialist countries with favorable diplomatic relations with China (at the time); North America, Europe, and Australia are noticeably absent from this list as a result. The final sentence also indicates the extremely political nature of Cultural Revolution music. The lyrics explicitly list three enemies of the socialist revolution that the children of the

²⁵ See Melissa Chiu and Shengtian Zheng, *Art and China's Revolution* (New York: Asia Society; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Liu Ding and Carol Yinghua Lu, "From the Issue of Art to the Issue of Position: The Echoes of Socialist Realism, Part I," *e-flux* No. 55 (2014); and Ling Ding and Carol Yinghua Lu, "From the Issue of Art to the Issue of Position: The Echoes of Socialist Realism, Part II," *e-flux* No. 56 (2014).

world should unite in solidarity to defeat: imperialists, revisionists, and counter-revolutionaries. Such lyrics are remarkably propagandistic in reference to political slogans and socialist ideology that far exceed the everyday language and political thought of any ordinary child.

Lyrics: ZHANG Zhongliang
enthusiastically
a little fast

Music: KANG Shouxin

(A) Ni zhan zhe'er, wo zhan na'er (B) la gen xian, da dian hua.

(A) Wei, wei, ni yao na'er? (B) Wo yao kua dao ya, fei, la.

A&B: Xiang ge guo xiao peng you wen ge hao, wo men de peng you bian tian xia.

Shi jie ren min tuan jie jin, ba di, xiu, fan

quan da kua, quan da kua. quan da kua.

Figure 4: “Calling on the Telephone”

“LITTLE” (“XIAO”) SONGS

“Little” (Chinese “xiao”) songs are a handful of songs that all begin with the diminutive “xiao” in their titles. For example, between 1972 and 1975 there are five songs that all begin with the character “little.”

YEAR	TITLE	(COMPOSER AND LYRICIST)
1972	“Tiny Ball Shines Silver Rays”	(SHEN Yisu/MA Kaiyuan)
1972	“Tiny Little Screw Cap”	(CHEN Shaolin/SUN Yu)
1973	“Little Driver”	(SU Yong/ZHANG Dongfang)
1974	“Little Pine Tree”	(FU Jing and LI Weicai/FU Gengchen)
1975	“Little Shoulder Carrying Pole”	(LIU Dezheng/Beijing Primary School Chinese Language Textbook)

While this may be considered a somewhat arbitrary grouping, the relevance of this group becomes apparent when compared to other patterns of repeated characters at the beginning of titles. For example, of the 65 children’s songs in the *New Songs of the Battlefield* anthology, repeated characters at the beginning of titles include:

“we”	我们	“women”	6 song titles [9%]
“red”	红	“hong”	6 song titles [9%]
“little”	小	“xiao”	5 song titles [8%]

Many scholars have written about the language of the Cultural Revolution, and in reference to slogans and song lyrics it is significant to identify the limited vocabulary and repetition of key terms such as “we” (“women”), “red” (“hong”), “big/great” (“da”), “toward” (“xiang”), “battle,” (“zhan”), “forward” (“qian”); these terms invoke solidarity in the revolution as well as general encouragement and vigor.²⁶ In the *New Songs* anthology, the three most frequent characters at the beginning of song titles are as follows:

“big”	大	“da”	103 song titles [18.5%]
“red”	红	“hong”	54 song titles [10%]
“we”	我们	“women”	50 song titles [9%]

Thus, it is interesting that “little” (“xiao”) would appear as one of the most frequent song title characters for children’s songs as it is in opposition to the most frequent character “big” (“da”) in the general anthology. I view this, as with most other propaganda, to be intentional in design with the diminutive “little” (“xiao”) as a marker for children and children’s culture; thereby a suitable keyword for children’s songs of the Cultural Revolution.

The final example for the current study is “Tiny Little Screw Cap.” This song is at the heart of my investigation into children’s songs in content, style, and reception.

Leader:	On the roadside there is a screw
Group:	On the roadside there is a screw, a screw
Leader:	Little Brother sees it on the way to school
Group:	(he) sees it, (he) sees it, (he) sees it
Leader:	The screw, although small
Group:	...(it) is essential in the construction of the motherland Pick it up, wipe it clean Once it is all clean it is so pretty Bring it to Worker Uncle, put it in the machine, Hey! The machine hums (sings) while we clap our hands

Musically, the song is a simple children’s melody, complete with call and response sections and a generic ABA form. The song begins with a leader (or solo voice) calling out a short musical line that is then repeated by the group (chorus); the third time the chorus completes the line (both musically and in lyrics) as opposed to continued repetition. In the next (B) section (measure 24) the group sings a short

²⁶ For a discussion of keywords in *New Songs of the Battlefield* see Bryant, “New Songs,” 99–104; see also Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004); and Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012).

one-measure phrase that is then repeated by the instruments instead of voice (see measures 25 and 27). A final three lines serve as a closing to the song with two lyrical lines and a final line that brings back the original A theme.

Lyrics: SUN Yu
Music: CHEN Shaolin

9 [S:] Lu bian you_ ke_ luo si_ mao, [C:] lu bian you ke luo si mao, luo si mao,
16 [S:] di di shang xue kan_ jian_ le. [C:] kan jian le, kan jian le, kan_ jian_ le.
24 [S:] Luo si_ mao, sui ran_ xiao, [C:] zu guo jian she bu ke_ shao.
32 jian qi lai, qiao yi qiao, ca ca gan jing duo mo hao.
39 Song gei gong ren shu shu, ba ta zhuang zai ji qi
shang, hei! ji qi chang ge wo men pai shou xiao.

S: Solo
C: Chorus

Figure 5: “Tiny Little Screw Cap”

The lyrics tell the story of a young child (“little brother”) discovering a screw on the side of the road on the way to school; the child dusts it off and hands it over to a worker (“uncle”) to be used in his machine. The lyrics continue on to propose that though the screw is small in size it is not insignificant in the essential large-scale work of building the nation. Therefore, children are once again connected to the larger work of the nation; specifically, though small in size (and/or age), children are identified as a valuable part of the larger “machine” (or nation). Thus “Tiny Little Screw Cap” appears as a clear example of 1) the specific identification of children within messages of nation building and 2) recognition of their contribution to society at large.²⁷

²⁷ I discuss the contemporary reception of the song in my book manuscript with ethnographic accounts of contemporary music videos and in fact, I recently discovered multiple contemporary music videos of “Tiny Little Screw Cap” on YouTube, indicating continued interest and dissemination of the song: <https://youtu.be/NlxzUsnXgw0>, accessed December 1, 2017.

MUSIC AND CHILDHOOD

Children are a product of social organization, and they do not move through increasingly advanced stages of their biological and neurological growth without being shaped by a constellation of forces within their environments, not the least of which are the musical genres which their societies value and thus preserve.²⁸

Ethnomusicologist Patricia Shehan Campbell’s research on music in childhood illuminates several important elements of children’s songs from the Cultural Revolution, such as the songs found throughout the *New Songs of the Battlefield*. First, music is commonly considered an artistic expression of human emotion and experience. Secondly, as generations of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have explored, music is a central site for processes of enculturation. Such sentiments are evident in discussions of Chinese children’s songs as CHEN writes, “Beautiful children’s songs will inspire children’s thinking in all aspects, giving them a beautiful experience, but also cultivate their sentiments.”²⁹ And in a recent *Guangming Ribao* (Enlightenment Daily) newspaper article GUO Chao describes children’s songs as “the breast milk that guides children to learn the language” and “crucial to children’s growth.”³⁰ So what happens when music is controlled for political purposes and human emotions are replaced with propagandistic ideology and language? And what happens when the process of enculturation is politicized? Can music still serve as a “resting spot”?³¹ Children’s songs from the Cultural Revolution provide examples and experiences to shed some light on these larger questions.

Mao presents ideas for the radical transformation of music in his 1942 “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art.” Zhou Enlai’s “*sanhua*” policy that follows Mao’s 1942 talks specifically outlines how to transform both the *function* and the *content* of music and the arts. Applied to music of the Cultural Revolution such as *New Songs of the Battlefield*, I argue that it was only the *content* of music that was successfully transformed. The *function* of music was never successfully transformed but there are significant and lasting implications for the failed attempt. The extreme politicization of music, in content and function, is seemingly at opposing odds with what one may imagine for children’s songs. In particular, the cross-cultural functions of music by and large prevailed over the attempted political transformation of the *function* of music. For example, my fieldwork reveals that many individuals who grew up with the children’s songs of the Cultural Revolution still benefited from music on individual, social, and emotional levels despite extremely politicized and propagandistic efforts.³² So how can this be explained?

Campbell and Scott-Kassner open their text *Music in Childhood* with reference to Anthropologist Alan P. Merriam’s 1964 list of “Music’s Many Functions”; the list includes 1) emotional expression, 2) aesthetic enjoyment, 3) entertainment, 4) communication, 5) symbolic representation (symbols within the text, notation, and cultural meaning of the sounds), 6) physical response (dancing and other physical activity), 7) enforcement of conformity to social norms (instruction through song and rhymes), 8) validation of social institutions and religious rituals, (use of music in religious services and state occasions), 9) contribution to the continuity and stability of culture (music as an expression of cultural values), and

²⁸ Patricia Shehan Campbell, “Global Perspectives,” in *The Child as Musician: A Handbook of Musical Development*, ed. G. E. McPherson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 434, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198530329.003.0021>.

²⁹ CHEN Chaoxia, “On the Characteristics,” 499.

³⁰ GUO Chao, “How to Make Today’s Children Have Their Own Children’s Songs,” *Guangming Ribao* [Enlightenment Daily] 14 June (2017), 9.

³¹ Campbell and Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood*, 13.

³² See Bryant, “New Songs,” and “Music, Memory, and Nostalgia.” Ethnographic accounts of individuals who came of age during the Cultural Revolution are also discussed in my forthcoming manuscript *Music as Mao’s Weapon*.

10) contribution to the integration of society (use of music to bring people together).³³ After reviewing Mao and Zhou's cultural policies and the resulting children's songs in the *New Songs of the Battlefield* anthology, do the children's songs still maintain any of the above cross-cultural functions of music? With much concern and fright, I argue yes across the board; the propagandistic nature of children's songs from the Cultural Revolution seems at first glance to be counter-intuitive to "children's songs" in general. And yet, the astute attention to the cross-cultural functions (and ultimately power) of music makes this example rather disturbing. In the case of the children's songs from the Cultural Revolution, the use and benefit of music are fully exploited to bring the message and ideology of a political movement to an entire generation of children in China.

Political propaganda directed at children is certainly not exclusive to music of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party, or China alone. Patriotic songs for children appear across time and place and the Cultural Revolution examples share some similarities with other instances. For example, Noriko Manabe writes of Japanese school songs during World War II that focus on instilling the national spirit, expanding the empire, and glorifying the military.³⁴ Manabe describes:

Among the vast repertoire of Japanese school songs, perhaps the most thought provoking—and least well known—are those songs taught during World War II. Soaked with propagandistic messages, they assert the superiority of Japan over other nations, the glory of dying for one's country, the romantic imagery of conquered territories, and the joys of toiling in weapons factories, among other things.³⁵

Manabe considers the songs for schoolchildren to be an "important part of the wartime propaganda machine"³⁶ and continues to explore the values reinforced, behaviors encouraged, and legacy of the songs in the schoolchildren after the war.³⁷

Juliane Brauer examines how another totalitarian regime exploited the power of music in her study of music as a form of torture in Nazi concentration and extermination camps. She identifies how the "power of music lies in its abilities to shape notions of identity, subjectivity, and belonging. For this reason, a focus on the body and emotions, both of which are targeted by torture, can go a considerable way toward offering an explanation of the potentially torturous nature of music."³⁸ Brauer's emphasis on the body and emotions provides a mechanism for unpacking the distinction between the transformation of function and content in children's songs of the Cultural Revolution. As Brauer explains:

Music itself has no inherent meaning or emotional content. This is what makes the contact zone necessary and productive. Music's effect and the emotions attached to music are strongly linked to experiences, those at the time of listening as well as past experiences that have already been internalized in the listener. The effect also depends on the circumstances surrounding perception, concrete practice, and performance. Furthermore, the impact of music is not entirely determined by the individual listener; it is dependent on broader, shared social factors and is subject to change over time.³⁹

³³ Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood*, 3–7.

³⁴ Noriko Manabe, "Songs of Japanese Schoolchildren During World War II," in *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Musical Cultures*, ed. Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102–104, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199737635.013.0006>.

³⁵ Manabe, "Songs of Japanese Schoolchildren," 96.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Manabe, "Songs of Japanese Schoolchildren," 96–97.

³⁸ Juliane Brauer, "How Can Music be Torturous?: Music in Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps," *Music & Politics* 10, no. 1 (2016): 7, <https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0010.103>.

³⁹ Brauer, "How Can Music be Torturous," 9.

To understand the impact of children’s songs from the Cultural Revolution it is the individuals’ emotions linked to their experience as well as the broader social context that makes clear the complexity of how a generation experiences, and later remembers, the music of their childhood. In other words, the political propaganda explicitly changed the *content* of children’s songs (from the simple and innocent content of traditional children’s songs to overt political messages) but the *function* of music was a lot more difficult to transform. In this article, I aim to provide detailed accounts of how the *content* was transformed and will elaborate on the attempts to transform the *function* of music in forthcoming works.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the extent of hardship and conflict around the world, fascinating work lies ahead as to the role of music for children in challenging situations of work as child soldiers and of their struggles in families suffering the effects of failing economies. Such research would be difficult to arrange, and it should be no surprise that there is very little extant literature about the darker side of music by and for children that could be included in this volume.⁴⁰

Children’s songs from the Cultural Revolution are just one example of the “darker side of music” to which Campbell and Wiggins refer in the introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Children’s Musical Cultures*.⁴¹ The techniques of politicizing the content of music (politically explicit songs), directly placing children within socialist action (action songs), and repeatedly identifying children within the political campaigns of the day (little or “*xiao*” songs), brought the storm of the Cultural Revolution directly into the everyday lives of children. I see the masterminds behind these children’s songs (and the cultural policies that informed them) to be quite aware of the power of music; for example, the upbeat and simple children’s songs maintain the cross-cultural functions of music that Merriam lists from numbers 1–6 (emotional expression; aesthetic enjoyment; entertainment; communication; symbolic representation; and physical response). And since music is one of several processes of enculturation, functions 7–10 on Merriam’s list (enforcement of conformity to social norms; validation of social institutions and religious rituals; contribution to the continuity and stability of culture; and contribution to the integration of society) maintain their power (or capacity) to teach children about cultural value but now with the political ideology and language of Cultural Revolution politics.

Specifically, the political language of children’s songs from the Cultural Revolution may initially surprise an outside observer. Stereotypically, children’s songs talk about everyday life and play with simple and upbeat themes; yet the lyrics reek of political jargon, themes, and language otherwise absent in an ordinary child’s life. For example, songs such as the classic “I Love Beijing’s Tiananmen” appears to be a simple song instilling patriotism and connecting children to the capital and the nation. Yet songs such as “Study Well and Make Progress Every Day” and “Calling on the Telephone” take a step away from simple patriotism with specific political ideology from the Cultural Revolution with mention of the “workers, peasants, and soldiers” and “to fully defeat imperialists, revisionists, and counter-revolutionaries.” Then in songs such as “Lin Biao and Confucius are Both Bad Things” and “Tiny Little Screw Cap” a distinct departure is observed where children are directed to participate in political criticism and the work of the nation.

⁴⁰ Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Children’s Musical Cultures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.

⁴¹ Campbell and Wiggins, *The Oxford Handbook*.

Indeed, the Cultural Revolution was very different from so-called “ordinary” life as one may commonly imagine. The political and cultural disruptions to everyday life were extraordinary and taken to historical extremes in many cases; children’s music is just one example. Yet when the lived experience of individuals who grew up with the children’s songs is taken into consideration, the relevance, significance, and impact of the songs becomes increasingly apparent. That is to say, while politicized lyrics may seem outdated or irrelevant, the emotional, social, and personal memories that individuals attach to these songs are essential in understanding the complexity of music in childhood.

Additionally, many individuals interviewed who grew up during the Cultural Revolution suggest a type of selective listening or processing to the political language of the time; that they could only process so much (given their maturity/age) and suggest that much of the political language, and therefore ideology, washed over them. While the practice of actively choosing what to process and what to discard is commonplace throughout musical childhoods,⁴² the extreme level of dissemination coupled with cultural isolation during the Cultural Revolution time period provides a different context. Once again drawing a connection to the role of music in concentration camps, Fackler quotes Christoph Daxelmüller’s concept of “the prisoner as a cultural being”⁴³ when writing how, “nevertheless, the fact that music was performed in the camps forces us to realize that the prisoners should not be regarded as an undifferentiated ‘grey mass.’”⁴⁴ Manabe aptly phrases the legacy when she writes,

... an egg cannot be unscrambled; given how pervasive wartime propaganda was in the schools and media, and how impressionable most children would have been, it would seem likely that these childhood teachings somehow affected the way these children thought as adults.⁴⁵

In the Cultural Revolution context children could focus (either consciously or subconsciously) on the non-political aspects of the music, yet it is seemingly difficult, if not impossible, to completely discard or divorce the political aspects of music (especially in one’s subconscious mind) given the oppressive and all-encompassing context of Cultural Revolution culture.

As always, an individual’s process of enculturation and social positioning (especially nationality and the type of government under which one comes of age) will directly and indirectly inform one’s response to music used as political propaganda. Writing about music and propaganda in 1983, Perris mentions “the control of art for official information goes against the grain of the creative spirit, we suppose”;⁴⁶ still, it is commonplace across many cultures to employ music to disseminate ideas, information, and values.⁴⁷ Yet when A) music is controlled for political propaganda and not creative/artistic functions and B) that music is in fact children’s music, alarm bells seem to go off for many observers. I am certain that responses differ based on one’s nationality, age, and other social identities, so I note that the observations here are specifically based on my experience teaching university students in the United States as an American-born Chinese professor of ethnomusicology. As Perris writes, “The Westerner’s presumptions arise in part because the term propaganda has acquired an odious meaning: it is a technique of distortion, often with

⁴² See Campbell and Wiggins, *The Oxford Handbook*.

⁴³ Christoph Daxelmüller, “Kulturell Formen und Aktivitäten als Teil der Überlebens- und Vernichtungsstrategie in den Konzentrationslagern,” in *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Entwicklung und Struktur*, vol. 2, ed. Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann, (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1998), 983–1005, quote on 993.

⁴⁴ Guido Fackler, “Music in Concentration Camps 1933–1945,” transl. Peter Logan, *Music & Politics* 1, no.1 (2007): 1–25.

⁴⁵ Manabe, “Songs,” 111.

⁴⁶ Arnold Perris, “Music as Propaganda: Art at the Command of Doctrine in the People’s Republic of China,” *Ethnomusicology* 27, no. 1 (1983): 1, <https://doi.org/10.2307/850880>.

⁴⁷ Perris, “Music as Propaganda,” 1.

evil intent.”⁴⁸ While I am not certain if this alarm for propaganda in children’s music is limited to so-called “Western” ways of thinking, I have observed two recurring and distinct viewpoints when presenting research in the United States on children’s songs from the Chinese Cultural Revolution. On the one hand (often, but not exclusively, represented by youth and young adults) are individuals who vehemently believe such music to be in violation of humanity; on the other hand are individuals who, with varying degrees of acceptance, understand propaganda as one of the many ways that music functions in society. Future cross-cultural and multi-sited research projects may provide more nuanced accounts and perspectives. Regardless of one’s stance, music utilized as political propaganda appears repeatedly in different times and places around the world. Accordingly, some questions that remain include: 1) *how* this exploitation of music manifests when directed at children, and 2) *how* such exploitation impacts the ability for music to remain as a so-called “resting spot” or “calm from the storm” to which Campbell and Scott-Kassner refer.⁴⁹

In conclusion, the Chinese Communist Party attempted to transform both the content and function of children’s songs during the Cultural Revolution. The extreme politicization of children’s songs unquestionably transformed the content. However, I suggest that the function of music was never successfully transformed but instead exploited. On the one hand, we can be encouraged to know that music still had the ability to serve as a site for enjoyment and socialization; yet on the other hand, we should take note of such historic politicization of a traditional “safe” space in childhood.

Glossary

Ertong ge	儿童歌曲	Children’s Songs
Geminghua	革命化	Revolutionize
Geming qingnian jinxingqu	革命青年进行曲	March of the Revolutionary Youth
Geming Wenhua	革命文化	Revolutionary Culture
Hen pi	狠批	Ruthless criticism
Hong Wei Bing	红卫兵	Red Guards
Hong Xiao Bing	红小兵	Little Red Guards
Kuomintang	国民党	Nationalist Party
Minzhuhua	民族化	Nationalize
Qunzhonghua	群众化	Popularize
Sanhua	三化	Three Processes of Transformation
Wuchan jieji wenhua dageming	无产阶级文化大革命	Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
“Zhandi Xinge”	“战地新歌”	“New Songs of the Battlefield”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Campbell and Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood*, 13.

Chart of 65 Children's Songs

Chinese Title and Transliteration	English Translation	Volume and page
祝福毛主席万寿无疆 Zhufu maozhuxi wanshouwujiang	Wish Chairman Mao a Long Life	I-58
好好学习天天向上 Haohao xuexi tiantian xiangshang	Study Well and Make Progress Every Day	I-149
我爱北京天安门 Wo ai beijing tiananmen	I Love Beijing's Tiananmen	I-150
火车向着韶山跑 Huoche xiangzhe shaoshan pao	The Train Runs Toward Shaoshan	I-151
我们是红小兵 Women shi hongxiaobing	We are Little Red Soldiers	I-153
大庆花开遍地红 Daqing hua kai biandi hong	The Flowers of Daqing Bloom in Red	I-154
小小螺丝帽 Xiaoxiao luosimao	Tiny Screw	I-155
我是公社小社员 Wo shi gongshe xiao sheyuan	I am a Little Member of the Commune	I-156
针线包是传家宝 Zhenxianbao shi chuanjiabao	Sewing Kit is our Family Treasure	I-157
小小球儿闪银光 Xiaoxiao qiu'er shan yinguang	Tiny Ball Shines Silver Rays	I-158
革命故事会 Ge ming gu shi hui	Revolution Story Telling	I-158
大家来做广播操 Dajia laizuo guangbocao	Everybody Come Do Radio Broadcast Exercises	I-159
歌声飞出新窝窝 Gesheng feichu xin wowo	Songs Fly Out of Our New Village Homes	II-36
歌唱我们的新西藏 Gesheng women de xin xizhang	Sing in Praise of Our New Tibet	II-39
真象一对亲兄弟 Zhen xiang yidui qin xiongdi	They are Really Like Two Blood Brothers	II-136
我们是毛主席的红小兵 Women shi Maozhuxi de hongxiaobing	We are Chairman Mao's Little Red Soldiers	II-191
红小兵成长全靠党 Hongxiaobing chengzhang quan kao dang	The Little Red Soldiers Growing Up Rely Completely upon the Party	II-192

小司机 Xiao siji	Little Driver	II-194
长大当个好社员 Zhangda dangge hao sheyuan	Grow Up to be a Good Member of the Commune	II-196
我是公社小牧民 Woshi gongshe xiao mumin	I am the Little Herdsman of the Commune	II-197
从小扎根在草原 Congxiao zhagen zai caoyuan	Rooted in the Grasslands from Childhood	II-198
丰收歌儿飞满山 Fengshou geer fei man shan	Song of Bumper Harvest Flies to all the Mountain	II-200
种葵花 Zhongkui hua	Plant Sunflowers	II-201
植树苗 Zhi shu miao	Plant Tree Seedlings	II-202
送饲料 Song siliao	Delivering Feed	II-203
喂鸡 Wei ji	Feeding the Chickens	II-205
打电话 Da dianhua	Calling on the Telephone	II-206
骑上小木马 Qishang xiao muma	Ride the Little Rocking Horse	II-206
我们是毛主席的红小兵 Women shi Maozhuxi de hongxiaobing	We are Chairman Mao's Little Red Soldiers	III-206
红小兵之歌 Hongxiaobing zhi ge	Song of the Little Red Soldiers	III-207
我们是朝气蓬勃的红小兵 Women shi zhaoqipengbo de hongxiaobing	We are Little Red Soldiers Full of Vigor and Vitality	III-208
林彪，孔老二都是坏东西 Linbiao, konglaoer dou shi huai dongxi	Linbiao and Confucius are Both Bad Things	III-209
雷锋叔叔望着我们笑 Leifeng shushu wangzhe women xiao	Uncle Lei Feng Smiles at Us	III-210
我们长在延河旁 Women zhang zai yanhe pang	We Grow by the Side of the Yan River	III-212
信儿捎给台湾小朋友 Xiner shao gei Taiwan xiaopengyou	Letters Sent to the Children of Taiwan	III-214
红小兵学工歌 Hongxiaobing xue gong ge	The Song of the Little Red Soldiers Learning Industry	III-215

井冈山下种南瓜 Jinggangshan xia zhong nangua	Growing Pumpkins at the Foot of Jinggang Mountain	III-217
红小兵织渔网 Hongxiaobing zhi yuwang	The Little Red Soldiers Weave Fishnets	III-220
勤俭节约记心间 Qinjian jieyue ji xinjian	Remember in Your Heart to Work Hard and Economize	III-221
小松树 Xiao songshu	Little Pine Tree	III-222
打开咱的收音机 Dakai zande shouyinji	Turn on our Radio	III-223
红星歌 Hongxing ge	Red Star Song	IV-193
党的光辉照亮了我们心田 Dangde guanghui zhaoliangle women xintian	The Brilliance of the Party Shines and Brightens our Heart	IV-195
在灿烂的五星红旗下 Zai canlande wuxing hongqi xia	Under the Magnificent Five-Starred Red Flag	IV-198
工人师傅进校来 Gongren shifu jin xiao lai	Master Workers Come into the Schools	IV-200
“五·七”路上向前跑 “Wu.Qi” lushang xiang qian pao	On the "5.7" [May 7 Directive] Road We Quickly Run Forward	IV-202
批臭反动的“三字经” Pichou fandong de “san zi jing”	The "Three Character Essay" of Criticize Chou and Oppose Movement	IV-203
绣红星 Xiu hongxing	Embroider a Red Star	IV-204
橡胶林里歌声响 Xiangjiao lin li gesheng xiang	Sounds of Songs Ring Through the Rubber Forests	IV-204
少年运动员进行曲 Shaonian yundongyuan jinxingqu	The Marching Song of the Juvenile Athletes	IV-206
海岛红小兵 Haidao hongxiaobing	Island's Little Red Guards	IV-207
我们怀念台湾小朋友 Women huainian Taiwan xiaopengyou	We Cherish the Memory of the Children of Taiwan	IV-209
红小兵扫谷忙 Hongxiaobing sao gu mang	The Little Red Soldiers Are Busy Sweeping the Grains	IV-210
小扁担 Xiao biandan	Little Shoulder/Carrying Pole	IV-211
祖国，我爱你 Zuguo, wo ai ni	Our Motherland, I love you	V-228
南海儿童爱北京 Nanhai ertong ai Beijing	The Children of the South China Sea Love Beijing	V-229

为新生事物齐鼓掌 Wei xinsheng shiwu qi guzhang	Applaud for the Newborn Things	V-230
向阳院里阳光照 Xiang yangyuanli yangguang zhao	The Sunlight Shines on the Courtyard	V-231
铁路铺向延河旁 Tielu pu xiang yanhe pang	Pave the Iron Path toward the Side of Yan River	V-232
外外盛开大寨花 Chuchu shengkai dazhai hua	The Flowers of Dazhai Blossom Everywhere	V-234
长大当个新农民 Zhangda dangge xin nongmin	Grow up to be a New Peasant	V-237
草原小巡逻兵 Caoyuan xiao xunluobing	Little patrol soldiers on the Grasslands	V-238
東海小民兵 Donghai xiao minbing	Little Militia Men of the East China Sea	V-239
两个大苹果 Liangge da pingguo	Two Big Apples	V-241
我们是亲爱的好朋友 Women shi qin'aide haopengyou	We are Dear Friends	V-242

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Abstract

In 1942 Mao Zedong presented an influential policy for revolutionary culture in his "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art." Mao detailed how the arts could act as a "powerful weapon" in uniting and educating the masses, "attacking and annihilating the enemy," and simultaneously foster solidarity in the struggle (Translated by Bonnie McDougall. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1980). Accordingly,

revolutionary music should focus on the three pillars of socialist society: workers, peasants, and soldiers. Many children’s songs were composed and disseminated in attempts to educate the next generation of Chinese socialist society. Songs such as “I Love Beijing’s Tiananmen,” “Tiny Little Screw Cap,” “Grow Up to be a Good Member of the Commune,” and “Lin Biao and Confucius are Both Bad Things” are striking examples where the innocence of children is written into political ideology and revolutionary language while routinely including references to struggle, weapons, and violence. Seemingly opposing forces come together in these children’s songs as music is utilized as a weapon for the revolution. In this article, I examine children’s songs from the *New Songs of the Battlefield* anthology published between 1972–1976. My analysis will consider how children’s songs are a dangerous and extreme example of the exploitation of music.