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The Maoist Soundscape:

Sonic Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1976

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by

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ABSTRACT

The Maoist Soundscape:
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This dissertation examines the technologically mediated developments in the relationship between the Party and the People in Mao era China (1949-1976). With a focus on audio technology (radios and loudspeakers), and drawing from sound studies, media studies, and 20th century Chinese history studies, it explores the soundscape of the period, in order to understand how the proliferation of amplified sound, combined with the unique nature of the Party's propagandizing, to forge a new form of sonic politics for New China. Chapter One focuses on Tiananmen Square parades and rallies, and the ways in which a new political culture was shaped by the Party's application of sound media at these events, and the emotionally charged vocal responses from the People. Chapter Two broadens the scope of the inquiry by examining the nationwide construction of the Party's sonic infrastructure in the 1950s, and considering the Party's aspirations as well as the challenges it faced in attempting to transmit its new political culture through sound media. Chapter Three turns to the actual content that was broadcast across the sonic infrastructure, paying attention to the usage of loudspeakers in the education system, as well as the Party's manipulation of sound effects and noise to spread propaganda and provoke appropriate emotional responses from listeners. In Chapter Four I explore the ways in which individuals reacted to extreme

loudness and targeted sonic harassment in the soundscape, and consider the specific qualities of the loudspeaker that made it a useful tool for maintaining control over bodies, space, and time. Chapter Five broadens the scope of the soundscape study once more to analyze international perspectives on the Party's usage of sound media, which centered on accusations of "brainwashing," as well as the Party's attempts to construct a "sound wall" around the People, by campaigning against the Voice of America. The dissertation, as a whole, constructs an overview of the Mao era soundscape, which illustrates that despite various points of failure and weakness in the PRC's sonic infrastructure in this period, the application of sound media was integral in shaping and circulating a new political culture, and in forming new bonds between the Party and the People.

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Introduction

The "Maoist Soundscape"

A 2017 article from the *LA Times* headlined, "'Good Morning, it's the Communist Party': Loudspeakers in China take Xi's ideological campaign to new levels" describes the recent reintroduction of the loudspeaker, a technological "throwback," into everyday life in rural China.[1] Loudspeakers, as the article explains, were a "common sight" in the early People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC), but "fell silent … with the death of Mao and the rise of television." The article examines why these particular tools of communication are returning, even after the introduction of various more advanced technologies. Essentially, the answer is three-fold: first, loudspeakers are still of use in reaching those people who are not "technologically savvy"; second, loudspeakers are superior in some aspects as a tool of communication; and third, loudspeakers have symbolic value, because of their associations with the Mao years.

The return of loudspeakers, as Jessica Meyers (the author of the article) argues, is an "old-school strategy" within the "highly sophisticated propaganda apparatus" being employed to enact Xi Jinping Thought.[2] Loudspeakers still have utility among the broader mediascape for the three reasons mentioned above, which comprise their capacities as technology, and their more intangible benefits. They can permeate local spaces with sound, set the rhythms of daily life, and bring the Chinese Communist Party's (hereafter CCP, or Party) propaganda directly to the

[1] Jessica Meyers, "'Good Morning, it's the Communist Party': Loudspeakers in China take Xi's ideological campaign to new levels," *Los Angeles Times*, 10/23/17 https://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-china-loudspeakers-20171023-story.html accessed 11/16/21

[2] Also known as "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" (习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想).

People.[3] They can also be used to imbue propaganda with a certain spirit that is perhaps not attainable through the usage of other media, because of particular qualities of the human voice that a skilled broadcaster can harness. Loudspeakers, as was mentioned above, also have great potency as a visual symbol; they are material objects that call to mind the Mao years, and the intense propaganda that politicized all aspects of everyday life in that period. With regards to the loudspeaker as an icon of the Mao era, and its reintroduction in the Xi era, the article quotes Jude Blanchette, a researcher at the Conference Board at Beijing, who argues:

> In many ways, what Xi is doing is ripping off what Bo Xilai did … Bo Xilai was one of the first people to show this very maudlin type of nostalgic memory, a very selective memory, that was often viewed as the good times and solidarity. He showed that still had a deep reservoir … Loudspeakers feel like a part of that broader search to find what someone once eloquently called the usable past.

Zhang Lifan, a Beijing based historian and cultural commentator also quoted in the article, asserts that the return of loudspeakers represents a move "backward," which shows that the Party "wants to impose its own will on people, no matter if they want to listen or not," a position which accords with Laurence Coderre's description of the loudspeaker being the "perfect aural metonym for totalitarianism" (2021, 33). Leaving aside the question of the parallels between Mao and Xi as leaders, what is striking about these two quotes is the range of opinions regarding what loudspeakers signify about the Mao years. Do they evoke "the good times and solidarity" of the Mao era, or are they merely symbolic of the Party imposing its will on the People? Or are both of these types of memory "selective," and do loudspeakers instead represent more nuanced and complex feelings of nostalgia in the minds of those that lived

[3] The word 'people,' when occurring in the phrases "the People" or "the Chinese People" is capitalized throughout to reflect the importance of the "People" as a political concept in the Mao era, as I explain below.

through the Mao years? Also, can loudspeakers alone represent the sound, or soundscape, of this period in history?

This dissertation is an examination of the Mao era soundscape, which focuses on the roles of sound technologies, as they pertained to the CCP's mass propaganda work. It explores the ways in which amplified sound was experienced by people in everyday life, in factories, villages, and schools; and how people in turn contributed, voluntarily or otherwise, to the soundscape, by using their voice to sing, shout slogans or criticism, or "speak bitterness" (*su ku*) (诉苦). This soundscape study also explores the fears and anxieties that individuals felt because of noise; the hopes that Party officials had for sonic propaganda, and whether or not these dreams were realized; the usage of radio for Chinese soft power efforts abroad; and the international perspectives on the Chinese Communist soundscape at the height of the Cold War.

The broader issues this dissertation addresses are: the importance of sound as a subject-making force in the early PRC, and how audibility became as much a trap as visibility (Foucault 1979, 200), as China started on its path towards becoming a unique form of modern disciplinary society. This dissertation shows the early stages of this process, in which the "capricious expression of the sovereign's will" – which, in Foucault's conception of the rise of disciplinary societies, should have been absent – still pertained, through the figure of Mao, and how this contributed in a significant way to the noisy chaos that characterized the internalization of obedience and meting out of punishments in this period, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Sound, broadly speaking, was crucial in refashioning the relationship between the (Communist) Party (*gongchandang* 共产党) and the People (*renmin* 人民), and between individuals and the Masses (*qunzhong* 群众). Sound technologies were also of

significance in actually producing these categories, and in circulating knowledge of them so that they became a part of everyday reality.

In using the terms "Party," "People," and "Masses," throughout this work, rather than the traditional conceptions of "state" and "society," I draw influence from the work of Elizabeth Perry (1994) who argues that "[there] was no monolithic Chinese society during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, nor was there a single Chinese state," as well as the Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson edited volume *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China's Era of High Socialism* (2015), which develops on the more nuanced understanding of these abstractions, and details how the political campaigns and propaganda, directed by Party Center, were really experienced by citizens in the early PRC. I employ the labels mentioned above, and capitalize them, also to underscore their especial significance during the Mao era, and to emphasize that they were constructed ideas (People and Masses being arguably more abstract than Party). The People and the Masses were both concepts that connoted considerable veneration in the Mao years, as Lin Chun explains:

> [Whereas] in English, with an air of elitist condescension, the term 'masses' conjures up the loss of individuality in an indistinct crowd of people, during the Mao era, to be part of the 'revolutionary masses' was to belong to a collective political subject, which *amplified one's sense of individual worth and glory*. Today, China's ordinary people could only dream of such substantial and symbolic respect. (Chun 2019, 121; emphasis mine)

The symbol of the "People" was equally, or perhaps more "substantial," as the novelist Yu Hua details:

> In the past this was such a weighty phrase. Our country was called the People's Republic of China. Chairman Mao told us to 'serve the people.' The most important paper was the People's Daily. 'Since 1949 the people are the masters,' we learned to say. In my childhood years 'the people' was just as marvelous an expression as 'Chairman Mao,' and when I first began to read, these were the first words I mastered; I could write them even before I could write my own name or the names of my parents (Hua 2012, 3, 4)

The People and the Masses were both imagined conceptions of personhood and collective identity that were given life and a sense of immutability by audio technologies and sound-based propaganda during the Mao years. Sound technologies, therefore, played an important role in the interpellation of people as citizens in the early PRC, and in creating and inculcating the new political culture.

My analysis of this process, which is threaded throughout this work, is influenced in part by Laura Kunreuther's work on the impact of FM radio and the telephone, in producing the notions of "urban Nepalis" and the "Nepali diaspora" in Kathmandu (2006). In her study, Kunreuther refers to Judith Butler's (1997) expansion on Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, which argues for the "inaugarative" rather than the "descriptive" elements of interpellation, because, as Butler explains, interpellation "seeks to *introduce a reality* rather than report an existing one" (Kunreuther 2006, 325).[4] Kunreuther also cites the work of William Mazzarella (2004), who argues that media creates social entities such as "society," "nation," and "culture," before she details the specific situation in Kathmandu, and how FM radio "produces, as one of its persuasive effects, the idea that 'urban Nepalis' and a 'Nepali diaspora' are entities that exist prior to their mediation through the telephone or radio" (ibid., 325). This dissertation argues that a similar state of affairs was brought about in the Mao years, when the new political culture of the period, with its novel conceptions of class, the nation, the Party, the People, and the Masses, was introduced into reality, and continually reinforced by sound technologies. In this

[4] The emphasis is in Kunreuther's work, not the original piece by Butler.

way, these sound technologies played foundational roles in both the history of the PRC era, and the People's understanding of that history.

Sound was a vital element in binding individuals up with the Masses (as I explain in chapter one), which enabled the amplification of their own self-worth and glory (Chun, 121), at the same time as it connected the People-as-One (Lefort 1986). Through various forms of sound-based propaganda, targeted sonic harassment, and the repetitive structuring usage of sound, subjects were formed and the Party was able to penetrate everyday life at the grassroots to a very high level. The emotional and affective usage of radios and loudspeakers also impacted on people physically and mentally in deeply visceral ways, sometimes causing life-long damage, or long-lasting vastly altered attitudes towards hearing particular sounds, music, or noises. For all of these reasons, sound, both amplified and unamplified, has been of critical importance in defining the contours of modern and contemporary Chinese history.

The Soundscape: A Key Concept

To examine historical change in the Mao era, in terms of its series of mass campaigns, its shifts in power relations between social classes, and its numerous political and ideological developments, I believe that a soundscape study is ideal. A soundscape study, for reasons outlined below, brings new perspectives to our knowledge of what it was like as an ordinary citizen in the PRC living through the Mao years, and to our understanding of the period overall. As numerous striking accounts in this dissertation prove, this truly was an "era of sounds" (声音的时代) (Huang 2013, 194); the PRC before the age of television, the Internet, widespread newspaper circulation, and the majority of its population being literate, was a nation in which

information both trivial and consequential was transmitted, and made sense of, via the medium of sound.

For many people, the beginning and end of the Mao years were heard rather than seen, or at least heard before there was visual confirmation. When the People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered the west gates of Beijing (then known as Beiping) in January 1949, a truck, "opened the procession, its loudspeakers blaring the continuous refrain, Welcome to the Liberation Army on its arrival in Beiping! Welcome to the People's Army on its Arrival in Beiping! Congratulations to the People of Beiping on their liberation!" (Dikötter 2015, 23). 27 years later, in January 1976, when Jan Wong, a young Canadian Maoist studying in Beijing, heard the "state funeral dirge [booming]" from her campus loudspeakers, this was her call to pay attention, and how she learned of the death of Premier Zhou Enlai (165). News of Mao's death later that year was brought to her in a similar fashion; while out cycling, the same music blasted from an office building's loudspeaker, and compelled her to stop and mourn (173). As Wong states, regarding Zhou's death, though there had been some vague awareness that he was sick, "there had been no television reporters … outside his hospital, no day-by-day bulletins" (165). All the news about Zhou's sickness and eventual death was heard; people had heard rumors of ill health through the unofficial Maoist soundscape, and then heard news of his death, officially, over radios or loudspeakers. That the PRC of this period was "an era of sounds" is not only borne out by these descriptions of amplified sound usage on momentous occasions, however, as I stated above, and it is by taking note and analyzing the admixture of both quotidian and epoch defining sounds that we can improve our understanding of the period as lived, track historical changes, and ascertain people's sensory experiences of these changes.

It is for these reasons why soundscape studies have particularly appealed to historians in recent decades. The amount of research on sound, broadly conceived, in various time periods and locations, has grown exponentially since the publication of *The Tuning of the World* by R. Murray Schafer in 1977,[5] and the soundscape concept in particular has inspired a great many scholars working across different fields (Hirschkind 2006; Birdsall 2012; Ehrick 2015; E. Thompson 2002), some of whom have drawn directly from Schafer's work, and some of whom have applied the term soundscape very differently.[6] The works of these scholars form part of the broader field of sound studies, which has also grown significantly in recent decades. Sound studies and soundscape theory have proven influential especially since the 1990s, in part because of their thematic overlapping with other significant academic trends: namely the "affective turn" (Kim and Bianco 2007; Massumi 1995) and the rise of "sensory history" (Smith M. 2007; Williamson 2013; Mottahedeh 2009), which intersects, naturally, with studies of historical sound. Scholars working within these areas – on studies of affect, and sensory histories - are concerned with analyzing bodily experiences and the ways in which humans interact with and are affected by their environment. As studies concerning sound also frequently involve similar considerations, it is clear why, with the growth of affective and sensory studies, there has been a concomitant rise in interest in sound studies.

Another factor informing the recent profusion of soundscape studies is the versatility and plasticity of the term itself. A soundscape is, according to Schafer, "the sonic environment," and "any portion of the sonic environment regarded as a field for study," and the term can be applied to "actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape

[5] In this dissertation I use the 1993 edition of Schafer's work; see works cited.
[6] Charles Hirschkind, for example, does not cite Schafer in *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (2006), which deals with the circulation of cassette sermons and their impact on ethical self-improvement in the Middle East, and does not share Schafer's ecologically focused motivations.

montages, particularly when considered as an environment" (274, 275). Therefore, a "soundscape" could refer to the sounds of a certain place, such as Vancouver, where Schafer has carried out various soundscape studies and soundscape recordings; as well as the sonic montages of Bernie Krause (1938 -), the soundscape ecologist, who has recorded numerous environments around the world, often for ambient film soundtracks or museum installations.

A soundscape can be studied in the same way that a landscape can be studied, Schafer asserts, meaning that we can consider "ground" and "figure," and we can listen for soundscape features such as "keynote" sounds, "signal" sounds and "soundmarks."[7] A historical soundscape study can involve an examination of the same categories of sounds, but it naturally requires a different sort of research methodology. A "reconstruction" of a historical soundscape, Schafer claims, could be put together using "earwitness" sources, that is descriptions of sounds from people that have "directly experienced and intimately known" them (19). Earwitness accounts can be found in any texts, though Schafer emphasizes novelists in particular as leaving us with the most vivid descriptions of otherwise lost sounds. Like many recent studies of historical sound, however, this dissertation uses the earwitness theory more broadly, so as to avoid privileging the accounts of lettered elites and overlooking the diverse everyday experiences at the grassroots level.

The emergence of the soundscape concept, and the wider field of sound studies, contributes to studies of history for a number of reasons, though there are some potential obstacles to the approach that need to be circumvented, or mitigated.[8] The soundscape concept

[7] These classifications of soundscape sounds will be returned to at various points of this dissertation, where I will explain their meaning in detail.

[8] Historians of sound can face challenges in attempting to ascertain the veracity or true meaning of earwitness accounts. One reason for this is that our conceptions of how an individual hears might not be the same as it was for the people in the period we are studying. Our sense of hearing is informed by our understanding of modern anatomy, and our own way of listening is socially, culturally, and historically constructed. As Penelope Gouk explains in her work, "Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls: Early Modern Medical Explanation's for Music's Effects" (2004), we

can encourage historians to research extensively, creatively, and against the grain, because sound could, theoretically, be inscribed in the historical record in a variety of formats, and for a variety of reasons. Some sounds form part of the historical record because they have been encoded via mimetic representation, simile, or punctuation, and some sounds have been documented by earwitnesses, because they have struck someone as particular unusual, disturbing, or noticeable. By researching widely, therefore, and using an array of sources – textual or otherwise, as I shall detail below – historians of sound can bring our attention to moments, trends, and people from history that might otherwise have been forgotten.

In this study I use a diverse range of textual sources – memoirs, newspaper articles, foreign intelligence reports, etc. -, as well as oral interviews, to uncover sound technology usage, and attitudes and emotions related to sound and noise in the Mao era. My usage of textual earwitness accounts was influenced by scholars such as: Richard Cullen Rath, who examines books, letters and pamphlets to outline the "sonic beliefs" of American Puritans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (2003); Mark M. Smith, who depicts the American Civil War soundscapes of the home front, the slave home front, and battlefields, through analyzing letters, memoirs, and newspapers (2001); and Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2014), who probes

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have a very different understanding of how we hear and what music does to the body now, than people had in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Aural historians need to be aware of such different perceptions across time and across cultures in order to understand the perspectives and subjectivities of listeners. Another challenge is that sound is notoriously difficult to describe with accuracy, even in a contemporaneous way, and even among professional sound-engineers, as Thomas Porcello explains (2004), and this issue is only compounded when we attempt to understand what exactly the historical ear heard (Sophia Rosenfeld, 2011). Another issue with historical textual descriptions of sound concerns the question of who wrote the text, and who or what they were describing. As D. R. Woolf (2004) and Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2014) have pointed out, most of our written historical sources are from elite lettered men, and if we were merely to report how they described sounds, we would be in danger of recreating the same prejudices and power relations encoded within the source. Relying on textual sources produced by more privileged members of society could also lead to a historian assuming the universality of elite experiences, and disregarding the diversity of practices and understandings related to sound at the grassroots in society. In this study I have endeavored to avoid these possible pitfalls by consulting a wide variety of texts, including self-published and online works, and carrying out oral interviews with a diverse range of subjects, not just urban based and university educated individuals, as detailed in the appendix.

written descriptions of sound in order to understand, among other issues, the production of knowledge and conceptions of personhood in nineteenth-century Colombia.

This dissertation also draws from works that pay heed to the relationship between sound and space. In my examination of the Tiananmen Square soundscape; the usage of amplified sound in schools, factories, and villages; and the Party's long-term efforts to extend their sonic infrastructure and aural propaganda capabilities, so as to broadcast effectively from China's center to its peripheries, and beyond, I take inspiration from: Adam Kielman's study of the contemporary sonic infrastructure of the PRC, which concerns audio technology, musical circulation, recording companies, and physical media (2016); Bruce R. Smith's analysis of the city, the country and the court in early modern England, which explores various subjects such as social class and political structures (1999);[9] and Niall Atkinson's descriptions of the "acoustic regime" of Florence before the Renaissance, in which the city's bell towers communicated messages "from center to periphery, from government to citizens" (2013, 74-75).

This soundscape study is also built upon previous academic histories of sound reproduction, such as Jonathan Sterne's *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (2003), which traces a history of sound through examining the creation and introduction of telephony, phonography and radio, and Lisa Gitelman's exploration of recorded sound and digital networks (2006). Sterne and Gitelman's investigations of the ways in which sound media were imagined, created, popularized and ultimately shaped by the specific societies and cultures into which they were introduced, have influenced this work in various ways. My analysis of audio technology usage in the PRC strives to counteract simplistic "impact

[9] Like Smith, my examination of sound and everyday life is also inspired by Michel de Certeau's concept of "ways of operating," or "tactics [that] individuals [use] as they [engage] with the people, ideas and spaces around them" (1984: 2).

narratives" and technological determinism, and instead outlines the ways in which loudspeakers and radios were molded by their actual utilization at the grassroots in the Mao era. In *The Audible Past*, Sterne argues that, "modernity marks a new level of plasticity in the social organization, formation, and movement of sound. These moments of plasticity, where the social organization of sound can and does change, are perhaps the defining characteristic of the modern sound media" (2003, 182). Sterne examines "the moments prior to [the] crystallization" of the forms that media would come to take, and along similar lines Gitelman tracks, "the contested relations of force that determine the pathways by which new media may eventually become old hat" (2006, 6). In this dissertation I also analyze the social organization of sound in the Mao era, as well as the intense usage of new media in everyday life, up to the point where it became "old hat," and a ubiquitous annoyance that many listeners learned to adapt to.[10]

Two post-2000 works that have refined Schafer's soundscape concept have also directly influenced this dissertation. Emily Thompson, in *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (2004), employs soundscape theory, but explains that her usage of the term differs from Schafer's, in part because it is not informed by the same issues that animated him – noise pollution and the environmental movements of the 1970s. Thompson defines the soundscape instead, as:

> [An] auditory or aural landscape. Like a landscape, a soundscape is simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment; it is both a world and a culture constructed to make sense of that world. The physical aspects of a soundscape consist not only of the sounds themselves … but also the material objects that create, and sometimes destroy, those sounds. A soundscape's cultural aspects incorporate scientific and aesthetic ways of listening, a listener's relationship to their environment, and the social circumstances that dictate who gets to hear what. A soundscape, like a landscape, ultimately has more to do with civilization than with nature, and as such, it is constantly undergoing construction and always undergoing change. (Thompson 2004: 1, 2).

[10] My analysis of this latter issue is influenced by Sterne's concept of "audile techniques" (2003).

Thompson's soundscape research, therefore, takes into account not just the sounds of an environment and an individual's perception of environmental changes, but also a range of political, cultural, scientific and social issues, as well as the historical changes of civilizations. An important focus of Thompson's work is the "new sound" obtained in modern buildings "from concert halls to corporate offices, from acoustical laboratories to the soundstages of modern picture studios" which was "[clear], direct and nonreverberant" owing to architectural improvements and the development of sound-absorbing materials (3). These changes "transformed traditional relationships between sound, space, and time" (4), and fostered new attitudes and perceptions towards sound, noise, and silence. Similar to Thompson, in this soundscape study I also show how technological changes transformed relationships between sound, space, and time, in various settings across China – at the rebuilt Tiananmen Square; in factories, schools, and villages - which also represented, as with Thompson's study of American modernity, an attempt toward "mastery over nature and the annihilation of time and space" (4), but was, of course, aimed at establishing a very different configuration of modernity, producing greatly contrasting attitudes to noise, silence, and private space.

Carolyn Birdsall, in *Nazi Soundscapes: Sound, Technology and Urban Space in Germany, 1933-1945* (2012), also finds value in the soundscape concept, stating her belief that it "remains an important methodological intervention for insisting on the cultural and historical specificity of sound, its embeddedness in material landscapes, and involvement in power relations" (26), but she offers a sustained critique of Schafer's comments regarding sound technology and its negative impacts on the soundscape and people's modes of listening (21). Birdsall outlines in detail the paradoxes of Schafer's attitudes towards technology (23), and

argues that Schafer (along with Barry Truax) gives "an unsatisfactory reading of the past, mistakenly characterizing the modern listening condition almost exclusively in terms of loss and desensitization" (24). Birdsall also stresses her usage of "phenomenological perspectives" to "reflect on auditory experience and affect" and explains how her study avoids "simple oppositions between the auditory and visual, given that all media are mixed media, and draw on mixed sensory modes" (26).[11] The elaborations on Schafer's original work by Thompson and Birdsall have informed my utilization of the soundscape concept in various ways, such as: my avoidance of simplified binary oppositions between the auditory and visual; my focus on the multifarious contexts that define a listener's relationship with their environment; and my examination of the involvement of sound in Mao era intersocial power relations (chapter four).

My work on the application of audio technologies in everyday life in the early PRC is influenced by Birdsall's adjustments to Schafer's concept, as well as her focus on both the "affective charge" of sound in various contexts and the "corporeal basis" of listening, which I also extend to consider the corporeal basis of vocal practices. These phenomenological aspects of sensing sound, both in production and reception, underpin my examinations of such things as: slogan chanting, speaking bitterness, being the subject of targeted sonic harassment, and the auditory perception of extremely loud sounds. As stated above, such experiences were crucial to the development of the new political culture in the early PRC.

This soundscape study also attends to the fact that various scholars have found fault with both Schafer's original soundscape concept, and his general attitudes towards sound, noise,

[11] Jonathan Sterne lists some common examples of such simple oppositions between the auditory and visual, present in the work of some scholars, in his "audiovisual litany" in *The Audible Past* (15). The "litany" includes: "hearing is spherical, vision is directional; hearing immerses its subjects, vision offers a perspective; sound comes to us, but vision travels to its object; hearing is concerned with interiors, vision is concerned with surfaces; hearing involves physical contact with the outside world, vision requires distance from it …"

technology, and human relationships with the environment, in recent decades. Schafer's "purism, nostalgia and technophobia have been widely criticized," as Marie Thompson explains (2017: 5), and the potential flaws of soundscape studies have been commented on by Tim Ingold (2007) and Stefan Helmreich (2010), among others. The criticisms of Schafer's work, and soundscape studies generally, have encouraged scholars to extensively modify the soundscape concept, as mentioned above, and examine aspects related to sound, noise, and audio technologies that either Schafer neglected, or which could be interpreted very differently according to alternative historical, social, and cultural contexts, or simply because of contrasting matters of taste.

I believe that soundscape theory still represents an important approach for making interventions in historical studies, and bringing our attention to neglected human experiences. A soundscape is, as Emily Thompson outlines, "both a world and a culture constructed to make sense of that world" (1), which is what makes it an effective concept for examining both the "new world" (to use Chang-tai Hung's phrasing (2011)) forged from Maoist ideology, and the culture constructed to make sense of it. A soundscape study redresses the ocularcentrism (the privileging of vision) informing the western academic tradition too (Jay, 1988), which has also impacted on previous narratives of the Mao era. In this dissertation I aim to prove that a soundscape study can provide important new perspectives on everyday life in the Mao years, and yield new insights on developments in the relationships between the Party and the People, and between individuals and the Masses, and also between individuals and their broader environment, whether they were in schools or factories, the city, or the countryside.

Chinese Historical Sound Studies

As the Party's mouthpiece the *People's Daily (Renmin Ribao)* explained in a 1950 editorial, "radio broadcasting is the single most powerful educational and propaganda tool for the masses," with "outstanding potential … especially … in places where transportation and communication are inconvenient; for the large number of illiterate people; and in cases where newspaper circulation is difficult to achieve" (Kielman 2017, 221). As the CCP knew, the two main reasons why amplified sound had significant power, compared with printed media, were: the low literacy rate, and the poor infrastructure that existed when the PRC was established. According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, the literacy rate in the PRC in 1950 was 20%,[12] and at this time China was considered to be, "less well provided with transport facilities than any other large country in the world" (Comtois 1990, 784).

From numerous historical accounts of the Mao era, contained in memoirs, diaries, archival records, newspaper reports, and the observations of foreigners, it is plain that for many people, amplified sound from radios and loudspeakers permeated everyday life. People were frequently called upon to join the soundscape too; they were instructed to use their voices in chants at parades, to speak bitterness about pre-1949 grievances and deliver panegyrics on the benefits that the Party had supposedly brought them since Liberation (in a process known as *yi ku si tian* 忆苦思甜).[13] As the scholar and philosopher Hu Shih (胡适) said of life in the early PRC, and under Communism more broadly: "We know, of course, that there is no freedom of speech ... in Communist countries … [but] few persons realize that there is no freedom of silence, either. Residents of a Communist state are required to make positive statements of belief

[12] Ted Plafker, "China's Long – but Uneven – March to Literacy," *International Herald Tribune*, Feb 12th 2001. https://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/12/news/chinas-long-but-uneven-march-to-literacy.html, accessed 06/01/2018.
[13] A later practice, which developed from "speaking bitterness" (mentioned on page 3)

and loyalty."[14] Sound was required, as Hu Shih argued, to establish and affirm the bonds between the Party and the People, and given the Party's focus on constructing an effective nationwide sonic infrastructure, and their understanding of its crucial importance for propaganda work, it was inevitable that sound, broadly conceived, played various significant roles in everyday life, and suffuses historical records of the period.

It is surprising therefore, that only very recently have scholars turned their focus to the topic of sound in Mao era China. Conversely, the visual culture of the Mao years has been well studied (Hung, W. 2005; Hung, C. 2011), and what dominates in the popular imagination about this period is captivating images such as: the *Little Red Book*, the Red Guards, big character posters, mass rallies, and large parades at Tiananmen Square. The various roles played by sound, however, have mostly been neglected, or at least sidelined in China studies. The significance of Maoist China has been largely ignored in the field of sound studies too, which, despite its interdisciplinary nature, has:

> [Remained] deeply committed to Western intellectual lineages and histories. As one example, of the dozens of books about sound published by MIT press – a leader in science and technology studies, philosophies of aesthetics, and cognition – none is principally invested in non-Western perspectives or subjects. Sound studies has often reinforced Western ideals of a normative subject, placed within a common context of hearing and listening. Presumptions of universality have also led scholars to treat sounds as stable objects that have predictable, often technologically determined, effects on a generalized perceptual consciousness, what might even be reduced to an entire "human condition." (Novak and Sakakeeny: 2015, 7)[15]

To some extent this state of affairs is now changing, however, and a field of Chinese sound studies is beginning to emerge. Scholars of Chinese history and contemporary China are

[14] "Danger Zones: No Freedom of Silence," *Time Magazine*, October 2nd 1950 Vol. LVI, No. 14. https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,813415,00.html, accessed 07/29/22.
[15] Mark M. Smith also remarks on this western-centric tendency in *Hearing History* (2004), stating that, "the field of aural history is young and work on, for example, the aural dimensions of gender and the history of listening, sound, and noise outside of the United States and Europe begs for detailed attention and investigation" (2004, intro x).

starting to address the issues mentioned by Novak, Sakakeeny, and Smith, producing works that are in conversation with North America and Europe focused sound studies literature, as well as works that speak to the unique nature of the PRC's soundscape. This new Chinese sound studies literature is building, in part, on foundations laid by scholars of Chinese music, Chinese cultural history, and Chinese STS (Science and Technology studies).[16] This dissertation is influenced to varying degrees by many of these works, and although I focus more on the technological mediation of the Party and People, rather than specific pieces of music, some scholarship on music and propaganda informed the preliminary research of this study,[17] and the connections between music, propaganda and education are discussed in chapter three.

Literature concerning modern and contemporary China and sound studies, much of which was published after I began my research on the Mao era soundscape, has had a greater influence on my dissertation. In a general sense, all new literature in the field of Chinese sound studies has shaped my own research, as it has encouraged me to reflect more deeply on my usage of concepts from sound studies in the specific context of the early PRC, but this dissertation engages more directly with issues also explored in the following: Andrew Jones' *Circuit Listening: Chinese Popular Music in the Global 1960s* (2020), which examines transistor technology, discusses the ubiquity of the "The East is Red," and details the role of consumer

[16] In terms of sound media and Chinese history studies, the radio has been a particular focus for dissertations, articles and books in the last few years including: Laura de Giorgi's examination of the policies and plans of the Nationalist Party (KMT) for wireless radio broadcasting, which "laid the foundations for the development of a national-level cultural institution that aimed … at mass propaganda and education" (2014: 1); Wei Lei's (2019) analysis of the history of radio in China from the Republic of China era to the present day, covering such issues as health infomercials, drive radio, and talkback radio in post-Mao China; and Wang Yu's work on the importance of radio in state building and social integration in the 1950s and 1960s PRC, which deals with matters such as the voice, hearing and listening, (without a deep engagement with sound studies literature) (2019). Earlier works on radio and communications in the early PRC include: (Jan 1967; Howse 1960; Liu 1975)

[17] My preliminary research covered works such as: (Baranovitch 2003; Clark (ed.) 2016; de Kloet 2010; Hung C. 1985; Kagan 1963). Isabel K. F. Wong's chapter "Geming Gequ: Songs for the Education of the Masses" (Clark and McDougall (eds.) 1984) was also an influence, and Andrew Jones' *Yellow Music* (2001) is referenced in chapter three.

electronics in circulating modern popular music across Asia; Adam Kielman's 2017 dissertation, which is detailed above; Jing Wang's 2012 dissertation, which describes different conceptions of listening and their connection with notions of freedom, affective territories, and the performances of sound artists. Jones' work informs, in part, my contextualization of the Maoist soundscape within broader global cultural flows, as well as my exploration of the ways in which sounds and aural political messaging circulated and became ubiquitous. Kielman's "sonic infrastructure" concept is explored in the second chapter of this dissertation, and Jing Wang's research on listening and affect informed my research on earwitness accounts of the Mao years.

Several articles from the last few years attest to the wealth of untapped resources available for studies of sound in modern Chinese history, and the range of potential lines of inquiry, some of which also overlap with the concerns of this dissertation. Paulina Hartono has written on broadcasting voices in the early PRC (2020); Jie Li outlines a "media history of the wireless and wired soundscape in Mao-era China," (2020), and details the "hot noise" of open air cinema in the same period (2020); Dayton Lekner analyses sonic experiences, silence, voice and affect, during the Hundred Flowers and Anti-Rightist campaigns of the 1950s (2021); and Chuan Xu studies magnetic recording in the 1960s and 1970s, and the "rapid popularization" of compact cassettes and recorders in the 1980s (2019). All of these works have uncovered a wealth of interesting material, and their theoretical interventions have contributed much to the emergence of the field of Chinese sound studies. This dissertation also aims to advance this new area of research, and though it connects with similar subjects and ideas from the works above, it makes new and unique arguments about sound in the early PRC. This dissertation is also intended to provide a more universal soundscape study of the Mao period, the first full length study of its kind, and as its title suggests, it seeks to examine the political aspects of sound, in

particular the way in which it produced and continually renegotiated the relationship between the Party and the People.

My analysis of the sonic politics of the early PRC bears relation to existing scholarship on the connections between politics, sound and music, but is differentiated in its focus and conclusions because of the unique nature of the Mao era political culture, which entailed distinctive applications of amplified sound in everyday life, and idiosyncratic vocal practices in the Party's propaganda work. As Tom Western argues, in his analysis on the sonic politics of refugee shelters in Athens, "[music] and sound are ways in which people make claims on belonging and are ways in which solidarity is performed, but they are elsewhere heard as noise and become a means of creating borders in urban space" (124). Like Western, I also explore the relations between sound and noise, and questions of belonging and identity, and consider how both "[certain] sounds and people [were] heard as fitting or not fitting within 'appropriate soundscapes.'"[18] My study of Mao era sonic politics addresses concerns such as: how sound and vocal practices cultivated feelings of belonging, fungibility, or being a pariah (chapter one); the perception of certain sounds as being fitting or not fitting to the permitted soundscape (chapters three and four); and the designation of sounds as noise, in order to create dividing lines or borders (chapter five),[19] which involved the CCP attempting to construct a "sound wall" (Schafer 1993, 152) around the PRC in order to shut out the harmful soundscape of the United States.

This dissertation's examination of the sonic politics of the Mao years, which also takes into account the corporeal basis of vocal practices, as I stated above, is informed by Carolyn Birdsall's research on the "body politics and disciplining of the senses" in Nazi Germany too

[18] The term "appropriate soundscapes" originally comes from: Susanna Trnka, Christine Dureau, and Julie Park, eds. *Senses and Citizenships: Embodying Political Life*, p. 2.
[19] The "aural border" concept is also explored by Western in: Tom Western. "Securing the Aural Border: Fieldwork and Interference in Post-war BBC Audio Nationalism." *Sound Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 77-97.

(34), and her argument that "bodily practices with sound and rhythm are … integral to establishing selfhood, patterns of identity and belonging" (34), and Amanda Weidman's work on the voice and its relationship with "identity, status, subjectivity, and publics" (2014, 37). A soundscape study centered on the sonic politics of the Mao era enables me to draw attention to facets of everyday life that have previously been overlooked, and also sheds light on the various political roles of sound in an underexplored cultural context. For example, as I detail in chapter one, the "bodily anguish" involved in vocal practices performed in both large-scale public events – such as National Day and May Day parades at Tiananmen Square or elsewhere in China – and in speaking bitterness was crucial in constructing the new political culture of the Mao years, especially in terms of constructing and reinforcing class statuses, and circulating Maoist ideology and the Party's viewpoints on Chinese history and social structures.

Because of this centering on sonic politics, this dissertation connects also with Nicole Huang's "total soundscape" concept, outlined in her 2013 article, "Listening to Films: Politics of the Auditory in 1970s China," which explores modes of listening in the late Mao years, and examines film soundtracks that were edited for "auditory consumption outside of the theater, on gramophone and radio, before television entered individual households in China" (1). In this article Huang, in conversation with Schafer's soundscape theory, and Emily Thompson's development of the concept, uses the term "total soundscape" to describe the sonic environment of China in the late Mao and early Reform years. This develops on Schafer's original theory, Huang explains, by:

> [Removing] the concept from its pastoral origin and [resituating] it in a highly politicized society where every corner of social life was thoroughly saturated with centrally ordained and politically charged sound bytes [sic]. Sounds stemmed from the Centre and radiated to all corners of the society, including those where light failed to penetrate (190, 191).

Huang goes on to detail the dominance of the loudspeaker over public and private domains in this period, exploring its visual symbolism, through an explication of various compelling images. Huang's "total soundscape" concept is critiqued by Laurence Coderre (2021), however, in her study of the material and media culture of the Cultural Revolution period, in which she argues:

> [The] "total" lends itself all too easily to an unproductive discussion of totalitarian cultural production and an excavation of totalitarian realism in sound, much as Igor Golomstock has attempted in his study of Nazi, Stalinist, Italian Fascist, and Maoist art. In other words, it may be tempting to approach the "total soundscape" as a product of a particular sonic—and especially musical—aesthetic. We could posit, in short, not only a Cultural Revolution soundscape but also a particular Cultural Revolution sound, thereby assuming the existence of sound or music as a discrete, analyzable, aesthetic object in the process. (31)

Coderre chooses not to invoke the "total" soundscape concept also because of its "tendency to collapse the necessary conceptual gap between the aspiration to centralized sonic totality … and the inevitable historical failure to fulfill that aspiration" (32). This dissertation also engages with the "total soundscape" concept, by evaluating whether "every corner of social life" truly was "thoroughly saturated with centrally ordained and politically charged sound bytes," and the extent to which "sounds stemmed from the Centre and radiated to all corners of the society." My utilization of the concept, and consideration of Coderre's caveats on it, is not designed to pronounce Huang's claim correct or incorrect, however, but simply to use the idea as a means of understanding the nature of the Mao era soundscape, and the Party's level of success with their sonic infrastructure construction in the early PRC. My conclusions on the total soundscape differ from Huang's, but this dissertation deals with the entirety of the Mao era, and not the 1970s exclusively, as Huang's article does, and also does not address film culture or propaganda images.

The main contribution of this soundscape study, I believe, lies outside of this discussion. The value of this dissertation is in its examination of particular historical questions about the Mao period through the lens of sound studies theory, as well as its usage of sources that have either not been examined before – archival sources, including those from digital archives, and my oral interview testimonies – or have not been collated and examined in relation to methodology and subject matter from the field of sound studies. By examining the Mao era soundscape, I attempt to bring new perspectives to our understanding of an issue that informs the framework of this dissertation: the technologically mediated relationship between the Party and the People. These new perspectives pertain to the unique ways in which a new political culture was constructed and then fortified by: the circulation of Maoist ideology through sound technologies; vocal practices performed in parades, struggle sessions, and speaking bitterness events; the recirculation across the mediascape of these vocal practices – what was ostensibly the voice of the People – which legitimized and reinforced Maoist ideology; and the "sonic enactment of body politics" (Birdsall, 34), which involved constructing "the People" (or "the Masses") by encouraging the release of "bodily anguish" via the deeply emotional and affective production and reception of sound. The numerous accounts concerning such practices, analyzed throughout this dissertation, show that the reach of the Party's sonic propaganda was never truly "total," but they do vividly illustrate that for many people the Mao years really were an "era of sounds," which allowed for no real "freedom of silence."

Sources and Methodology

This dissertation has developed from research carried out in courses on sound studies, media studies and 20th century Chinese history at UC Santa Barbara, and is based on my 3 months of

fieldwork in Shanghai at the end of 2019, and digital archival research thereafter. My fieldwork in China consisted of archival research carried out at the Shanghai Municipal Archives (上海市档案局) and research at the Shanghai Library (上海图书馆), along with a series of oral interviews. I also conducted a handful of oral interviews in Toronto in late December 2019 and one WeChat oral interview in early 2020.[20] All interviewees were introduced to me by academic and personal contacts, or were acquaintances of individuals I had already interviewed. The second leg of my planned six months of fieldwork in China would have involved more archival research in Shanghai and further interviews in Beijing and Tianjin. Owing to the COVID-enforced cancellation of this section of my fieldwork, however, and recurring periods of lockdown in the United States, I consulted digital archives to complete my research, and also made extensive use of memoirs for my earwitness accounts of the Mao years. My digital archival research mainly focused on the following resources: The British Foreign Office Files for China, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, the *People's Daily* (人民日报) database, and CUHK's *Minjian lishi* (Folk History) (民间历史) database.

Before fieldwork, my preliminary research was technology focused, concentrating particularly on descriptions of radio and loudspeaker usage in everyday life.[21] In time I broadened my inquiries to also research unusual sounds that people heard; people's thoughts on

[20] See appendix for all interviewee details.

[21] This initial emphasis on the radio and loudspeaker in my research was informed by previous soundscape studies on audio technologies (Hirschkind; Birdsall; E. Thompson), and the importance of these tools in the CCP's own particular attempts to annihilate time and distance, which characterized modernity in the Socialist bloc in a similar fashion to how it represented modernity in the United States (E. Thompson, 4). Radio itself, as Daniel Fisher states, is a "spatial metaphor," which indexes the cultural imagination of the radial, 'broadcast' signal that gathers its audience through concentric waves of sound" (Fisher 2015, 153). Loudspeakers have different connotations (as detailed in the opening sections) and varying ways of calling attention and constructing audiences and publics. The research for this soundscape study began with the analysis of the application and reception of both of these audio technologies in order to understand how Party Center attempted to bypass the obstacles of time and distance, along with the other numerous severe hindrances they faced in that period, to construct an audience, a public, new class subjects, and the People.

any changes in their sonic environment; how they felt when producing or hearing certain sounds; and any other issues related to sound, sound effects, noise, silence, listening, hearing, and being overheard. In this way I expanded the scope of my study to consider emotion and affect, and the relationship that individuals had with their aural landscape. Much of the memoir material I consulted in my initial period of research was "scar literature," or "literature of the wounded," *Shanghen wenxue* (伤痕文学). This term is often applied quite broadly to all works of literature or memoir that deal with people's sufferings during the Cultural Revolution era, though some scholars use the term only to describe earlier works from 1977-1981 that examined these traumas in the hope that "honest analysis and individual responsibility [would] lead to reform" (Knight 2016: 297). Scar literature has frequently been criticized for its "formulaic and didactic content" (Knight, 297), and some "testimonial literature" (another term for later scar literature), also overlaps with the field of "misery literature," according to some observers, a genre that focuses on subjects such as "child characters who endure various forms of physical and emotional abuse," which are often "ephemeral and of poor literary quality" but that nevertheless appeal to a very wide audience of readers (Mastey 2016: 149). I believe that the "didactic" nature of these works, however, does not truly extend to descriptions of sounds, hearing, listening, or singing etc., as these tend to be smaller details within accounts of everyday life and mass campaigns. As sound was not the major focus of these works, it is unlikely that these would be biased by any didactic point these authors wished to make.

It is possible, however, that some descriptions of radio/loudspeaker usage, singing, enforced listening, slogan shouting or noise etc. could be "formulaic," in some sense clichéd, or misremembered and perhaps unduly influenced by other stories and impressions from literature, movies, conversations etc., but this is a more general issue that applies to dealing with the

memory of any sort of witness to historical events. As Gail Hershatter explains, in *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past*. (2014):

> When a possibility exists of talking to those who witnessed or participated in past events, the project of "making the invisible visible" by simply asking and recording is seductive, but chimerical. Oral and written sources are both fragmented; neither is wholly reliable. Both are essential … not because combining them offers a definitive account of the past, but because each type of source bears different traces of the circumstances in which it was generated. Different types of sources talk back to, ignore, or interrupt one another, and awareness of this is crucial to the crafting of a good-enough story that does not smooth over such dissonances. (15)

Hershatter's methodological approach informed my research, when it came to the initial usage of scar literature, when I conducted oral interviews in China and North America, and when I examined online memoirs. My collection of earwitness accounts of the Mao era soundscape have been used in conversation with each other, and I gathered from a variety of sources – contemporaneous and retrospective - in order to interrogate material for both assonances and dissonances. This earwitness material was also used in combination with archival documents and other texts that offered the perspective of the Party and its officials, so that I could form an understanding of the Mao era soundscape from the viewpoint of both the Party and the People, which helps with telling the "good-enough story" described by Hershatter.

In the archives I searched for material related to CCP organizations, municipal people's governments and mass organizations in Shanghai, and anything related to audio technology usage, such as regulations regarding radio ownership, broadcasting rules, and the organization of large broadcasting conferences. Much of this material was valuable background research, but was not used extensively in this dissertation, as I chose instead to center my view of the Party's role in the Mao era soundscape on one particular individual who was heavily involved in broadcasting work, Zuo Ying (左荧), who I introduce in detail in chapter two. My research into

the Party's broadcasting goals, which was informed by Liu (1974), Tuohy (2001) and Kielman (2017) among others, was also shaped by booklets I found in the Shanghai Library. These booklets,[22] which offered guidance on broadcasting work in rural areas, schools and factories, encouraged me to delimit my study to concentrate on these specific sites when attempting to understand the Party's aims for broadcasting and the types of challenges they faced.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One, "The Party and the People: Shifting Sonic Politics in Post-1949 Tiananmen Square," focuses on the technological mediation of large public events such as National Day and May Day parades at Tiananmen Square. I examine the influence of technology on the actual events at the square and the impacts of the nationwide broadcasting of these celebrations. I outline the architectural and technological developments of Tiananmen Square in the early PRC era, and consider the symbolism of these changes, and how they impacted on the staging of large spectacles. I look at slogan shouting and crowd behavior, considering Didier Anzieu's sonorous envelope theory, and what it suggests about the integration of citizens into the new nation. I also analyze how slogan shouting influenced individuals' perception of the Masses in the Mao era, the connections between sound and affect, and how it felt to be either a part of the crowd, or an outcast from it.

Chapter Two, "Sinking Deep into the Hearts of the People Through Sound: Zuo Ying and the Development of the PRC's Sonic Infrastructure" examines the buildup of a sonic infrastructure - meaning the spatial configurations of sound media tools, the radio and

[22] These booklets are: 《农村有线广播站》*Rural Wired Broadcasting Stations*, 《学校广播站》*School Broadcasting Stations*，《海伦广播站》*Hailun's Broadcasting Station*，《谈谈苏联的工厂广播站》*Talking About the Soviet Union's Factory Broadcasting Stations*，《一个农村有线广播站的成长》*The Growth of a Rural Wired Broadcasting Station*. Full citations are given in the works cited section.

loudspeaker – nationwide during the Mao years. Here I look more closely at technological developments and the statistics regarding installations of loudspeakers and the establishment of broadcasting stations, to present a picture of the prevalence of this technology in people's everyday lives. I look at two particular sites, factories and rural areas, and examine the writings of Zuo Ying (1917-1984), a broadcasting official and expert, to consider what the advantages and challenges were of using sound for propaganda work, and the overall goals of the Party for broadcasting.

Chapter Three, "Sonic Propagandizing: Sound, Noise, Music and Mass Persuasion in the Early PRC," turns to the actual content broadcast via the Mao era sonic infrastructure, and how it was received, to consider whether there truly was a "total soundscape" in this period, or if the Party fell short of its aims. I analyze how loudspeakers were used in schools, and detail the utilization of sound, music, sound effects, and noise, in the Party's propaganda work. I use memoirs, oral interview information, and archival records, to consider how it felt to experience and participate in the Mao era soundscape, and evaluate the effectiveness of the Party's aural propaganda techniques, such as "emotion raising," and the extreme usage of repetition. Also related to the ubiquitous nature of sound technology in everyday life, I look at the ways in which individuals adapted to persistent broadcasting of amplified sound, and consider (like Huang 2013) how they "listened in" or "listened against" the soundscape.

Chapter Four, "The Panaural People's Republic: Sonic Politics and Social Control in Mao's China," explores the connections between sound/noise and fear, discipline and anxiety. Following on from the detailing of amplified sound usage for organization and propagandizing in the previous chapter, I outline the role of sound reproducing tools in conducting struggle sessions and circulating political messaging that was designed to cause the People to accept the

supremacy of the Party, and to become self-disciplined. I also analyze slogan shouting and examine the various ways in which individuals reacted to extreme loudness and targeted sonic harassment in the soundscape. I examine the specific qualities of the loudspeaker that made it a useful tool for maintaining control over human bodies, space and time, and which also made it a particularly destructive force.

Chapter Five, "Competing Spheres of Sonic Influence: The Voice of America, Radio Peking, and the Specter of 'Brainwashing,'" broadens the scope of the dissertation to consider international perspectives on the Maoist soundscape. I explore the ways in which amplified sound tools were both an asset and a potential danger for the CCP at the height of the Cold War. I consider the attempts of the United States to use sound technologies to undermine stability in China, and how the Party fought against this in its propaganda campaign against the Voice of America, and in its usage of Radio Peking for improving Chinese soft power worldwide. I examine the concept of "brainwashing" too, and consider the usage of propaganda on both sides of the Cold War divide, assessing the capabilities of sound and radio technology for brainwashing citizens and adversaries. I analyze the ways in which this domestic propaganda intensified the attempts of both sides to strengthen their own broadcasting endeavors, and suppress the efforts of their enemy.

Chapter One
The Party and the People: Shifting Sonic Politics in Post-1949 Tiananmen Square

To most people visiting Beijing's Tiananmen Square today, from the Chinese mainland or elsewhere, it is images from the People's Republic of China (PRC) era (post-1949) that would most likely be called to mind. Tiananmen Square is a public political space, of great national importance and international renown, which evokes memories of the Mao Zedong years, past National and May Day parades, large rallies, and major public protests. Outside of China, the historical event most strongly associated with Tiananmen Square is the protest there that formed part of the wider democracy movement in 1989, which was violently suppressed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Images related to Tiananmen Square, such as Mao with the Red Guards at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and the "Tank Man" photograph, of the individual who defiantly stood before a column of People's Liberation Army (PLA) tanks in 1989, are regarded as iconic.

As this chapter will argue however, it is not just the famous images from Tiananmen Square that have an afterlife. The sounds, as well as the sights, at many historical Tiananmen Square events still evoke memories and have a sense of power. This sense of power, that I argue was present in the chanting and singing at Mao era (1949-1976) Tiananmen Square parades, rallies and other public events, is something that was apparent in post Mao public protests at Tiananmen Square, and is something that still needs to be carefully managed by the CCP.

Previous scholarship on public events at Tiananmen Square has mostly focused on the site's spatiality and the monuments and buildings there, in terms of their visual symbolism.[23] I

[23] Haiyan Lee's (2011) "The Charisma of Power and the Military Sublime in Tiananmen Square," Chang-tai Hung's (2007) "Mao's Parades: State Spectacles in China in the 1950s" and Wu Hung's (2005) *Remaking Beijing:*

argue, however, that the wider significance of Tiananmen Square public events, as ritual and propaganda, was more dependent on the sounds produced and received by their attendees, and broadcast simultaneously across China. In this chapter I will argue that these sounds were crucial in establishing the representation of PRC citizens as the "People-as-One," a unified body of people (including the Party and the leader) that excludes all enemies and outsiders, which Claude Lefort argues is one of the fundamental features of totalitarian regimes (Lefort 1986). This construction of the People-as-One in China, was enabled by sound, and in particular the sound of mass slogan shouting and singing at Tiananmen Square public events. Drawing from the psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu's "sonorous envelope" theory, explained in detail below, I argue that sound was crucial in binding people together, and giving them a sense of protection and courage, which often caused large crowds to become threatening to perceived enemies.

Using earwitness accounts from several sources, including memoirs, oral interviews, and British Foreign Office Records, among others, I explain how the sonorous envelope forged by large-scale Tiananmen Square public events, such as the May Day (May 1st -International Workers Day) and National Day parades (October 1st, which this chapter has a particular focus on), that were technologically mediated at the Square itself and broadcast throughout Mainland China on radios and loudspeakers, was integral in creating the image of the Chinese People as the People-as-One. I believe that an examination of the spatiality of Tiananmen Square in connection with the sounds of the parades and rallies held there, is therefore of importance in understanding the development of the Party and People relationship, as well as the development of totalitarianism in the PRC, and can provide perspectives on these points that could not be addressed in more ocularcentric studies. This soundscape study will, however, be aided by an

Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space, are good examples of scholarly works that analyze the visual symbolism of public events at Tiananmen Square.

understanding of the physical environment of Tiananmen Square, so I turn now to briefly outline the spatiality of the site and some of the visual studies and architectural literature regarding its various monuments and buildings.

The Visuality and Spatiality of Tiananmen Square

On October 1, 1949, when Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the PRC from the top of Tiananmen (the famous "gate" at the northern end of the plaza, known as the "Gate of Heavenly Peace"), he faced a T-shaped space, rather than the vast quadrangle that now exists. Extensive reconstruction work on this area in central Beijing, which necessitated the demolition and removal of numerous walls, gates, roads and various other pieces of architecture, began shortly afterwards, and by the time of the tenth anniversary of the PRC's founding, Tiananmen Square looked more or less as it does today.

This rapid transformation was motivated by the planned staging of a National Day parade on the PRC's tenth anniversary in 1959, to showcase the achievements of the CCP and the strength of a resurgent China. A variety of monuments and buildings were erected around the square before this event, each with a specific symbolic meaning that consecrated Mao, Maoist thought, the revolutionary history of the Chinese People, and foundational CCP doctrines. The new structures that, along with Tiananmen, surrounded the square included: the Great Hall of the People (the Congress), the Museum of Chinese History, and the Monument to the People's Heroes, which stands near the center of the plaza.

Shortly after Mao died in 1976, the CCP put 700,000 "volunteers" to work around the clock to construct a Memorial Hall honoring him (Schell 1994, 26). Mao's body was embalmed and it has been kept in the Memorial Hall (or Mausoleum), situated at the southern end of the

plaza, ever since. This building represents, according to Ellen Laing, a "repository of political symbolism signifying a closed chapter in the history of the [CCP] and the [PRC]" because it literally closes off Tiananmen Square (Laing quoted in Hung 2005, 130).

Laing contends that Tiananmen Square, with the construction of its surrounding buildings and monuments, became a symbolic political space. Each part of Tiananmen Square and its environs—in place by 1959—represented something about the CCP, the PRC and its leader: Mao's portrait was at the front and center of Tiananmen, an obvious symbol of the new leader's dominance; the Congress and the Chinese History Museum that flanked the square's sides, displayed the strength of the ruling government and China's long history; and the Monument to the People's Heroes reflected China's recent past (known as the *bainian chiru*, the "century of humiliation," 1839-1949, from the First Opium War to the founding of the PRC), its liberation, and the main architect and supposed beneficiary of its future: "the People," through its bas-relief representations of key historical revolutionary episodes, seen as "prototypes of 'people's revolution'" (Schell 1994, 25).[24]

Nelson Lee argues that it was the May 4, 1919 demonstration at Tiananmen, which was provoked by anger over the Treaty of Versailles, that converted this "empty space in front of [Tiananmen] into a public space of political significance" (Lee 2009, 32). Tiananmen and its surrounding area had long before this been regarded more as a central point in the Chinese national and cosmological perception, and in connection to a range of fundamental Chinese philosophical and cosmological concepts (Meyer 1991).[25] It was for these two main reasons, its

[24] The significance of the "People" was also apparent in the numerous expansions to the square before 1959. In 1949 the site had only enough space to hold 70,000 people; within ten years it could hold 600,000, though Mao had optimistically ordered it to be built "big enough to hold an assembly of one billion" (Hung 2005, 23).
[25] Such as the *yin-yang* and five-phases worldviews. According to Meyer, Beijing was "an idea long before it was a city" and this idea "gave shape and shape substance to the city and its surroundings, to the province in which it was located, to the whole of what we call China, and ultimately to the world," which was conceptualized according to Beijing, "the center to the circumference" (Meyer 1991, 1).

long history as a symbolic site, and its new function as a public political space, that the CCP chose Tiananmen to remain as the center of the capital in the early years of the PRC, and why it became a focal point around which the CCP rebuilt the city.[26] To Mao, who had the firm ideological belief that "revolution meant destruction and transformation," it was necessary and inevitable that Beijing should be greatly altered and remade in the image of himself, and the new regime (Hung 2005, 8).[27] This connection between Mao and Beijing, which remains to this day, is most evident at Tiananmen Square, at the heart of the capital city.[28]

Spatiality, Slogan Shouting, and the Body

Previous studies of public events at Tiananmen Square, like most cultural historical studies generally, have tended to privilege the visual over the aural. A result of this bias towards the visual is that, where the Party and People relationship is concerned, we are usually left with a clearer understanding of what messages the Party was attempting to convey, rather than how these messages were received by the People. For example, we can see the architecture of Tiananmen Square, the design of particular monuments there and the placards that were used in parades, but we do not know if the symbolism explicated by an author really registered with

[26] Orville Schell, in *Mandate of Heaven*, points out the "shadow identity" of Tiananmen, which existed long before the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Schell describes the two marble *huabiao* (pillars) "topped with stylized wings and mythical animals, one facing the palace and the other the city, reminders to the emperor of the indissoluble connection between ruler and ruled." In ancient times these *huabiao* were said to be made of wood, so that the subjects could carve criticisms and complaints on them. Schell claims that even after the *huabiao* were remade in marble, "their presence served as reminders that at the same time that the Square served as the seat of state power it was also a place where citizens were entitled to remonstrate" (Schell 1994, 22).

[27] Also, as Haiyan Lee states, "a new spatial order was necessary because the cosmology by which the new regime legitimized its rule rode on the wings of an unprecedented social revolution. Never before had the wretched of the earth been as exalted as the subject of history and master of the land." (Lee, 399-400)

[28] Mao Zedong and Tiananmen Square remain closely associated, and this connection was reinforced by music as well as visual symbolism. For example, during the Cultural Revolution, the song "I Love Beijing Tiananmen" (*Wo ai Beijing Tiananmen*) by Jin Yueling (composed in 1970), with its lyrics, "I love Beijing Tiananmen, The sun rises above Tiananmen, The great leader Chairman Mao, Leads all of us forward," was sung daily by schoolchildren, all across China.

those that saw these things first hand—or if audiences could even see them. Sound would have been impactful on people regardless of where they were standing during any event in Tiananmen Square however, and it would have been inescapable in many other moments when the visual would not have registered.

In terms of sound, the most frequently mentioned feature of Tiananmen Square parades and rallies was the slogan shouting. In this section I will outline some of the history concerning slogan shouting and propaganda work in China, and the connection between slogan shouting and broader practices of "speaking out" and the release of "bodily anguish" in the first few decades of the PRC. Propaganda work in the PRC was aimed at reconstructing the political thinking of all people, inclusive of people living in rural areas and the uneducated. Mao, unlike Stalin, truly believed that the minds of the peasants could be politically transformed (Gray 2006), and so the methods of mass persuasion and mass mobilization were especially targeted towards the pre-literate, who made up the vast majority of the population. Sound was integral to this process. Mao was inspired by the seizures of power he witnessed in Hunan province in 1927, when poor peasants organized themselves into associations, revolted against their landlords, and aggressively humiliated them. Mao praised the peasant associations, noting how they eliminated old ties that the masses had to other authorities, such as clans, and political and religious leaders. He also commended the peasant associations usage of simple repetitive slogans that "penetrated into [the peasants] minds and [were] on their lips," to the extent that even local children would parrot them, even though they did not understand their meanings (Mao 1927).

As Walter Ong, the literary scholar and priest known for his work on orality and literacy and their connection with human consciousness, states, "oral peoples" (the non-literate) consider words and sound to have great power (Ong 2013, 32). Ong explains, "all sound, and especially

oral utterance, which comes from inside living organisms, is 'dynamic'" (ibid., 32). Ong contrasts the way in which oral peoples think about words with the way in which literate people do, saying, "deeply typographic folk forget to think of words as primarily oral, as events, and hence as necessarily powered: for them, words tend rather to be assimilated to things, 'out there' on a flat surface" (ibid.). Oral peoples, according to Ong, can also more easily retain and deploy phrases that are repetitive, rhythmic and formulaic (ibid., 34).

Mao also understood the power of words in a nation where the majority of people were pre-literate. He learned from the Hunan rebellions the power of rhetoric, that words and slogans could "grow wings," and he believed that the peoples' minds could be changed so that CCP propaganda could be inculcated everywhere (Mao 1927). Mao's thoughts on the power and hold of slogans chimes with Ong's descriptions of, "proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall," and the way in which oral peoples do their thinking in "mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence" (Ong, 34).

In CCP propaganda work sound and the physical process of "speaking out" were just as important as the actual content of the slogans. As Ann Anagnost has argued, in the early PRC years the masses were mobilized into legitimating new Maoist ideas in a way that involved the "physical body itself [becoming] the medium for registering the collision of material forces in history" (Anagnost 1997: 19). Anagnost, Liu (2010), Perry (2002), and Hershatter (1997) have all described how the CCP encouraged people to emotionally "speak bitterness" about repression before 1949 by various forces, such as the Nationalists and foreign powers. As Anagnost states, people released "bodily anguish" by using (simple and repetitive) narratives about past repression that were encouraged by the CCP, and it was this "circulation of violence between

writing, the spoken word and the body" that is "central to understanding how class subjects were constructed in revolutionary China" (Anagnost 1997, 19). The writing aspect of this circulation did not involve the majority of people though. Most used the spoken word and the body to circulate narratives encouraged upon them by the Party, and formerly promulgated by intellectuals. On a day-to-day basis this type of speaking out usually happened in small groups that were organized by the Party for political thought work and discussion (Whyte 1975), but each year on key dates such as May Day and National Day speaking out took place within the context of much larger scale public festivities.

The Mao Era Tiananmen Square Soundscape: Voices of the Party and the People

The two elements that dominated the soundscape of Tiananmen Square during the Mao era (1949-1976) were the voice of the People, who mainly chanted slogans, and the voice of the Party,[29] represented primarily by amplified sound from loudspeakers. Other sounds that were heard during parades at Tiananmen Square, particularly National Day parades, included artillery salvoes and the noise of aircraft flyovers. These also formed part of what I have described as the "voice of the Party." These two elements of the soundscape developed in significance in relation to both the changes in the built environment of Tiananmen Square, and in connection with Party policies, and they resonated beyond Tiananmen Square and beyond the Mao years, owing to the symbolic importance of the site, and the images and sounds from events at Tiananmen Square being broadcast elsewhere in China and abroad.

[29] These are my terms created for my soundscape analysis, rather than terms used in China at the time. I refer to the "voice of the People" in the singular form, as this was meant to be a unified voice that would articulate what the Party demanded from it.

Amplified sound at Tiananmen Square was of importance right from the beginning of the PRC's founding, as Mao's first speech had to be heard by the people assembled in front of Tiananmen. As the plaza was expanded stage by stage, there was a clear need for further amplification, so that sound could be broadcast to all areas during parades and other events. The North China Wireless Electronics Materials Factory "designed, produced and installed the loudspeaker systems for Beijing's Chang'an Avenue and the wired sound columns" in time for the 10th anniversary (Jones 2014, 50).[30] The loudspeakers and wired sound columns allowed the voice of Mao and others to be carried all across the square. Slogans and speeches could be broadcast from the loudspeakers so that acclamations would be returned, and a feedback loop would be achieved, which incorporated the voice of the People, and reinforced Mao and the CCP's preeminence and the People's connection to Mao, the Party and the country.

The "voice of the People" was technologically mediated in this feedback loop. Loudspeakers were used in order to make more efficient the call and response system used by parade organizers and parade-goers. According to a British Foreign Office report from May 2, 1952, the May Day parade of the day before featured a range of slogans being summoned by "cheer leaders" over the loudspeakers. For example, the "masses" were "continuously called upon to cheer for the Chairman [Mao Zedong] to the practical exclusion of everyone else" (FO 371-105351, 22). The slogans were not printed out and dropped from the air (as they might have been at other parades), but were instead only shouted across the loudspeakers and in response towards Tiananmen and Mao (ibid., 22).

[30] This "wired sound columns" technical set up of 1959 mentioned by Andrew Jones appears to suggest a technological advancement from the descriptions of a United States' Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report of September 29 1955 which states, "parts of the thoroughfare which runs through the square are being overhauled to facilitate the parade on National Day. Floodlights and loudspeakers have been mounted along the parade route and in the square itself."

Amplified sound was therefore needed to help the sonic aspect of the parades run smoothly. It ensured that parade attendees were brought into the event and understood what was occurring and what was expected of them. As Wu Hung makes clear in his account of witnessing a Tiananmen Square National Day parade in 1955, the movements and sounds that he was expected to make from his place on the plaza were "not triggered by sight," as he was then a child and could not see any of the festivities, so his actions were instead triggered by other senses; by sound and by being part of a large crowd. He was "moved by a nameless collectivity of which [he] had become a part," and along with the rest of the crowd he waved and shouted slogans (Hung 2005, 22).

Zhai Zhenhua recalls similar experiences of participating in a few National Day parades as a middle school student in her memoir *Red Flower of China* (2003).[31] She would arrive at East Chang'an street at 7AM, and it was usually noon when she and other Young Pioneers, the "flowers of the country" would pass through Tiananmen, marching and dancing to "drumbeats and music, all the while streaming long, wide silk ribbons in unison" (Zhai, 60). Zhai, like Wu Hung, was unable to guide herself by sight, but in her case (as she needed to choreograph her actions) she had to rely on the "drumbeats and music" and had to practice dancing and marching for "long hours beforehand," so that she could do this "in a straight row of one hundred people." While dancing and marching, Zhai "couldn't see anything beyond ten feet," as a "whirlwind of flying ribbons completely blocked her view," so she had no idea if Chairman Mao was present on the rostrum, or if he was "taking a break" (Zhai, 60). The whole event was "exhausting" and "not much fun" to Zhai, but she saw it as a sacrifice that she was willing to "put up with" (Zhai, 61). One oral interviewee concurred with this account, saying that the Chinese National Day

[31] Participating in the actual parade, rather than observing from the plaza, as Wu Hung recalled in his account.

parades were "formal," and that the children who were selected to take part in these parades needed to rehearse for months beforehand, wear a uniform and carry props, and shout slogans in an "orderly" way (Interview Nine).[32]

For many parade attendees it is the shouting of these slogans that dominate their recollections most, as demonstrated by Chang-tai Hung's interviews with some of them, for his article on Mao's parades of the 1950s. The interviewees all "expressed … reverence for [Mao]," and one in particular recalled having to repeat, "Long live Chairman Mao!" many times over (Hung 2007, 419). The repetition of this particular slogan, directed up towards Mao on Tiananmen by huge crowds of people on Tiananmen Square, captured in photographs and on film, travelled far beyond Beijing. It reflected and fostered the deification of Mao, as C. T. Hung explains, and the sacred nature of the space in which Mao and the People were situated only exacerbated the growth of the Mao cult.

The slogans that emanated from the loudspeakers were to be repeated by parade attendees, and were captured on live radio broadcasts and often recorded on film for later broadcast across China, usually as newsreels to be played in cinemas. The slogans were carefully choreographed so as to transmit certain political ideas across mainland China and abroad. The slogans were a way of communicating to people in China, but they were also transmissions to other nations, to countries that China was opposed to, and countries it had friendly relations with. The slogans to be chanted were, like every aspect of the parades, ultimately determined by the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee (Hung 2007, 424). Nothing could be chanted that did not have official approval. British Foreign Office workers in Beijing analyzed the content of the slogans each year in order to ascertain what the Party was attempting to

[32] Written response to follow up question. 09/20/20

convey about policy and direction.[33] The content of the yearly slogans, as Hung (2007) and Ye and Barmé (2009) have explained, can be analyzed in order to retrospectively chart CCP policy and the growth of the Mao cult. The chanting of the slogans can also be considered in relation to questions of performativity and who exactly the audience and performers were at the parades: Mao or the parade attendees? Another important question is, how did the chanting of slogans at public events, and the energetic bodily way in which they were voiced, referred to in this chapter as the "voice of the People," influence the connection that the People had with Mao, the Party and their nation? In the following section I will analyze some earwitness accounts of chanting in public events at Tiananmen Square, in order to consider this question.

Chanting, Crowds, and the Sonorous Envelope

Slogans and chanting intensely with vast crowds, were key aspects of the "voice of the People," which grew in intensity during the Mao years, and especially during the Cultural Revolution, so as to become a problematic issue for the Party after the death of Mao. By considering the sonic and bodily aspect of the chants, as described in various earwitness accounts, I intend to explain how the "voice of the People" developed throughout the Mao years and beyond into something that brought potential danger to outsiders and enemies, and eventually even the Party itself.

The act of chanting loudly as part of a large crowd conferred a certain sense of power on the audience and upon individuals within the crowd, according to many accounts of people who attended events at Tiananmen Square, and this could perhaps be explained in part by the psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu's theory (1976) of the "sonorous envelope." As I will explain

[33] For example, from a Foreign Office report regarding the 1959 May Day parade in Beijing, A. D. Wilson analyzes the meaning behind the appearance of new slogans concerning Tibet and Taiwan and the absence of slogans used in previous years related to culture and the economy. British Foreign Office. Foreign Office Files for China, 1957-1966. Celebrations and Anniversaries of China, May 6, 1959; May Day Parade in Peking. FO 371-141357, 5.

below, I believe that the sonorous envelope had an even greater effect in the early PRC than in other societies, in part because of the particularity of traditional Chinese constructions of personhood, and also because of the deliberate totalitarian fomentation of the "People-as-One" during this crucial period of modern Chinese history.

Anzieu posited that the sonorous envelope "originates in the womb as the prenate experiences two senses as if they were a single sense … touch and sound" (Goodale 2013, 220; originally from Anzieu 1976). After birth, when we notice the loss of the original sonorous envelope of the womb, we feel exposed to a range of tactile and sonic sensations, and so we develop another sonorous envelope, which can act as a "protective cocoon." Goodale explains that, "as we age we incorporate new sounds into our sonorous envelope. Thus the baby adopts the sound of the father's voice and the voices of siblings into his or her envelope" (Goodale 2013, 220). Sonorous envelopes have the potential to make people feel protected in certain moments, such as when, "the sound of voices combined into one … lends individuals the courage to face violent threats" (ibid.). Many protests against an ostensibly more powerful status quo have benefitted from protestors experiencing the "protective cocoon" of sound. The sonorous envelope can also give those who chant in parades a feeling of belonging and power, derived from a similar sense of protection.

A sonorous envelope can prevent political deliberation too. In Goodale's article he provides a number of examples regarding politics in the United States and how the sonorous envelope can be used to drown out others and prohibit any form of real dialogue or agonism. This form of "protective cocoon" is often non-violent, Goodale asserts, and it could have positive consequences in a society like the United States in which there is often great divergence between political parties and their supporters, as it can help people who have significant points of

disagreement to avoid conflict. The prevention of political deliberation in an authoritarian country such as the PRC is a different matter however, and this has implications for the specific nature of sonorous envelopes there. As mentioned above, the Party chose the slogans for the parades on Tiananmen Square in advance, and the specific wording of the slogans was often published in the press, or distributed on printed slips around the city before the parade took place (FO 371-105351, 2). Tiananmen Square was a vast public space, with enough room for more than half a million people. The sonorous envelope of this huge crowd, with its carefully calibrated slogans showing unambiguous support and opposition for certain things, would have intimidated those that did not subscribe to the values of the Party.

This dual nature of the sonorous envelope, its capacity to engender a feeling of protection as well as project aggression, is mentioned in Goodale's essay, but is perhaps more apparent in the Chinese and Maoist context, where there was: a set of fixed slogans, a huge crowd of people, and an officially sanctioned event watched over by the autocratic leadership of Mao and the Party, which was recorded for broadcast elsewhere. All of these things ensured that the sonorous envelope of Tiananmen Square made those that felt positively toward the Party feel a sense of belonging, whereas those who opposed the Party (on or away from Tiananmen Square) would have felt intimidated and coerced into either relinquishing opposition in the face of an overwhelming mass voice, or simply conforming. The warmth of the sonorous envelope and connectiveness that people would have felt as part of a large crowd could also have converted many to the causes that they chanted about, or made them feel a sense of belonging. The sonorous envelope encompassing the masses in China might also have been an even more powerful protective force, and could have provoked greater "courage" than it would elsewhere, because of the more relational construction of personhood in Chinese culture, where identity is

not given to be intrinsic and fixed, but is instead constantly being created, altered and dismantled according to particular social relationships (Yang 1994, 192).

The sense of belonging within the sonorous envelope was also reinforced by the Party's deliberate assemblage of the People-as-One in China's new Socialist era. As Claude Lefort explains, the constitution of the People-as-One, which is typical of totalitarian regimes (Lefort uses the example of the Soviet Union when discussing his theory), bound the People together, and kept out all perceived enemies. As Lefort explains:

> At the foundation of totalitarianism lies the representation of the People-as-One. It is denied that division is constitutive of society. In the so-called socialist world, there can be no other division than that between the people and its enemies: a division between inside and outside, no internal division. After the revolution, socialism is not only supposed to prepare the way for the emergence of a classless society, it must already manifest that society which bears within itself the principle of homogeneity and self-transparency. The paradox is the following: division is denied — I say denied, since a new dominant stratum is actively distinguishing itself from the rest of society, since a state apparatus is separating itself off from society— and, at the same time as this denial, a division is being affirmed, on the level of phantasy, between the People-as-One and the Other. This Other is the other of the outside. It is a term to be taken literally: the Other is the representative of the forces deriving from the old society (kulaks, bourgeoisie) and the emissary of the foreigner, the imperialist world. (297, 298)

According to Lefort, the Party and the leader were also enfolded within this construction of the People-as-One. This is explained in the following passage, which adds an interesting perspective to the relationship between the Party and the People in connection with another theme from this chapter, the body:

> It should also be observed that in totalitarian ideology, the representation of the People-as-One is in no way contradictory with that of the party. The party does not appear as distinct from the people or from the proletariat, which is the quintessence of it. It does not have a specific reality within society. The party is the proletariat in the sense that it is identical with it. At the same time, it is the guide or, as Lenin put it, the consciousness of the proletariat; or, as I would say, using an old political metaphor, to which I shall come back, it is its head. And, similarly, the representation of the People-as-One is not in contradiction with that of an omnipotent, omniscient power, with, in the last analysis, that of the Egocrat (to use Solzhenitsyn's term), the ultimate figure of that power. Such a

> power, detached from the social whole, towering over everything, merges with the party, with the people, with the proletariat. It merges with the body as a whole, while at the same time it is its head. (298, 299)

This particular image of the People-as-One comprising both the People and the Party, with the guide being the head of this body, recalls the spatiality of Tiananmen Square and the portrait of Mao on Tiananmen, and communicates an idea of the collective power of the sonorous envelope effect at Tiananmen Square public events. It also brings to mind the complicated issue mentioned earlier of who exactly the audience was at these major rallies and parades, and suggests that the answer is neither Mao/the Party nor the People, but instead anyone outside of the formulation of the People-as-One, such as foreigners, counter-revolutionaries and other enemies. Building on Lefort's theory of the People-as-One and also the aspects of the sonorous envelope that could cause it to imperil those on the "outside," namely the "protective cocoon" that it afforded and how this could drown out the voices of others, I will now consider some of the ways in which the sonorous envelope of the People-as-One brought fear and anxiety to people that were deemed to be enemies.

The People-as-One and the Other

Official political events at Tiananmen Square broadcast political discourse and methods of behavior that were legitimated across the nation, because they were permitted and organized by the Party. Anyone who did not consider themselves to be a part of the masses was vulnerable to the anger of the crowd whose noise and violence was made permissible and actively encouraged by Mao and the Party, particularly during the less strictly organized Cultural Revolution era rallies.

A number of scholars have written on the subject of the crowd, and how people within a group can behave in irrational and destructive ways that they would not consider if alone. Le Bon has claimed that crowds are characterized by "impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgment and of the critical spirit [and] the exaggeration of the sentiments," (Le Bon 1897, 16) and Aldous Huxley has termed such behavior "herd intoxication" (Huxley 2005, 365-72). Crowds can be powerful, and from many Cultural Revolution era memoirs we can see that while the chanting of simple, repetitive slogans at rallies gave some a feeling of pride and strength, others could feel pressure to conform or fear at feeling themselves to be outside of the crowd, or sonorous envelope. What is often striking about many of these accounts is the intensity of the physical act of speaking out at Tiananmen Square rallies, and the more unrestrained nature of the events, especially when compared with the parades.

To give some examples: in Nanchu's *Red Sorrow* the author describes how her elder brother, Ming, joined the Red Guards at a Tiananmen Square rally and, "jumped until his legs cramped, shouted until his throat bled, and cried until he had no tears to shed" (Nanchu 2001, 5). Whether or not this is an exaggeration, it is evident from this description that many people in this era, particularly young people, wanted to use their body and voice in order to prove their revolutionary zeal. Similarly, in Shen's *Gang of One* the author describes how when Mao Zedong appeared at a Tiananmen Square rally, there was a sense of elation, and repeated "deafening shouting" of "long live Chairman Mao," as some people around fainted from excitement. Fan Shen shouted as loudly as possible too in an attempt to generate a sense of excitement that he did not truly feel about the revolution, and he was eventually carried from the Square after pretending to faint (Shen 2004, 59). Fan Shen believed his friends to be genuinely excited and emotional, and he could not quite understand why. He felt guilty and uneasy about

feeling "nothing" at the sight of the Great Leader (Ibid.). From both Fan Shen and Nanchu's accounts we can get a sense of the "bodily anguish" (Anagnost 1997) that people strived for at Tiananmen Square. The voice, used for chanting for long periods of time, seems to have been a key part of establishing one's commitment to the nation and Mao's revolution, and Tiananmen Square was the perfect symbolic site in which to experience the bodily anguish that would affirm these things.

People that were unable to establish this connection, like Fan Shen, could have felt vulnerable in such a place. The concept of the "fungibility" of people (meaning the replaceability of people) within a crowd explains something of how individuals can feel vulnerable when amongst many other people that seem homogenous. Felstiner (2012) examines how the fungibility of a crowd can work against the interest of the individuals within that crowd, and how such people can be exploited as a resource, in his article "The Weakness of Crowds." The context of Felstiner's article is the technological industries of Silicon Valley, the "exploitable labor pool" that the crowd constitutes, and the "futurist crowd-driven utopia" that sees only potential and "wisdom" in these new forms of crowds. The concept of fungibility connects to Maoist China as well, even though much of the focus of Felstiner's article is a particular geographic location and societal stratum of the modern-day United States. Fungibility pertains to people being interchangeable within a crowd. As Felstiner explains:

> Dissatisfied crowd members … are faced with the choice of discontinuing their participation or attempting to improve the crowd … [when] everyone is fungible, and the numbers are so large, why would a crowd member choose voice over exit? The truly discontented … will look at the sheer size of the available pool, and the interchangeability of its constituents, and recognize the futility of becoming a squeaky wheel. Instead, they will just leave. (Felstiner 2012)

We can surmise that at Mao's parades any discontented individuals would have experienced the same realization. The fungibility of the individuals within Tiananmen Square rendered any possible form of opposition irrelevant. "The People" were deemed to be what was important in the PRC, as evidenced by various monuments around Tiananmen Square, but the nature of the crowd ensured that each individual was easily replaceable. Furthermore, if an individual chose to opt out at Tiananmen Square, then owing to the symbolism of the public political space they were in, its centrality and obvious significance for national life, they would in effect be opting out of the public political sphere, and the new vision of their country.[34]

The sights and sounds of events at Tiananmen Square, when circulated via print, radio and film recordings,[35] also ensured that people clearly recognized both their own fungibility, and the passion and fervor of the "voice of the People." Some people developed an acute fear of crowds, the sounds that they made at rallies, and the latent sense of violence that they projected. Yang Rae, a former Red Guard writes in her memoir, *Spider Eaters* (2013), of her frequent nightmares concerning crowds. The sound of the voice of the People is a recurring theme in these nightmares:

> Around me the frenzied revolutionary masses were yelling at the top of their voices. Everybody hated me. I was a tiny boat sinking in a vast raging ocean. I wanted to speak up, to debate with others and defend myself, but no one was willing to listen to me. They were all convinced that I was guilty. So they sentenced me to death. The sentence was to be carried out immediately. (36)

[34] Some were very anxious about being rejected by crowds/the masses. As Li Nanyang states in *Morning Sun*, a 2003 documentary on the Cultural Revolution (4:24 in Barmé, Gordon, and Hinton 2003), "The motherland, the Party, and the revolution came first, and yourself, you were nothing unless you were part of the great cause. To be excluded was to be without a purpose in life. That was very, very painful."

[35] Nien Cheng describes seeing a large photograph of Mao Zedong reviewing the Red Guards at Tiananmen Square on the front page of a newspaper. She was struck by the sound of this scene, even though she was only viewing a photograph, as she states, Mao "smiled and waved as he received a thunderous ovation from the youngsters gathered below (Cheng 2010: 58). Wei, in *A River Forever Flowing* states, "the movie theaters showed only documentaries of Chairman Mao receiving the Red Guards in Tiananmen Square in Beijing" at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (Wei quoted in He 2003, 33).

Yang relates another nightmare in which, “the revolutionary masses were in a great rage. Their voices, ‘Down with so and so!’ overwhelmed the sound of thunder.” (120) Yang describes again how in this nightmare she wanted to speak but the masses would not listen. Instead they just chanted slogans and then attacked her physically. She was being denounced in this (nightmare) situation because the group she is perceived to be a part of, which used to be venerated, is now the object of virulent scorn, as encouraged by the Party. In this sense even whole crowds could be fungible: easily replaceable by other crowds that were now deemed to be ideologically correct.

This could happen very swiftly during the Cultural Revolution era, as Ji Xianlin, an academic who was brutally “struggled against” (a subject I shall cover in more detail in chapter four) during that period, described in his memoir *The Cowshed: Memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (1998):

> Everyone was either a persecutor or being persecuted. And as political movements evolved, the groups were constantly splintering and regrouping, so that the persecutors could easily become the persecuted in the next stage of the struggle and vice versa. The position of each individual shifted constantly, like a dizzyingly complex military formation. (22)

The dual aspect of the crowd and the sonorous envelope is evidenced in these accounts. These things gave individuals a sense of power or a sense of fear, depending on how much one aligned with their values. Sound and the intense bodily way in which people received and produced it during the events at Tiananmen Square was a significant element in reinforcing both of these aspects, and if we take into account the concepts of the sonorous envelope and fungibility, along with Ong’s understanding of the power of sound and simple slogans amongst non-literate people, and Anagnost’s explanation of how the spoken word and the body were central to how class subjects were constructed in the PRC, we can understand something of how

the sonic events at Tiananmen Square were deeply affective to the people who experienced them, and influential nationwide.

To briefly summarize the developments in the two key aspects of the Tiananmen Square soundscape during the Mao years: the voice of the Party was extended across Tiananmen Square before the ten year anniversary of the PRC's founding, and remained somewhat stable, whereas the voice of the People became more intense and unrestrained during the Cultural Revolution years.[36] Whilst the political public square was speaking out in an area that had been carefully designed to evoke specific Party approved symbolism, and the Party and Mao decided the content of political speech at Tiananmen Square, the intense bodily way in which the People spoke out there generated a fervent sonic politicization that the Party had some difficulty constraining in the years following Mao's death, a point I shall return to in the conclusion of this chapter.

National Day Parades & The Nationalist Mythology

In this section and the following one I will focus more specifically on the Chinese National Day, the most significant political event on the calendar in China, to reflect on the ways in which the countrywide broadcasting and media coverage of Tiananmen Square National Day parades helped to foster a new political culture in the PRC. National Day parades were held annually at Tiananmen Square from the founding of the PRC until its 10th anniversary, and though since 1959 National Day parades have been held more sporadically – they now occur every 10 years,

[36] This intense drawing in of people to the soundscape was evident across China throughout the Cultural Revolution with the broadcasting and performances of Quotation songs (Jones 2014) and Model Operas. As Barbara Mittler states, "the soundscapes of the Cultural Revolution … opened up new avenues of experience for those living in the countryside, on one hand, and in the cities, on the other," because the Model Operas "gave people, both in the countryside and in the cities, regular opportunities to take part in large-scale cultural performances, both actively or as audiences—providing more opportunities than ever before (or after) to experience music in very immediate fashion" (Mittler 2016, 253).

in years ending with 9 – they are still the principal occasions for displays of the Party's power. National Day parades are increasingly choreographed and sophisticated spectacles, that are held for both domestic and international viewers, watching via television or online, and it is partly for this reason that the visual symbolism of recent parades predominates in scholarly and non-scholarly analyses.

The military aspect of the National Day parades has been a particular area of focus in recent decades, and the National Day parade at Tiananmen Square is in fact sometimes referred to primarily as a military parade (Zhao and Hu 2019). Haiyan Lee's 2011 article, "The Charisma of Power and the Military Sublime in Tiananmen Square," details the militaristic facets of modern National Day parades, and how they are bound up with the long history of the PLA looming "ever so large in the national consciousness" (H. Lee, 407). Lee's analysis of the "charisma of power," and the "military sublime" at Tiananmen Square events, and the Party's utilization of symbolic rituals and references to "nationalist mythology" in order to assert its power, refers to the work of both Max Weber and Clifford Geertz, with respect to the "inherent sacredness of sovereign power," which is a product of the "rites and images that exert the universal will of kings, presidents, generals, *führers*, or party secretaries much as they do for gods" (H. Lee, 398). It is these rites and images that create the charisma (Weber) and mystification that makes National Day parades resonate throughout the country, but as Lee's article makes clear, the potency of the military sublime is imbricated with (and refers to) the "nationalist mythology," which was developed over the course of the PRC era, at parades in Tiananmen Square and elsewhere across the country.

In the following analysis of the early developments of this new "nationalist mythology" in the Mao era, and in my descriptions of the reception of National Day parade broadcasts and

media coverage I will draw from the work of cultural historians Lynn Hunt and Henrietta Harrison. In Lynn Hunt's study *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, she examines "both the politics of revolution and the people that practiced them," and it is her contention that the "political culture of revolution was made up of symbolic practices, such as language, imagery and gestures," and "in many ways, the symbolic practices – the use of certain rhetoric, the spread of certain symbols and rituals – called the new political class into existence; talk of national regeneration and festivals of federation, for instance, gave the new political elite a sense of unity and purpose" (Hunt 2016, 13). Harrison, who was influenced by Hunt, begins *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* with the provocative questions of what it actually means to be Chinese, before examining the ways in which rituals/ceremonies, such as state funerals, and sacrifices to revolutionary martyrs as well as things such as costumes, etiquette and calendar reform, helped to shape national consciousness and provide new markers of national identity. As Harrison explains in her introduction, ritual had long been regarded as a crucial method for inculcating values and morals in China, and it was in the Republican era (1912-1949) that various reformers and political bodies introduced new rituals and customs to unify the Chinese People and encourage new ways of thinking.

As Hunt and Harrison show, a new political culture can be fostered via a range of means, and some elements of this culture, even if they are wholly new and initially alien seeming, may eventually come to seem an intrinsic and traditional part of a nation's culture.[37] It was this

[37] In this way these new values and customs are similar to the concept of the nation itself, which is as Benedict Anderson explained in *Imagined Communities*, a development that occurred after the spread of printed media that led to people (that shared a vernacular language) to think of themselves as a cohesive group, a nation. Nations may seem to "loom out of an immemorial past" and appear to be gliding "into a limitless future," but it is the "magic of nationalism" that engendered this commonly held opinion (Anderson, 11,12).

process that the CCP was attempting to set in motion in the early years of its regime, and the National Day parades, which were broadcast nationwide on radio and on newsreels, and given extensive newspaper coverage, were especially important events that conveyed the new political culture, and a new nationalist mythology, informed by the CCP narrative of Chinese history, and reflected (as explained above) in the architecture at Tiananmen Square, and in many sonic and visual aspects of the parades held there. In the next section of this chapter, I will consider the methods, especially those related to sound-reproducing tools, that were used by the Party to imbue their new National Day with the level of importance and power that could, in turn, communicate a new nationalist mythology. I will also detail some broader media reception of the National Day events at Tiananmen Square to elucidate the general importance of the date, and how Chinese citizens of all ages looked to various symbols and signs, visual and sonic, in the media coverage to understand the political culture and overall state of politics in their country.

National Day Parade Media Coverage

I will now turn to some descriptions of National Day media reception from memoirs, an oral interview, and one account from the Shanghai Municipal Archives which details reactions from a group of 21 people who had listened to a broadcast of a "special program" concerning the events of the 1956 National Day. These various accounts can only give some indication of how some people responded to the various National Day parade broadcasts and mass media reportage of these events, but they do provide a worthwhile contrast with the numerous descriptions of those that experienced National Day parades and other significant public events personally at Tiananmen Square.

The novelist Yu Hua's describes viewing National Day newsreels in his memoir/essay collection *China in Ten Words* (*Shi ge cihui li de Zhongguo*) and gives a revealing account of the different ways in which meaning could be extracted from mass media messages. His account concerns visual media, but offers some revealing distinctions between how National Day was experienced in visual terms, as compared with radio broadcasts. Yu Hua explains first his yearning for the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen) and his childhood reverence for and "eagerness to see" Mao. Yu Hua was born in 1960, and given the intense political propaganda he would have experienced throughout his young life, it is understandable that he would have had these opinions, and would have been drawn to the spectacle of National Day. He describes how he had the habit of viewing the newsreels of National Day in the cinema, even if it meant heading into a "bitter night wind [blowing] in his face" (32). Yu Hua lived in a small town in Shandong province and the National Day newsreels only made it to this fairly remote place when it was already "well into winter." This gives some idea of how the moving images would have lagged behind the sounds from the event (the radio broadcast), which people would have relied on if they wished to experience the National Day live.

What was striking to Yu Hua about the newsreels was, the "pyrotechnics display that took place after nightfall, when Mao and his colleagues sat down at a table so groaning with fruits and pastries it made [Yu's] mouth drool. Fireworks illuminated the square as brightly as day" (33). In later "documentaries," by which time Yu Hua was an adolescent, he was most interested in the "lovely young wives" of Prince Sihanouk and Penn Nouth, two of the foreign visiting dignitaries. Another aspect of the celebrations that Yu Hua noticed as he grew up, from the annual photos of the events of National Day, was the changes in the People that surrounded the only remaining constant, Mao Zedong, as various figures (such as Lin Biao and Wang

Hongwen) experienced political rises and falls. He also noticed the yearly "physical decline" and "increasing senility" of Mao himself (33). Yu's descriptions here are a reminder that although the names of the key attendees at the parade were listed out on the live radio broadcast, and sometimes some of these people gave speeches, only by looking at the newsreels or photos, would people be able to see the gradual weakening of the leader's health. Those that were only listening to the radio, and were unable to access visual images, would only have heard the leader's names and the acclamations and ovations of the crowds, which were often directed only toward Mao.

Yu Hua, like many Chinese citizens of the time, paid careful attention to political shifts by the events of National Day. Over the course of the Mao years, the presence or absence, foregrounding or backgrounding of certain figures viewing the festivities from Tiananmen or making speeches, and what this all conveyed about policy and political direction, took precedence for some viewers/auditors over the fostering of national pride and internationalism apparent at the earlier Mao era parades. Observers and listeners would pay attention to things that augured well or ill in the parades, and when the annual National Day parades stopped being held and broadcast, or were cancelled, this was also a sign in itself, one which was very unnerving to some people. For example, in Cheng Nien's *Life and Death in Shanghai*, the author describes how, in 1971, whilst she was in prison, she was shocked to discover, first from the morning broadcast (over the prison loudspeakers) and later confirmed by the newspaper, that "the most important event of the year," which "everybody in China" knew was a "great day of personal satisfaction" for Mao Zedong, was not even being held that year (498):

> It was most astonishing to find that on October First, 1971, there were no celebrations at all. When the morning broadcast did not mention anything, I was surprised. In the afternoon, I waited eagerly for the newspaper. When it came, I saw only Mao's official

> portrait on its front page. The date, October First, and "Nation Day" were printed in red, but there was no mention of any activities by leading officials or any special events. (500)

This account highlights the extent to which National Day, by 1971, had become such a key fixture in the national calendar, that its absence represented a disturbing political development. Nien Cheng later pieces together, from various pieces of evidence, the fact that Lin Biao, Mao's chosen successor, must have experienced a sudden downfall. That Nien Cheng was able to deduce this from prison, where her access to the news was severely limited, makes apparent her perceptiveness, but during the Cultural Revolution, and at most points during the Mao years, access to certain information was always restricted to most Chinese citizens, no matter whether one was inside or outside prison. From a contemporaneous British Foreign Office record, it is clear that no-one except the higher CCP leaders knew for certain what fate had befallen Lin Biao, though he was presumed dead (it was later revealed that he died in a plane crash on 13 September, whilst trying to flee the country after supposedly putting together a plan to assassinate Mao). This foreign office document conveys the sensitivity of the Lin Biao incident, especially as it occurred so close to National Day:

> From mid-September, references to Lin gradually ceased to appear in the press, while books in which he was mentioned were withdrawn from sale and photographs of him removed from display. Editions for foreign consumption of those publications which contained reference to Lin were allowed to remain on sale, or in some cases were withdrawn and then re-released. The intention was no doubt to sustain uncertainty abroad over the truth of accounts of Lin [Biao's] fall, and thus to avoid the embarrassment which would be caused by the public announcement of the treachery of Mao's designated successor and closest collaborator. (FCO 21/805, 30)

The Lin Biao affair, its impact on the National Day celebrations, the reaction of the CCP leaders to it (with regards to cautious moves that were subsequently reversed), and the reaction of citizens observing the events, such as Nien Cheng, is revealing of a number of things. What

the various repercussions of and reactions to the Lin Biao affair show above all, is that the Chinese leaders needed the National Day period to mainly be a series of propaganda successes, and for nothing untoward to happen that would cause a loss of face, partly because they understood that their National Day celebrations were so widely and intensely scrutinized.

The final document that I will examine in this section is a fairly detailed account of the reactions of people to a broadcast of a recording of the 1956 National Day's special program. In the week after the National Day special program was broadcast, 21 people (including 4 workers, 1 farmer, 8 students, 1 primary school teacher, 1 campus worker, 4 socialist youths and 2 residents) sent letters expressing their opinions about the broadcast, and this document details what appears to be mostly honest feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. This feedback was meant to help the broadcasting station better understand the needs of its listeners to improve future broadcasts of such events. The comments that were received were generally positive, but there were also complaints and suggestions from the listening audience.

Some of the comments praised the attempts of the broadcasting team to appeal to all listeners, with one piece of feedback saying, "there are not many long shows like this," its contents were "rich," and tightly organized. It is claimed that the listening audience also all thought that there were many new types of content within this special program. One piece of feedback says, "some of the literary works, operatic works, music etc. within the special program would usually be very difficult to hear," and it was "moving" to hear some contents of the show. One of the socialist youths praised the amount of good crosstalk (*xiangsheng*) content, and said that everyone loved hearing it (SMA B92-1-209-79).

There was excitement about the live commentary of the parade. "It was like being there in the parade procession yourself," is one comment, and one of the Socialist youths was excited

that the famous actors Shangguan Yunzhu (上官雲珠) and Sun Daolin (孙道临) had been invited to give live commentary on the parade, saying, "when Shangguan Yunzhu introduced the procession of young people she was full of love for the youths and children, and Sun Daolin's introduction of the advanced workers was very appropriate, as it was full of energy" (ibid.).

The complaints about the special program mainly related to organizational errors and technological limitations. One complaint was that at the same time that a song ("Ode to the Motherland") composed by a student was being played, there was also cheering from some of the parade processions, so that there was no way to appreciate the music. In future, it was suggested, things should not be arranged in such a way. Other complaints were related to a special feature titled "We are this Happy," which was deemed to be of poor sound quality and lacking in focus. The sound was apparently too "messy," as the recording, which was apparently of the sounds of general celebration on the streets, had too much commentary of the scenes, and should perhaps have been focused on more specific places and groups of people (ibid).

The reactions detailed in this document convey the sorts of details that ordinary listeners were focused on. The feedback seems to be honest because most of it is not couched in the especially political terms that we would expect to see if it came from a later Cultural Revolution era document, when public discourse was more restrictive. Some of the listeners were also open about the entertainment aspects of the broadcast being most appealing to them, and were also open in their criticisms of the organization of some parts of the special program. From this document we can surmise that though there were limitations to the technology at this time, especially if complex broadcasts were organized ineffectively, the radio was overall a very powerful tool for the Party. The radio enabled Chinese people from all across the country to feel as if they were a part of the celebrations at Tiananmen Square, if talented voice artists or actors

were involved with the broadcasting then people might be moved or engaged more by the proceedings, and also, if the entertainment portions of the special program were well managed, the entire broadcast could be appealing to people. From this document, we can perceive that if broadcasting stations took on board the criticism they received, there was the opportunity to make these National Day broadcasts engaging for the general public, which would help to bolster the importance with which people regarded this date in the calendar of New China.

The viewpoints expressed in the archival document bear similarities with an oral interviewee's account of listening to National Day radio broadcasts in the 1950s and 1960s. He pointed out that the central broadcasting station's National Day program was "richer and more varied" than everyday radio broadcasts, so it was appealing to the young and students. He recalled hearing about various production gains and scientific and technological breakthroughs, and about the various congratulatory messages that the PRC received from foreign countries all around the world. In his opinion, the propaganda that was being broadcast was very effective for people of his age at that time (teenagers and elementary school students), and the content of these programs made him feel very "uplifted" and "proud," because China was so great and it had so many friends from around the world. The broadcast of the actual parade was also very stimulating, he said, because the radio could make feel people feel that they were actually there at Tiananmen Square, especially as much effort was put into the broadcast, and the best radio announcers were used, people whose voices were "resonant," "vivid and colorful," with "excellent enunciation" (Interview Nine).[38]

It is quite likely that during the Mao years, what with the intense and ubiquitous propaganda, that many people would have taken the connoted meanings that were apparent at the

[38] Written response to follow up question. 09/20/20

various National Day parade broadcasts and accepted these. Also, as was mentioned above, the Party knew that its every action at the parades was heavily scrutinized, so its moves were deliberate and intended to convey definite things regarding policies, as well as political rises and falls etc. This guaranteed that a lot of what the Party wished to communicate would be picked up on, and also its general messaging elsewhere at the parade, often coming in the form of slogans, was mostly a recirculation of messaging echoed elsewhere in the mediascape. We can surmise that this messaging would have been particularly potent for those that grew up entirely in the PRC era as well, as the same political/ideological content and the same nationalist mythologies would have been circulating about for such people's entire lives, and they probably would not have encountered oppositional reading of media messaging anywhere. Even if the National Day radio broadcasts were not entirely successful at conveying certain political messaging and having it decoded in the same form, they evidently were effective in entertaining people, building up patriotic feeling and knowledge of ideology/policy, and immersing people from across China in the soundscape of and celebrations at Tiananmen Square.

The Sonic Legacies of the Mao Years

As Doreen Massey states, "places do not have single, unique 'identities'; they are full of internal conflicts" and "the specificity of a place is continually reproduced" and is not "a specificity which results from some long, internalized history" (2010, 8). In some respects, Mao and the CCP attempted to create a single unique identity for Tiananmen Square. It was a public political space that was meant to attest to the glory of Mao and the PRC, and support the idea that "the People" were central to the new regime. The Party has made further architectural alterations at Tiananmen Square in the years following Mao's death (Yu 2006, 78), but what has not changed

is the Square's position as the national center. It is the supreme public political site in China, despite developments in its physical environment, and the CCP's policy since the late 1970s of de-politicizing public spaces (Hung 2005, 244).

Significant protest movements at Tiananmen Square occurred in 1976 and 1989. These events underline the challenges to CCP de-politicization, and the extent to which the sights and sounds of significant events at Tiananmen Square are still ingrained within the psyche of the populace. From the 1976 and 1989 protests we can see evidence of the existing tension between the two key aspects of the Tiananmen Square soundscape mentioned in this chapter. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to fully delineate the political and social contexts informing these events, I will briefly describe some selected details from them, and the interactions and confrontations of the two main aspects of the soundscape.

The first and lesser-known Tiananmen Incident occurred on 5 April 1976, when people assembled to show disapproval at the mourning for recently deceased Premier Zhou Enlai, which was perceived to be curtailed and inadequate. More than one million people gathered at Tiananmen Square in a protest that included "verbal declarations and outbursts" as well as wreaths, poems and handbills that honored Zhou Enlai and also contained criticisms and comments related to the contemporaneous political situation (Teiwes and Sun 2004, 218). The government moved to suppress the protests, and even though a police van broadcasting messages through its loudspeaker was overturned, the police and militia were "restrained" in doing this. The main strategy employed by the government was to repeatedly play an amplified speech by the mayor of Beijing, Wu De, which stated that "bad elements" had caused the unrest, and called for everyone to leave the plaza (ibid., 219).

This first incident at Tiananmen Square, which erupted just as the Mao years were coming to a close, was in some respects a precursor of the larger event in 1989, in which the same two aspects of the soundscape were present and the death of the popular official, Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦), was also a catalyst, but the outcome of this later event was far more violent and tragic. The 1989 protests at Tiananmen Square were part of a broader democracy movement that saw similar large-scale demonstrations in a number of cities in mainland China and Hong Kong. Tiananmen Square was once again the symbolic site to which national and international attention was directed. International attention was in fact particularly significant by 1989 as foreign television crews now had direct access to the protests as they unfolded, a result of the "Reform and Opening up" (*gaige kaifang*) of the PRC in the late 1970s.

Music played a significant role in the 1989 protests at Tiananmen, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" was played over the protestors' loudspeaker at the Monument to the People's Heroes (Schell 1994, 127), and on a number of occasions the protestors held each other's hands and sung the "Internationale"—the anthem of Socialism (ibid., 63, 149, 151).[39] Sound, considered more broadly, in relation to the two main elements of the soundscape discussed above, is also a significant detail in accounts of what took place at that time. The collective chanting that had been in evidence during the parades and Cultural Revolution rallies was also made use of during the protests as activists shouted short slogans in unison to bring attention to particular viewpoints such as (on May 5th) "Freedom of the press is good for stability" (Pan 2011, 334). Also, on May 13 "student activists adapted Mao's words from 'The Great Union of the Popular Masses' to show their firm stand to sacrifice for the mission of national salvation" (Pan 2011: 346). The protestors were attempting to use the power of the mass voice for revolutionary aims, in the same

[39] Beethoven had the reputation of being a "revolutionary" in China, as explained in Jindong Cai and Sheila Melvin's *Beethoven in China* (2015).

way that the mass voice had been used during the Cultural Revolution. The rhetorical content of their chants was also important, and also harkened back to the revolutionary years of Mao.

The chanting of slogans and singing were accompanied by many other sounds. During the protest movements there was a "cacophony," a "din of chanted political slogans, songs, drums, and raucous orations delivered through handheld bullhorns," as well as a "wail of sirens as ambulances manned by Red Cross volunteers ferried unconscious fasters off to nearby hospitals" (Schell, 87). In Orville Schell's descriptions we see again the connection between the voice, bodily anguish and revolutionary political experience at Tiananmen Square, one of the major legacies of CCP sound-based political work during the Mao years.

One constant theme amongst the complexity of this soundscape was the obvious confrontation between the voices of the Party and the People. Some observers described this sonic tension as a kind of "air war" (Berman and Lee 1991, 94). Protestors had loudspeakers mounted on the Monument to the People's Heroes. From these they addressed the assembled crowds as well as the Party and the world's media with a mixture of "exhortation, oratory, invective, [and] ridicule" (ibid., 96). The Party had their own loudspeakers of course, and as with the 1976 protests, they frequently broadcasted messages encouraging and warning people to leave the plaza. The "mature" and "mellifluous" voice emanating from the government loudspeakers contrasted sharply with the sometimes "trebly" and unamplified voices of protestors (ibid., 96).[40]

[40] Another contrast between the "voice of the Party" and the "voice of the People" at the 1989 protests was that the "voice of the Party" was more in unison than the "voice of the People," which could in this instance be considered more in the plural form "voices of the People." Orville Schell describes how walking through the Square was like "roaming a huge bazaar filled not with merchants selling goods but with people trading ideas, giving speeches, debating, and arguing politics with one another" (Schell 1994: 87).

Such was the constancy and reach of the amplified voice of the Party at Tiananmen Square that during one secretive meeting at the Monument to the People's Heroes, protestors needed to speak very softly into a portable loudspeaker in order to be heard by those around them, but not be audible to spies from the police, military or Party who were likely nearby (Chiu 1991, 338). In this moment we can ascertain one significant difference between the voice of the People and the voice of the Party: the extent to which on certain occasions, or when voicing certain content, it was desirable or safe to be heard. There were still definite limitations therefore to the power of the voice of the People, and these limitations remain.

Conclusion

Since 1989 the "image of Tiananmen Square [has become] politically sensitive, and it [has been] less frequently and more carefully mentioned than before" (Zhao 2005, 263). Parades are more tightly regulated and orchestrated now, and they are primarily produced for the TV audience. In more recent celebrations, such as the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the PRC, in 1999, "Beijing residents were told to stay home and enjoy the week-long festivities on television" (H. Lee, 419). Tiananmen Square remains a central and charismatic public political space, but it now also has a more widely known history, domestically and internationally, as a site of protest.

Control over the sound and music heard at Tiananmen Square is of great importance for the Party today. The sounds, as much as the images, from parades and rallies in the Mao years, often carried nationwide via the PRC's sonic infrastructure in the form of live radio broadcasts and promoted by intense propaganda campaigns throughout the mediascape, inspired many aspects of the later protest movements, and led to the need for much more careful negotiation between the two key elements of the soundscape. The Party's need to reconfigure its usage and

promotion of Tiananmen Square as a charismatic public political space post-1989, and the continued usage of this space by the public as a place of protest, perhaps indicate that at least in terms of the sonic aspects of Tiananmen Square's political symbolism, the death of Mao in 1976 and the construction of his mausoleum did not truly constitute a "closed chapter" in the history of this vitally important site. Mao era Tiananmen Square public events had a significant role in the construction of the People-as-One at the beginning of the PRC era, which laid the foundation for totalitarianism in China. Sound, particularly owing to the sonorous envelope effect, was of great importance in binding the People together, including the Party, and in doing so it greatly altered the Party and People relationship. Both of these factors attest to the lasting and ongoing impact of the Mao era Tiananmen Square soundscape.

Chapter Two
Sinking Deep into the Hearts of the People Through Sound: Zuo Ying and the Development of the PRC's Sonic Infrastructure

Soon after coming to power, following the October Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks, "with Lenin himself to the fore" sought to hasten broadcasting technology developments (S. Lovell 2015, 21). A "radio laboratory" was "set up by decree" in December 1918, and Lenin "took a close personal interest" in the experiments of its head, the inventor M.A. Bonch-Breuvich. In February 1920, Lenin wrote to Bonch-Breuvich to congratulate him on his work thus far, proclaiming, "this newspaper without paper and "without distances" that you are creating will be a great thing." Further technological developments continued, with the construction of a radiotelegraphy station "with a radius of 2000 *versts*" in March 1920, and in the summer of 1921, "Lenin was excited to hear that in Kazan loudspeakers had been used for a public broadcast." In May 1922 Lenin wrote to Stalin and other members of the Politburo to "emphasize the value of radio for maximizing the impact of communist propaganda on the illiterate masses" and he continued to keep himself informed of radio technology's evolution even as he became too ill to attend Politburo meetings (ibid., 21).

Lenin's comparison of the radio with the newspaper recalls the argument made by Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media* that "the "content" of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph" (McLuhan 1964, 29). These connections between media also inform a common way of conceptualizing new technology whereby, as Stephen Lovell states in *Russia in the Microphone Age*, "new media are conceived by analogy with existing media until their newness fully crystallizes: until it becomes clear that, as well as doing the old

things better or faster, they can do new things that were previously unimaginable" (S. Lovell, 2). Jonathan Sterne relates a number of instances of this type of process occurring in his history of sound *The Audible Past* (2003), in which he details the technological and cultural origins of various sound media, such as the telephone and phonograph.

As Sterne explains, after a new technology has been invented, as it begins to be promoted commercially and used in everyday life, the medium itself is often altered or reimagined, because, "a medium is a configuration of a variety of social forces," so "as the social field changes, the possibilities for the medium change as well" (Sterne 2003, 202). The history of the phonograph is a good illustration of this, according to Sterne, as its varying usages "highlighted in the industry literature correspond to changes in middle-class sociability." This means that inventors of new technologies often cannot predict exactly how their inventions might be used in the future, or how their usage might vary in different cultural contexts. For example, although Thomas Edison, the inventor of the phonograph, created a list of the "potential applications" of the technology, and as Sterne points out, "most of these uses came to pass," it was also true that, "the specific form that they ultimately took was determined by the changing world of their users" (ibid., 20).

One of Sterne's main areas of concern in *The Audible Past* is "the malleability of sound itself and the malleability of practices of hearing and acoustic space," and he argues that, "as with the form of sound and the function of hearing, modernity marks a new level of plasticity in the social organization, formation, and movement of sound. These moments of plasticity, where the social organization of sound can and does change, are perhaps the defining characteristic of the modern sound media" (ibid., 182). Sterne is most interested in "the moments prior to [the] crystallization" of the forms that media would come to take, and this is in part due to the

insufficiencies of previous histories of technologies and media that tended to analyze the introduction of new technologies by considering their final form and deducing from that a simplistic "impact" that it supposedly had on social relations. This is the "impact narrative" that seems to suggest that "technologies are mysterious beings with obscure origins that come down from the sky to "impact" human relations" (ibid., 7).

The analysis of Mao era sound media developments in this chapter (mainly the radio and loudspeaker) is influenced by Sterne's histories of sound reproduction tools in *The Audible Past*. I will examine the period of modern Chinese history in which the radio and loudspeaker were seemingly made almost omnipresent nationwide. My analysis takes into account the malleability of these technologies and how a "medium is a recurring set of contingent social relations and social practices" (ibid., 182). Like Sterne, I will consider the "larger institutional and cultural contexts through which sound technologies became media" (ibid., 181), and look at how sound media was shaped by the specific environments that they were used in, and the desires that leaders and Party officials had for these new technologies, as well as how the sound media brought about changes in societal relations. In order to evaluate these issues, and build a general picture of how China moved from being a country in which there were many difficulties in spreading propaganda across the country, before the Mao era,[41] to a nation that seemed to have the capacity to make propaganda ubiquitous, by the time of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), I will analyze the introduction, popularization and alterations of sound media in the 1950s via the framework of the "sonic infrastructure," a concept introduced in the field of sound studies by Adam Kielman.

[41] Such difficulties are described in *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937-1945* (1994) by Chang-tai Hung. In the period Hung analyzes it became a pressing problem to inform and mobilize people across the country in opposition to the Japanese invasion.

The PRC's Sonic Infrastructure

In this chapter I will examine the growth of the PRC's sonic infrastructure, and the ways in which sound media were used in two sites that were a particular focus of the CCP's broadcasting efforts: factories and the countryside. This is a broad topic, which could be addressed in any number of ways, but for the purposes of this chapter my inquiry focuses on one particular Party member who played a significant role in the development of Chinese broadcasting both before and after 1949. It is through this person, Zuo Ying (左荧), who will be introduced in more detail below, that I will trace the hopes that the Party had for sound media and broadcasting; the strengths and limitations that sound was believed to possess as a vehicle for conveying propaganda; and the ways in which the radio and loudspeaker were actually shaped by their usage in everyday life across China.

The main body sections of this chapter draw from four articles and a booklet written by Zuo Ying in the 1950s, which are all broadly concerned with understanding sound media and sound in order to improve broadcasting practices. I summarize and translate sections from these writings, before analyzing each piece to give more clarity and context to each specific topic. My aim is to evaluate the institutional and cultural contexts of the PRC in this period that shaped sound media usage, and assess how new sound media also brought about societal changes in New China. It is obvious that unlike in Jonathan Sterne's study, the main way in which these technologies were shaped was by political concerns rather than consumerism (middle-class consumers played a significant role in shaping new sound media in the United States), but as Jie Li explains in her 2020 article "Revolutionary Echoes: Radios and Loudspeakers in the Mao Era," this did not mean that radios and loudspeakers were merely representative of "a caricature

of totalitarian propaganda at work" (27). These tools were not merely "enthralling the nation with the Party's monotonous voice" Li argues, but were used in "heterogenous" ways, and this is borne out by Zuo Ying's writings, which elucidate the Party's broadcasting efforts, the difficulties that they faced in attempting to connect with the People, and the concessions they made in terms of making broadcasts appealing and entertaining as well as politically informative.

My analysis of Zuo Ying's writings is informed by the concept of the sonic infrastructure, introduced by Adam Kielman in his 2018 article in the *Sound Studies* journal, "Sonic Infrastructures, Musical Circulation and Listening Practices in a Changing People's Republic of China." Kielman's development of the sonic infrastructure concept represents an attempt to bring more of a focus to the acoustic aspect of Chinese media systems. Like the existing scholarship in this sphere, Kielman is concerned with "issues of place, space and scale" and the "ways in which the spatial configurations of media systems reflect and influence broader economic, political and cultural formations," but contrary to previous scholarship, Kielman is primarily concerned with sonic media forms (Kielman 2018, 20). At the beginning of the article, Kielman outlines the role of wired radio in the Mao years:

> During the Mao era … media systems "mirrored and [were] metonymic of a spatial hierarchy" (Sun 2012, 13) that was centralised and oriented toward Beijing, geographically mimicking administrative boundaries and scales. An acoustic representative of these media systems is the wired radio rediffusion network established in the early 1950s (Li 2014; Liu 1971; *Zhongguo de youxian guangbo* 1988), which linked public address speakers in homes, workplaces, dormitories and public spaces throughout the farthest reaches of rural and urban China to sounds emanating from the national capital. News, political speeches and musical programmes produced in Beijing were interspersed with locally produced content including weather reports and agricultural information. As a material infrastructure linking local rebroadcasting stations, copper wires and loudspeakers, this infrastructure connected citizens to the nation's capital through the sensorium, functioning not only through the sounds it transmitted, but also through its mere visibility. In addition, practices of "collective listening" (Liu 1971), wherein groups of people led by a local cadre listened and discussed together the content of the programmes (Li 1956), sonically reinforced a

> political ideology grounded in collectivism and interpellated listeners as subjects of the PRC state. (21)

This is a fairly comprehensive overview of the sonic infrastructure of the Mao period, its purposes and its effects, though the Mao era is not the overall focus of Kielman's article. In the remainder of this chapter, I will seek to add more details and complications to this picture of the Mao era sonic infrastructure, in terms of what tools and materials it comprised, how exactly "it [reflected] and [influenced] broader economic, political and cultural formations," as well as the ways in which this system was liable to malfunction at the grassroots level. In analyzing the PRC's sonic infrastructure in this chapter, I am concerned more with the dimensions of new sound media development and how they were integrated into and shaped by everyday life, the "medium" itself more than the "message" (the content of the broadcasts) which will be covered in chapter three.[42]

My overall argument in this chapter is twofold: first through my analysis of Zuo Ying's writings, and my usage of the sonic infrastructure concept to assess the scale and capacity of Mao era broadcasting, I will outline the difficulties that the Party had in trying to enact a "total soundscape" across China from the 1950s onwards. As the articles discussed in this chapter show, the Party faced numerous challenges in constructing their sonic infrastructure, and there were various potential points of failure all across the system. The articles on broadcasting analyzed in this chapter evidence what Coderre describes as the "gap between the aspiration to centralized sonic totality that we see and hear in the period in myriad ways and the inevitable historical failure to fulfill that aspiration" (Coderre 2021, 32), and also hint at the impossibility that the PRC would ever be able to construct a "total soundscape" nationwide.

[42] To clarify, though this is some discussion of broadcasting content in this chapter, I will analyze content/propaganda in more detail in the next chapter.

The second main viewpoint expressed in this chapter is that Jonathan Sterne's counter-argument against typical "impact narratives" outlined in his history of sound and based on the introduction and development of sound-reproducing tools in N. America, also holds true for China, though of course the "variety of social forces" that shaped media were quite different. In building on Sterne's history of sound media in America, in the context of Mao's China, I am also offering a counter opinion to earlier histories on the usage of sound-reproducing tools in the PRC, which also had a tendency to examine these media as if they emerged from nowhere to shape human relations (Jan 1967) (Liu 1971). Instead, as I explain below, as with audio technologies in the west, the specific forms that sound media took in the PRC, and the possibilities for these media were shaped by the hopes and desires of Party leaders and broadcasting workers, as well as the usage of these tools at the grassroots.

My depiction of the Mao era sonic infrastructure and the development of audio technologies in the PRC will be constructed in my summaries and analyses of Zuo Ying's writings, which begin following the next brief section on Zuo Ying's life and career, which comes from a 2005 anthology of his works titled "*Style Lasts Forever: The Zuo Ying Commemorative Collection*."

(Fig. 1) Zuo Ying, undated photo.[43]

The Life of Comrade Zuo Ying[44]

Zuo Ying was born in Huojia County of Henan province on July 12, 1917. He joined the Communist Party in May 1939. Before 1949 he worked as an instructor at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts at Yan'an, broadcasting editor at the Xinhua news agency, at the Liberation Daily newspaper of Yan'an (*Jiefang ribao*), and as a military team leader (2). After New China was established, he worked in various roles including: deputy director at the Central Broadcasting Bureau office, director of the regional broadcasting bureau, and director of the international liaison department. From August 1959 until November 1974, Zuo Ying was (successively) deputy Party committee secretary of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, vice president of the Institute, while also director of the news department, Party committee secretary while also vice president, and the leader of a small group for re-education, and from the beginning of 1975 he

[43] Picture from: http://by.cuc.edu.cn/2017/0505/c1652a26708/pagem1.htm - Communication University of China website, accessed 12/03/20.
[44] Translation of the original title of this brief essay from *Style Lasts Forever*.

was president of the China Record company, acting director of the China Central People's Broadcasting station, and director of the international contact bureau.

Zuo Ying is described in his brief biography as being an early convert to the revolutionary cause. In 1934, when he was a student in high school, he began to accept the influence of "progressive thinking," and in 1937 after the Marco Polo incident, Zuo and some other progressive youths "actively threw themselves into the Anti-Japan movement and organized the "Kaifeng Resist the Enemy Mobile Drama Troupe."" In 1938 Zuo "hurried" to Yan'an to "throw himself into" the struggle for revolution. From 1946 Zuo moved to the Xinhua News Agency, and "put his lifetime's energy" into the "construction and development" of the People's News Broadcasting service, doing much "groundbreaking" work for the organization. Over the years Zuo made "significant contributions" to leading operations in broadcasting propaganda, developing regional broadcasting, "establishing the rural wired broadcasting network," and "launching broadcasting work exchanges" with foreign nations, among other activities (3). He also contributed much as an early founder of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, and to the early development of Chinese television broadcasting work.

Zuo Ying, like a number of other early supporters of Communism in China, eventually experienced a very severe reversal of fortunes in the Cultural Revolution, despite his many valuable contributions to the Party. As his biography details, "during the ten years of turmoil, Zuo Ying directly suffered Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan's brutal persecution, and was mercilessly attacked," and his "body and mind" were "destroyed" (3). However, his "revolutionary convictions" were supposedly "unwavering" throughout this period. In his later life he returned to broadcasting work, and was commemorated after his death, in 1984, as an "outstanding Party member" who had lived a life of "revolution" and "struggle" (4).

The short biography of Zuo Ying is laudatory and somewhat typical of an individual who had been an important figure in the early PRC era, and then suffered much during the Cultural Revolution. From the positions that he held it is clear that Zuo Ying was an important figure in the PRC broadcasting industry throughout almost the entire Mao period, and his work reflected and influenced many significant aspects of the Mao era soundscape. From his writings on broadcasting work, we can ascertain much about the ways in which he attempted to shape broadcasting practices and the sound media that was being used across China. What follows is a summary of five pieces by Zuo Ying, two dealing with broadcasting in rural areas, two with factory broadcasting, and one (which I shall begin with) concerning the more general characteristics of using sound for propaganda work. With my selection of these five pieces, rather than any of the other equally interesting and revealing articles from the anthology, I am attempting to give an impression of the "strategies" that were employed by Party officials, to use Michel de Certeau's term, how the technology was applied in the field, and what the construction of the PRC's sonic infrastructure looked like, in the eyes of those that designed it.

Piece One: *"Talking About Broadcasting's Characteristics: One of the Study Notes on this Business,"* published in *The Broadcasting Business*, trial publication No. 1, June 1955

In this short article Zuo Ying details his understanding of the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of broadcasting as a medium, and more broadly the advantages and disadvantages of using sound to convey propaganda to the People. The article was written to help broadcasting workers become more familiar with the specific characteristics of their field, because as Zuo Ying put it, radio broadcasting was still a "very young" industry in China, and "as soldiers must be completely

familiar with the weapons in their hands, it is just as important that technical workers must understand the functions of machines that they use" (78).

The "fundamental distinguishing feature" of radio broadcasting was that it "used sound to carry out propaganda, it was not like newspapers and magazines, which used the written language … it was not like the plastic arts which relied on art, imagery and colors, and also not like the performing arts which relied on the stage and imagery to arouse people" (78). Also, unlike other instances in which sound was being used to convey "thought and emotion," such as at a lecture in a classroom, a speech at a public arena or a performance at a theatre, radio did not deliver sound to a directly facing audience (78). Sound needed to travel via "radio waves" in order to reach people, and it was using radio waves to speak and sing to "tens of thousands of masses" that was truly the "fundamental distinguishing feature" of radio broadcasting (78, 79).

Based on this conclusion, radio broadcasting was a "propaganda tool that possessed very distinct advantages," Zuo Ying affirms. These advantages are then listed out as follows: first, radio broadcasting was "very rapid and timely" and "not subject to constraints in time and space," so as soon as a thing happened it could be transmitted by sound to any place (79). This meant that, for example, "we can send the broadcast of the actual events of May 1st [Labor Day] and October 1st [National Day] to the tens of thousands of masses several thousand *li* away, it would be like listening to the troops being reviewed and the parade in front of Tiananmen Square at the same time [as they are happening]" (79). Another possible usage of this positive aspect of broadcasting, suggested by Zuo Ying, is more directly educational. Radio broadcasting could be used to organize simultaneous viewings in different locations of solar and lunar eclipses, whilst the scientific principles could be explained to listeners in a "cordial" way (79).

Another related advantage of radio broadcasting was its capacity to propagandize current affairs. An example of this occurred during the War of Liberation, or Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), in which broadcasting was "wielded" to "smash through ring upon ring of blockades in the liberated areas to tell the People across the whole country and the entire world in a timely way about the real situation in the war of liberation and the liberated areas" (79).

The "mass character" of radio broadcasting was another of its benefits:

> whether it is children or youths, young or old people, they can all find things they like to listen to from the radio broadcasts; radio broadcasting is also not subject to restrictions in terms of one's cultural level, whether literate or illiterate, as long as you're not deaf, if it's using a language that is shared, then everyone can understand, and everyone can be influenced by it. (79)

This "mass" nature of radio broadcasting had already been made use of in China, as Zuo Ying argues. The "most outstanding" example of this being the broadcasting assembly, which was a format of broadcasting created in China (79). The invention of this format meant that "many millions of people dispersed in a number of places, seem as if they were massed together in one hall, concentrating all their attention on listening to the same single voice" (79).

The "mass character" of broadcasting was not only represented by its capacity to organize people. It was also connected, "more importantly" with being able to "penetrate into every household, cordially and naturally carrying out propaganda to people outside of their work hours" (79, 80). This was easily achievable because "people just need a radio, then in the hours when families are at rest, before bedtime, or after getting out of bed, they can hear from it the things they need to hear" (80), and if a radio or loudspeaker were installed in the family home, then "this would be like us having a propaganda worker there" (80).

Many broadcasting workers did not "fully understand" this potential of broadcasting work however, and this resulted in "lengthy speeches" at broadcasting assemblies that were as

"dry as dust," and other problems, which also occurred in part because broadcasters were not familiar with the "mentality" of their listening audience (80). Broadcasters could improve their effectiveness by "using vivid and vigorous forms, cordial and natural tones of voice," and by telling people things in "as short a time as possible" (80). Broadcast propaganda "had a greater power to move people" than written propaganda did, and "if wielded appropriately" it "often deeply touched people's heartstrings" (80). This superiority of broadcast propaganda over written propaganda was, according to Zuo Ying, due to the "power" of sound. For example, if "we read a portrayal of a war hero or a model worker, this is not as good as them personally giving a talk over the radio, which is more intimate" and if "we read a news report this is not as good as listening to a recording of a report, which feels more authentic" (80). Listening to skilled broadcasters could provoke intense reactions, and the usage of certain other characteristics of broadcasting assisted with this. As Zuo Ying explains:

> The impressions obtained from a person reading a literary work, and listening to someone else reading the same work aloud with great expression are often very different. The latter often gives people an intense impression, even making people follow along with the plot of the work and producing different emotions, up to making people laugh or cry. If we mix other necessary sound effects with broadcasts of literary works (for example the soughing wind, the sound of rain, birdsong, horses neighing …) or music that fits in with the contents, this will also make the broadcasts appear livelier still, and will attract an audience. (80)

These aspects of sound are borne out by an old adage Zuo Ying refers to: "beautiful music lingers in the air, uninterrupted for three days," which is proof, he argues, that "sound moves people deeply" and that broadcasters ought to make "every manuscript and every song that [they] broadcast all capable of carrying people away and sinking deep into their hearts" (80). This would be using the full potential of radio broadcasting and the power of sound.

In the second part of this article Zuo Ying turns to the weaknesses of radio broadcasting as a medium. He begins by addressing one of the limitations of sound itself, namely that once emitted it, "vanishes in a flash, almost as if it didn't remain for even a moment" (81). This caused a problem for broadcasters, because it meant that "audiences must come within a fixed time to listen to something, otherwise an opportunity can be lost" (81). Broadcasting also posed some problems for listeners, because in contrast with reading newspapers, periodicals or books, as Zuo Ying points out, a radio program could not be stopped and listeners needed to understand it all whilst it was being broadcast, as they did not have a chance to play back the broadcast (81).

Another particularity of broadcasting, which caused some issues, was the large physical distance between "the people speaking and the people listening" (82). This gave broadcasters a "complex" feeling, because it could seem as if they were just "talking to themselves" when at the microphone (82). Zuo Ying relates an anecdote a comrade once told him about this sensation, "the speaker at a broadcasting rally could not see one person, and could not feel there was an audience, so he felt as if he was talking into the air. This gave the writer of the program and the speaker a complex and contradictory feeling" (82). Another quirk of broadcasting that seemed to make broadcasting less appealing to some listeners was that they were able to hear speakers, but not see them. Often in this situation it was difficult to make people stop and listen to broadcasts, which was one of the reasons why broadcasts "still could not completely replace public lectures," at least at that point in time (82).

Two other shortcomings with broadcasting, according to Zuo Ying were: one, many people only spoke minority languages or dialects, and would not be able to understand broadcasts coming from the capital, and two, radios were simply still beyond the financial reach of most of the masses.

Piece One Analysis

This piece speaks to the strengths and limitations of sound reproducing tools, and sound itself, in terms of how they could fulfill the Party's aims. From Zuo Ying's summary, we can gain an impression of how broadcasting was shaped by the cultural, educational and socioeconomic standards at the grassroots, but also how sound media had the potential to bring about change, as long as broadcasters understood how to make best use of the medium.

The idea of the Party having a propagandist in every home if they could install a radio or loudspeaker there, is something that would seem Orwellian to many, though Zuo Ying claimed that propaganda would be carried out in a cordial and natural way. It was a plan that came to fruition in many parts of China during the Mao years,[45] and from the perspective of listeners there were both positive and negatives aspects to these indoor loudspeakers, as well as notable sound quality issues. As Jie Li writes:

> In Jiangxi "moving-iron speakers or "reed speakers" (舌簧喇叭 *shehuang laba*) [were installed] in villager homes around 1970. Connected to the commune station through wires, these reed speakers became the villagers' only means of receiving news and entertainment at the county, provincial, and national levels for nearly a decade … the installation of such indoor loudspeakers was initially required of and welcomed by villagers, who could turn them on and off with the tug of a line. However, when the speakers broke for any reason, villagers would rarely pay to have them repaired. (J. Li 2020a, 36)

Sound and equipment quality problems aside, having indoor loudspeakers installed across the country was a method by which the Party and its ideology could integrate itself into people's

[45] By 1974 65% of rural households were estimated to have speakers in use. See Andrew Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (163).

daily lives, and there are also accounts of listeners being unable to turn off indoor loudspeakers.[46]

The intimacy of broadcasting that Zuo Ying refers to a few times in this piece,[47] and the way in which sound could be used to rouse various emotions, could also have enabled the Party and the People to become closer, both because of the medium's nature (and how listeners tend to perceive information from the radio) and certain qualities of the human voice. As Susan Douglas writes in *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*, in 20th century America listeners often had an "intimate relationship" with the radio (3), and this came in part because of the active participation of listeners with their broadcasts, whereby:

> [A] listener could ornament any radio broadcast, whether it was a political speech, *Inner Sanctum, Fibber McGee and Molly*, or the New Philharmonic Orchestra with appropriate visuals. This meant more than imagining the people and their expressions, the setting and its architecture and décor. It also meant that with words and tone of voice as your only clues (often reinforced by sound effects and music), you conjured up people's emotional states, their motivations, the tenor of their interactions with others. (4)

Zuo Ying, as his writing shows, was well aware of the techniques that could be utilized to ensure that people were influenced, strongly and emotionally, by what they were listening to, and as he pointed out, broadcasting had a "mass character," as everyone could find something they enjoyed listening to from the radio or loudspeaker. This "mass character" (also apparent in the

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[46] As the anthropologist Yan Yunxiang notes in regard to the collectivization of individual space in an agricultural commune, "Wired broadcasting is a typical example. In the early 1970s, Dadui village installed a loudspeaker in every home, typically right above the *kang* bed. The loudspeakers had no on/off switches, and both the content and the schedule of the programming was determined by the county broadcast station.The Dadui station was just a relay for the county broadcast system. And so the villagers had no control over what they could hear or when they would hear it. They were forced to listen every day to official news, political propaganda, speeches by cadres, entertainment programs, and the like. But as time went on, everyone not only got accustomed to the wired broadcasts, but came to depend upon them." See Yan Yunxiang, *Siren shenghuo de biange: yige zhongguo cunzhuang li de aiqing, jiating yu qinmi guanxi, 1949–1999* [The transformation of everyday life: Love, family, and intimacy in a Chinese village, 1949–199] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2006), 41. From Andrew Jones, *Circuit Listening* (2020, 222)

[47] *Qinqie* (亲切), which I translated in most places as "cordial" can also mean "intimate"

illustration below (fig. 2), the front cover of a booklet entitled, "*The Growth of a Rural Wired Broadcasting Station*" published in 1956)[48] was an important benefit to the new sound media, and the appeal of broadcasting to both the old and the young, and people from all walks of life, was another thing that made radios and loudspeakers seem like more powerful tools for propaganda than newspapers and other printed media.

Fig. 2

In order for people to feel genuinely close to what was being broadcast, and have their emotions moved by what they heard; however, it was important to have appropriately skilled voices

[48] *Yi ge nongcun youxian guangbozhan de chengzhang*《一个农村有线广播站的成长》, referenced also in the introduction.

broadcasting. As Paulina Hartono has detailed in a recent article (2020), this was something that the Party paid close attention to:

> From the earliest years of the People's Republic of China, officials saw radio as a tool for political and ideological education. The sounds of broadcasters' voices were themselves exercises in a political education. They projected an imagined voice of the nation by using the national standardized accent and a sonic affect to project affinity with ordinary citizens, or "the People," vaunted in Chinese Communist Party (CCP) culture and propaganda. Warmth, strength, and confidence were qualia that were closely associated with the voice and what it signified. (27)

The importance of the voice in radio broadcasting was also apparent from the descriptions of the live radio broadcasts of National Day parades from chapter one, but as Zuo Ying pointed out in this piece, there were still limitations across the nation regarding people's comprehension of the "national standardized accent" (*Putonghua*) (普通话) This would have undermined the extent to which many actually felt close to the "voice of the nation" that emanated from the center. As Hartono explains at a later point in her article, though, radio was itself used for the nationwide standardization of Mandarin (36), which was a long-term process.[49]

One other constraint mentioned by Zuo Ying, which also could have become less of a problem once people became more familiarized with the medium, was the somewhat "uncanny" aspects of broadcasting, which included the "complex" feeling some broadcasters had about speaking to no-one, and the lack of attention some listeners paid to voices that were separated from their source – "schizophonia," to use R. Murray Schafer's term, "the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction" (Schafer 1993, 90). Zuo

[49] Loudspeakers played a part in helping to spread *Putonghua* because they were an effective way of ensuring passive exposure to the language. S. Robert Ramsey writes in his book *The Languages of China* that; "in squares and marketplaces the ubiquitous loudspeaker fills the air with broadcasts from Radio Peking" (28) The standardization of language was a very consistent policy throughout the Mao years. Ramsey writes, "through the Hundred Flowers Movement, the Cultural Revolution, the reign of the Gang of Four and their subsequent downfall, the government … never altered [their] objective" (27)

Ying believed that the contents of broadcasts could be improved to catch people's interest, though, and with this limitation and the others mentioned in the article, his general viewpoint was that no flaws were "absolute," and that being familiar with the medium, its strengths and weaknesses, was crucial for carrying out effective broadcasting propaganda work. In this way the specific usage of radio broadcasting in the field, was constantly being shaped by the knowledge and experiences of broadcasters, and the social and cultural contexts in which they were working.

Piece Two: *How to be a Radio Receptionist*, published in *Broadcasting Journal* (*Guangbo tongbao*), December 1950

This article, published just over a year after the founding of the PRC, describes the duties of and qualities necessary for the role of "radio receptionist" (*Shouyinyuan*) (收音员) in early broadcasting work. As the editorial note for this article explains, at this time in PRC history, just after "liberation," in "the vast rural areas and remote mountainous areas, conditions were very bad, and in some places they only had one or two radios," so in order to have Party center's "voice spread widely across the whole country" the "central broadcasting office and local governments set up a radio receiving team" who would take a record of the contents of broadcasts so that they could deliver news to local cadres and the masses (14).

The question of how to be a good radio receptionist was an "urgent" one, according to Zuo Ying. In 1950, in north and south-central China there were only 1170 "trained" radio receptionists. Much work also still needed to be carried out in training radio receptionists, as some people were unclear about what exactly the role entailed. Some radio receptionists had the impression that they were merely taking notes about what they heard, and that they were simply

performing “routine work,” but Zuo Ying argued that this was a “complete misunderstanding” of the role. Radio reception work was of great “political significance,” because every day a radio receptionist needed to deal with domestic and international matters of importance, and they needed to “organize cadre learning” and raise the “political cultural level” of the masses (9). In this way radio receptionists acted as intermediaries between the Party and the People.

Not everyone could be a radio receptionist, however, as Zuo Ying makes apparent. A radio receptionist “should not only have reached a certain cultural level, and mastered how to use their own radio, they must also possess a certain degree of political understanding” (10). Radio reception work was also “arduous” and it required “patience,” and difficulties could be faced, because leaders in some areas, who radio receptionists would need to cooperate with, were not “used to” broadcasting (10). Radio receptionists should also be adaptable and ready to use various means to convey propaganda to the People:

> [They] should use all methods to spread propaganda, through using mimeograph newspapers, wall newspapers, rooftop broadcasting, announcing in front of the team etc. use forms that communicate as much as possible to make yourself become one of the most outstanding propaganda workers. (11)

Zuo Ying then describes in more detail how a successful broadcasting meeting would be carried out by an outstanding radio receptionist/propaganda worker:

> Some radio receptionists place the radio in a large hall, sweep the room clean, prepare seating and drinks of water, and invite the staff to listen to the broadcast. Some organize a discussion after the audience has listened to the broadcast. A few days ago, many radio receptionists did this during a propaganda event, when they were collecting signatures for peace, and it was very effective. Some radio receptionists, upon hearing battlefield reports, draw maps for everyone to look at. Some radio receptionists will mobilize comrades that can paint to make caricatures on wall newspapers and blackboard newspapers to accompany the broadcasts, and this is very popular. Some radio receptionists, in order to solve the difficulties of cadres and the masses not understanding the Beijing accent, will attach a microphone to the bottom part of the radio to use it as a loudspeaker, and after part of the broadcast is over, they will use this self-made loudspeaker to provide explanations in the local dialect. (11)

Radio receptionists also needed to promote the advantages of broadcasting "at all times and all places" (11). They needed to make broadcasting appealing to people, whilst bearing in mind the balance between entertainment and political education (11). The article concludes with Zuo Ying's stressing the positive aspects of being a radio receptionist, emphasizing in particular that radio reception work presented a great opportunity for studying that should be "cherished" (13).

Piece Two Analysis

The role of radio receptionist has recently been written about by both Jie Li (2020), and Wang Yu in a 2019 dissertation.[50] As Jie Li argues, radio receptionists "[demonstrated] the mediating role of human beings in the Maoist media infrastructure," and there was often a "spirit of sacrifice" in conducting their work (33), which recalls Zuo Ying's description of radio reception work being "arduous." This "spirit of sacrifice" is evidenced in a 1954 short story, detailed by Li, entitled, "Radio Receptionist Little Wang goes to the Countryside" which describes how:

> Overcoming her frail physique, young and cheery radio receptionist Little Wang took to the road with a heavy load on her shoulder pole. While she dreamed of the day when Chinese peasants also owned radio sets like their Soviet counterparts, village children greeted her as the "singer of electric opera." Upon arrival, she connected her radio set to a loudspeaker and asked the village party secretary to organize some 500 listeners by mutual aid teams. She then introduced the program and let the radio transmit a speech by the agricultural minister and a model worker on the virtues of rural cooperatives. By dusk, five more households had pledged to join the cooperative. The remainder of the story chronicles her journey through snow to a second village and an accident with a falling antenna pole that smashed her hand but could not hinder her work. (32)

[50] See works cited section.

The radio receptionist, as well as helping to disseminate propaganda using sound media, would also (if they were as dedicated as Little Wang in this story) have been distinct visual symbols of the devotion of some people to the Party, and of the Party's strong desire to connect with the People, even in very remote regions.

Wang Yu focuses on technological and political issues on his chapter on "radio operators" (his term for radio receptionists) and though his detailed conclusions on the power dynamics of this period (and the eventual phasing out of radio reception work) cannot be covered in full here, I will briefly relate part of Wang's descriptions of the various hurdles that were faced in radio reception work. In this early stage of the PRC, in areas where technological limitations were severe, there was a strong reliance on the capability of individuals and the bureaucratic system as a whole in order for radio reception work to function smoothly. In Wang Yu's study, he details the wide range of inadequacies in radio reception work, some of which arose because of political tensions and some because of poorly trained and poorly educated radio receptionists (2019, 22).

One anecdote that Wang Yu relates underlines how much of a challenge it would have been to switch between political/textual content and music in a way that would have maintained the interest of listeners:

> [When one operator] played opera, everybody sat there listening to it quietly and attentively. The moment she switched to political reports, however, she immediately saw listeners' disappointing faces. Despite popular protest against political reports, Yan continued playing them. After all, it was the operator's duty to make policies known by every person in the village. As a result, fewer and fewer people came to the listening site. There was nothing she could do but to set up a board to forecast programs before operating so that listeners could walk in for their favored programs and walk out to avoid the non-favored ones. (38)

From this account it is quite clear that there would have been many differences between how the radio receptionist role was idealized and conceptualized by leading Party members, and how radio reception work might have functioned at the grassroots. The role of radio receptionists, if the system functioned smoothly, and individuals were capable and informed, was potentially important, and their place within the sonic infrastructure shaped and was shaped by political formations across China. It was a new position that carried with it some status (as I will briefly show below), but it was challenging work, and the efforts of radio receptionists were often thwarted for various reasons.

One weakness with radio reception work was its success being contingent on human relations and capabilities, and another was due to the reliance on equipment that was not always adequate for either the needs of the Party or the listeners. A *People's Daily* article from May 1957 entitled "A Rural Radio Receptionist" illustrates this latter point well. The article tells the story of Zhang Runlin, a diligent radio receptionist, and the eventual switch to wired broadcasting in a small village. To summarize this piece: Zhang was successful in his role of radio receptionist, the villagers appreciated his efforts and he became popular, the villagers always calling on him and wanting to listen to the radio every day. Zhang's battery-powered radio was not fit for purpose, however, as the sound was "not loud," and could not be heard from a small distance away, even if no-one made a noise. The broadcasts were also often interrupted by "droning" or "humming" sounds, which could not be fixed by retuning, and one old person tended to "dominate" the machine, getting too close because his hearing was bad. To address these issues, as this article describes, the village was due to have wired broadcasting installed. Zhang Runlin was delighted about this, because he was familiar with this equipment, and knew that with loudspeakers in place, the "loud and clear" sound would be heard by all in the village.

From all of these pieces dealing with radio reception work – Zuo Ying's article and Jie Li and Wang Yu's academic works – we can gain a sense of the "plasticity" of sound media during the early stages of the Mao era, and the different range of social and cultural forces that were steadily altering sound media usage at the grassroots, and more broadly, China's emerging sonic infrastructure. The various anecdotes quoted above contradict typical impact narratives concerning technology, and instead show how new sound media often needed to be supplemented and understood by other forms of media, and adapted and improved on in the field or just replaced, if they were not fit for purpose. In piece two and the following piece we can clearly see the desire of Zuo Ying and the Party to rapidly develop broadcasting capabilities in order to get propaganda/information to the People, which led to the crystallized form of China's sonic infrastructure that people associate with the Mao era, wired broadcasting.

Piece Three: *"Developing Rural Wired Broadcasting is the Way to Go for the Radio Rediffusion Network: An Explanation of the Instructions for the Gradual Construction of Rural Wired Broadcasting in the Provinces and Districts with Necessary Prerequisites*," published in *Broadcasting Business*, first issue, August 1955

This article deals with the proposed development of the rural wired broadcasting network, which was seen as a progression from the radio rediffusion network that existed when the CCP came to power in 1949. The development of the PRC's radio rediffusion network had followed two main paths since its establishment, Zuo Ying explains. One was "employing all types of radios, including battery powered radios and crystal radio sets, and establishing radio receiving stations across the country" and the other was building "various wired broadcasting stations" where conditions allowed (47, 48). A great amount of "manpower" and "material resources" had been

expended on developing a radio receiving network over the previous five years, and "without doubt" this had been "correct" and "necessary" because of the numerous positive effects of broadcasting, but there were obvious challenges in building radio receiving stations as well, and other methods needed to be considered for connecting with people across the country.

Zuo Ying explains this complicated situation in this way:

> We should see that in the process of developing listening work radio receiving stations are just a transitional form, in the definite upwards trajectory of China's rural economy they will accomplish their historical mission and be replaced by other forms. Second, we should see that using the established radio listening stations to develop listening work, due to them requiring high costs and specialized management, the process of making them widespread has limitations. Therefore, if we want to go a step further to meet the needs of numerous peasants in listening to broadcasts, we have to create the conditions to find other ways. (48)

Zuo Ying then explains why the radio rediffusion network ought to change, to better meet the needs of listeners. In recent years, in places where conditions were good, in order to "accompany the Socialist reform movement and go a step further in satisfying the needs of the masses in listening to broadcasts" broadcasting stations in towns and cities and rural wired broadcasting had begun to replace radio receiving stations, and the amount of crystal radio set listeners had also quickly grown in the surrounding areas of large cities. Problems remained however, with provincial and rural broadcasting, partly because leaders of broadcasting work were "slaves of habit" (48). One particular problem that needed to be solved was that the residents of cities and small and medium industry and commercial businesses were receiving provincial broadcasts that were aimed at rural people, and they were not satisfied with the content of these broadcasts (48).

The solution was rural wired broadcasting and its benefits were "very obvious" to Zuo Ying. The four clear advantages of rural wired broadcasting were: 1) it was relatively "cheap"

and “convenient,” and would be easy to “popularize” and make “pervasive” given the prevailing conditions of rural China; 2) “Apart from it being able to relay the important programs from China People’s Central Broadcasting and local stations, it could also help local leading bodies supply encouragement directly to local people carrying out propaganda. Moreover, in minority regions and areas where dialects are relatively strong, the important propaganda contents can be broadcast using minority languages or dialects”; 3) “Wired broadcasting [was] effective for controlling collective listening,” because it could “disseminate propaganda content that would be inappropriate to broadcast on wireless” systems and it could “effectively eliminate the influence of enemy broadcasting stations”; 4) Wired broadcasting also had benefits for China’s national defense (49).

The “huge dimensions” of the planned rural wired broadcasting construction project (50), meant that it would take ten years or longer to put in place. Zuo Ying had the following suggestions for making this process smoother and more cost effective, and generally a worthwhile endeavor: he puts forward a plan of how equipment could be paid for, stating that to encourage peasants to “take good care of” loudspeakers, they could pay for part of their cost themselves (52). He then discusses the subject of improving the quality of the shows (*jiemu*) (节目) that were being broadcast, pointing out that “running a broadcasting station well is not easy,” so rural stations should make use of relayed programs (from the Central People’s Broadcasting Station and provincial broadcasting stations), and manage their “limited manpower” well to make their own shows (53). This would help the rural stations to improve the quality of their own shows, but besides this it was “absolutely necessary” anyway to relay international and domestic news, provincial news, policies and propaganda (53). Rural radio stations should also, “rely on the local Party committee’s propaganda department” and “unite a group of broadcasting

hobbyists" and take them on as "assistants" (54). It was also important for provincial and regional stations to help rural stations by "giving them manuscripts and recordings, frequently exchanging experiences, and helping them resolve questions and overcome difficulties" (54).

Towards the end of his essay Zuo Ying gives some details on the problems that rural wired broadcasting had faced in the past, and how some areas of the country had deviated from the ideal path for developing rural broadcasting. Speaking of the well-known "model" example of success in rural broadcasting, Jiutai (九台) county, Zuo Ying argues that, "it should be admitted that although we have summarized and promoted the practice of rural wired broadcasting in Jiutai county, Jilin province since 1952, we lacked specific methods to promote their experience, therefore, until now our achievements in rural wired broadcasting construction have been very small" (54). Zuo Ying ends the article by suggesting that a rural wired broadcasting station could be built according to "the principles of utility and economizing" and this would serve as a good example that could be followed by others (55).

Piece Three Analysis

This piece gives an impression of the spatial configurations of China's sound media, as they were developing in the 1950s, and allows us to understand the plans that Zuo Ying and other prominent Party officials had for their future. From this piece we can ascertain some of the materials that made up the sonic infrastructure (radio receiving stations, broadcasting stations, wired broadcasting stations, radios, loudspeakers, battery operated radios and crystal radio sets), and how developments in the system necessarily entailed changes in social, economic and political relations. People's positions in society could change, as new technologies were phased in or out, and people were being encouraged to work together ("exchange experiences") in order

to make smooth progress with technological changes.[51] Zuo Ying's descriptions of the successes and failures of implementing rural wired broadcasting, however, also show how human relations and human nature (people being "slaves of habit") impacted on technological progress and usage, which again refutes the typical "impact narrative" concerning new technologies.

Various statistics were provided by Zuo Ying, which showed the progress that had been made thus far with broadcasting work in New China, as well as the Party's ambitious plans for the future. Statistics were generally useful for the Party in presenting a positive picture of PRC economic and technological development and Hugh Howse, one of the early scholars to examine the usage of the radio in China, points out the tendency of the Party to draw comparisons between themselves and the old Kuomintang regime in terms of radio transmitting power, with their claim that "it is now [in 1960] almost five times greater than the total transmitting power under the Kuomintang in the twenty years from 1928-47. Ergo, the Central People's Broadcasting Station in [Beijing] proudly claims, "one year of us is equal to a hundred years of the Kuomintang" (Howse 1960, 60). Various other scholars have also used similar statistics to illustrate the growth of sound media in the 1950s and 1960s, and though we should be cautious about the veracity of these numbers (as some have pointed out)[52], they can allow us to generally ascertain changes in the scope of China's sonic infrastructure. Alan Liu provides the following numbers in his 1971 work, *Communications and National Integration in Communist China*: in 1949 there were 500 loudspeakers in China. In 1957 there were 993,200 and this increased

[51] In terms of the sonic infrastructure that existed at this point, human bodies could also generally be perceived as "essential nodes of [the] mass media network," as Jie Li argues (2020a, 33), in performing radio reception work or rooftop broadcasting (*wuding guangbo*).

[52] For example, Alan Liu points out that "false reporting" (exaggerated numbers) was especially common during the Great Leap Forward (from 1958), and noted unusual statistics related to radio stations and loudspeakers at that time (1975, 119)

significantly to 2,987,500 in 1958. By 1964 there was said to be 6,000,000. In the same period (1949-1964) the number of radio stations in China grew from just 8 to 1,975 (Liu 1975, 120).

Jie Li also presents some impressive statistics, drawn from *Zhongguo de Youxian Guangbo*: "there were 93 million loudspeakers in the Chinese countryside by 1973, more than 10 times the 8.5 million prior to the Cultural Revolution," whilst pointing out that "quantity did not promise quality" (2000a, 35). This disclaimer is important to remember when considering these statistics, and both Jie Li and Andrew F. Jones[53] have remarked on the ramshackle nature of the sonic infrastructure, which is also reflected in the variety of sound media in use mentioned in Zuo Ying's piece, some of which were quite antiquated by 1957, and as other sources have shown (the *People's Daily* article on Zhang Runlin, the radio receptionist, and Jie Li's descriptions of many indoor loudspeakers), these media could be unreliable and sometimes unusable.

What Zuo Ying's piece indicates most perhaps, is the daunting scale of the sonic infrastructure from the perspective of those that were attempting to develop it. He was advocating a move from the radio rediffusion network to a wired rural broadcasting network that would take ten years to construct, and though he had a thorough understanding of what the advantages of that system would be, it is apparent that a large number of obstacles needed to be surmounted (human, technological, economic and political), and that unrealistic propaganda about broadcasting developments (such as the promotion of Jiutai's accomplishments)[54] was less

[53] "Mandated by the central authorities, broadcasting networks were often jerrybuilt by local authorities in the absence of state funding or even electrical mains. Engineers were forced to improvise, and the technical choices they made were governed by thrift and expediency rather than by engineering efficiency or audio quality, let alone high fidelity. Transistorized public address systems and portable film projectors were often driven by makeshift generators, hand-cranked by peasants, or even propelled by teams of oxen. Relays traveled down telephone lines, and interference was common. Speakers were rudimentary at best and always shrill. The network was *noisy*." (2020, 18)

[54] As Jie Li explains, "rural wired broadcasting in China had its legendary origins in Jiutai County, Jilin Province. In 1952, the county Party secretary reportedly heard the sound of opera on the telephone and learned that there had

helpful than understanding and addressing the real strengths and limitations of China's technological capabilities. Zuo Ying's piece on rural wired broadcasting is also therefore of importance in making plain some of the gaps between "the aspiration to centralized sonic totality" and the "inevitable historical failure to fulfill that aspiration" that Laurence Coderre described.

Piece Four: *Talking About the Soviet Union's Factory Broadcasting Stations,* Beijing Workers Press, 1956

This 1956 booklet discusses the Soviet lineage of PRC broadcasting work. The booklet is 22 pages long, and divided into 10 sections, which mostly follow a question-and-answer format, and was written following Zuo Ying's visit to the Soviet Union as part of a delegation. It gives an introductory account of the operations of a factory broadcasting system at a ball-bearing factory in Moscow. The descriptions of the factory broadcasting system indicate the advanced level of Soviet Union factory broadcasting, though it is unclear from this account exactly how representative broadcasting capabilities and practices at this large factory in the capital were of factory broadcasting standards nationwide.

Zuo Ying's delegation met with some compatriots, also in Moscow to learn from the Soviet Union, who extolled the benefits of the factory broadcasting for encouraging production, educating employees and disseminating culture and entertainment (2). The delegation then learned about the basic broadcasting schedule. For the daily broadcasts, the broadcasting station's editing department was responsible for just 20 minutes of manuscript reflecting on this

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been crosstalk between the telephone cables and the loudspeaker wires of a local factory's PA system. Inspired by this discovery, he worked with local technicians to develop a countywide wired broadcasting station using telephone cables to connect 330 loudspeakers. These experiments turned Jiutai County into a model for the rest of the country." (2000a, 34)

factory's production efforts. Employees worked in shifts at different times throughout the day, but they all needed to hear the broadcast, so the same content was broadcast at 12:20, 16:30, 19:20 and 23:00. In the latter three broadcasts, they used a recording, and apart from these broadcasts, at other times they would relay programs from the Moscow broadcasting station (2).

The "militancy" (*Zhandouxing*) (战斗性) of the broadcasting station was strong and they often broadcast criticisms and self-criticisms. Every month they could receive between 25 and 30 manuscripts related to criticism, and "broadcasting needles" (*guangbo cizhen*) (广播刺针) were played on the broadcasting station and afterwards disseminated via pictorial magazines, similar to Chinese style large posters or linked picture books (*lianhuanhua*) (连环画), with "very vivid" contents (3). The criticisms and self-criticisms were one way in which workers could contribute to the broadcasts. They could also use the broadcasting station to raise issues with management. One method of doing this was to send letters of complaint to the broadcasting station. This happened in the Moscow factory once when winter was approaching and workers felt that improvements were needed to the equipment to protect against the winter weather (4). This is one example Zuo Ying gives to explain the "close" relationship between the factory broadcasting station and its listeners (4).

The factory broadcasting workers had a close relationship with the factory newspaper workers. The factory had many kinds of wall newspapers and pictorials, and the newspaper workers needed to cooperate with the broadcasting station on propaganda, to make sure their efforts were coordinated. The broadcasting station also needed to consider the differences between sound media and print media, as Zuo Ying explains, and for this reason the broadcasting station was not always a suitable tool for certain types of broadcast. For example, when it came to disseminating criticism and self-criticism, newspapers held some advantages over the

broadcasting station, essentially because broadcasted sound was short lived, so a worker might not hear it, and even if they did, they were unlikely to "reflect deeply" on it in the same way they might if it were circulated in print. Criticism in print could be "very detailed" and a time limit could be specified in which the person who was being complained about could make a response. The factory broadcasting system was also deemed inappropriate for dispersing certain information, from a political consideration, because the scope of the broadcasted sound (the "wireless electronic waves" that "delivered sound") was very "broad," as compared with the factory newspapers (14). The factory broadcasting station still needed to broadcast criticisms and self-criticisms, however, and could not only produce positive content, as this would lead to the listeners having doubts and "losing belief" in the station (14). The booklet concludes with some general praise for the efforts of the Soviet Union factory broadcasters and the broadcasting system in the Soviet Union.

Piece Four Analysis

This booklet points to the significant influence of the Soviet Union on the soundscape and sonic infrastructure of the PRC, and it demonstrates that when considering the spatial configurations of Chinese sound media, we should remember that in the early Mao era in particular, China was closely connected with the Socialist bloc of countries, especially the more advanced Soviet Union.[55] Up until the Sino-Soviet split of the early 1960s, the Soviet Union was regarded as a "big brother" that China could learn from, and "following Soviet experience and directly supervised by Soviet advisers, China launched its first five-year plan built around industrialization and the socialist transformation of the economy" in 1950 (Y. Li 2017, 1). This

[55] The idea of the Soviet Union representing China's future was also apparent in the excerpt from the story ""Radio Receptionist Little Wang goes to the Countryside" (23).

booklet provides a detailed account of the role that the Soviet Union played as a model for the PRC's factory broadcasting, as well as the broader internationalism of the early Mao years, something that is also reflected in other essays in the Zuo Ying anthology in his essays concerning his observations of the "Leningrad radio club," and broadcasting in East Germany and Yugoslavia. Zuo Ying also details his thoughts on the more general strengths and weaknesses of factory broadcasting, a topic I will return to after piece five, on factory broadcasting in China.

Piece Five: *"A Typical Factory Broadcasting Station,"* published in the *People's Daily,* September 1951[56]

This quite lengthy *People's Daily* article describes the history and developments of the broadcasting station at Shenyang's 52 Factory. The article details the process by which the Shenyang 52 Factory broadcasting station (hereafter 52 Factory station) overcame its early difficulties to be awarded a "first class" placing by the Shenyang People's Broadcasting Station in 1950. The 52 Factory station began operating in July 1949 in order to carry out "propaganda education," and it used a 200-watt amplifier and 42 large loudspeakers, which were placed in each workshop and in the workers' collective dormitories. The station broadcasted sometimes on the production situation and sometimes on new production records that had been set, and it also relayed the Shenyang People's Broadcasting Station's "worker's program." At first, the workers at 52 Factory thought that the broadcasts were "novel" and were willing to listen, but in time everyone stopped listening, and some of them even "hated" the broadcasts, and wanted to sleep

[56] This piece is also contained in the Zuo Ying Anthology, *Style Lasts Forever*,

early or do other things, rather than listen. Some even wanted to cancel the broadcasting altogether.

Because of the 52 Factory station's failings, two comrades were sent from the Shenyang People's Broadcasting Station to evaluate the situation and help out. The 52 Factory station was deemed to have the following shortcomings: the organizational leadership was not strong enough; there was a lack of planning and organization in their work; there was no regular organization of listening; the existing listening organizations were not in contact enough with workers; the content of the broadcasts was "messy"; the broadcasts had no system; the broadcasts were too short or long (erratic in length); sometimes there were broadcasts, and sometimes the broadcasts stopped; and the Shenyang People's Broadcasting Station's "worker's program" did not satisfy the needs of workers.

To deal with these numerous shortcomings the 52 Factory station planned to strengthen their organizational structure, create programs that would satisfy the worker's needs, organize listening, and establish a system for working. The rest of the article lays out the organizational changes that were made in order to accomplish this plan and essentially lists the actions that contributed to 52 Factory station's recent successes.

There were four groups under the reorganized 52 Factory's station: the editing group, the engineering/maintenance and announcers' group, the cultural recreation group, and the listening group. Each group was responsible for a number of things, for example the listening group needed to: organize and develop all the factory's small listening groups; collect and sort out the opinions of the small listening groups and audiences to the broadcasts; formulate a system for the registration, meeting, and reports of the small listening groups, and supervise and check its

implementation; and maintain a relationship with the Shenyang People's Broadcasting Station, reflecting on their views and exchanging experiences (2).

Zuo Ying concludes the article by outlining how the 52 Factory station "learned the ropes" and "gradually accumulated some experience," listing five points (summarized below):

1) They carried out "focused interviews" on the production situation in various workshops, "therefore … promoting an upsurge in labor competitions in the whole factory." After this, in the Number One laboratory workshop after broadcasting the "ensure that the day's work is completed on the same day" proviso, one female worker even decided to forgo the "one-hour government permitted breastfeeding time" in order to continue working. Criticism was also broadcast to help drive up production and ensure production quality. One example of this was the worker Guan Chenglun who, after being criticized, felt "very ashamed," and "determined to correct his mistakes, immediately self-criticized and guaranteed a quality of 100% [in future], and to increase his production from before by 50%."
2) Broadcasters were "enthusiastic about serving the workers, listened well to everyone's opinions and constantly improved the content of broadcasts based on the opinions of the masses." They responded to listeners, and some workers said, "the broadcasting station and radio station are really like good friends to us, we offer opinions, and can get an answer just like making a phone call."
3) They maintained "very close contact" with Shenyang People's Broadcasting station and also "collected and reflected on the opinions of listeners."

4) "They built a relatively complete listening organization … and in a planned and conscious way cultivated a group of broadcasting activists." These "cadremen" were propagandists for the broadcasts. For example, one worker "often attentively listened to the broadcasts, and afterwards he would take the initiative to speak to others about the broadcast." If a worker ever missed a broadcast they would "automatically" go to this person to hear about it.
5) Broadcasting propaganda work was coordinated well with other propaganda forms. Also, the form in which propaganda and news was delivered was correlated to the educational and cultural level of listeners. For example, "Crosstalk was used to say that [President] Truman had slapped himself in the mouth, and after the workers heard they understood that Truman's statements before and after were contradictory. [Also], many *kuaiban* performances have been played several times and workers have already learned them. This not only balances work and cultural life, it also advances very good political education."[57]

Piece Five Analysis

This September 1951 piece describes the development of the 52 Factory station into a successful model that other factory broadcasting stations could learn from. This particular factory broadcasting station in Shenyang was the subject of two other *People's Daily* articles from 1951, which also extolled its progress, but this piece is the most detailed of the three.[58] The article

[57] Crosstalk, or Xiangsheng (相声) and Kuaiban (快板) are both popular forms of entertainment. Crosstalk usually involves a comic dialogue between two people, similar to a western comedic double-act, and *kuaiban* is a type of oral storytelling where a performer uses bamboo clappers and speaks/raps in time with a beat.
[58] There were two pieces published on May 14 1951 "A Factory in Shenyang, Everyone Loves the Broadcasting Station" "沈阳某工厂 – 人人都爱广播站" and "Learn from the Experience of a Shenyang Factory Broadcasting Station" "学习沈阳某工厂广播站的经验."

outlines the progress made by 52 Factory station, and also brings attention to some of the ways in which factory broadcasting could fail and be ineffective. In describing the old flaws of 52 Factory station, and how these were amended, it offers some specific suggestions to factory broadcasting stations nationwide on how to improve their service, and gives more evidence of how sound media were altered by their usage in everyday life. We can see how sound media needed to be integrated within the specific cultural and political aspects of life in the PRC, such as small group political work, and also get a sense of how this form of media would have encouraged new types of small group work, because of the particularities of listening work in political education.

When comparing these last two pieces we can also get an understanding of how broadcasting operated differently according to the cultural context it was being utilized in. For example, Zuo Ying, when writing about the Soviet Union factory broadcasting station mentioned a couple of times the "militant" nature of the criticism that was being broadcast. It could be that in the Chinese factory broadcasting stations criticism was ideally meant for "rectification" instead, (something I will explain in more detail in the next chapter) and attaining promises of improved performance, as with the case of Guan Chenglun, and so the criticism being broadcast probably had a different tone in these two countries.

In both of these two pieces Zuo Ying reflects again on the strengths and limitations of using sound for propaganda and once again sound's short-lived nature was something that caused problems for broadcasters. In the case of factory broadcasting, it meant that criticisms were not always "reflected" on deeply, as a criticism did not have the same sense of permanence it would have had if it were written down. If broadcasters cooperated well with other propaganda workers within factories, however, and understood the strengths and weaknesses of the medium

then they would be able to use factory broadcasting effectively. There are many examples of this in this piece, and with one in particular, the usage of crosstalk and *kuaiban* to convey news that might otherwise have been difficult to understand, it is interesting to consider again the careful balance that was being negotiated between entertainment and political education (which was mentioned earlier in the radio reception work piece). Listener engagement and entertainment were still concerns that shaped the specific usage of factory broadcasting tools, even though China was not a capitalist country.

One aspect of listener engagement that was clearly different in the Chinese context, however, was that listeners were engaged with even when they might not have wished to be, as Zuo Ying's piece makes clear. The prevalence of sound in all parts of the factory, even in workers' dormitories, would have enabled a quite significant sonic politicization of space, and it is not surprising that many workers in 52 Factory Station resented this at first. Other sources also suggest that sometimes these intrusions into the lives of workers were resented, and this did not always occur simply because workers were not interested in poorly organized content, as was mentioned in Zuo Ying's article. One example of this appears in Robert Loh's *Escape from Red China* (1962), where Loh recounts an incident in the mill he worked at where, "during the lunch period, the clinic doctor lectured on birth control over the loudspeaker. Because both sexes ate in the dining hall, this caused agonizing embarrassment" (147). This story indicates the possible everyday intrusion of politics into the lives of citizens, with the loudspeaker being employed to ensure that nobody could avoid policy and propaganda, even on issues that might have been regarded as personal or private.

The sonic politicization of both the employees working environment and their private living spaces and time, was something that could easily become bothersome. A 1956 *People's*

Daily article collection of responses to various readers' letters of complaint, details one particular criticism of a factory broadcasting station at an ironworks in Ma'anshan (马鞍山) in Anhui province. The complaint was titled "large speakers are hindering our rest," and the response of the factory's Party committee was to promise that they had now "separated the broadcasting line between the production area and the area of the dormitories," and they would "improve the contents of the broadcasts to make the broadcasting station truly become a tool that promotes production and gives propaganda education." These letters were exchanged at a particular moment in PRC history, the Hundred Flowers Campaign (*Baihua qifang*)(百花齐放) of 1956/1957, when the channels of communication between workers and cadres were open for criticism to be passed upwards, but it can be surmised that ordinarily workers might have had to endure broadcasts disturbing their rest periods, and would not have had recourse to complain.

From these two examples, as well as the more positive examples of broadcaster/listener relationships from this piece by Zuo Ying, it is evident that the medium of factory broadcasting itself reflected and influenced political and cultural formations in factories, and that the sound media being used in factories were shaped, in terms of their specific usage and roles, by everyday factory operations, the broader cultural context, and the interests and needs of listeners and factory broadcasters, as well as the needs and desires of the Party. As with the development of audio technologies in Western Capitalist countries factory broadcasting systems in Mao era China were, to return to Sterne, "a configuration of a variety of social forces," and so "as the social field [changed], the possibilities for the [media changed] as well."

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined some of Zuo Ying's writings in order to consider the desires that the Party had regarding sound media and their potential in New China, and the reality of constructing and implementing a new sonic infrastructure at the grassroots. These pieces, all from the first decade of the PRC era, reflect on the possibilities afforded by these technologies, the benefits and costs of using sound to spread propaganda, and the obstacles that needed to be overcome to ensure that these tools were effective transmitters of propaganda. What we can see in these documents is the steady shaping of these instruments by their usage across China, as well as the ways in which these media brought about changes in human relations, within specific cultural and political contexts in the PRC of this era. In outlining all of these issues I have sought to complicate the typical "impact narrative" concerning the introduction of new technologies in the PRC, and show the many serious challenges that the Party faced in attempting to saturate China with a "total soundscape."

Zuo Ying was realistic about the obstacles that would be faced in building a rural wired radio network, and that would be met when attempting to incorporate various types of new sound media all across a vast and diverse nation. His career reflected these efforts, as well as the broader technological changes in the second half of the 20th century, which were impacted by the needs of the Party and also global developments in science and technology, such as those detailed by Andrew F. Jones in *Circuit Listening* (2020).[59] Zuo Ying understood that forms of technology often served a particular purpose during a particular historical moment, but they would eventually always be supplanted by newer forms of technology. His descriptions of the radio rediffusion network's shortcomings, and his eventual focus on television broadcasting evince these things. While radio broadcasting was the dominant form of communication,

[59] Jones' particular focus is on the role of transistor technology in the global 1960s, and its influence on music and listening practices in China and Taiwan.

however, Zuo Ying believed that people working within the field needed to grasp the particularities of propagandizing with sound so that broadcasting could aid all kinds of improvements across China, in politics, culture, education and elsewhere.

In conclusion, despite considerable impediments and various technological limitations and weak spots in many areas, the sonic infrastructure greatly expanded in scope across the Mao era, and this had various impacts on economic, political and cultural formations. Sound media were shaped in different ways according to their usage in particular regions and sites, and these sound media impacted in turn on social relations. As new technologies were being phased in and out this making and unmaking of social relations could occur quite rapidly, which is why, as Jonathan Sterne cautioned, we should not work backwards from the final form a medium takes and construct an overall impact narrative accordingly. As Zuo Ying's writings, and the other sources in this chapter, have demonstrated, the histories of connections between human relations and technological developments are much too complicated for such arguments. Despite these matters, however, and the general conclusion that the Party was successful in expanding and improving its sonic infrastructure, the overall target as far as the Party was concerned was always geared toward improving actual propaganda work, which required effective content, and not merely having a well-developed sonic infrastructure. In the next chapter I will examine the level of success that the Party had in fulfilling this aim.

Chapter Three
Sonic Propagandizing: Sound, Noise, Music, and Mass Persuasion in the Early PRC

Though the term "propaganda," is widely used, there is no clear consensus on what it constitutes. As Peter Kenez states, "we all think we know perfectly well what propaganda is, [but] in fact we have no precise definition that would be value free and valid regardless of time or political culture" (Kenez 1985, 1). Propaganda is now generally considered to be a pejorative term, however, and Merriam-Webster defines it as "the spreading of ideas, information or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person," and "ideas, facts or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause."[60] Propaganda is regarded as a duplicitous measure, somewhat synonymous with other terms such as "bias" and "brainwashing" (the subject of chapter five), and it tends to be associated more with authoritarian political systems rather than democracies.

The original sense of the term was more neutral. Propaganda arose from a religious context, and was connected with propagation of the (Catholic) faith. The "church assumed that it had the one and only correct interpretation of faith, of man's place in nature and in history, and therefore regarded the attempt of bringing its doctrine to others as wholly benign" (Kenez, 2). The Catholic church believed that it was bringing truth to people, and so its efforts to spread information about this truth would therefore have been regarded positively. We can see from this, however, that an individual's perspective on the "truth" of the Catholic faith would determine whether they thought propaganda influenced conversions to Catholicism constituted some form of brainwashing, or the honest persuasion of someone with facts.

[60] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/propaganda accessed 05/12/20

Propaganda in its more modern and negative sense, is something that can take place covertly, and something that aims at manipulating the emotions (Ellul 1973). For these reasons it bears similarities with advertising. Advertising is designed to create desire for products and services, and political propaganda is designed to create support or consent for governments or political causes, and this support or desire can be provoked by emotional appeals, and subliminal manipulation, among other means. Edward Bernays (1891-1995), generally regarded in the United States as the "father of public relations," symbolizes this overlap between propaganda and advertising in the history of modern mass societies. During World War One Bernays worked for the Committee on Public Information (CPI), which was set up in 1917 to create support for the United States' involvement in what many American citizens still regarded primarily as a "European struggle" (Axelrod, preface xi). The CPI set about the "total monopolization of information, shaping news, shaping images, shaping emotions to create a reality in which President Wilson's war emerged as not merely desirable but inevitable" (ibid., xi). The "astounding success" of the CPI's wartime propaganda provoked Bernays to consider the "possibilities of regimenting the public mind" in peacetime as well (ibid., xi) and after the war, influenced by his own experiences and his understanding of work by theorists such as Wilfred Trotter and Gustave Le Bon on mass psychology and herd instinct, Bernays worked on such public relations projects as encouraging women to smoke, by marketing cigarettes as symbols of equality and emancipation and calling them "torches of freedom" (Cutlip 2013, 210).

Bernays claimed that "public relations, effectively used, helps validate an underlying principle of our society – competition in the market place of ideas and things" (*New York Times*, 1995). In this way, like the Catholic church, and also like the CCP, Bernays justified his actions by claiming that they accorded with a fundamentally correct, or at least widely accepted,

principle. The CCP, as I outline in this chapter, also connected their propaganda work with an "underlying principle." They too felt justified in their propaganda/public relations because it was validated by a higher truth, in their case the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of human history, and an ethical framework that also drew from Marxism-Leninism, as well as traditional Chinese philosophy. With these truths the Party wanted to remold the Chinese public into "New Communist People," and propaganda, or mass persuasion, was required to communicate their messaging.

Propaganda and Sound

As David Goodman explains, there is a "long history" in the "belief that sound propaganda is more effective than visual propaganda" (D. Goodman 2018, 91), and sound, music, and sound reproducing tools such as the radio and loudspeaker have long been regarded as particularly powerful propaganda tools by various governments, corporations, and notable historical figures. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to outline the reasons informing this belief in full, but they include: First, the fact that "sound has … historically more often been heard in a collectivity of some kind – in a church, at a political rally, in conversation" in contrast to visual propaganda, which in the modern era has usually been "consumed alone and in isolation – silent, solitary reading spread with the rise of book ownership from the early 18th century" (D. Goodman, 91). Second, music – particularly music with lyrics, but also instrumental music– has often been seen as an effective vessel for propaganda. For example, in the Reformation and in the Counter-Reformation, music was frequently used to disseminate propaganda on church politics (91, 92). Third, radio advertisers believed that the voice possessed specific qualities that meant that the radio was an extremely powerful tool for commercial and political manipulation of people.

Goodman quotes American advertising expert, Herman Hettinger, who claimed that radio had "all the emotional appeal and persuasiveness of the voice" giving it "a power which cold print cannot equal" and Charles Siepmann, who worked for the BBC, who said radio "exerts over many listeners an almost hypnotic influence, so that for them the borderline between fact and fancy becomes obscured" (93). Hettinger and Siepmann's comments here recall Zuo Ying's beliefs on the value of the human voice in communications between the Party and the People, and the idea of hypnosis will be explored in more detail in chapter five.

This chapter is an analysis of propaganda and sound in Mao era China, with sound representing a broad category including: sound, music, noise, sound effects and sound reproducing tools. The analysis in this chapter builds on the previous chapter in which I outlined the dimensions and features of the sonic infrastructure in the early Mao years, and discussed the hopes that officials had for its further construction, usage, and impact, and the obstacles the Party faced in attempting to improve broadcasting countrywide. In this chapter I continue to address the idea of whether or not a "total soundscape" existed during the Mao era, but my focus is on the content of broadcasting, rather than the technology. I explore a range of issues related to sound and propaganda, such as the CCP's attitudes towards propaganda, rectification and education; the varied roles and impacts of school broadcasting stations; propaganda and music; noise and silence, and their connections with CCP propaganda efforts; the usage of sound effects in propaganda work; and the impact of repetition in the Mao era soundscape.

I argue that although a total soundscape was desired by the Party, and was experienced to some degrees by numerous individuals in the Mao years, as various vivid and affecting accounts show, there were also ways in which the soundscape malfunctioned at the grassroots level, however, and in which centrally ordained sonic control from the Party was not attained. I also

argue that the intense saturation of political "sound bytes" in the Mao era soundscape, even where it did occur, was not especially effective as a propaganda technique. Although the Party had the means, in many cities and towns, and in sites with "captive audiences," to constantly bombard individuals with sound propaganda, this did not necessarily mean that their messages were absorbed by individuals in the manner that the Party wanted and expected. Before I fully address these issues, however, I will explain some of the specific attributes of Mao era Chinese propaganda work.

The CCP and Propaganda

The Chinese term for propaganda, *xuanchuan* (宣传),[61] underwent a shift in meaning in the modern age, as Weihong Bao explains, from being used to refer to the "dissemination of ideas and information from the ruling classes" to being connected with a broader range of actions such as "religious propagation and dissemination of knowledge, information, and thought for educational and commercial purposes as well as for political and military causes" (Bao 2015: 300). In 1924, under the Nationalist government, a Central Ministry of Propaganda was formed, and from that point onwards propaganda became an integral part of governance in China (ibid., 300).

The CCP, as well as the Nationalists and numerous artistic and political figures, worked on propaganda during the War of Resistance era, and refined their communication techniques in this crucial fight for China's future (Hung 1994). Their propaganda efforts before and after 1949 differed from other's efforts, however, because like the Bolsheviks, from whom they drew inspiration, and like the Catholic church, the CCP held the view that it possessed the "one and

[61] Propaganda work was also often described as "thought work" (*Sixiang gongzuo*) (思想工作).

only correct interpretation" of man's place in history. Their propaganda was geared towards delivering this truth to the People. In a 1930s interview with the American journalist Edgar Snow, Mao described how in 1920 he "organized workers politically for the first time" and read three books (*The Communist Manifesto*, *Class Struggle* by Kautsky, and a *History of Socialism* by Kirkup) that "deeply carved [his] mind" and "built up in [him] a faith in Marxism, from which, once [he] had accepted it as the correct interpretation of history, [he] did not afterwards waver" (Snow 1994, 155). The Party's post 1949 propaganda was concerned with two main things: converting the People to this faith and (again, like the Bolsheviks (Kenez, 4)) molding the People into citizens that were worthy exemplars of a new Communist society.

This second concern had its roots in ancient Chinese philosophy as much as in the Bolshevik propaganda state. The CCP's belief in moral reform drew from Confucianism, as well as the ideas of earlier Chinese reformers, such as Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen, "both of whom used their writing and actions in part to change the passive character of the Chinese people" (Lu 2017, 115). Mao espoused the belief that a "new Communist person" could be formed by correcting an individual's misguided ideology, as long as this individual went through moral reform with an honest and sincere attitude. Mao's belief, as Xing Lu explains, reflects the Confucian view, long held in China that, "individuals can cultivate virtuous minds, compassion, and good qualities through learning from moral exemplars," and contended that "attitudes can be inculcated, the mind can be transformed and behaviors can be modified. Through self-cultivation and the imitation of virtuous models, then, moral perfection can be achieved" (Lu, 116). Comparable ideas on self-cultivation and their ancient Chinese philosophical basis are also very much in evidence in Liu Shaoqi's 1939 text *How to be a Good Communist* 《论共产党员的修养》.

Techniques for implementing moral reform were honed in the Rectification Movement of the early 1940s that took place in Yan'an. This movement began after Mao assumed greater control over the Party in September 1941, and it involved him attempting to bring his vision of the revolution down to the mid and lower levels of the Party (Hua 2018, 319). Anyone could become a good comrade, as long as they were exposed to the correct kind of moral thinking, as Mao explained:

> Our aim in exposing errors and criticizing shortcomings, like that of a doctor curing a sickness, is solely to save the patient and not to doctor him to death. A person with appendicitis is saved when the surgeon removes his appendix. So long as a person who has made mistakes does not hide his sickness for fear of treatment or persist in his mistakes until he is beyond cure, so long as he honestly and sincerely wishes to be cured and to mend his ways, we should welcome him and cure his sickness so that he can become a good comrade. (Mertha, 207)

The importance of the "correct interpretation of history" was also stressed during the movement. According to Gao Hua, Mao wanted to rid the Party of the Russified Marxism-Leninism of Wang Ming (王明) (CCP leader and rival of Mao's during the 1930s) and other senior figures, and he wished to "use his own thinking to thoroughly remold the CCP and transform the worship previously directed to Wang Ming into worship of himself and his thinking" (Hua, 323, 324). In this respect, the Rectification Movement also impacted on another strand of later Mao era propaganda work: the cult of Mao.

In the next section and beyond, building on this contextualization of the rationale informing CCP propaganda work, I examine the significance of sound, music, noise, sound effects and sound-reproducing tools in the Party's propaganda efforts during the Mao years. I will first consider the usage of loudspeakers in schools to explain how broadcasting equipment helped to shape new subjectivities and remold social relationships in everyday life. Schools were particularly important sites for the Party's propaganda work, because they were where the PRC's

"new Communist people" were molded, and Mao had particular faith in young people's receptiveness to Party propaganda, and so propaganda within the education system forms a significant part of this chapter.

Propaganda and the Young: School Broadcasting Stations

Mao's views on young people, the role of education, and epistemology all bore an influence on how propaganda work was carried out in schools in the early PRC. Mao believed that knowing came from practice, or as he put it, "if you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself" (Lu 2017, 45). He believed also that children needed to understand society and politics in a direct experiential way, and that the "energy" of youth should be brought into "full play" (Piao 1966). In various quotes Mao expressed both optimism about the receptiveness of youths for propaganda work - "The young people are the most active and vital force in society. They are the most eager to learn and the least conservative in their thinking" (Piao 1966) - and an awareness of the difficulties that the Party would encounter in assuring the young that China was improving and had improved thanks to the CCP, but that further significant improvements could not be achieved as rapidly as they might hope (Piao 1966). From the various accounts of Mao era school-goers that I will detail in this section, it is clear that these theories and principles bore an influence on propaganda in schools, and that school broadcasting systems played a vital role in carrying out this work.

In this section I will examine the ways in which school broadcasting systems delivered propaganda that aimed at: instituting moral reform, shaping new subjectivities and new social/familial relations, and disseminating Marxist-Leninist ideology and the Party's viewpoint on current affairs. Broadcasting within schools, as with broadcasting within factories and

governmental offices, allowed the Party to communicate its messages directly to a "captive audience," as Alan Liu states (Liu 1975, 125). School broadcasting stations (*Xuexiao guangbozhan*)（学校广播站）also enabled collective listening, which as David Goodman has explained was one of the key assets of sound propaganda, because this type of "organized group listening" was a "means of monitoring the reception of broadcasts to ensure desired outcomes" (91). In organized group listening, responses to what was broadcast were checked in order to ascertain that the correct message had been absorbed; this placed pressure on auditors to pay attention and learn the response they should make if called upon.

Alan Liu outlines why collective listening was a particularly favored method for propaganda during the early stages of the PRC:

> Collective listening not only maximized the usefulness of the limited number of radio sets then at the regimes disposal but also increased the "impression of universality" that is one of the characteristics of radio communication … in a group setting the pressure to conform to collective standards was high, and individuality was submerged. As a result, the collective symbol, the Party, was strengthened. (125)

Liu divides collective listening into two categories: "institutional listening," which took place in sites such as schools and factories and was part of the "daily routine" of life, and broadcasting assemblies (*Guangbo dahui*) (广播大会), which took place more sporadically and involved gathering heterogenous people together to listen to propaganda regarding mass campaigns or important current events.

School broadcasting systems carried out propaganda work in the following ways: they were used for direct political messaging regarding mass campaigns and current events; they were used to organize activities that were linked to mass campaigns or broader national aims; and they were used to draw attention to model students and their behavior, and to criticize behavior that was deemed regressive, destructive, or immoral. These were some of the functions of sound-

reproducing tools in schools (others will be covered elsewhere – namely, broadcasting music with political/ideological lyrics (later in this chapter), and broadcasting music for mass callisthenic practice (*Guangbo ticao* - 广播体操) (in chapter four) and each relates in some way to the Party's propaganda objectives mentioned above.

Loudspeakers in schools and college campuses could directly deliver political messaging to students. Broadcasting of such messages was often particularly prevalent during the more "revolutionary" periods of the Mao era, or when important national and international events were occurring. For example, one interviewee recalled how at his middle school in Tianjin in the 1960s, there was a political education office, and a Communist Youth Party secretary often gave lectures over the school loudspeaker to educate the students on political thought and global political developments. During the US-Vietnam war the students were told that they should support their Vietnamese "brothers" and oppose the American invaders; they were also told during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 that America was "bullying" the Socialist country of Cuba; and when Sino-Soviet relations worsened in the early 1960s the children were lectured on Soviet revisionism. Students at his middle school listened to such lectures every week at a fixed time instead of attending regular classes (Interview Nine).

A British foreign office report from 1955 describes how political propaganda from loudspeakers seemed to form a consistent part of the educational soundscape. In this account a diplomat relates a trip to Wuhan University, where "on the Saturday afternoon when [he] was there small groups of students were sitting under the trees studying Marxism while a loudspeaker recounted the wickedness of British and other imperialist powers before the "liberation" (FO 371/115169, 31). From this report we gain a sense of both the quotidian nature of ideological education, and the circulation of ideological messaging. Students needed to study Marxism and

presumably produce work on the subject while also being repeatedly exposed to it. We gain an impression of how ubiquitous political messaging from sound-reproduction tools could be, at least in the more well-equipped campuses in China.

Political messaging from loudspeakers was, of course, extremely common during the Cultural Revolution, both in the period when classes were still taking place, and also during the time when classes were cancelled but students remained on university campuses to "make revolution." In *Wild Swans*, Jung Chang recalls that when the Cultural Revolution started in 1966, in her school, "teaching stopped completely from the beginning of June, though [they] had to continue to go there" and "loudspeakers blasted out People's Daily editorials," and students had to read out Mao's quotations repeatedly, chanting passages from the *Little Red Book*, "over and over again in unison," such that she could still recall many "verbatim" many years later (Chang, 281, 282). Here again we see the loudspeaker as a tool within the larger mediascape that recirculated and reinforced the political "sound bytes" that Nicole Huang wrote of.

Ideology and political thought could also overlap with the promotion of moral behavior or the castigation of bad behavior. Being given the privilege to use the school broadcasting station was in itself a way that model students could be rewarded. In *Red Azalea*, Anchee Min describes how when she was thirteen years old (in 1970) her name was "constantly mentioned by the school authority and praised as "Study Mao Thoughts Activist," "Mao's Good Child," and a "Student of Excellence." She was considered a model student because she often gave long and confident speeches at the school's Revolutionary Committee meeting and "phrases from *People's Daily* and *Red Flag* magazine poured out of her mouth," and for these reasons she was allowed to broadcast to the rest of the school. Min details how when she would "speak through a microphone in the school's broadcasting station, [her] sister and brother would be listening in

their classrooms and their classmates would look at them with admiration and envy" (Min 2006, 26).

Being permitted to broadcast was also sometimes connected with self-cultivation, as Zhai Zhenhua describes in *Red Flower of China*. As a youngster she read out a story over the school's broadcasting station, a task she was given as a form of training, because in a recent singing competition her teacher believed that she "lacked emotion." The teacher encouraged Zhai to show plenty of emotion when reading her revolutionary story into the microphone, and though Zhai felt that she was in fact "overacting" when reading, her teacher was satisfied with her performance and encouraged her to begin entering interschool reciting competitions (29). These competitions involved Zhai reading out other short revolutionary stories, also with emotion, though Zhai claims that she found these texts "insipid." The revolutionary story that Zhai's teacher first encouraged her to read over the loudspeaker was called "Mother" and it concerned a young girl from before the Liberation who could not understand why her mother was "cold and uncaring," but later realized that her mother was a revolutionary spy who could not always acknowledge her daughter (29).

These passages from Zhai's memoir reflect a number of key aspects of Mao era propaganda work (some of which has been discussed previously), and especially of propaganda work aimed at young people. First, the importance of "emotion raising," which was mentioned in the introduction and in chapter one, and was particularly prevalent in such propaganda efforts as "speaking bitterness" (recalling the inequities and miseries before liberation), and the cultivation of "new Communist people," with the correct revolutionary spirit; Second, the content of the story that Zhai was instructed to read, "Mother," was meant to convey to children something of the contrast between old China and New China, because Mao believed that it was important to

point out to young people that China had improved greatly since 1949; Third, the usage of the school broadcasting station enabled political ideology to be circulated, model student behavior to be encouraged, and a "captive audience" would be collectively listening.

Another anecdote from a Mao era memoir gives us a sense of the experience of being a part of this "captive audience," and the overall power of the school broadcasting station for circulating ideology, and more specifically in this case, shaping new understandings of familial relationships. In *Growing Up in the People's Republic*, a joint memoir composed of discussions between two women on their recollections of their Mao era childhoods, Ye Weili explains how during the "four clean-ups" movement in 1963,[62] in her school, "students started to publicly criticize their own parents." One day Ye heard a speech by a senior high school student whose parents were well-known public figures. In this speech, "from the loudspeaker their daughter told the entire school that she often thought her mother was rather coarse, and that she felt ashamed of her" (Ye and Ma, 59). Ye "couldn't believe her ears" that a child could talk about a parent like this in public, but points out that exposing one's own parents later became the "politically fashionable thing to do during the Cultural Revolution" (59).

This account underlines the power that school broadcasting stations had. This particular broadcast is a direct example of how students were encouraged to consider their ties to the Party and to broader political movements as being more important than family ties. Broadcasting such information to the entire school gave legitimacy to what was being said, and the collectively listening children were made to understand that such behavior (putting Party ties above familial ones) was not only condoned, but was being actively promoted. Though Ye was shocked by this incident, and many other students would, presumably, also not have been persuaded by what was

[62] Also known as the Socialist Education Movement （社教运动）

broadcast, we can surmise that such institutional collective listening, made legitimate by the school authorities, would have had an impact. The broadcast showed the new "correct" way of considering your obligations to your family and the Party/New China – which was also reinforced by popular song lyrics at the time, such as "Father is close, Mother is close, but neither is as close as Chairman Mao" (Chang 2008, 264) – and, as Ye points out, this incident foretold many later episodes in the Cultural Revolution, of relations between family members being subordinated to relations between individuals and the Party, New China, and Mao.

The importance of school broadcasting stations within the wider propaganda apparatus of the Party, was most obviously exemplified in the battles over campus broadcasting during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. An interviewee who attended Peking University in this period told me that she strongly disliked the loudspeakers on the campus because they were very loud, there was no escape from their sound (even in her own room), and she had no personal control over them (unlike with radios). These problems were particularly pronounced when students split into factions and carried out political disputes with each other. Broadcasting equipment was extensively used by various student groups in factional disputes, loudspeakers were broadcasting all day long in this period, and these broadcasts often disturbed her sleep and made her uncomfortable (Interview Six).[63] With school grounds also often becoming the sites for political rallies, struggle sessions and book burning in this period (Shen 2004, 4), and loudspeakers being used to broadcast speeches or revolutionary music as accompaniment, schools became, much more obviously and publicly, the political sites that they had operated as pre-1966.

[63] Andrew Walder details the intense factional struggles over campus broadcasting stations in *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (2012)

Propaganda and Music

Music, as I mentioned in the introduction (quoting Goodman), has long been associated with propaganda. The CCP were not the first in Chinese history to notice the opportunity that the education system offered for reshaping the thinking of citizens through music. Earlier Chinese reformers, such as Liang Qichao (梁啓超) and Shen Xingong (沈心工), also saw the school as a crucial place for change, and the medium of music as being particularly important for instigating change. Although these earlier reformers had differing ideas as to exactly what values should be promulgated, they shared the view that daily group singing in school of songs (with suitable lyrical content) would be an effective way of raising the intellectual and moral quality of Chinese citizens for nationalistic purposes (Jones 2001, 34).

Andrew Jones, in *Yellow Music*, outlines this long-term development in the Chinese education system. The introduction of "school songs" (*xuetang yuege*) that served Chinese nationalism stemmed from the efforts of Chinese reformers to rebuild the Chinese education system "along lines suggested by Meiji Japan," a country that had rapidly modernized and posed a serious Imperialistic threat to the rest of the Asian region (ibid., 33).[64] The "most significant function" of school songs in China, was the "dissemination of progressive and nationalist ideologies" (34). The songs were short, musically simple and often militaristic in style and instrumentation, and they promoted a range of values that aimed at improving the "quality" of

[64] As Jones explains, "the Meiji government had introduced choral singing and music education into the public schools as early as 1879 with the aid of an American educator, Luther Whiting Mason, and a Japanese musician, Ijawa Shūji. This … in turn, triggered the development for classroom use of an intensely nationalist genre of school songs called shōka" (Jones, 33). These shōka were formed by applying Japanese lyrics to Euro-American melodies, and when the Chinese reformers Liang Qichao, Shen Xingong and Cai Yuanpei set about introducing shōka to the Chinese education system, they often simply replaced the Japanese lyrics with Chinese ones (Jones, 33).

China's citizenry and persuading young Chinese people of the necessity of caring about the fate of their nation.[65]

There was a similar usage of music in the education system throughout the Mao era. Many songs promoted nationalism and railed against Imperialism, and songs were also used to disseminate the new political culture and spread propaganda. Unlike pre-1949, however, was the focus on Chinese development along Marxist-Leninist lines, the relations between China and its allies in the Socialist Bloc, and the gradual promotion of the cult of Mao. Different propaganda concerns emerged at different stages of the Mao years, but there was always a propaganda element within collective singing at schools, and collective singing – asides from the aims at indoctrination through political lyrics – served a range of general propaganda goals.

Collective singing was an enjoyable activity for many children.[66] Singing songs also sometimes helped with enabling less academically gifted students to feel involved with classroom activities, as Rhoda Stockwell describes in her 1975 article "With China's Children." A Chinese teacher told Stockwell that she had one third-grade student who was naughty and lacked discipline, but she had him "lead the singing of revolutionary songs and shout the slogans," and he was "encouraged" by this. "Slow students" were not separated from the rest of the group, some teachers told Stockwell, and the principle of dialectical materialism was used to appreciate the strong and weak points of students (232). Singing also harnessed the "energy" of young people, which Mao believed was important for propaganda work aimed at the young.

[65] "Songs extolled scientific method, hygiene and discipline. Other songs called for the liberation of women … and an immediate end to the practice of foot-binding. A substantial number of these compositions, finally, were patriotic anthems that lamented the humiliations visited on the nation by Western imperialism and Japanese aggression and urged Chinese citizens to mobilize and resist" (Jones, 34).

[66] One interviewee told me that collective singing was a "kind of amusement," that gave him "enjoyment," and the songs were entertaining (Interview Two).

Political indoctrination through music often began as soon as a child started with their education. In *Son of the Revolution*, Liang Heng describes how before the age of four (in the late 1950s) he attended a child-care center where "you had to fold your hands behind your back and sing a song before the nurses would let you eat your meals. Then, if you ate too fast, they hit you over the head with a flyswatter. The songs and dances – like "Sweeping the Floor," "Working in the Factory," and "Planting Trees in the Countryside" were fun, but I was constantly in trouble for wanting to dance the army dance when it was time for the hoeing dance or for refusing to take the part of the landlord, the wolf or the lazybones" (3). Political thought and moral behavior were being taught at the same time in these examples. Stockwell describes these propaganda aims being combined in a cultural performance she witnessed in Nanjing in which:

> [Children] sang and acted out the story of a young boy who had made a mistake in the writing of a Chinese character. The young children admonished him for his mistake. He replied that it was only a "small mistake." The other children explained that a worker in a steel factory cannot make a "small mistake" when producing a piece of machinery, and so they helped him learn to write the character correctly." (231, 232)

The lyrics to songs that were collectively sung could also teach children about international political concerns. One song an interviewee remembered singing at school, and hearing over the school loudspeaker, was called "A Child of Havana." This song was composed in 1962, the year of the Cuban missile crisis, and it quickly became popular in China. The lyrics to the song tell the story of a Cuban girl, Maria, who learns from their father that her mother was worked to death by the American plantation owners. She hears that her father and others were mistreated too, so they followed "the hero Castro" to make revolution, removed the Americans from their land, and made sure that the workers and peasants become masters, and were "never bullied again." The child hears her father's story and becomes angry; she says that she will become a small civilian soldier, and vows to destroy the American robbers if they ever come

back again.[67] The interviewee told me that everyone in his generation would be familiar with this song, and others such as this that formed part of their political education (Interview Nine).

As this brief section has shown, music played a vital role in the education system in Mao era China. Schools were ideal sites for circulating the political "sound bytes" that constituted early PRC propaganda and Marxist-Leninist ideology. Music within the educational soundscape brought important political and societal changes and events into the classroom as well, and allowed children to understand what was happening in the world and how they should think of these matters. School broadcasting systems helped with the circulation of these political messages, but even in more materially deprived areas of China collective singing without technological mediation would have enabled propaganda to circulate in a process that was enjoyable for many children and effective for helping them to remember the Party's interpretations of history, ideology and current events. As I shall explain later, however, this intense saturation and repetition of ideas, even when it was achieved, did not always produce the results desired by the Party.

Noise and Silence: Positive and Negative Affectivities[68]

In his classic early sound studies work, *The Tuning of the World*, R. Murray Schafer contrasts the negative aspects of noise, which he deems a significant and ever-growing problem of the modern industrialized world, with the positive aspects of silence, something natural that was in danger of

[67] A Child of Havana (哈瓦那的孩子) with English/Chinese lyrics: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwktlHArfMA

[68] This section, and the one following it, form part of my contribution to a co-authored article titled, "A Revolution of the Ear: Making Sense of Noise in the Mao Era," which was recently accepted for publication by *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*. They are incorporated here with the permission of the article's co-author, Dayton Lekner.

becoming extinct. This binary opposition is summarized by Marie Thompson (Thompson 2017, 5) as being, "where silence is associated with a positive affectivity – it has the capacity to calm, revive and rejuvenate – noise is defined by its negative affectivity – it damages, destroys, deafens and harms."[69] This ascribing of positive and negative attributes to noise and silence does not take into consideration cultural, social or historical contexts, however, or matters of personal taste, and in *Beyond Unwanted Sound* Thompson attempts to move beyond the "aesthetic moralism" of Schafer (and others) to elucidate the ways in which noise "betrays" binary categorizations (5, 7).

One major factor behind noise defying such judgments, is that it is "ubiquitous," as Thompson argues. It is also, contrary to popular thought, something that can bring people together:

> Though noise is often associated with the idea of disconnection – as that which inhibits communication and alienates and isolates the listener – total disconnection from noise can only be a fantasy. As the excluded middle that must be included, noise constitutes connectivity. (175)

In the case of Mao era China, as I argue in the following section, noise was a significant influence on broad social cohesion and the Party's propaganda efforts. Both the production and reception of noise, in terms of extremely loud musical and non-musical sound, fostered social cohesion and connectivity between individuals and the masses, and between citizens and the larger goals of the Communist Party. Noise was also not purely defined by its negative affectivities in many Mao era accounts, just as silence was also not solely associated with positive affectivities. In fact, as I detail below, partly due to the relationship between noise,

[69] Some positive affectivities of noise are briefly discussed by Schafer in *The Tuning of the World*, to be clear. In one short section, which draws inspiration from the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, Schafer contrasts noise with silence, in terms of the sacred and the profane. Though the modern world is "noise-riddled," in Schafer's view, noise could also be "sacred" and a sign of prosperity in certain situations and locations. Schafer, 51, 52.

connectivity and social cohesion, noise was often something that connoted fun, pleasure, adventure and progress.

Noise, Connectivity and Propaganda

In 1958, at the beginning of the Great Leap Forward, as part of a broad campaign to improve hygiene, people across China were encouraged to eliminate four particular pests: mosquitoes, rodents, flies and sparrows.[70] The rationale behind ridding the country of sparrows was that they consumed much-needed grain, but the killing of so many of them brought unintended consequences. The "war" against sparrows backfired as crops were left "vulnerable to insects" and an ecological imbalance ensued, which led to China experiencing "the greatest human-created famine in history" (Shapiro 2001, 104). The war against sparrows was a noisy one, and like many Great Leap Forward campaigns, it involved people from all walks of life using whatever tools were at hand in a concerted effort to conquer nature. Rae Yang, a child during the Four Pests campaign, recalls her contribution to these efforts in her memoir, *Spider Eaters*:

> For three days in a row, there was no class at school. What we did was to sit on top of our two-storied classroom buildings, beating drums and gongs, banging on the bottoms of iron basins and cooking pots, waving banners, and shouting at the top of our voices. This was a unified action. The idea was to have people all over Beijing make a great noise so that sparrows would have nowhere to land. In three days all of them would die of exhaustion. So we had a great time making noise on the roof. By the end of the third day, splendid results were reported from the battlefields. Thousands of sparrows had fallen from the sky, and so had numerous other birds, beneficial ones as well as harmful ones. Well, that was the necessary sacrifice sometimes one had to make for the revolution. Compared with communism, our paradise on earth, the death of some birds was a small price to pay. (54)

[70] This was known as the Four Pests campaign (*Chu si hai*) (除四害)

亦远 (Yi Yuan), in another account concerning the war on sparrows, recalls similar experiences of making a lot of noise and having fun, instead of attending his normal lessons. He was 12 years old at the time, and though it frightened him at first to climb up high onto a roof, where he was tasked with swinging a bamboo pole and shouting whenever sparrows flew by, he ended the day being very "reluctant" to leave and go home (Yi n.d.). Up on the roof swinging his bamboo pole and shouting, Yi Yuan felt as "mighty" as Zhang Fei (张飞), the ancient Chinese military general and hero of *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*, when he "rode his horse and wielded a long spear." Whilst there he heard shouts "coming in waves from afar" as his classmates stood on the roofs of other buildings all making as much noise as possible to frighten sparrows away. When Yi Yuan returned home that evening, he found an engineer from the department of geology on the roof of his house, also engaged in the war. The engineer gave Yi Yuan boxes of firecrackers to use freely, which greatly excited the young boy as ordinarily his family would hesitate to buy such "treasures" even during the Spring Festivals (ibid.). Yi Yuan reflects, "there is a slang phrase from Beijing called "*sa huan*" [撒欢], which means to have fun at will, at that time us children really did have fun at will" (ibid.)

In both of these accounts, from a young girl and a young boy of this era, we can see how making as much noise as possible to rid their locales of sparrows was a fun activity that brought people together, allowed children to take a break from their normal education, and also enabled them to engage with a larger purpose. Rae Yang explicitly connected the elimination of sparrows with the Chinese revolution and the path towards Communism, and saw even the unexpected adverse consequences of these attacks – "beneficial" birds also dying – as being a "necessary sacrifice" for the revolution. In Yi Yuan's account, though he understood that it was Mao who commanded the elimination of sparrows, he daydreamed instead about being the ancient warrior,

Zhang Fei, rather than any sort of contemporary Communist hero. In either case, however, these children saw themselves as participating in some form of warfare against nature,[71] and connected their actions with larger national goals.

Though the war on sparrows was enjoyable for children, tactics that were learned in using noise to torment and eliminate sparrows were used years later in the Cultural Revolution, when these children became Red Guards (Li 2020b). Both of these aspects of the war on sparrows – the pleasure it brought children, and the later impact it possibly had on their actions during the Cultural Revolution – accord with the findings of German psychologist Karl Groos concerning infants and their feelings engendered by causing effects on the world and learning to play. Groos believed that when children learn that they can cause predictable effects in the world, and understand their ability to repeatedly cause such effects, they experience "the pleasure at being the cause." This feeling of joy becomes the "basis for play," which Groos saw as "the exercise of powers simply for the sake of exercising them," and which explains why humans "become so passionate and excited over the outcome [of games] even when they know it makes no difference who wins or loses outside the confines of the game itself" (Graeber 2018, 83). Play was also something that Groos "considered … to be an essential need of childhood, one that reinforces the instincts that allow children to prepare for their futures. For example, when children assume parental roles in dramatic play, they are rehearsing the behaviors they will need as adults" (Saracho and Spodek 1995, 137).

[71] As Judith Shapiro has written, the "official discourse" concerning Mao era campaigns pertaining to the natural environments was "[Filled] with references to a "war against nature." Nature was to be "conquered." Wheat was to be sown by "shock attack." "Shock troops" reclaimed the grasslands. "Victories" were won against flood and drought. Insects, rodents, and sparrows were "wiped out."" Shapiro asserts that there was a "congruence between violence among human beings and violence by human beings towards the non-human world" in the Mao era, and this chimes with Jie Li's argument that the children who used noise to exhaust sparrows in the late 1950s later used similar tactics against their human enemies as Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution era.

These discoveries by Groos explain a number of issues about noise, play and pleasure in the Mao era. The war on sparrows allowed children to cause specific predictable effects in the world, and it had the structure of a game, as Rae Yang's quote makes clear –the sparrow killing results were tallied and made public. The competitive element of making noise and trying to exhaust and kill as many sparrows as possible, contributed to encouraging children to enjoy causing predictable effects on the world, by using noise, and experiencing the noise of others in a unified activity. According to Groos, this would explain why the children that experienced the war on sparrows learned to associate the production of noise with positive affectivities, and how these children might also have been unconsciously rehearsing for later roles in their lives.

Noise symbolized pleasure and togetherness in the war on sparrows. In other activities related to the Great Leap Forward it also connoted pleasure in relation to Communist Party goals, and the rejuvenation, progress and success of the nation. In the Cultural Revolution era, noise remained a key element of daily life and a powerful force for the mobilization of people for campaigns and for helping them to feel connected with each other and with Party goals. Zhang Kangkang (张抗抗), in her memoir, details the affectivity of noise in provoking her desire to volunteer to join other educated youths to labor in the Northern Wilderness:

> On the streets from morning until night the joyful sound of drums and gongs rang out, and truck after truck carried groups of educated youths wearing red flowers on their chests, as they hurried out to the wide world. The high-volume loudspeakers broadcasted the highest directives, it was deafening … compared with this frenzied situation my mother appeared so tiny, so weak and so unimportant. Mother was like a fallen autumn leaf, silently floating away from my heart. (Zhang 2015)[72]

There is a clear contrast between silence and noise here, and it is noise that has the greater appeal and is defined in more positive terms. The noise of the loudspeakers broadcasting

[72] The online version of this text does not have page numbers. See works cited.

the highest directives was “deafening” or “ear-splitting” (震耳欲聋) which implies extreme loudness, and it was combined with the “joyful” sound of the drums and gongs, to create a frenzied and exciting soundscape. The noise outside represented adventure, youth and the wider world, and it contrasted sharply with the image of her mother who was “silently” drifting away from her and who seemed unimportant and weak. Noise was connected with youth, vigor and revolution, and silence with being old or lifeless (the “autumn leaf”). Noise represented a disruption from the everyday routines of work and school, as it was calling Zhang off to a distant place, but it was not a negative sound, or an isolating one. This repeated exposure to loud sounds during the Mao years sometimes rendered silence, by contrast, undesired or unnatural seeming to some people, recalling to an extent the “addiction to noise” and “allergy to silence” J. Martin Daughtry writes of regarding those who experienced “violent wartime noise” in the combat zones of Iraq (Daughtry 2014, 44, 45). In some respects, the noise from outside, in contrast with her silent mother, helped contribute to the severing of the tie between mother and daughter, but noise was also a powerful force in connecting Zhang Kangkang with the other educated youths, and the broader goals of the Communist Party.

This examination of noise, connectivity and propaganda above is not meant to suggest, however, that noise (and extreme loudness) had no negative affectivities in the early history of the PRC. The disorienting and isolating aspects of noise will be covered in the next chapter. From all of the anecdotes above, though, we can ascertain something of the importance of noise in the Party’s propaganda efforts. Noise could bind people together – which was also suggested by the sonorous envelope concept in chapter one – and bind individuals together with the larger goals of the nation. It could excite people, and motivate them for campaigns and contributing in some way to the Chinese revolution. This was the value of noise to Mao era propaganda work. It

was also an aspect of the Mao era soundscape that complicates the idea of the total soundscape concept, in which centrally ordained "sound bytes" were enforced on people. Some accounts in the previous sections have shown the agency of individuals within the soundscape, and the pleasure and excitement that some derived from experiencing and producing noise themselves, and so sound and noise – or "sound bytes" - were not just delivered from the center outwards (from Party to People), but were also recirculated by individuals, often in an energetic and enthusiastic way.

Sound Effects

A May 1951 *People's Daily* article describes a broadcasting assembly held in Chongqing concerning the US rearming of Japan during the Korean war (*Renmin ribao*, 1951). Chongqing was the capital of the Republic of China during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945) and it was the Chinese city that suffered most from Japanese bombing raids during this conflict. Japanese bombing targeted "all major facilities in Chongqing, military and civilian alike," and it was estimated that on just two days, May 3rd and 4th 1939, more than 5,000 Chinese civilians were killed (Wei, 236). The broadcasting assembly in Chongqing was designed to garner support for China's war efforts, and mobilize the People to oppose the rearming of Japan.

The broadcast represented a concerted effort to remind people from Chongqing, and elsewhere (as the event was broadcast to the general public), of the traumas that had been experienced in the city just over a decade before. Certain "dramatic effects" were used, including the use of patriotic music at the beginning (Meng Bo's "Time to Sacrifice," with lyrics by Mai Xin, part of the "National Salvation Song Movement," (Howard 2015, 20)) followed by a series of sound effects: the rumbling of aircraft, bombs, houses collapsing, the screams of people, the

cries of infants, and various alarms (*Renmin ribao*, 1951). These sounds are described in the article as "shocking" and intertwining, so that it is like the miserable situation of two decades before could even be smelled and seen (ibid.). After the broadcasting of these effects, fourteen citizens who had suffered significant personal losses owing to the Japanese bombing raids went on the stage to tell the assembled people what they had personally experienced. The *People's Dail*y article relates their vivid descriptions of the bombings, the deaths and the destruction that was witnessed (ibid.). These citizens also reminded the audience of the "tunnel massacre" that occurred when the people of Chongqing hid in the caves to escape from Japanese bombing, and the Nationalist police locked the cave door, which, allegedly, resulted in many citizens inside dying. The Kuomintang police then supposedly stole all of the valuable belongings of these people (ibid.).

There are some interesting parallels between the Chongqing broadcasting assembly described in this *People's Daily* article and an August 24 1940 CBS radio broadcast by Edward Murrow that was designed to give Americans an understanding of the war in Europe. In this broadcast, documented by Greg Goodale in *Sonic Persuasion*, Murrow provided commentary from Trafalgar Square on an air raid. Goodale analyzes the key sounds heard in the broadcast, pointing out the "steady and calming" presence of Murrow, as he described the sounds of air raid sirens, traffic and the "quotidian sounds" of footsteps (Goodale 2011, 109,110). Murrow introduces this element of the soundscape in the following way: "one of the strangest sounds one can hear in London these days, or rather these dark nights, just the sound of footsteps of walking along the street, like ghosts shod with steel shoes" (ibid., 110). Goodale points out how "rhetorically forceful" these sounds were, and concludes that "the voice of Murrow successfully

accustomed Americans to the sounds of war and helped to convince them of the necessity of joining England against Germany and Italy" (110).

Both Murrow's report on the London air raids and the broadcasting assembly in Chongqing used the power of sound to evoke certain emotions in their audiences (as Zuo Ying suggested sound effects to be used, as detailed in chapter two). Both of these broadcasts were designed to elicit sympathy and a sense of shared community, which could hopefully spur action. With Murrow's radio report the listening American audience was called on to give consideration to the suffering and stoicism of the Londoners, and Murrow hoped that this would cause them to support the British war effort (ibid., 109). As for the broadcasting assembly in Chongqing, the audience was meant to be reminded of the brutality meted out in their own city in recent history, so that they would devote themselves to China's role in the Korean war. The wider general audience for the Chongqing broadcast assembly, we can surmise, would also have felt sympathy and consideration for the people of Chongqing, and the employment of sound effects would have made the traumatic events, which these auditors did not experience first-hand, vivid and real. The usage of sound had a sense of power in both broadcasts, it would seem, and in both cases, it was supported by narrations/anecdotes that guided listeners and provided more detailed information.

There are also crucial ways in which Murrow's report on the London air raids differed from the broadcasting assembly in Chongqing. First, the London air raid broadcast, though providing description to distressing events, was narrated by Murrow, whose "vocal power," as Goodale states, "transcended the war, elevating him into a voice that Americans would believe even after the curtain was torn away," and Murrow "very much wanted Americans to hear [the] lack of hysteria" among Londoners (ibid., 110). The Chongqing broadcast, by contrast, had the

opposite tone and overall aim, and was intended to provoke the maximum emotional impact by making use of a soundscape of war and harrowing personal accounts of trauma. Similar to much other Mao era propaganda work, it was meant to work on an emotional and visceral level, and sound was a particularly potent tool for this, as I shall explain below. Another difference between the broadcasts is that the sounds in Murrow's report were live and real, whereas the sound effects used at the broadcasting assembly were recordings, or what would now be known as sound files (the article does not provide information on how this form of soundscape was put together). Though Murrow's report was live, and the Chongqing assembly was reminding listeners of events of more than a decade ago, however, both of these broadcasts used sound as a way of bridging a distance. The potency of the sound effects was intended to bring listeners closer to the reality of situations, so that people based in the US would care about what was taking place in London and Europe, and listeners to the Chongqing broadcasting assembly across China would care about events from a different city, and a decade preceding.

Certain qualities of sound effects made them ideal for the purposes of the Chongqing broadcast. Particular sounds, such as those heard during this broadcasting assembly - the rumbling of aircraft, bombs, houses collapsing, the screams of people, the cries of infants and various alarms – would have caused intense emotional reactions for many people that had lived through the War of Resistance. A 2021 article by Alison Walker, on "embodied libraries and the corporeal lives of sonic effects" explores some of the connections between sound, memory and the body (among other issues), which are pertinent to the Chongqing broadcast. Walker quotes Wayne Pashley and Sean Street on the ways in which sound can trigger memories, and the links between the "physical body and memory" that are made "most tangible through sound, because we hear not only through our ears but also through our whole body" (Street 2015, 151). As

Walker explains, this line of argument "posits memory as corporeally located, and claims that sound is central to accessing and triggering these somatically loaded memories" (218). We can surmise that hearing the Chongqing broadcasting assembly soundscape and testimonies would have triggered many unpleasant memories for those that experienced the Japanese bombing raids, and caused those that did not have first-hand experiences to have some sense of the disturbing events. The "somatically loaded" memories directly prompted by sound, recalls both the "bodily anguish" of people that was often engendered by Mao era propaganda work, as well as the emotion raising nature of political consciousness work in the early PRC. It is not clear how common such usage of sound effects was in broadcasting assemblies, but as this section has indicated they did at least have potential for provoking visceral and emotional reactions in people, and they could be recirculated quite effectively as "sound bytes."

Repeatability, Repetition and Reception

With the invention of recording technology, music became repeatable for the first time in history. This innovation, "may not seem especially momentous," as Mark Katz says, but "it may have [had] the most complex and far-reaching consequences of any of the technology's attributes" discussed in his work, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (30). Katz outlines the importance of repeatability, or repetition, from the perspective of listeners, performers, and composers, explaining how this technological development has shaped such things as: listeners expectations of live performances; composers perceptions of their own work; and the innovation of certain compositional techniques.

Apart from its importance within music, which is Katz' primary focus, repetition has also been a key feature in other significant areas of modern life, such as the rise of totalitarian

societies and their propaganda apparatuses, and the increasing prevalence of advertising in capitalist countries. Corporations and governments within both of these political systems have found recorded sound, and sound-reproducing technologies, to be vitally important in circulating propaganda/messaging, and as David Goodman argues, "repetition became one hallmark of systematic intent, aiming to reinforce messages and maximize chances of reaching most of the population" (90). Repetition could be achieved via other means, such as word of mouth or through organized political work (the daily political work within *Danwei* (单位) organizations that Martin King Whyte details in *Small Groups and Political Rituals in China* (1974)), and across the broader mediascape, utilizing visual and textual propaganda, but recorded sound allowed for the exact same messages and music to be played *ad infinitum*.

In this section I consider the usage of repetition in the Mao era soundscape, and discuss its potential and its limitations. I argue that although recorded sound's repeatability was of value to the Party, and the Party had success in circulating political ideology throughout much of China, repetition was not, by itself, able to convince people of the Party's political messaging because of two main reasons: first, messaging was repeated too often, so that it became either irritating or easier to tune out, and second, messaging could be rendered ineffective if it was contradicted by what was being heard elsewhere in society – the hidden transcript (Scott 1990) – or by first-hand experience. Repetition was more effective as a propaganda tool when there was restraint in its usage, but at many points in the Mao era when the leftist wing of the Party (headed by Mao) was in the ascendancy over the non-leftist wing (represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping) (Liu 1975, 8), repetition was much overused in mass persuasion efforts.

Repetition was also a favored technique of the Nazi party in their propaganda broadcasts. The Nazis "preferred repetition to amplification because they believed that "repetition can make

words all powerful over the mind, [and] can make a man a set of reactions to stimuli," however, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels also contended that excessive repetition was detrimental to propaganda work, as Leonard Doob explains:

> On the one hand, Goebbels believed that propaganda must be repeated until it was thoroughly learned and that thereafter more repetition was necessary to reinforce the learning. Such repetition took place over time - the same theme was mentioned day after day - as well as in the output of a single day. An anti-Semitic campaign, for example, continued for weeks, during which time "about 70 to 80 per cent of our broadcasts are devoted to it" … [on] the other hand, repetition could be unnecessary or even undesirable. It was unnecessary when "the material thus far published has completely convinced the public" … [and it] was undesirable when the theme became boring or unimpressive. (435)

From many accounts of life in the Mao era it is apparent that the CCP did not adhere to this logic when conducting their own propaganda work. There was excessive repetition of both musical and linguistic themes, particularly during the Cultural Revolution period, and also a superabundant amount of amplification in the soundscape, a topic I will return to in the next chapter. One notable musical example of extreme repetition is the song "The East is Red," a piece of music that Andrew Jones describes as "the most widely known and frequently broadcast song of the [1960s], saturating the quotidian life of nearly a quarter of humanity to an extent undreamed of by any entrant to the Western hit parade, including the Beatles" (Jones 2020, 2). The ubiquitous nature of this song is made especially clear in the following excerpt from Rae Yang's memoir *Spider Eaters*:

> The east is red. The sun rises. China … Mao Zedong … " Oh. Miserable! just as I was about to fall asleep, this damn song starts. At five thirty! Every day. Seven days a week ... Never gives anybody a break ... I hate this song now! I used to love it . . . Things change into their opposites ... Red Guards. Class enemies … I wonder if any counterrevolutionary can match me in hating this song. It's not music. It's torture! Pouring out of a loudspeaker in a pine tree just outside my bedroom window. It drives me crazy! Are there bedrooms in this college that don't have loudspeakers blaring into them? Guess not. At daybreak, the whole college was drowned in this deafening music. Teachers, students, workers, their families, all were forced to wake up. Other colleges and

> universities in Beijing were pretty much the same. When "the east is red," everybody had to get up except a few leaders, such as Chairman Mao himself. (157)

Rae Yang goes on to detail how much she despises the loudspeaker outside her window, and how she wishes she could destroy it. She was unable to shut the sound out by any means and it "drilled into [her] ears, turning [her] brain into a battlefield where the persistent sound waves and [her] drowsiness fought a bloody battle" (157). This passage clearly describes an example of excessive repetition of propaganda, as Rae Yang states that she used to "love" the song, but its overuse has caused her to hate it almost to the extent of doubting her sanity and dreaming of committing a crime that could potentially be punished by death, she surmises (157, 158).

Wang Xiaoming, in their account "The Cultural Revolution, 10 Years of Slogans and Catchphrases," also speaks to the intense repetition and circulation of slogans, from those that were written down to those that were shouted aloud, saying: "the slogans of that decade were deafening, shaking people's eardrums every day. At that time, you wanted to find a pure land north or south of the river without catchphrases or slogans. Using a common phrase of that era, it was just 'wishful thinking'" (Wang X.). Wang makes reference to the extreme loudness of slogans (they were "deafening" or "ear-splitting"), the way in which slogans were circulated across different forms of media, and how the overuse of slogans did not just render them "boring" and "unimpressive," as Goebbels believed it would, but also, like the "East is Red" was to Rae Yang, as things that became inescapable and mentally exhausting.

As propaganda from sound-reproducing tools was also ubiquitous, on the streets, on public transport and elsewhere, as well as in people's places of work, it is also apparent that many people during the Mao era were able to develop audile techniques to shut out propaganda that did not apply to them, but could quickly shift to paying attention to messages that were

directly related to them. In my oral interviews, and in other earwitness accounts, it is clear that people were exposed so often to various forms of political messaging, and were therefore made to understand very clearly their own particular place in New China (as a member of a certain class, or as someone with a specific type of desirable or undesirable background) that they were able to recognize very quickly whether a particular message from a loudspeaker was something that they needed to pay attention to or not. If not, they could ignore the propaganda.

For example, one British Foreign Office report from 1952 stated that, "on the trains … loudspeakers intermittently blare songs of hate and lectures of vilification … but the passengers by and large seem to carry on their conversations, reading, and throat-clearing with encouraging indifference" (FO 371/99236, 183). This depiction of loudspeaker usage gives the distinct impression that the passengers on the train were used to this sort of sound in public spaces, and that neither the volume nor the content of the 'lectures' and 'songs' surprised them or particularly bothered them. One interviewee, who worked on a farm in Jiangxi from the late 1960s until the late 1970s also explained that loudspeakers could be ignored quite easily, and that they had much less of an impact on the productivity of workers than the presence of a team leader would. He described how workers would often sleep if team leaders were not around, but would make sure to look busy if they came by. The loudspeakers were merely for political propaganda, he said, which was also particularly irrelevant when times were especially arduous, such as during the Great Famine (Interview Two).

Even among youths, who Mao believed to be the most receptive to mass persuasion, and who would have been exposed to repeated political ideology from a very young age, the official "total soundscape" of the Party was occasionally undermined by a hidden transcript that existed at the grassroots. One collective listening event from 1963 shows the ways in which mass

campaigns sometimes met with resistance, and Party propaganda efforts, over the long-term, could be regarded as at least partly ineffective. This collective listening event, described in an archival document (B105-8-108-38), involved the broadcast of a speech given by Premier Zhou Enlai to graduating high school students in Beijing. This document details the audience reactions to the rebroadcasting of the speech in various middle schools in Shanghai. Though the content of the speech itself is not reproduced in the document, we can infer from the reactions to the speech that the topic concerned sending urban youths to the countryside. This was in some respects a precursor to the "up the mountains and down to the countryside" (*Shang shan xia xiang yundong*) (上山下乡运动) movement of the Cultural Revolution period.

The document describes the various responses of the students to Zhou Enlai's speech. Many of the reactions are positive, from the perspective of the Party, and seem to show the successful results of both long and short-term Party propagandizing. Some students produced the types of reactions, using the correct kinds of rhetoric, that would have been desired by the organizers of the events. For example, many students praised the "cordial" nature of Zhou Enlai's speech, and "many students expressed that after hearing the very vivid speech, they will definitely answer Premier Zhou's expectations with practical action" (B105-8-108-38). Some students made clear that listening to Zhou Enlai's speech helped to convert them to thinking in line with the Party. One student said, "before listening to the speech I just thought about myself, I thought why can't the country arrange it so that I can further my studies? After listening to the speech, I was very surprised, this country has so many people, every year there are fifteen million children of my age, [so] wanting the government to arrange further study for all would be very difficult" (ibid.). The document also states, "some students with capitalist family backgrounds were in a good mood and had a relaxed frame of mind after listening to the speech,"

and one student said, “I was born in a Capitalist family, as long as I reform very well, and surrender to the proletariat class, we can have the same prospects” (ibid.) A number of students also claimed that the speech helped them to better understand the educational policies of the Party, and the ideology that informed these policies. These comments suggest that the Party’s propaganda work was effective, as these students referred to self-cultivation, and the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

As the document makes clear though, some students did not receive news of the education policies well, and the listening event/speech was not sufficient in itself to address their misgivings. Some students supposedly had “fantasies” about the policy, and thought that as long as they had a “hard” attitude to the arrangement and distribution of work then they would not need to comply, they could just persist in not going where they were told to go (ibid.). Some students were vocal in opposition to the policy. One said, “I want to stay in Shanghai, it’s fine if you call me a reactionary, I will still stay in Shanghai. The next time we have one of these kinds of political movement, I will not attend” (ibid.) Another said, “Premier Zhou raised six requirements, even if he raised ten, I wouldn’t do them. Assign me in Shanghai. If I had to go far away from my family, I would have to consider it. If I can research foreign languages or can research science, I would still be willing, anything else would not suit me” (ibid.) At some schools some students avoided the discussion, afraid that in the discussion they would have to express their thoughts. At some group discussions there were sometimes protracted “awkward silences” (ibid.). A number of students also had particular issues with the possibility of being sent to Xinjiang. There were several “rumors” that students had questions about. Students made the following comments: “Xinjiang is full of soldiers, they’re all old soldiers, in their thirties or forties, and they want to marry, they want female students to go there to marry them,” and “the

ethnic minority people there all carry knifes on them, they're very scary people," "Xinjiang has very little water, in your lifetime you can only shower three times (when you're born, when you marry and when you die)", and "Xinjiang is very close to the Soviet Union, now the Soviet-Chinese relationship is very tense, is there a chance of war breaking out?" (ibid.).

That these "rumors" circulated, and bore an influence on the youngsters growing up in the PRC shows that the soundscape was not truly a "total" one. It is true that the political "sound bytes" of the era were circulated in a relentless fashion, so that students could easily regurgitate the "correct" interpretation of history or the "correct" attitude to any given situation or current event, however, as this document indicates, there were also ways in which the "official transcript" of the Party's propaganda soundscape was being undermined in everyday life. The Party's efforts at making the soundscape total, even when they were achieved, also did not always yield the desired results, because extreme repetition of musical or linguistic themes often led to propaganda becoming boring, deeply irritating, or easy to tune out, depending on the individual, a point I examine in more detail below.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined some of the ways in which sound, noise and sound reproducing tools assisted the CCP's propaganda work in the Mao years. As I have shown, sound, noise and amplification helped to: circulate the Party's messaging through lectures, special broadcasts and music; motivate and integrate people for mass campaigns; institute moral reform, and help mold individuals into being new types of citizens for New China; and reshape social and familial relations. The radio and loudspeaker were utilized productively in many cases for the Party's

propaganda efforts, and sound, music and noise were employed to great effect in mass persuasion work and the encouragement of self-cultivation.

As I have also explained, however, there were ways in which the Party could not achieve a "total soundscape," though, as reflected by various accounts of everyday life in the Mao years. One reason why the Party could not do this (which relates back to the previous section and previous chapter), is that occasionally there were breakdowns within the sonic infrastructure, including equipment failures, distortion etc., or malfunctions in delivering messages from the center to the peripheries, for example the "politically significant gaffes" and manipulations of broadcasting content that Michael Schoenhals details (2013).[73] Another reason why the total soundscape was not achieved is that although, as the previous section detailed, mass persuasion was often incessant and extremely repetitive in nature, and there was a widespread presence of sound-reproducing tools in daily life, this frequently caused sound propaganda to be easier to ignore, at least according to some accounts. In some respects, the situation in the PRC in this era, in cities and towns where these technologies were installed, bears similarities with Brian Larkin's descriptions of loudspeaker usage in contemporary Nigeria. As Larkin explains:

[73] From *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967*: "Positioning agents in the radio and telecommunications sector was, interestingly enough, for many years not deemed a top priority. As a result, a survey conducted by the CMPS Party Group in 1961 found that, "as a result of broadcasting stations for a long time not having been subject to the kind of [security] demands put on secret and critical infrastructure," their personnel were often "highly impure." Consequently, there had over the years been numerous and repeated "political accidents and mishaps" in which broadcasters had made politically significant gaffes on the air or otherwise manipulated broadcasting content so as to make a statement obviously critical of the regime. A broadcaster (a former *Sanminzhuyi* Youth Corps member) in Tianjin had referred to a certain "special grade labor hero" (*tedeng laodong mofan*) as a "*tewu* [spy] and labor hero" (*tewu laodong mofan*); one of his colleagues (a former member of the Guomindang) had spoken on the air of Chiang Kai-shek's armed forces as facing "certain victory" (*bisheng*) and not, as his script had it, "certain defeat" (*bibai*). A broadcaster in Sichuan (a "reactionary element") had, instead of referring to the CCP as "our helmsman" (*duoshou*), described it as "our adversaries (*duishou*). In replies to letters from readers, broadcasting stations had on numerous occasions (in Shanghai, thirty-one times in the first six months of 1960), either intentionally or inadvertently, leaked classified economic and defense-related information. The leaks were seen as particularly serious given that the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service on Okinawa was known to constantly monitor the airwaves in search of "intelligence on our nation's politics, economy, defense, diplomacy, and most advanced science and technology." (79)

> The religious use of loudspeakers is … ubiquitous in Nigeria and it is only one way these tools are used in a country where musicians, shop-keepers, civic meetings, and politicians continually use loudspeakers. The consequences of this for ordinary Nigerians is that urban streets are technologized and everyday life emerges in relation to the machine of the loudspeaker. To live in this environment, urban Nigerians have to develop certain cognitive and practical skills. (992)

Larkin later defines these skills as "techniques of inattention," and a form of "virtuosity," which gives urban Nigerians "the ability not to hear the messages that carom around the urban landscape" (1007). Urban Nigerians learn to live with the technology, which is a "medial base" of urban life (1009), and can tune in or out according to whether or not messages are applicable to them.

From some of the accounts above it is evident that many Chinese people living throughout the Mao era also developed this form of virtuosity for tuning out messaging that did not apply to them, or did not appeal for other reasons – what Nicole Huang describes as "listening against" the soundscape, in her work (203), which she argues could "[begin] to erode" the total soundscape. This inattentiveness was usually particularly conspicuous when Party propaganda was clearly unreflective of reality. Frank Dikötter describes the ineffectiveness of CCP propaganda techniques a few years after the Great Leap Forward had started, by which time the movement was an obvious failure, and starvation was widespread. Dikötter writes, "the deeper the country sank into famine, the greater the shirking became," and "cadres simply did not have the means to control every worker and punish every disciplinary breach," and though "loudspeakers might be blaring exhortations to work" and "propaganda posters might extoll the model worker who overfulfilled the plan … apathy more often than not governed the factory floor" (Dikötter 2010, 208). These quotes hint at a level of resistance at the grassroots too, which was also present in the excerpts from the archival document outlined in the previous section, in

which some students refused to relocate to the countryside, despite the propaganda speech they had just heard, and all of the previous propaganda they had been exposed to throughout their education. The inability to eliminate this form of resistance and rumor-mongering at the grassroots level shows that the Party was unable to establish a "total soundscape," or at least that their attempts to establish a total soundscape were frequently undermined by counter "sound bytes" that circulated among the People.

Chapter Four
The Panaural People's Republic: Sonic Politics and Social Control in Mao's China

Italo Calvino's short story collection *Under the Jaguar Sun*, contains three narratives concerning the senses: taste, hearing and smell. The collection as planned would have been called *The Five Senses*, and would have also included stories on sight and touch, but Calvino died before completing his work. 'A King Listens' is the story concerning hearing, and it describes a king sitting on an "isolated" throne in a palace, who fears the possibility of rebellion, and uses his hearing to detect whether or not a plot is stirring against him (Calvino 2002). The king uses attentive listening to decipher the meaning of the palace soundscape, he scrutinizes audible signs, or "signals," to use R. Murray Schafer's term. As Schafer states, "signals are foreground sounds and they are listened to consciously. In terms of the psychologist, they are figure rather than ground. Any sound can be listened to consciously, and so any sound can become a figure or signal" (Schafer, 101). Schafer goes on to describe signals that "constitute acoustic warning" and argues that "sound signals may often be organized into quite elaborate codes permitting messages of considerable complexity to be transmitted to those who can interpret them" (ibid., 101).

Acoustic codes are transmitted and interpreted by various people in the course of their daily lives, such as those who work on trains and ships, as Schafer points out, but in the case of the king from Calvino's story, a more paranoid sort of audio surveillance is what consumes his existence. Aside from the more elaborate acoustic codes/signals, the palace is also a "weft of regular sounds" which are "always the same, like the heart's beat," sounds that Schafer terms "keynote," those that act as an "anchor" to the soundscape, against which the other sounds take on their "special meaning" (ibid., 100). The King listens to the regular sounds/keynotes to check

if the day in his palace is following its normal routine, and analyzes more carefully the acoustic codes/signals of his environment. The palace in which the king resides is used as a metaphor for various things. It is a "clock," it is "a great ear," and it is the "body of the king" (Calvino 37, 38, 43). Because of Calvino's use of the second person in this story, and these metaphors of the palace, two of which are anatomical, the reader is provoked to consider the ways in which sounds impact on the body ("your body sends you mysterious messages, which you receive with fear, with anxiety. In an unknown part of this body, a menace is lurking, your death is already stationed there" (ibid., 43)), and how the ear, in times of great anxiety, is employed to disentangle both complex codes/signals and regular sounds/keynotes that contain messaging on the origin and cause of the sound, and the time and space in which it occurred, in order to avert possible danger. As 'A King Listens' shows, this sort of auditory auto-surveillance or paranoid attentive listening, can take hold of anyone, no matter their position in society, in moments of tension and fear, or in times of violence and political uncertainty.

The Panaural State and Discipline

In this chapter I will examine the ways in which certain sounds caused fear and anxiety in everyday life, and the usage of sound to organize people's daily routines during the Mao era, and how the combination of these things led to a form of sonic conditioning in which individuals became anxious, fearful and disciplined by the soundscape around them. I will examine the range of issues related to the themes of sound, listening and hearing, the body, and the spatial and temporal aspects of sound that informed 'A King Listens,' to address the connections between sound, fear and discipline in the Mao era. The sounds I deal with in this chapter are a mixture of amplified and unamplified, including: slogan shouting, bells, loudspeaker broadcasts at public

trials, loudspeaker van broadcasts and loudspeaker broadcasts in public spaces. This chapter deals with the following questions: How did certain sounds create fear and anxiety in people, and how did sounds impact on people's bodies and minds, in the short and long-term? How did individuals alter their listening practices in times of great stress? What spatial and temporal aspects of the Maoist soundscape caused individuals to become conditioned through sound, and self-disciplined? How could sound – amplified or non-amplified - be used to target and harass individuals? What fears did people have regarding eavesdropping? And, what caused these fears, and were they justified?

My analysis of these questions engages with Michel Foucault's concept of the Panopticon, and its later adaptation by sound and media scholars to address the role of sound and music in a "disciplinary society," a form of social structure which I argue followed a different path of development in modern China. The Panopticon theory, originally associated with Jeremy Bentham, and later developed by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), concerns a prison design that has a central room from which a supervisor can observe all prisoners in their peripheral cells at any time. The prisoners are unable to tell when or whether or not they are being observed, because they cannot see out of their cells that surround the central observation room. Visibility becomes a "trap" for the prisoners, "he is seen, but he does not see," and because of "the arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, [it] imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility," and "this invisibility is a guarantee of order" (200). The "major effect" of the Panopticon is therefore: "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201). This type of power relation, as Foucault details, could be repeated in other institutions as well, so that a madman, a worker, a schoolboy or a patient could

be guided to behave according to the relevant rules, without any recourse to force, as long as the "see/being seen dyad" is also replicated.

In recent years some scholars influenced by Foucault's writings on discipline have modified his theories to consider the role of sound in guaranteeing order and compliance. Christiane Lenk, for example, in the chapter "Audibility is a Trap" from *Germany in the Loud Twentieth Century*, examines the latter years of the German Democratic Republic (the GDR, also known as East Germany (1949-1990)), focusing on the film *The Lives of Others* (*Das Leben der Anderen*, 2006) to explain how the citizens of the GDR "lived under permanent sound control," and how the GDR could be described as a "panaural state," owing to the widespread practice of audio surveillance and spying. Lenk describes how through bugging and wiretapping, government agents listened in to possible dissent and plans that went against the ideology of the state. A wide network of informants, which citizens knew of, also caused the citizens of the GDR to internalize obedience. As Lenk explains:

> From the founding of the Stasi in 1950 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, all GDR citizens were aware of the possibility that their conversations, their music, their everyday sounds could be and often were intentionally listened to. This continuous surveillance was a means to maintain power for the East German government; Staatsfeinde (enemies of the state) were sent to prison or excluded from many functions of life as a result of what was heard by the Stasi. Thoughts that potentially foreshadowed illegal actions, such as leaving the country or criticizing the government, were enough to earn one the title of Staatsfeind. As the French verb *surveiller* suggests, observation takes place through visual "overseeing." Yet, in the GDR, observation was primarily achieved through eavesdropping. (126)

In this chapter I will analyze the ways in which the Mao era PRC also constituted a panaural state, albeit a lower tech version of the later GDR panaural state that Lenk wrote of. My arguments throughout this chapter build on Foucault's Panopticon concept, and his broader viewpoints on discipline (the internalization of obedience), but not merely to suggest that

Foucault's original theory was ocularcentric (Jay 1988), or that sound has also been crucial in the growth of surveillance states, though both of these points are true. As this chapter shows, the evolution of the panaural state in China differed from the evolution of Foucault's "disciplinary society," in two particular ways. One is that, similar to what Takashi Fujitani describes in *Splendid Monarchy*, the rise in this form of modern society in China, as in Japan, did not coincide with "the decline of the monarchy, or at least of 'monarchical power'" (27). The other is that owing to the continued existence of a sovereign or sovereign-like power in China, Mao, punishment was not as managed and regulated as it would have been in Foucault's vision of a disciplinary society.

According to Foucault, the "gentle way in punishment" that was advocated by prison reformers led to a system in which punishment became "a reflection of the crime itself, as when work is used against idleness, shame against vanity … and so on" rather than "arbitrary, the capricious expression of the sovereign's will" (Garland 1986, 856). As various anecdotes from this chapter elucidate, however, the "capricious expression of the sovereign's will" and its link with punishment and discipline was still much in evidence during these early stages of China's disciplinary society, especially in the Cultural Revolution years, and in other politically unsettled periods. The sovereign's will was enacted through the People, who were encouraged to rebel and crush counter-revolutionaries, which meant that arbitrary forms of punishment continued to exist alongside the maturing disciplinary society. The protracted co-existence of these foundations for punishment during the Mao era – a growing disciplinary society in which audibility was a trap, and a society in which the will of a sovereign like entity still pertained (and audibility was still a trap) - led to a generally more chaotic (or "capricious") system of discipline and punishment in China, than would be expected in Foucault's depiction of a modern disciplinary society. This

chaos was also exacerbated by malfunctions in the system of surveillance – which Foucault has been criticized for overlooking (Garland, 873) – caused by factors such as ineffective discipline work at the grassroots level, and the successful strategies that some individuals employed to escape state control, among others.

Apart from its panaural nature, I will also examine other aspects of the Mao era soundscape that caused citizens to become self-disciplined and to a certain extent conditioned by sound. Besides the fear of eavesdropping and bugging, I argue that there were various causes of this internalization of obedience, including: amplified sound usage at public trials (and radio broadcasting of these events) and struggle sessions; slogan shouting, extreme loudness and the usage of amplified sound for targeted harassment; and the employment of acoustic time-tables in everyday life, my analysis of which also builds on ideas from Foucault. All of these measures contributed to instilling fear and anxiety and self-discipline in people, during the Mao years. I will turn first to acoustic time-tables, because these were crucial for establishing power relations between the Party and the People, and introduced enforced listening and sonic conditioning in everyday life in the PRC.

Acoustic Time-tables, Discipline & Conditioning

In chapters two and three, I detailed the usage and reception of radios and loudspeakers in institutions and specific sites, such as factories, schools, and villages, as well as the history of China's sonic infrastructure. In chapter three I also discussed broadcasting station schedules, and how the everyday soundscapes in schools, factories and villages could be altered entirely when broader ideological concerns were superseded by particular campaign goals or important political developments. Now I will turn my attention towards some more specific aspects of the

everyday soundscape in the Mao era, and consider how acoustic time-tables – which includes broadcasting schedules, as well as time-marking keynote sounds such as bells - impacted on peoples' minds and bodies, and the connections between these scheduled sounds and the internalization of obedience.

According to Foucault:

> [The] principle that underlay the time-table in its traditional form was essentially negative; it was the principle of non-idleness: it was forbidden to waste time, which was counted by God and paid for by men; the time-table was to eliminate the danger of wasting it – a moral offense and economic dishonesty. Discipline, on the other hand, arranges a positive economy; it poses the principle of an ever-growing use of time: exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting from time, ever more available moments, and, from each moment, ever more useful forces. (154)

The time-table, Foucault argues, in combination with "a system of prohibitions and obligations, continual supervision, exhortations, [and] religious readings" helped to draw prisoners "towards good" and "away from evil" (121). As Foucault explains, time-tables and other measures were also used in various other sites such as schools, factories and military barracks, to regulate daily life and discipline individuals so that they became mere "docile bodies," and the overall effect of this discipline was that it:

> [Produces] subjected and practiced bodies … [it] increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (138)

E. P. Thompson, in "Time, Work-Discipline and Capitalism" (1967) like Foucault, draws a connection between the conception of time, and how it ought to be utilized to its fullest extent in the workplace, with Christian morality ("the Puritan ethic"). Christian moralists wrote about "the brevity of the mortal span" as well as the "husbandry of time" in everyday life in the

workplace, and in combination with "the division of labour; the supervision of labour; fines; bells and clocks; money incentives" etc. "new labour habits were formed, and a new time-discipline was formed" (87, 88, 90). This time-discipline was steadily internalized over the 18th and 19th centuries, and still informs the regularity of our modern working week, one structured very differently from the previous work pattern, which "was one of alternate bouts of intense labour and of idleness" (ibid., 73).

While the Christian moral basis of "time-thrift" did not apply to the PRC, I believe that there was a similar drive towards making workers internalize the concept of "time-thrift" in Mao's China, and that it was also connected with a moral dimension that extended beyond the mundane reality of daily life in schools, villages and factories. This moral dimension has already been touched upon in chapters two and three, in the descriptions of how model workers and model students were praised over broadcasting systems, and how bad elements in society or poorly performing workers were criticized or denounced, and these details inform my analysis below. My specific focus here, however, is the acoustic timetables that reinforced the connection between time-thrift and the morality/ideology of model citizens, which led to the internalization of discipline.

Loudspeakers, radios, bells and other amplified sounds marked routine in many people's daily lives during the Mao era. People were conditioned to respond to these sounds, and these sounds forced individuals to be cognizant of Party decreed conceptions/apportioning of time – i.e. time had to be considered in relation to a campaign period, the build-up to National Day, or its place within a five-year-plan – all of which encouraged model behavior. This meant that in daily life the new political culture of the PRC was inculcated constantly, and time in school or at work was counted by the Party/Mao and paid for by the People, to paraphrase Foucault. The

obvious presence of a sovereign-like figure, Mao, inscribed within the acoustic timetables of everyday life in China (as shown by examples below) meant that the PRC's "disciplinary society" did not conform to Foucault's original concept, because Foucault believed that monarchical power would be absent from this modern type of societal structure.

Broadcasting systems in schools helped with the organization and administration of school life, and they could also be used for a certain level of conditioning. To be clear, the conditioning of children in their education via public address systems or bells is not unique to the Mao era or China. In the United States and elsewhere we are "conditioned in time discipline by primary schooling" for our future as workers, as David Graeber states, and this is something that could be achieved even without specific acoustic signals (92). In the Mao era, however, the acoustic signals that children were expected to obey and follow ingrained within children a different sort of time-discipline, as time was apportioned/designated by the Party and the children's' bodies and minds needed to be disciplined for the good of the Party and the new nation. Basic time-discipline was imposed on children/teenagers, but within the daily schedule, the presence of the Party was felt in certain acoustic symbolism, or in the instructions that children/teenagers were given. For example, in Beverly Hooper's *Foreigners Under Mao: Western Lives in China, 1949–1976*, western students who studied in the PRC during the Mao era give an account of how their days were structured by various acoustic signals:

> The students' day was punctuated by bells and loudspeaker broadcasts relayed across the campus. They were woken at 6 a.m. by a rousing rendition of "The East Is Red," followed by the daily political broadcast ('the news') and the morning exercise music. At 7 came the breakfast bell, followed by bells to start and finish class, punctuated by more exercise music at 10, the bell for lunch—and so on for the rest of the day. Wristwatches were still a relative luxury for Chinese students even in the early 1970s and there was a need for reminders, even though they 'made us feel like Pavlovian dogs', in the words of one British student. At 10 p.m., dormitory front doors and the high entrance gate were usually locked. (200)

The strict acoustic time-table was connected with various other prohibitions and regulations, and many of the foreign students found such things difficult to abide by. This was "institutional living Chinese style" and some felt that they were adults who were being "treated like children." As Isabel Hinton wrote in a report to the British Council, life at the Peking Language Institute was "rather like the army – without the weapons training" (ibid., 199). It is interesting to note that the foreign students used the term 'Pavlovian,' referring to Pavlov's famous experiments on conditioning, and that school life was deemed to be similar to life in a barracks. It should be noted that this foreign student was studying in a nation that was a Cold War adversary, when concerns about Pavlovian conditioning/brainwashing by the Soviet Union and the PRC would have been at their height, and foreigners would presumably have not felt like "Pavlovian dogs" when responding automatically to bells and loudspeakers in western schools, but this is not to say that the observation was totally unfounded. In terms of the presence of Mao and the Party in the daily soundscape, they were symbolically intertwined with the acoustic time-table owing to the enforced listening of "The East is Red" and the "daily political broadcast" (the news).

Acoustic signals within the soundscape, when intensely and regularly repeated in everyday life, caused some children and adults to be conditioned to respond appropriately. Such automatic responses were also usually linked to some form of behavior that would be of benefit to the nation. For example, in Rhoda Stockwell's 1975 article "With China's Children," (also mentioned in chapter three) there is a description of certain "eye exercises" being performed in time to loudspeaker music:

> At the sound of another bell, the children happily returned to classrooms but soon became quiet. Music came over the loudspeaker, and I very much expected what I have seen often in lower primary schools in the USA, that each child would rest his head on his desk for a quiet period. To my great surprise, the children did not do that at all but, rather,

> sat straight in their seats and rubbed their eyes. Watching more closely, I could see a definite pattern to the hand motions. The children were massaging certain muscles and stimulating acupuncture points we were told. The children were doing their eyes exercises. They do these twice a day at school, to protect their eyesight. (234)

Stockwell also relates the daily practice of calisthenics:

> During the midmorning, a bell rang and the children trouped out into the schoolyard, chattering gaily. They arranged themselves into straight lines as a teacher and a young girl pupil took their places at the middle of the yard, on a raised step. Everyone participated in fifteen minutes of rhythmic exercises. The teacher blew the whistle, and the children broke formation, and clustered around, or engaged in free play. (234)

Stockwell explains that the physical development of the children was as important as their moral and intellectual growth, but does not explicitly connect it with national goals in her article, though in general "[the] principles "Love labor" "Study hard for the revolution" and "Unite with one another" are in evidence throughout the child's school day." The connection between physical exercise, in time to broadcast music and instructions, and national goals, is attested to in various other sources, however, especially for the practice of broadcast led calisthenics or "radio gymnastic exercises" 广播体操 (*guangbo ticao*), which all of my oral interviewees recalled doing at school. A *People's Daily* article from June 1952 explains how radio gymnastic exercises were an effective way to improve the health of the People, and that the extensive practice of radio gymnastic exercises was improving "efficiency" in workplaces and the "mood" for studying in schools (*Renmin ribao*, 1952). The connection between the health of the People and national goals is clearer still in an article published in *China Daily*, which gives a retrospective overview of the practice of radio gymnastic exercises. The article, written in conjunction with the 2010 resumption of radio gymnastic exercises (or "broadcast calisthenics," as this author, Liu Zhihua, terms it) delineates the history of the practice and features an interview with Cong Mingli, a former editor of physical education books:

> Following the first broadcast, the whole country soon adopted the calisthenics with enthusiasm. Everyday at 10 am and 3 pm, when the broadcast was aired, people would stop everything to do the calisthenics. In the 1950s, a Soviet poet N S Tikhonov marveled at the spectacle in Beijing. "When Beijingers do broadcast calisthenics, all the streets and alleys become a sports ground," he wrote. People were enchanted with the novelty of the new workout method and sought to follow Chairman Mao Zedong's direction: "Strengthen our body to protect our homeland". "It was the national will. We knew the Party was doing it for our sake. We were willing to obey the Party's orders," Cong says.

At various points after the 1950s, radio broadcasting exercises were not as much a part of daily life for many people, however, as the article explains, but the exercises continue to be practiced in schools to this day (Liu Z. 2010).

In factories (and other workplaces) there was a similar connection between acoustic time-tables and discipline, and the time-table was also punctuated by propaganda messaging or soundscape signals that encouraged model worker behavior. Constant repetitive broadcasting could have impacted on people in a subconscious, perhaps Pavlovian, way at times. For example, in the early years of the PRC (in 1955), one foreign observer noted the intense usage of loudspeakers, and its direct causal relationship with “discipline” and the development of “national consciousness” in China, which seemed to him to have developed quite rapidly since the CCP had come to power, six years earlier. The Swiss photographer and reporter, Walter Bosshard (1892-1975), in “Stern Discipline in Communist China: Impressions from Peking” (FO 371/114990, originally published in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 01/03/55) describes in detail the usage of loudspeakers in the “continuous process of teaching and enlightenment,” by giving an example of a typical broadcasting schedule at a building site:

> [As] early as five in the morning the loudspeakers started to blare out directions to the workers lodged in barracks on the site of the building. A paternal friendly voice repeating the same words three or four times reminded them that it was now time to get up. A new day had started. Chairman Mao Tse Tung once more expected them to overfulfil their norms. There followed explanations on the importance of physical hygiene. These invariably ended with the exhortation to remember to wash their faces and hands. In

> much the same way during the course of the day further instructions on how to work, how to behave, how to rest, how to share your meals with your comrades, were given. (26)

Bosshard details all of this as a way of explaining his main thesis, that the continuous process of education and enlightenment (via the radio and loudspeaker) had brought about stern discipline to the extent that "a stage has almost been reached where people react much as automatons and adapt and subordinate their own free will to the orders which issue from the radio or loudspeaker" (26). Bosshard supports his argument by explaining how a foreign diplomat who lived opposite the building site and who had to listen to the daily repetition of this broadcast eventually "became so obsessed with the whole business that at the end of one month he began to feel a sense of guilt if he still remained in bed after the loudspeaker across the road had for the third time ordered everyone to get up" (26).

Bosshard goes on to delineate other ways in which the Party had garnered popular support and control, but he concludes his article by returning to the importance of sound-reproducing technology, stating:

> [All] the signs point to the fact that the Peking government has already succeeded by the use of modern techniques such as the wireless and permanent loudspeakers installed everywhere, in bringing its propaganda even to the most distant valleys of this great Empire. Its endeavor has been to impose on the 600 million inhabitants as stern a discipline as that which has already been accepted by the Chinese in the capital Peking. (28)

Bosshard is correct in saying that this was the Party's endeavor, however, his assumption that these technologies caused the Chinese People to lose their free will is not borne out by many of the accounts in this dissertation. The main point that I would like to draw from Bosshard's account, however, is the description of loudspeaker usage at the building site, and how the

matters of time-thrift, national consciousness and work discipline could all be easily and repetitively promoted by a factory/workplace broadcasting system.

Other acoustic signals were used to encourage model worker behavior. An example of this is given in Jan Wong's *Red China Blues*. Wong was a Canadian student studying in China during the Mao years and at one point during her time there she was given permission to work at Beijing Number One Machine Tool Factory. When she begins work at the factory, she notices that there are two early morning alarm calls. Each morning she and her friend and teachers ignored "the first ear-splitting 5 AM bell" and instead got up at the second 6 AM one (99). After a little while working at the factory Wong began to realize why there were two early morning calls. The first wake up bell "was for fanatics," who wanted "to display their revolutionary fervor" (99). As was detailed in chapters two and three, model worker or model student behavior could be encouraged and praised, and poor performances or behavior that contravened ideology could be criticized, but this account shows that factory workers also knew that reacting in certain ways to acoustic signals evidenced their fanaticism for the cause, and employees encouraged such behavior by using these acoustic codes.

Jie Li (2020) argues that village loudspeakers brought "a more regimented, industrial concept of time and work discipline" into rural life as well, citing the ethnographic study *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization* (2009), and how after the 1966 installation of 30 wired loudspeakers throughout the village, the brigade broadcaster "became the village's relentless time-keeper," and, "surveillance was introduced into the village along with discipline, as the brigade broadcaster could monitor what individuals did, and publicly shame "slackers" (Li 2020, 37). Earlier on in the article Li relates how surveillance and work-time discipline were encouraged by factory broadcasting systems, and how the deployment of broadcasting for "labor

mobilization" could be "oppressive" as much as it could also be entertaining (33). In this section of my chapter I have examined broadly similar themes, but I have attempted to focus quite specifically on the connections between the acoustic time-tables of schools and factories, the usage of acoustic signals/codes and how they encouraged discipline in daily life, up to a certain level of conditioning.

Acoustic signals within the everyday soundscape of the Mao era encouraged model and moral behavior and also accompanied particular exercises that strengthened people's bodies in order to better protect the homeland, as Mao instructed. Discipline, as Foucault explains, "[Produces] subjected and practiced bodies … [it] increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)" (138). This section has shown how this type of discipline was put into place partly by the everyday acoustic time-tables of schools and factories. In the next section of this chapter, I will examine how discipline was further inculcated, and internalized by the People, by the usage of loudspeakers and radios to create fear and anxiety.

Fear & the Internalization of Discipline (I) – Amplified Sound at Public Trials and Struggle Sessions

Amplified sound, through loudspeaker usage at large-scale public events and live radio broadcasting of such events elsewhere, when combined with organized listening, was a powerful propaganda tool for the Party, as previous chapters have shown. This tool was similarly effective, if not more visceral and potent, in conveying warnings to the People, regarding the consequences of any anti-Party actions. The PRC's sonic infrastructure enabled the Party to ensure that public punishments of supposed wrongdoers were no longer merely the spectacles that they would have been in earlier centuries around the world, but were instead events whose

impact could be experienced intimately, widely and as they happened. In this way, radios and loudspeakers were made use of to create the maximum amount of fear and anxiety in listeners, so that they would internalize discipline and learn not to pose a threat to the Party's power.

In this chapter section I will briefly elucidate some examples of public broadcasting meetings that were set up to denounce and judge various parties deemed as "spies," "counter-revolutionaries" or other types of bad elements. There are a few examples of public trials (that could be considered show trials) or "large denunciation meetings" documented in the pages of the *People's Daily* in the early years of the PRC era, which is logical, because these were the years in which the Party was gradually establishing a tighter control over the nation and suppressing any possible source of dissension, and there were many real enemies still on the Mainland at this time.[74] Public show trials/denunciation meetings, brought to the masses with radios and loudspeakers were suitable means by which the Party could send warning signals out, and make it plain that it had the overwhelming support of the majority of the People too, so any opposition would be hopeless.

A *People's Daily* article from May 1951 details a broadcasting conference/public trial that was set up to denounce counter-revolutionaries. At the end of this denunciation meeting, held in Shenyang at the municipal People's stadium, the People's municipal government accepted the people's "request" to execute the accused, according to the article (*Renmin ribao*, 1951a). This was a large-scale event attended in person by over 30,000 people from "all walks of life," which was broadcast via radio to over a million people. On the day when the event was

[74] Michael Schoenhals, in *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967*, writes, "Immediately after 1949, when the CCP's hold on power was still relatively weak, metropolitan Shanghai was, in the words of historian Frederic Wakeman Jr., "indeed swarming with special service agents [*tewu*] left behind by the Bureau to Protect Secrets [*baomiju*] and other secret police of Chiang [Kai-shek's] regime." It was not until "the second half of the 1950s" that the "CCP was firmly established in power," in terms of these efforts, and this instigated some questions regarding domestic intelligence work on the kinds of agents the Central Ministry of Public Security (CMPS) should recruit (92, 93). I deal with the work of the CMPS in more depth below.

held, schools were shut and businesses were closed so that citizens could gather around over 300,000 radios to listen in to the "blood and tears" accusations made against the counter-revolutionaries. The meeting began after a "stirring" singalong of "The White-Haired Girl," and when the counter-revolutionaries were brought onto the stage, the whole venue became a "racket," and the crowd's cry of demand that the "heinous" counter-revolutionaries be shot "resounded across the heavens" (ibid.).

What is striking about this whole account is the representation of a kind of People's justice, the emotion raising nature of the event, and the role of sound and technology in the proceedings. The article presents the guilty verdicts and death sentences as being the righteous conclusion of the People, and it asserts that the Party was merely listening to the People, and then carrying out their clearly expressed wishes. The voice of the People, what was called for and the sentiments expressed, was unanimous, according to the article. The People called out, "Long live Chairman Mao!" and "Long live the victorious suppression of counter-revolutionaries!", and the article presents these slogans as emerging spontaneously and as if delivered by one voice. The atmosphere of the event is emotional and almost carnivalesque at times as well, as dancing (*yangge*) and drum and gong beating greeted the sound of the gunshots that killed the accused after they had been taken away from the stadium (ibid.).

The emotion raising nature of the event was evident in many ways. This denunciation broadcast was similar to the standard emotion raising events mentioned in the introduction (Perry), in terms of what was expected of its participants, but the integration of broadcasting technology into the proceedings, and the halting of everyday life elsewhere as broadcasts were being relayed, shows how the Party carefully made full use of sound-reproducing technology to achieve their purposes. Similarly, as with many of the broadcasting conferences discussed in

chapter three, there was also a recirculation across the mediascape to ensure that the maximum propaganda potential was wrung from the goings on at the Shenyang stadium. The event itself lasted three hours, ostensibly owing to the "impassioned masses", and the general crowd sounds as well as specific accusations were broadcast over the radio. As specific members of the audience, those that would best elicit sympathy (a "grey-haired old lady" a "thirteen-year-old orphan" and a mother whose children had been killed), "poured out" their "bitter complaints," people who were listening in on the radio made telephone calls, and sent letters and money in order to show support for the victims and for the imposition of death sentences on all of the accused (*Renmin ribao*, 1951a). The recirculation of the broadcast content in print media helped to reinforce the salient points, from the Party's perspective: the public anger, and the People's justice being enforced etc.

During the Cultural Revolution similar public trials occurred, some on a larger scale in public stadiums, and some at smaller locations, without the sonic infrastructural set up for radio broadcast elsewhere. An account from *Ten Years of Madness: Oral Histories of China's Cultural Revolution* vividly recounts one of these Cultural Revolution era public trials:

> Once during the movement, we were assembled in a stadium for a public sentencing. The audience was assigned spaces according to their work units. We stood in rows, facing an ad hoc stage that was set up with wooden planks. On the stage were some loudspeakers and microphones. When the criminals—altogether twenty-two of them—were led onto the stage, the noises from the handcuffs and shackles were magnified by the loudspeakers and heard throughout the stadium, sending shivers of fear to everyone in the audience. Then the crimes of those criminals were read. One of them was charged with writing "counterrevolutionary" articles and journals. The most lenient sentence that day was twenty years imprisonment. Most of the accused were sentenced to death. The one who wrote "counterrevolutionary" articles was sentenced to life imprisonment. (2)

This account is significant, because unlike the *People's Daily* article, it gives us more of a sense of what it would have been like to be an audience member in the stadium, and what the

specific effects of amplified sound were. The microphones and loudspeakers amplification of the noises from the stage caused "shivers and fear" in the author, Feng Jicai, and "everyone in the audience," he presumes, because they allowed audience members to establish a connection with the criminals on the stage. Feng could hear the movements of the shackles and handcuffs, sonic details that would have been lost on the audience without technological amplification. If the accused were remote figures who could not be heard in any way, it would not have been as easy or automatic for audience members to identify with them in any respect, to internalize fear and, we can surmise, discipline.

Yu Hua, in *China in Ten Words*, describes a similar sort of Cultural Revolution era "trial" and recounts the enthusiasm that such events used to bring to his "little" hometown on Hangzhou Bay. "Whenever an execution took place," he recalls, his town "would buzz with excitement, as though it were a public holiday," and the school playing field on which the event was held would be packed with Yu Hua's fellow townspeople (90). Yu Hua attended many of these meetings and became very familiar with their attendant rituals, which involved visual symbolism and theatricality, as well as the usage of audio technology:

> The prisoners awaiting punishment stood at the front of the stage with a big sign on their chests identifying their crime: COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY/MURDERER, RAPIST/MURDERER, ROBBER/MURDERER, and so forth. Behind them sat the members of the county revolutionary committee. On either side were arrayed the ancillary targets of struggle, like landlords and rightists, "historical" "counterrevolutionaries and "active" counterrevolutionaries. The convicted prisoners stood, heads bowed, as a representative of the revolutionary committee delivered into the microphone an impassioned indictment of their crimes and announced their sentences. If an offender was trussed up and had two armed guards towering over him, this meant he was earmarked for execution … squeezed among the crowd of townspeople who packed the playing field, I would listen to the strident harangues that blared from the loudspeaker. The judgment took the form of a prolonged critique, starting off with sayings of Mao Zedong and quotations from Lu Xun, followed by paragraphs consisting largely of boilerplate borrowed from the People's Daily, verbose and flavorless. My legs would be aching when I finally heard what crime the person had committed. The

> sentence itself was brief and to the point, consisting of just five words: "Sentenced to death, execution immediate! (307)

Elsewhere in his recollections, Yu Hua describes a particularly adept public speaker, who later fell from grace during the campaign to punish followers of the Gang of Four:

> [He] threw his weight around every chance he could. When I was young, I would often see him at struggle sessions; and when his voice blasted from the loudspeakers, it sounded like two or three voices overlaid on top of each other. As he read out his denunciations, he would keep an eagle eye on the row of capitalist-roaders, with their heads bowed, and if one of them made the slightest movement, he would break off his tirade and kick the unlucky victim fiercely in the back of the legs to bring him to his knees. (569/570)

This powerful speaker was persecuted in a similar fashion in the post Cultural Revolution period, which resulted in him committing suicide. Yu Hua reflects in these passages on the swift rise and fall of such "completely ordinary people" who emerged from "society's underbelly" and "gained opportunities to soar" (575). By this point in the PRC era, individuals such as the man Yu Hua describes, were very familiar with the repertoire of struggle sessions, and the appropriate "boilerplate" to spout in order to wield power over other individuals. Some people, especially if they had a talent for public speaking, a powerful voice, and a knack for reeling off the appropriate rhetoric, could impose themselves on others and intimidate them as much with microphones and amplification as they could with actual physical violence. These pieces of audio technology also enabled such figures to have their power felt by a wide audience, and so the particularly opportunistic and talented could find a measure of fame in what they were doing.

To summarize, the usage of sound-reproducing technology in large-scale events such as public trials and struggle sessions had the following effects: first, the usage of microphones at these events enabled radio broadcasting that could reach wide audiences if the Party effectively organized listeners; second, microphones could be used to amplify the voices of the crowd as a

whole and particular accusers, which would be more impactful for audiences listening on the radio, and in the stadium; third, the careful placement of microphones could allow for loudspeaker broadcasting of particular sonic details that meant that audience members throughout entire stadiums could get a full sensory understanding of the power relations of public trials; fourth, skilled speakers, or performers, could make good use of audio equipment to put on an impressive show, heighten their aura of power, and gain some measure of fame, which would improve their position in society. The consequences of all of these things, however, for the majority of people, would be to bring them much closer to the reality of what it would be like to be one of the accused, a struggled against individual or someone facing execution, and it would make them more fearful of transgressing the political and social standards of the era. This caused individuals to internalize discipline and to subjugate themselves to a greater degree to the rule of the Party, or influential authority figures.

Fear & the Internalization of Discipline (II) – Slogan Shouting and Targeted Sonic Harassment

Jacques Attali argues, in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1985), that "noise is the source of power" and that "in noise can be read the codes of life, the relations among men" (6). Of the examples introduced so far in this chapter, of instances in which aspects of the Mao era soundscape caused the internalization of fear and discipline, Attali's view has been borne out. When people were denounced or subjected to "impassioned indictments" (to use Yu Hua's phrasing), those in the crowd witnessed and heard (owing to amplification) the power relations between the various figures within the trials/struggle session. The noise of the castigations and

the noises of handcuffs and shackles vividly attested to who was the subjugator and who was subjugated.

In this section of the chapter, I will continue to examine sound and the internalization of fear and discipline, but my focus will shift to a consideration of the ways in which individuals were injured by targeted noise, how it felt to receive such treatment, and how particularly loud sounds can impact on the physical and mental health of individuals. Sound, both amplified and unamplified, was frequently wielded to harm and torment individuals at various stages of the Mao era. Slogan shouting and other targeted noise attacks were sometimes combined with physical attacks, or other forms of torture (depending on where such events were taking place), but sound could also be used by itself, as a form of no-touch torture (Cusick 2006, 4), or a method of psychological warfare.

Ji Xianlin's *The Cowshed: Memories of the Cultural Revolution*, is an account of his downfall from being a respected linguist and professor at Peking University to his being incarcerated in a "cowshed," a makeshift prison for "bad elements," staffed by Red Guards, for being a supposed capitalist roader.[75] In this memoir Ji describes several instances of people using the tactic of aggressive slogan shouting to struggle against those who had been accused of some form of crime. He witnessed and heard many struggle sessions, and was the subject of many too after his persecution began. According to Ji, a typical struggle session ran as follows:

> Someone would read from Mao's sayings, and then the leader would call for ——, the capitalist-roader, to be brought to the front. The unfortunate individual would have his arms twisted behind his back with two Red Guards pushing down on his head as they led him onto the podium. Then the crowds would go wild shouting slogans: "Long live Chairman Mao!" Someone would make a speech, and whatever was said was by default true. All the capitalist-roaders had committed the same crimes: They opposed the Party,

[75] Cowsheds were "makeshift detention centers" that "sprung up in many Chinese cities" in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. Those that were incarcerated in these cowsheds were made to perform manual labor and frequently "[recite] tracts of Mao's writing." The cowshed guards inflicted various kinds of "physical and psychological violence" on convicts (Ji 2016, 7).

> socialism, and the Great Leader. The masses could pin any label they liked on their unfortunate victims. They would always ask the capitalist-roader whether he admitted his guilt. If he hesitated, they would beat him savagely. It was unclear what the struggle sessions achieved, except to torment their victims. Some in the audience were completely earnest, others found it good fun, and still others took sadistic pleasure in the torture. Whatever the case, they all enjoyed themselves, and visitors from other provinces took what they had observed back to their hometowns, so that the practice of holding struggle sessions quickly spread beyond Peking University. (32)

As this passage shows, noise[76] was one of several means used to attack an individual in these part-ordered part-chaotic events. The beatings would, we can surmise, mainly have been administered by those who were close to the struggled against individual, but the slogan shouting allowed everyone present in the crowd to participate. As Ji explains earlier in *The Cowshed*, Peking University was at this point in the Cultural Revolution "a Jerusalem, Leiyin Temple, or Mecca, a holy ground that cleansed pilgrims of all evil," (30) and students from all around the country visited it to participate in and learn about the Cultural Revolution. Tactics that were learned in Beijing were applied elsewhere, and the rough format of the struggle session that Ji describes was repeated many times over, all throughout China during the Cultural Revolution era.

Through Ji's graphic accounts of the numerous struggle sessions he endured, it is possible to gain an understanding of the strengths and limitations of slogan shouting as a method of torture. Slogan shouting was an ever-present fixture in these sessions, and its effects on the struggled against individual, and also on others in the crowd and even elsewhere, were distinct. These last points are significant in relation to the overall topic of this chapter, discipline, because the slogan shouting was experienced by everyone present and also anyone within earshot. To

[76] In this chapter I use the term "noise" somewhat synonymously with loudness. For a more in-depth exploration and definition of the term see David Novak's "Noise" chapter in "Noise" chapter in "Novak, David, and Matt Sakakeeny, eds. *Keywords in sound*. Duke University Press, 2015.

return to the sonorous envelope concept detailed in the first chapter, those that were participating in the shouting were inside the protective sonorous envelope, whereas to be outside of it, being struggled against or listening from a distance was to be the subject of a powerful weapon, and to be mostly defenseless.

The noise of slogan shouting was something that energized the crowd, and something that whipped them up into further violence, as Ji explains at one point, "They would begin with deafening slogans, followed by speeches and a bit of punching and slapping if the crowd became animated," and a "successful" struggle session appeared to require the accompaniment of sincere and full-throated slogan shouting (101). Inadequate slogan shouting was one sign of a mediocre, or failed struggle session, as Ji details elsewhere: "The slogans were halfhearted, there was no kicking or punching, and I barely held the airplane position at all. The speeches were 90 percent nonsense and 9 percent lies, with 1 percent remaining as a grain of truth. If I were grading struggle sessions, this one would fail—I couldn't give it any more than a 3 out of 10" (64).[77]

When the slogans were more impassioned, louder and relentless they could be severely disorienting, as Ji illustrates:

> People in the crowd began to throw stones at me, hitting my face and body. I was aware of being kicked, punched, spat on, and yet I was unable to fight back. Despite having lived near campus for nearly twenty years, I couldn't tell where the truck was going. I felt like a sailboat lost at sea or a fox surrounded by hounds. The slogans were making me dizzy, and I gave myself up for lost. (57)

[77] Jan Wong describes another struggle session in *Red China Blues*, in which the lack of noise and energy also signified its failure: "With great excitement, I joined five thousand other workers sitting outdoors on little folding stools. After a brief wait, security guards led out three men, yanking them by their clothing. An emcee shouted, "Down with criminal elements! Firmly attack the criminal elements!" People around me half-heartedly joined in, but some didn't even bother to look up." (114)

In this brutal account of what he experienced, Ji claims that it was the slogans that were making him "dizzy," and it appears that this was what caused him to become disoriented, and unaware of his surroundings. As Ji stated in his outline of a typical struggle session quoted above, exactly what was being shouted was not especially important ("[the] masses could pin any label they liked on their unfortunate victims"), so it is possible that it was the sheer loudness of the experience that caused his loss of bearings, and to some extent the loss of his sense of self. This could be explained by the phenomenon Michael Heller terms "listener collapse," which occurs:

> [When] loud sound dissolves the ability to distinguish between interior and exterior worlds, especially in regard to sound and self. Sound does not only touch, it saturates and fills mental and physical consciousness, eliminating the possibility of detached listening. In a sense, listener collapse acts as a forced imposition of the type of sonic experience proposed by [Jean-Luc] Nancy; it is a moment in which penetration erases our ability to distinguish between exterior/sound and interior/self, bringing both together in a single inescapable vibration. (45)

To some extent however, as Ji explains when describing later struggle sessions, he was able to detach himself from both the sounds he endured, and the other forms of torture he was forced to undergo:

> After half an hour in the airplane position, I was often sore all over and drenched in sweat; before long, I would grow light-headed and sway slightly, my ears ringing. To keep myself going, I sometimes repeated a Mao saying to myself: "Make up your mind to fight without counting the costs, overcome all obstacles, and strive for victory!" Or in my case: "Make up your mind to ignore the pain, overcome all obstacles, and strive not to collapse!" This generally worked. As I persevered, the slogans and speeches began to sound faint and faraway, like thunder on distant hilltops. (65)

And, later on:

> For the next few days I was busier than an itinerant actor: We did eight or nine sessions a day, one after another, stopping only for meals. It was a little tiring, but I grew to enjoy this sort of struggle, in which I could let other people shout themselves hoarse while I sat

> quietly, letting my mind wander. Remaining uncooperative from beginning to end saved me from committing suicide in the early days of the revolution, while toward the end it gave me a chance to enjoy a milder variant of struggle sessions. This certainly wasn't what the revolutionaries had anticipated. (123)

And on other occasions, despite his ears ringing with slogans and having fists raining down on him, Ji was merely "bored" and even "amused" during his struggle sessions. Heller explains, quoting the work of Elaine Scarry on torture, that "experiences of extreme pain work to dissolve the most basic concepts of self and world. For the body in pain, neither self, nor world, nor choice exist, as torment becomes the only perceivable content of consciousness" (46). Ji describes detached listening ("the slogans and speeches began to sound faint and faraway, like thunder on distant hilltops"), almost as if he has lost his sense of self, and as if what he was experiencing was not truly happening to him. This suggests that there were limits to the effectiveness of loud struggle sessions, and that human beings can find audile techniques (Sterne) to endure extreme loudness, at least when it is occurring. Or, more negatively, that the struggle sessions were effective as they thoroughly destroyed Ji's sense of self.

Being targeted with extreme loudness can also cause trauma in the long-term, as evidenced by Ji Xianlin, and as described in another account of a targeted sonic attack. This account comes from Xing Lu's work *Rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture and Communication*, when she recounts the abuse her family suffered after her father was labelled a bad element:

> While Father was going through the ordeal of a series of public denunciations and brutal beatings away from home, we endured humiliation and fear inflicted by a loudspeaker, which was placed outside our apartment building and constantly repeated at high volume: "Down with Lu Rong"; "Lu Rong is a capitalist running dog"; "Down with all the cow ghosts and snake spirits." The loudspeaker also broadcast revolutionary songs and announced public denunciation rallies. The projected noise was so loud and terrifying that Mother got into the habit of going to the toilet every time she heard the loudspeaker,

> and to this day whenever she hears a loudspeaker she has to urinate immediately. It would seem that Mother's bladder was totally conditioned by the terror of the Cultural Revolution. (20/21)

From this story we get a sense of the long-term impacts of extreme loudness,[78] and the power of amplified sound as a tool for oppression, persecution and possible conditioning. The family's private space was invaded with projected noise that could not be shut out, and which they had to endure throughout the day. The extreme loudness caused long-term trauma, or conditioning, reinforcing to some extent the arguments made in the second section of this chapter on time-tables, sound and conditioning. Here, however, the conditioning was linked to a traumatic and protracted period of time, rather than everyday regularity in the soundscape, suggesting something to do with the particular affective power of loud noise.

This type of targeted harassment with amplified sound was not an innovation of the Cultural Revolution era, and it did not even require an installed loudspeaker. There are various accounts of "loudspeaker vans" being used to harangue individuals throughout the Mao era. These vehicles could be stationed outside a person's house or place of work for long periods of time, or they could be driven around to disperse denunciations and violent rhetoric about people. Loudspeaker vans had been in usage from the beginning of the PRC era – when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Beijing in January 1949 they were proceeded by a loudspeaker van announcing and celebrating their arrival (Dikötter 2015, 48) – and the Nazi's also utilized them extensively "for penetrating public and private spaces with amplified sounds" (Birdsall, 39). Loudspeaker vans were a mobile feature of the Maoist soundscape with the capacity to stalk

[78] Tim Ingold's assertion (2007), quoted in the introduction, that "[we] need to avoid the trap, analogous to thinking that the power of sight inheres in images, of supposing that the power of hearing inheres in recording … the ears, just like the eyes, are organs of observation, not instruments of playback," appears not to take into account the long-term trauma that could be inflicted by particularly loud noises, or sonic torture. The ears can "playback" sounds, at least in the minds of some who have been traumatized by noise according to Xing Lu's account.

people at home and at work, and they could be used to for mobile broadcasts that incited people or attacked accused individuals.

To give some examples of these uses: during the campaign against the bourgeoisie in January 1952, loudspeaker vans went throughout business districts "stopping before shops … blaring: "Hey, proprietor! Evidence of all your misdeeds is now in our hands. Confess!"" (Dikötter 2015, 240), and after the 1951 announcement from Mao on the importance of "thought reform" for intellectuals, loudspeaker vans were sometimes placed outside an accused individual's home to pour out "a shrill stream of invective" (ibid., 260). In early 1967, when Tao Zhu (陶铸), then a high-ranking Politburo member, came under attack for supposedly representing a "reactionary bourgeois line" and not implementing the "proletarian line" that Mao advocated, "many posters and loudspeaker vans" were put to use to whip up the anger of the People. One loudspeaker van "was heard calling upon the masses to "strike down Liu [Shaoqi], [Deng Xiaoqing] and [Tao Zhu]" (FCO 21/21, 258-260). Various other figures were also targeted in a similar way in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution, as documented in numerous British Foreign Office Records, and representatives of the British government in China were also targeted using the same means (FO 21/33, 255).

To summarize, both amplified and unamplified sound were frequently used to harass and torment individuals in the Mao era, especially during campaign periods and in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. Both aggressive slogan shouting and constant loud broadcasting from loudspeakers and loudspeaker vans had significant affective impacts on individuals, in the short and long-term. Heller argues that loudness, "especially at extreme levels … draws its force from an oscillation that flattens and/or transgresses several perceptual binaries: interior/exterior, self/other, presence/meaning, individual/social, physical/reflective," and it disorients us by

"disrupting our most basic perceptual apparatuses" (54, 55). The extreme loudness was also coupled with the tactic of continuous broadcasting – or "acoustic bombardment," to use Suzanne G. Cusick's term – when loudspeakers were being used. Similar to the US military's usage of heavy metal music in the siege of Fallujah in Iraq in November 2004, the constant loud sounds, and the way in which they could reverberate, was disorienting. Regarding the Fallujah siege, a psyops spokesman said at the time, "it's not the music so much as the sound. It's like throwing a smoke bomb. The aim is to disorient and confuse the enemy to gain a tactical advantage" (3). In cases where similar techniques were employed in Mao era China, the aim was to psychologically weaken and destroy individuals as well. In the context of struggle sessions this tactic was known as "exhaustive bombardment" 疲劳轰炸 (*pilao hongzha*), and it could involve intensive and continuous interrogation that aimed at breaking individuals until they confessed to something and submitted themselves to rectification. As this section of the chapter has shown, extreme loudness, which could debilitate and disorient individuals whether it was coming from loudspeakers or fellow citizens, was an ideal way to carry out this type of rectification.

Fear & the Internalization of Discipline (III) – Eavesdropping, Bugging and Being Overheard

In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali writes:

> Eavesdropping, censorship, recording, and surveillance are weapons of power. The technology of listening in on, ordering, transmitting, and recording noise is at the heart of this apparatus. The symbolism of the Frozen Words, of the Tables of the Law, of recorded noise and eavesdropping-these are the dreams of political scientists and the fantasies of men in power: to listen, to memorize-this is the ability to interpret and control history, to manipulate the culture of a people, to channel its violence and hopes. Who among us is free of the feeling that this process, taken to an extreme, is turning the modern State into a gigantic, monopolizing noise emitter, and at the same time, a

> generalized eavesdropping device. Eavesdropping on what? In order to silence whom? (7)

In this section I turn to these "listening in" weapons of power and how they further caused the internalization of discipline in the Mao era. I will examine the extent to which these particular "fantasies of men in power" came to pass in the PRC, and how this impacted on social interactions in this period. I will outline a few instances concerning the dangers of being overheard, and the fears that individuals had of being listened to. I argue that although the PRC was not as technologically developed as the GDR of the 1980s that Christiane Lenk wrote of, and did not have access to "sophisticated bugging and wiretapping technology," or the means to apply any such comparable technology widely across the nation, the citizens of the Mao era still lived within a sort of "panaural state," because of a more generalized fear of being overheard. The citizens of the GDR "internalized Stasi control" and the "threat of acoustic surveillance inside their own four walls … was a permanent condition," (128, 129), Lenk writes, but in the case of the Mao era PRC the internalization of Party control, I argue, did not require advanced technology.

In a number of Mao era memoirs, authors have written about either their fears of being overheard, or of the actual negative consequences of being overheard in some way that marked them as being against the Party. In his memoir concerning the early years of the PRC, *Escape from Red China*, (also cited in chapter three) Robert Loh describes the chilling effect on intersocial relations brought about by the strictures on freedom of speech that were becoming more and more apparent in daily life: "People now were increasingly frightened of each other, and we were so wary of even our closest friends and relatives that free discussion was almost impossible." On one evening when Loh was with his friends (the Chans) and their wives the

topic of military conscription came up, when his friend (Charlie) declared: "What a pity I am over thirty years old, and thus do not have a chance to be conscripted as I wish. I regret that I miss this chance to serve my country and my people." The rest of the group was "shocked" at hearing "group-meeting talk in a private living room" (173). After this, Loh writes:

> Charlie's wife then said quietly, "You are in your house with your family, Charlie. You needn't speak like that to us."
> But she was wrong, and we all knew it. I think each of us was picturing in his mind what would happen if one of us were found unacceptable to the regime. If we were then to save ourselves we would have to denounce him and use our knowledge of him, acquired from years of close friendship, to betray him. Instinctively each of us in that group realized that the others represented his greatest danger. For months, although we outwardly seemed unchanged, our conversation together had been the most inconsequential "small talk" interspersed with such "safe" ideas as Charlie had automatically expressed. I know also that when Charlie made his comment each of us experienced a new depth of despair, but we were afraid even to show our anguish. Instead, we returned to meaningless chatter. (173)

This anecdote reveals a number of things about how the "panaural state" developed in the PRC. First, According to Loh, the constraints on what individuals should and should not talk about in public, even with close friends, had taken hold imperceptibly before that evening's get-together. Second, the panaural state, in which people felt that they were being listened to was not reliant on wiretapping or bugging, because saying something that could be construed as anti-Party to anyone, friend or enemy, could potentially bring about trouble at any point in the future. The reasons for this are evident in the rest of the passage – if someone is in trouble with the Party, even a friend might be willing to use any evidence of another's supposed wrongdoings to save themselves – and are also made clear in other sources I will detail below (and in an anecdote in the next chapter, concerning a group of friends listening to foreign radio). Third, the circulation of propaganda in the soundscape, in the broader mediascape and in the political group

meetings detailed in chapter three, all caused people to know by heart what talk represented pro and anti-Party (or Marxism-Leninism) sentiments.

Various other sources, from before and during the Cultural Revolution, contain similar descriptions of anxieties related to being informed on or overheard. Naturally, such fears led most people to become more disciplined with what they would be willing to say out loud. In a *Time* magazine article from March 1956 concerning the Central Ministry of Public Security (CMPS) and titled "High Terror in China" – the front cover of the magazine has a portrait of Luo Ruiqing (罗瑞卿) in front of a bloodied handprint with the words "Red China's Police Boss Lo Jui-ching" – describes a number of examples of people fearing "household police" (who supposedly kept dossiers on each household, and could "drop in anytime," engage householders in chatting where "sometimes trick questions are lobbed in casually") and the general grassroots penetration of spies and informers (*Time Magazine*, 1956).

> The article quotes "a Shanghai housewife, recently arrived in Hong Kong," who says:
>
> If you hailed me in the street as a friend, I would ignore you and think you were very inconsiderate. Who knows whether you will be arrested for something the very next day, and I will be in trouble for talking to you? Spies are everywhere, and they might have seen us talking. (30)

Whilst the overall tone of this article could be regarded as hyperbolic and suggests that the CCP enjoyed no popular support, and that the People had no agency, which is typical of western sources on "Red China" from this era (something I will return to in the next chapter), smaller details such as this direct quote have more veracity. This is because these words are not the generalizations of an author living outside China, and because the quote chimes with what other sources have suggested about the dangers of being overheard, and even of being seen with someone who might later be considered some sort of bad element. The dangers of being

overheard were particularly acute during important campaigns, in the Anti-Rightist movement of 1957 and in the Cultural Revolution era. In these latter two movements there were quotas of people considered to be either rightists or other sorts of bad elements, 5-10 percent in both cases, so people needed to find 5-10 percent of their peers to have been guilty of something or other (Yang 2021, 86). In such cases having once said something that indicated anti-Party sentiments could bring disaster on an individual. This caused people to internalize discipline, fear being overheard, and in some instances, even fear being bugged.

In Ji Xianlin's memoir, *The Cowshed*, the dangers of being overheard and of not internalizing discipline on what could and could not be spoken publicly is quite apparent. In fact, the event that sealed his downfall was being overheard. As Ji explains:

> I read a poster criticizing an essay of mine called "Springtime in Yanyuan." The Red Guards claimed that springtime represented capitalism, and celebrating the spring amounted to celebrating capitalism. I was bewildered. If anything, spring has always been the sign of new life—since when had it been appropriated as the emblem of capitalism? Then again, Yao's essay espoused just this sort of crooked logic, as did later essays criticizing the authors of the "Three-Family Village" column. Yao's methods had the seal of official approval, and everyone imitated them. Theories of "narrative as a counterrevolutionary tool" abounded, and soon enough everyone was an expert in these methods. At that point, I was still a true believer. But I knew perfectly well that the springtime I wrote about had nothing to do with capitalism and everything to do with the change of seasons. As I read the poster about my essay, I couldn't help snorting audibly. The enemy's eyes and ears were everywhere; like my heedless comments on Yao's essay, this single snort would later be used against me. (13)

This single snort was used by Ji's enemies to destroy his life, which is not surprising when we take into consideration the fact of the quotas on rightists/bad elements and the whole range of signifiers that were denoted as bourgeois or anti-Party sentiments in the Mao era.[79]

[79] Numerous objects, customs and past-times were considered "bourgeois" at various stages in the Mao era. The Cultural Revolution saw widespread destruction or confiscation of such bourgeois things as: ornamental plants and flowers, rockeries, goldfish ponds, cats, racing pigeons, articles of worship, luxury items, foreign books, concealed weapons, foreign currency, old land deeds etc. From Frank Dikötter's *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976.* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.(146)

Nanchu's memoir *Red Sorrow* describes the persecution of her father in the Cultural Revolution, which occurred due to somewhat similar circumstances. Her father became the target of verbal attacks in public shortly after their family home had been searched, and Nanchu wonders how General Ma, the leader of the local Red Guards, seemed to know everything about her family:

> [Had] General Ma planted a bug in our home during the house search? We scoured the rooms from the ceiling to the floor, from the holes in the walls to the cracks in the hardwood boards, but found nothing. If there were no listening devices, how did General Ma obtain his information? During this time, all of our neighbors and old friends avoided our family like death … since almost everyone avoided us, suspicion naturally fell on Ni, a young lecturer who lived a few doors away and was the only person who still visited us on a regular basis. (21)

In deducing the answer to the question of how it is that everyone knows all about her family, Nanchu moves from the high-tech to the low-tech solution. Other memoirs contain similar accounts of fears of being bugged,[80] but most people would have assumed that such tools were mainly for higher level purposes and would instead conclude that the people around them were a more realistic source of peril (see footnote seven). Of course, this sort of fear impacted on people's intersocial relations, as was mentioned in the Robert Loh quotes above. It is not surprising that Nanchu could not trust the loyalty of others, because around the time of family house searches, she too reckoned that, "If our great leader asked me to place righteousness above family loyalty, then I should do it. I should do it because everybody else did it, because the whole country did it. Actually, it was becoming the fashion to betray one's parents."

[80] In *Life and Death in Shanghai* (2010), Nien Cheng recounts her anxiety that her room was bugged. She had just been released from prison and was working as an English language teacher at the time, and one of her students, a former Red Guard reassured her that he was certain she was not being bugged, as she was "not important enough for mechanical devices which [were] in short supply" (575). Mao himself supposedly had his train and villa bugged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as reported in: Zhi-Sui Li. *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*. Random House, 2011. (292, 652).

During the Cultural Revolution, some people's anxieties of being overheard even extended to their sleep. For example, in the introduction to Feng Jicai's *Ten Years of Madness*, he recalls meeting with an old friend in 1967, who had worked as a middle school teacher before being persecuted and incarcerated in a cowshed. Whilst this teacher was in the cowshed, "several of his former students who knew he had the habit of sleep-talking took turns waiting by his side at night in order to record anything he said. The next day he would be forced to confess the "reactionary meaning" of his slurring "black words." Therefore he was always afraid to sleep. As a result, his health was damaged, and his spirit collapsed" (1). This story, when compared with a remark by Robert Ley, the head of the German Labor Front during the entire period of Nazi rule (1933-1945) that "the only person who is still a private individual in Germany is somebody who is asleep" (Arendt, 556), reveals something of the extreme level of fear and paranoia that some Chinese people felt in the Cultural Revolution.

In the course of everyday life, however, when political campaigns were not ongoing, would people have been justified in assuming that others were listening to them? The exact extent of public security/intelligence work at the grassroots of daily life in the Mao era is not known, and the domestic intelligence history of Mainland China is generally a poorly understood subject. In one of the few academic works on this subject, *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967* Michael Schoenhals explains that although historians generally tend to "either ignore intelligence altogether or treat it as of little importance" (9), an understanding of domestic intelligence work in PRC history would definitely enrich our comprehension of "the Maoist system of governance" and "our appreciation of the history of everyday life" in the Mao era (10). Understanding the operations of the CMPS and the roles of agents in the Mao era would improve our understanding of these issues because of the significant work that this network of

"eyes and ears" (or "ears and eyes" in Chinese, *ermu* 耳目) carried out every day, before they were abruptly disbanded in 1967. Schoenhals concludes that "widespread – but not necessarily efficient – use of agents was made by the competent governmental authorities in the urban People's Republic up to 1967 in counterintelligence and in compliance-oriented surveillance of status offenders (that is to say of 'class enemies')" (234).

Intelligence operations were "low-tech" Schoenhals explains, and were reliant on the same sorts of "human skills" that prevailed in "premodern" times, primarily because the usage of newer forms of technology could be "haphazard" (197). For example, when trying to get information about possible counterrevolutionary activity at the Anshan Steel Corporation in 1956, recording equipment was installed in an agent's home, but because of a "technical malfunction" it was "almost entirely impossible" to hear the conversation between the agent and the target. It was only with the help of "better equipped" colleagues in Beijing, and a rearranged meeting at a hotel in the capital that a good quality recording could be made (197).

Overall, as Schoenhals concluded, surveillance work was low-tech, but widespread. Agents could be installed in urban *danwei* quite easily to listen in to people's opinions and form judgments on their attitudes towards the Party and Marxist-Leninist ideology. A "Belgian correspondent for Agence France Press wrote in the early 1960s" that he had not yet met someone "who has actually discovered a microphone in his Peking home or office," but it is also true that the "neigborhood watch" or "social eyes and ears (*shehui ermu* 社会耳目)" could well have been gathering information on those "people deemed of interest," even if such people were not actually being bugged (51). This justified people's sense of being listened to at any given moment, by anyone around them, and it caused many individuals to have a fear of being overheard, and to feel as if they were living within something akin to a "panaural state." Such a

sense of paranoia naturally led to some people becoming self-disciplined about speaking in public, who they would speak with, and even what non-verbal sounds they might make in public.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the various ways in which sound and listening were connected with fear and anxiety and led to the internalization of obedience in the Mao era. My focus has been purely on sound, in terms of noise/loudness; listening, in relation to eavesdropping; acoustic timetables, and enforced listening; but it is important to bear in mind that the loudspeaker was also a tangible object and a visual symbol, usually of the voice of the Party and Mao. Loudspeaker broadcasts also often encouraged, directly or indirectly, behavior that other citizens could observe, and perhaps use as information if it was deemed to have been anti-Party, anti-Marxism-Leninism, reactionary or bourgeois. As Brian Larkin argues, "it is important to recognize that the loudspeaker displays a meta-reflexive desire, that is, the desire to be *seen* relaying a message as well as simply relaying a message … a loudspeaker is a visual device as well as an aural one, drawing attention to itself as a medium of relay" (2014, 990). In the early PRC, the loudspeaker was a visual representative of the Party and Mao's voice, and people needed to behave in a manner appropriate to the content that was being broadcast. Naturally, this also contributed in a major way to the internalization of obedience and compliance.

Sometimes the information from loudspeakers took the form of direct instructions. For example, upon the death of Stalin in 1953, loudspeakers in Beijing "alternated between funeral music and instructions to the crowd on how to behave. 'Don't sing – don't laugh – don't walk aimlessly – don't shout – keep order – behave as you were instructed in the newspaper" (Dikötter 2015, 227). Whereas sometimes loudspeaker content had more of a representative value of

something deemed sacred, for example, in Ming Fang He's *A River Forever Flowing*, a memoir that documents the lives of three women from their childhoods in the time of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) to their lives in Canada as adults and academics, He documents her friend Wei's recollection of the beginning of the Cultural Revolution,

> Everywhere I went, people were parroting slogans and grabbing Chairman Mao's Red Book to worship Chairman Mao with the loudspeaker announcing the latest instruction from Tiananmen Square. Whenever Chairman Mao's speeches were broadcast through loudspeakers, people would stop and look excited with tears in their eyes. I had tears in my eyes too but for different reasons. (30)

We can surmise that at least some of the people within earshot of the loudspeakers would have been compelled to behave according to what was expected of them, rather than being genuinely tearful. This is not to suggest, however, that no-one behaved in a natural way in these situations, because of the imposition of the loudspeakers, or that people had no agency or support for the Party. There was often genuine excitement and enthusiasm that greeted Mao's speeches or his latest instructions. One oral interviewee told me that whenever he heard the latest highest directives from Mao, during the Cultural Revolution, that no matter when the loudspeaker began its broadcast in his student dorm, even if it was at midnight, he was always very "excited" and "did not want to miss out on celebrating out on the streets with the other students" (Interview Eleven). The loudspeaker was an imposition, however, on those that did not genuinely share in the emotions that were obviously required of them. For example, when Mao died, because of the loudspeaker broadcast of the news of his death and the mourning music that was played everywhere, two people I spoke with recalled having to look "serious" and having to cry in public, though they did not truly care about what had happened (Interviews Ten and Eleven). The loudspeaker's physical presence in people's daily lives, therefore, in terms of what it

represented visually as a "relay" of the voice of the Party and Mao, was another factor in the sonic conditioning that occurred during the Mao era.

Returning to the Foucauldian framework of the modern disciplinary society, in this chapter I have argued that sound was crucial to the internalization of obedience, and that during the Mao years China could be considered, to an extent, a panaural state, albeit a low-tech one. Audibility was as much a trap as visibility, as it also was in the later GDR (Lenk 2012). However, the PRC's divergence from Foucault's vision of a disciplinary society was not just because of this difference, but also because of the continued significance of the sovereign's will throughout society, which resulted in a generally more arbitrary and chaotic forced internalization of obedience, in which discipline and punishment were often meted out loudly, publicly and in disorder, as much as they also occurred within the bounds of institutions, and carried out in a more regulated fashion. China today may have entered into the "age of infinite examination," to use another of Foucault's terms, with its very high prevalence of different forms of sophisticated surveillance equipment,[81] and with the disappearance of the "capricious expression of the sovereign's will" in matters of punishment and discipline, but the early stages of this disciplinary society were built on the aural as well as the visual, was liable to malfunction at times at the grassroots level, and still contained the presence of a sovereign-like will.

[81] Two forms of mass surveillance that are particularly pervasive in China today are digital surveillance through social media and the Internet, and video surveillance in public areas, which also incorporates digital capabilities, such as facial recognition. These forms of surveillance have been widely covered in the western media in recent years, for example: Dave Davies, "Facial Recognition and Beyond: Journalist Ventures Inside China's Surveillance State," *NPR*, 01/05/21. https://www.npr.org/2021/01/05/953515627/facial-recognition-and-beyond-journalist-ventures-inside-chinas-surveillance-sta accessed 02/03/22; Paul Mozur and Aaron Krolik, "A Surveillance Net Blankets China's Cities, Giving Police Vast Powers," *New York Times*, 12/17/19 https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/17/technology/china-surveillance.html accessed 02/03/22.

Chapter Five
Competing Spheres of Sonic Influence: The Voice of America, Radio Peking, and the Specter of "Brainwashing"

The establishment of the PRC in October 1949 had far-reaching consequences on both contemporaneous international politics and subsequent world history. From the perspective of the United States, the Communists coming to power in China and allying themselves with the Soviet Union was disastrous. The framing of this event in western discourse, as Noam Chomsky explains, was that China had been "lost," and this "terminology is revealing [because] it is only possible to lose something that one owns. The tacit assumption was that the U.S. owned China, by right, along with most of the rest of the world, much as postwar planners assumed" (Chomsky 2012). The loss had "major policy consequences" as Chomsky details, and the "domino theory" informed U.S. foreign policy afterwards, as various American leaders attempted to prevent other countries becoming a part of the Communist bloc (ibid.).

Immediately after, and in the years that followed the "loss of China," U.S. politicians and scholars sought to understand what errors had been made in the lead up to 1949. Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State of the Truman administration (1949-1953), reflected on this and other related issues in his August 1949 statement on China. In his comments, Acheson contrasts the "decay" of the KMT, its leaders being "incapable of meeting the crisis confronting them" and its army without morale, with the "ruthless discipline and fanatical zeal" of the CCP (Acheson 1949). Acheson makes clear that the post "loss of China" policy aim would be based on the contention that, "ultimately the profound civilization and the democratic individualism of China [would] reassert themselves and … throw off the foreign yoke [of the Soviet Union]." Acheson

believed that the United States should "encourage all developments in China which now and in the future [would] work toward this end" (ibid.).

Naturally, the CCP resolutely opposed this, and Mao Zedong outlined the PRC's antipathy to the United States, the primary "Imperialist" enemy, throughout his time as leader. In "Farewell Leighton Stuart!" a piece that Mao wrote in August 1949 concerning the recent departure of Leighton Stuart, the U.S. ambassador to China, Mao critiqued the U.S. "policy of aggression," announced that the American attempt to make China into its colony had failed, and called upon the Chinese people to resist the policies of the United States and prevail no matter what difficulties they might face (Mao 1949). Anti-imperialism would be necessary for ensuring the continued success of the Communist revolution, Mao believed. In 1952, Mao argued that the Revolution of 1911 had not succeeded in part because of the, "failure to wage sharp struggles against imperialism," along with the "failure to distribute land," and the "failure to recognize the necessity of suppressing counter-revolutionaries" (Mao 1952).

The CCP would not fail to "wage sharp struggles against imperialism," and they had the means to ensure this. The Party could wage their struggle against imperialism in people's everyday lives, using their domestic sonic infrastructure and the broader mediascape, as well as the more nebulous international sonic infrastructure (made up of friendly foreign nations' radio networks, and foreign shortwave radios) to disseminate the ideology and viewpoints of the CCP, and promote Chinese soft power more broadly. All such efforts were carried out in the face of asymmetrical endeavors from the United States to undermine the new CCP regime. The extensive usage of radio and loudspeakers by both sides created a kind of sonic Cold War that permeated people's lives across many countries, and occasionally reflected eruptions in international tensions. It was part of the broader Cold War competition of "spheres of influence,"

in which war "was reconceived as having shifted from a battle to conquer geography to a battle to persuade hostile minds" (Killen and Andriopoulos 2011, 9).

In this chapter I will look at a range of issues related to the sonic politics of the Cold War era, which coincided with the entire Mao years and beyond. I will consider the following questions: from the perspective of the PRC and the United States, what was the international Maoist soundscape? How were sound reproducing tools used to enact the foreign policy goals of the CCP and the United States, and how successful was their usage? How did the CCP use their sonic infrastructure to strengthen ties with their allies and wage struggles against imperialism? What particular qualities did sound and sonic media have for advancing the aims of these competing spheres of influence? What influenced the Western Cold War discourse of "brainwashing," and what are its legacies today?

The central argument of this chapter is that although many of the American and Chinese attempts to spread propaganda about themselves and each other could be regarded as failures, or not as effective as the leaders of these nations would have hoped, the Cold War era saw the beginnings of various important propaganda and soft power efforts that eventually saw success decades later. The Party erected a "sound wall" during the Mao era, to use Schafer's term, something which made the "the inimical forces from outside" inaudible to a certain extent, but also forged important broadcasting connections with other nations, which helped it to succeed long-term in dealing with ideological attacks from the U.S. sphere of influence. I will now turn to perhaps the most famous of these attacks, and the most prominent and pervasive international viewpoint overall on the Maoist soundscape during the Cold War era.

Brainwashing, Orientalism and Anticommunism

Before I analyze some key texts on supposed brainwashing in China, I will outline some of the most significant influences on brainwashing as a discourse. These three influences are somewhat interrelated, and taken together show, I argue, that brainwashing and the "Red scare" were not anomalous historical events, but were very much in line with longer term historical trends and inherent dynamics in the American/Western news media. These three influences/tendencies also still impact on the popular usage of the term brainwashing today, even though there is now a broad consensus that brainwashing of the type commonly described in the Cold War era is not really possible.

The Western Cold War era discourse on brainwashing derived mainly from these three tendencies in academic and non-academic literature: 1) Orientalism, 2) Anticommunism, being a key "filter" of the "propaganda model" of the news (Herman and Chomsky) and 3) Fears, some ill-founded and some valid, on the qualities and potential of sound and technology for altering human minds.[82] Edward Said uses the term "Orientalism" to refer to several "interdependent" things, two of which are particularly pertinent to Western discourses on brainwashing in the Cold War era. Said defines Orientalism as:

> [A] style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as a starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny and so on. (2)

[82] My analysis of these tendencies builds on Timothy Melley's article "Brain Warfare: The Covert Sphere, Terrorism and the Legacy of the Cold War," in which he described brainwashing as a "concept [which] began as an orientalist propaganda fiction" and outlines its support by various anti-Communist figures such as FBI leader J. Edgar Hoover.

As Said states, there is a "quite disciplined – perhaps even regulated – traffic between" the imaginative and academic meanings of Orientalism. This particular issue is something I shall explore in the next section of this chapter. The other aspect of Orientalism that directly relates to brainwashing is its connection with the "Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (3). As Said argues, these meanings of Orientalism are interdependent, and it is not difficult to understand how essentialist depictions of people from the Orient, that assume homogeneity of peoples, their customs and "minds," and which rely on negative representations or stereotypes of "the Oriental" as being "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike," in contrast with the "rational, peaceful, liberal, logical" Westerner, could be of service to Western claims of authority over these nations (40, 49). We can infer that these racist stereotypes informed both the understanding that the Chinese Communists had created "brainwashing" – which was said to come from the term *xi nao* (洗脑) meaning "to wash the brain" – and that the Chinese People were "childlike" enough to be susceptible to it.[83]

Anticommunism, as one of the filters in Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model of the news, bears some similarities with Orientalism, in its essentializing nature and how it creates "knowledge" that serves as a powerful political instrument for the elite classes and military in the West (Herman and Chomsky 2006). Anticommunism, Herman and Chomsky argue, is a "national religion and control mechanism" in the news media (258), and a "first principle of Western ideology and politics" (278). The property owners who control the U.S. media, as Herman and Chomsky explain, consider Communism as "the ultimate evil" because it "threatens

[83] Ryan Mitchell, in a detailed study of the term's origins, explains that "brainwashing" did come from China and the Chinese language, but "not in the manner or with the meaning that has previously been supposed." Ryan Mitchell. 2019. "China and the Political Myth of 'Brainwashing,'" *Made in China Journal*, October 8. https://madeinchinajournal.com/2019/10/08/china-and-the-political-myth-of-brainwashing/.

the very root of their class position and superior status." Because the concept of Communism is "fuzzy," the revolutions in the Soviet Union, the PRC and Cuba were "traumas to Western elites" (as was mentioned in the introduction), and the abuses of Communist states have been "well-publicized," this means that Anticommunism has been a potent and versatile tool for the news media to apply when reporting on various domestic and international matters. For example, the religion of Anticommunism, Herman and Chomsky explain, aided the justification of both the "U.S. subversion of Guatemala, 1947-1954, and the military attacks on Nicaragua, 1981-7," as the "allegations of Communist links" in these nations caused liberals to either support the U.S. military actions or remain quiet about their opposition to them, in fear of having their reputations tarnished (278). Because of the persistence of Anticommunism in the news media, and the "well-publicized" abuses of Communist states, the term "Communism" (and Socialism) can be used to attack anyone deemed supportive of left-leaning political movements or governments, or critical of U.S. military attacks on left-wing nations. In this way Anticommunism helps to keep Liberals "continuously on the defensive" and it helps with efforts to "fragment the left and labor movements" (278).

Mass media reporting on anything pertaining to Communism has also always tended to be simplistic and biased. As Herman and Chomsky state, "[in] normal times as well as in periods of Red scares, issues tend to be framed in terms of a dichotomized world of Communist and anti-Communist powers, with gains and losses allocated to contested sides, and rooting for "our side" considered an entirely legitimate news practice" (279). Because of the unspecific and "fuzzy" nature of how the term Communism can be applied (278), as well as the long-term consistency of Anticommunist messaging in the media, this promotes a Manichean worldview in which it can

always be assumed that the adversary is purely evil and permanently attempting to bring about the destruction of "our side."

Another important aspect of Anticommunism, which is something that clearly connects it with the Western discourse of brainwashing is the way in which any individual could be promoted as an "expert" on the issue, as long as they are on "our" side, the "good" side, and even if they have been previously exposed as "highly unreliable, if not downright liars" (279). As long as they are expressing clear Anticommunist viewpoints anyone could be accepted and promoted by the mass media as an "expert" and any claim about the adversary, even if unsupported and hyperbolic, would be regarded as valid.

The third tendency - fears regarding the qualities and potential of sound and technology for altering human minds – which I explore in more detail when analyzing the works on brainwashing, connects with the other two factors in a few important ways. First, Orientalism almost always involves the "denial of coevalness," defined by the anthropologist Johannes Fabian as the "persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse" (31). This denial of coevalness, which essentially always puts the observed as belonging to an earlier and more "primitive" point on the historical timeline than the observer, has also been common in area studies and some of the non-academic works I will examine in this chapter. In combination with another aspect of Orientalism – the negative stereotyping of Oriental peoples as "radical" and "irrational" – and Anticommunism, which caused Communist states to be regarded as inherently evil, it created a situation in which it would seem, to prejudiced Western observers, to be a very dangerous thing for the East and West to have technological parity. It would seem dangerous because of the tendency of these nations towards "despotism" and "radical" actions, and

dangerous for the citizens of these nations as well because they would not be equipped to handle or live with modern technology. In the following section I will outline how this prejudiced logic informed the work of the brainwashing "experts" of the early Cold War period.

Brainwashing in Red China

Though works on brainwashing were never concerned only with the usage of sound and sound reproducing media, the radio and loudspeaker were considered to be powerful tools for the supposed plans of Communist countries to conduct Pavlovian style "mass hypnosis," and sound itself, particularly the human voice, was regarded as a key instrument in conditioning people. Technology, the phonograph in particular, was also employed as a metaphorical way of conceptualization the effects of brainwashing on the human psyche. The concept of brainwashing, promoted by such figures as Edward Hunter (1902-1978), an American journalist and "CIA propaganda specialist" (Melley, 28) and Joost Meerloo (1903-1976), a Dutch/American psychoanalyst, was something that began to emerge in popular and academic literature during the Korean War (1950-1953). Those that wrote on the topic were supposedly attempting to draw the world's attention towards a new threat, something that appeared to pose more danger to the "free world" than anything even the recently defeated Nazis were capable of.

Edward Hunter's book *Brainwashing in Red China* (1951) is described in its blurb as:

> [The] first book that reveals how the Communists in China are utilizing [a] combination of misapplied psychology and perverted evangelism to make the Chinese impervious to all but the "straight party line." It is George Orwell's *1984* brought to life – a strange, distorted world in which even Robinson Crusoe is condemned because of poor Crusoe's reliance on individual initiative … [this book] thus discloses for the first time new and horrifying extremes in the psychological warfare being waged against the free world and against the very concept of freedom.

We see here the clear Orientalism of *Brainwashing in Red China*. Communist China is represented as a "distorted world" which used "misapplied psychology and perverted evangelism" to put its people into a trance. China is represented as a sinister inversion of the "free world" of the West (represented by the United States), which celebrates individualism as opposed to mass conformism. The Orient/China was something to be feared, and something that needed to be studied and understood so that its threat could be neutralized. The Chinese People are also dehumanized in *Brainwashing in Red China*, another aspect typical of Orientalism. They are represented as less than human because of the ideology that they followed, as I shall detail later in this section. Also, as Melley points out, in *Brainwashing in Red China*, as in the Dutch/American psychoanalyst Joost Meerloo's *Rape of the Mind* (1956) and in William Sargant's *Battle for the Mind* (1957):

> [Once] one understands brainwashing as a strategic fiction, one is struck by how much of the early scientific evidence marshaled for it is *fictional*. Sargant, for example, based his analysis not on clinical cases but on distant historical summaries and contemporary literature - particularly the dystopian fiction of Aldous Huxley, Arthur Koestler, and George Orwell. Meerloo's *Rape of the Mind* cites the same authors and concludes with Meerloo's own speculative fiction, "Totalitaria and Its Dictatorship," a detailed fantasy of future conformity and repression. (31)

The influence of fiction is certainly striking in Hunter and Meerloo's books,[84] and the melding of the imaginative and academic in their work recalls what Said wrote of typical Orientalist works (page 5).

[84] Hunter refers to "Hate Week" in *Brainwashing in Red China*, which he claimed was the term Chinese people used to refer to a week-long demonstration against "United States aggression in Taiwan and Korea" (141), and involved a "petition drive" and attempts to build up fervid hatred against America and its foreign policy (142). "Hate Week" is also a public activity in Orwell's *1984*, in which a great outpouring of hatred was expected from the populace at Oceania's enemies. "The processions, the speeches, the shouting, the singing, the banners, the posters, the films, the waxworks, the rolling of drums and squealing of trumpets, the tramp of marching feet, the grinding of the caterpillars of tanks, the roar of massed planes, the booming of guns" (256) in Oceania's "Hate Week" all helped to build up a unified hatred, and took much preparation. Oceania also had a daily "Two Minutes Hate." Hunter's descriptions of "Hate Week" in the PRC appear to bear the influence of *1984*, in terms of the framing of these

Another striking aspect of their work is the power they ascribe to modern technology, such as the radio. According to Hunter and Meerloo, citizens of totalitarian states could be deeply influenced by the radio and other audio technology, to the extent that they could, in effect, become pieces of audio technology themselves. Owing to brainwashing techniques and the power of modern media, people could in fact become components of totalitarian soundscapes. Hunter describes how this would work when detailing how political small group discussions operated in New China, stating, "[the] same topic is gone over again and again and again, until the mind of the student rings like a phonograph record that has stuck at a point where it soporifically sings something about dialectical materialism, tailism or productive relationship. And the student has to be able to get up and talk interminably and correctly on all of these …" (58). Meerloo makes the same connection between man and machine in his analysis of apparent brainwashing in the case of Brigadier General Frank Schwable, an American pilot who was prosecuted for collaborating with his Communist captors in the Korean war, saying, "[the] brainwashee lives in a trance, repeating the record grooved into him and by somebody else" (Meerloo 2015, 34).

As Alison Winter argues in her 2011 article "Manchurian Candidates: Forensic Analysis in the Cold War," this analogy was also referred to when justifying the U.S. response to their adversary's supposed usage of brainwashing:

> When [CIA head] Allen Dulles publicly declared shortly after secretly authorizing MK-ULTRA that the brain of an individual under Communist influence became "a phonograph playing a disc put on its spindle by an outside genius over which it has no control," he meant to suggest that people in this state lost not only their self-control but also their self. But his choice of metaphor - the mechanical recording device - was also central to an account of the resiliency of individual minds: recording implies a stability to knowledge of selves and their pasts. The phonograph produces one of the most stable and permanent of records: a solid physical object that, once created, can be replicated ad

activities, but *People's Daily* articles on such petition drives in the early PRC era provide evidence for some of the events that Hunter details.

> infinitum and cannot be transformed into something new … [buried] in the mind, these recordings remained fully intact, waiting only for the right button to be pressed (or the needle to be lowered in the right place). (108)

Recordings had stability, as Winter explains, and so anyone who had been brainwashed supposedly had the potential to be a "sleeper agent" in a foreign country.[85] A brainwashee no longer thought like a human being. They had turned into something "stable" and "permanent," Winter argues, developing Dulles' metaphor, but they had lost their original sense of self (114). They could only unconsciously project the authoritarian's soundscape, no matter whether or not they were a citizen of that nation. It was these kinds of analyses, by Dulles, Hunter, Meerloo and others that were used to justify the attempts made by covert government agencies in the United States to master brainwashing techniques so as to defend against brainwashing. The idea of an individual being a "sleeper agent" is closely connected with the practice of hypnosis, which is something Hunter explicitly connects with brainwashing and modern mass media in his work.

In the first chapter of *Brainwashing in Red China*, Hunter details a recent entertaining visit to a hypnotist's performance in the United States, in which he witnessed audience members, under what the hypnotist dubbed "post-hypnotic suggestion," acting out absurd scenarios. This supposedly caused Hunter to consider whether:

> [If] this could be done in a salon among friends, why couldn't it be done anywhere else to achieve any other objective that a party, social or political, might desire?" At home in America we might regard such things as great fun, but apparently they were being taken seriously by other countries, and their possibilities were being tried out. (10)

[85] A "sleeper agent" was understood to be a Communist agent who would "lie dormant" within the United States, possibly over a long period of time, ready to be "activated" to commit some sort of act against America, on behalf of their Communist masters. The concept is detailed in: Andriopoulos, Stefan. "The Sleeper Effect: Hypnotism, Mind Control, Terrorism." *Grey Room* (2011): 88-105.

Hypnosis could be carried out via the radio, Hunter claimed. He relates an interview he conducted with Henry Chao (pseudonym), a "young office manager from a Shanghai textile firm" whom he met in Macau (along with a Chinese professor "who had recently escaped from [Beijing]" (144)), in which he was told about how repetitious propaganda can alter people's minds, even if they are conscious that they are hearing propaganda:

> Songs are popular on the Chinese radio," Hunter states, "and, as in America, there is often a plug between songs. The disk jockey remarks: Chiang Kai-shek is no good; our next song will be a popular new tune everybody is humming; America is an Imperialist aggressor nation; we are now about to play Springtime in Soochow; Chiang Kai-shek is a bad bandit, and America is an aggressive, imperialist nation; Springtime in Soochow is by a well-known people's composer, and is about the liberation feeling; Chiang Kai-shek is a bad …"
>
> "Can the constant dinning of this single theme into a person's ears really influence him? I should think that it would have the opposite effect," I remarked.
>
> Henry thoughtfully shook his head. "You may not believe it," he said, "but while everyone you talk to will tell you that all this propaganda is a pack of lies, just the same a lot of these same people are themselves influenced by it."
>
> The professor nodded gravely. "You're right," he said. "Anyone you pin down will say of course it's Communist propaganda and can't be believed. Even the Communist Party will say it's propaganda, with the inference that they themselves are above it. Yet, and this is the peculiar fact about it, it is making tremendous inroads into the Chinese mind. (145, 146)

The suggestion here is that a person would be defenseless against brainwashing. The radio was a powerful tool that could endlessly repeat information, so that it would be drilled (or grooved) into the mind of a human being. The radio could impart information in short repetitive phrases, akin to mantras, designed to hypnotize the listening public. Meerloo describes a similar sort of radio usage in *The Rape of the Mind,* in both China (where he quotes from reports by "neutral Indian journalists" in a *New York Times* article, November 27, 1954) and Nazi occupied Holland (the Netherlands):

> Chinese leaders are using … vocal conditioning of the public to strengthen their regime. Throughout the country, radio and loudspeakers are broadcasting the official "truths." The sugary voices take possession of people, the cultural tyranny traps their ears with

> loudspeakers, telling them what they may and may not do. This microphone regimentation was foreseen by the French philosopher La Rochefoucauld, who, in the eighteenth century, said: "A man is like a rabbit, you catch him by the ears."
>
> During the Second World War the Nazis showed that they too were very much aware of this conditioning power of the word. I saw their strategy at work in Holland. The radio constantly spread political suggestions and propaganda, and people were obliged to listen because the simple act of turning off one's radio was in itself suspicious. I remember one day during the occupation when I was taking a bicycle trip with some friends. We stopped off to rest at a café that, we later realized, was a true Nazi nest. When the radio, which had been on ever since we arrived, announced a speech by Hitler, everyone stood up in awe, and it was a must to take in the verbal conditioning of the Fuhrer. My friends and I had to stand up too, and were forced to listen to that raucous voice crackling in our eardrums and minds. Throughout the occupation, the Nazis printed tons of propaganda, Big Lies, and distortions. They even went so far as to paint their slogans on the stoops of the houses and on the streets. Every week newly fabricated stereotypes ogled at us as if to convince us of the splendor of the Third Reich. But the Nazis did not know the correct Pavlovian strategy. By satisfying their own need to discuss and to vary their own arguments in order to make them seem more logical, they only increased the resistance of the Dutch people. This resistance was additionally fortified by the London radio, on which the Dutch could hear the sane voice of their own legal government. Had the Nazis not argued and justified so much, and had they been able to prevent all written, printed, or spoken communication, the long period of boredom would have inhibited our democratic conditioning, and we might well have been more seduced by the Nazi oversimplifications and slogans. (47, 48)

This passage has been quoted in full, despite its length, because it contains references to a number of key issues in this chapter, and this dissertation as a whole. First, there is the argument Meerloo makes about the significance of the radio and loudspeakers as tools of communication and propaganda. These media are presented as somewhat inescapable, particularly in public places (such as the café where Meerloo and his friends stopped off), which commanded attention whether or not an individual wanted to listen to them. As Meerloo stated, it was not possible to turn off the radio in public, because this would have been taken as a "suspicious" political act, a gesture in opposition to the regime. Second, though Meerloo talks about the "conditioning power of the word," he also refers to "verbal conditioning" and "vocal conditioning" which would include the sound of the speaker's voice, as well as the accompanying sounds being broadcast.

Meerloo refers specifically to the "sugary" tones being used by speakers over the Chinese radios and loudspeakers, and the "raucous voice crackling in our eardrums and mind" when he had to endure a speech by Hitler. These "sugary" tones from China were emphasized quite firmly by D. R. Mankekar, editor of the *Times of India*, in the *New York Times* article that Meerloo referred to (which is a summary of a piece originally published in the *Times of India*). According to Mankekar's account, millions were now "trapped by the ubiquitous loudspeaker "from morn till late in the night,"" and the "voice" heard was both alluring and inescapable:

> The sugary voice takes possession of you … [it] pushes you about, now humoring you with Chinese opera songs and Western music, now lecturing you on the do's and don't' [sic] on the train. The visitor is somewhat irritated by the ceaseless chatter and music blaring out of radio amplifiers through which a sugary feminine voice untiringly exhorts you to keep your surroundings clean, not to spit all over, not to lean out of your railway carriage window etc. (1, 2)

For a Chinese worker, Mankekar details how: "his day begins with the sugary voice telling him that it is time he got up, and then after his inevitable mug of green tea and his cigarette he is reminded of his morning 'jerks' – and they are all at it, in mass formation and in deadly earnest, to the accompaniment of radioed music" – he refers here to morning calisthenics (2). The article then mentions something else that Meerloo does not reference, and which could perhaps undermine his overall argument in *The Rape of the Mind*. It is pointed out that "the clever Chinese may have found a way to reassert their once famous non-conformism," because as Mankekar details, "not even the vigilant girl behind the mike can subdue the deafening cacophony raised by the motorcar hooters [horns], blown for the sheer love of it if not for the sheer pleasure of drowning the ubiquitous voice that haunts and chases men from morn till late at night" (2).

Here Mankekar describes some unexpected occurrences and complexities at the grassroots, which reveal a different impression of loudspeaker and radio reception in Communist China, one which was not available to Hunter or Meerloo, who did not experience life in China first hand. The "sugary" nature of the appealing voices was a key theme in Mankekar's article, undoubtedly (the word "sugary" was used three times), and the Chinese People were clearly represented as being haunted by amplified voices, unable to escape and possibly hypnotized, but there was also some resistance in the soundscape, and some ways in which the voice of the Party was being countered. The prevailing tone of Mankekar's article is still close to Meerloo's work, however, particular as it is claimed in the article that Mankekar's descriptions "virtually duplicate a scene in George Orwell's novel "1984,"" and it uses various stereotypes and generalizations that are typical of Orientalism (2).

The third point that I wish to address from the original long quote from Meerloo above, is the reference to Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), and his famous experiment on conditioning, which I do not have the space to recapitulate here. Pavlov's name was consistently evoked by both popular and scientific writers on brainwashing in the 1950s. Edward Hunter admits in his later work *Brainwashing: The Story of the Men Who Defied It* (first published in 1956), that Pavlov's name "meant almost nothing" to him when he first began to explore the idea of brainwashing, but he devotes a full chapter to him in this later text (17). Both Meerloo and William Sargant cite Pavlov many times in their more academic works on mind control. Pavlov's work on the conditioning reflex is given as proof that people can be conditioned in similar ways, and the theory itself is presented as an extremely dangerous tool in the repertoire of totalitarian regimes. It was a new development, which as Meerloo's contrasting example evidenced, made Nazi propagandizing seem relatively crude and ineffectual in retrospect.

The modern totalitarians of the world, however, led by the Soviet Union, were now supposedly attempting to use Pavlov's discoveries to make man into "a conditioned reflex machine, reacting to a prearranged pattern, as … laboratory dogs" (Meerloo, 39). Modern mass media such as the radio, as the quotes above show, played an especially important role in this process. It was claimed by Hunter and Meerloo that it could hypnotize Chinese citizens, and potentially transform Americans and other westerners into either unwitting sleeper agents or, basically, pieces of audio technology themselves. They could become components of the CCP soundscape. These ideas about the hypnotic nature of the Maoist soundscape, and the hypnotic nature of the PRC's media and governance more broadly, all contributed to America's efforts to breach China's "sound wall." These were some of the real-world consequences of brainwashing literature, and it is to these that I now turn, as I consider the output and reception of the competing radio stations, the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Peking.

Cold War on the Airwaves (I): The VOA and American Brainwashing

The "Publications" chapter of *Brainwashing in Red China* examines popular kinds of literature for their ideological content and anti-American stances. It contains a couple of interesting references to prevailing Chinese attitudes towards the VOA (*Meiguo Zhiyin*). The VOA, established in 1942 and funded by the U.S. government, is a radio station that is "responsible for the dissemination abroad of 'information about the United States, its peoples, and policies promulgated by the Congress, the President, and the Secretary of State and other responsible officials of Government having to do with matters affecting foreign affairs'" (Krugler, 27). After the passing of the 1948 Smith-Mundt act, sponsored by two Conservative Republicans, Rep. Karl

Mundt (SC) and Sen. H. Alexander Smith (NJ) the VOA began to be more specifically geared towards tackling Communism. As David Krugler explains:

> Congressional Republicans began to perceive the VOA as a necessary corollary to the Truman Doctrine and the proposed Marshall Plan, programs that introduced the administration's policy of global containment of Soviet and communist expansion. A trip to Europe made during late 1947 by members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmed the VOA's usefulness as a tool of containment. After observing the lingering devastation of the war and the prevalence of Soviet propaganda, the joint subcommittee returned to the US convinced of the need for the VOA. (28)

Although, as Krugler explains in this article, and in his book *The Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles, 1945-1953*, there was not consistent bipartisan consensus on the VOA's operations, we can regard the radio station as representing the American sphere of influence and being resolutely opposed to the Communist sphere of influence throughout the Cold War era. As the VOA was explicitly Anticommunist and attempting to broadcast within the Chinese mainland, this ensured that the CCP needed to deal with it. From early on in the PRC era, the Party set about doing this in a variety of ways. As Jie Li details, in Shanghai in 1950:

> [The] CCP tightened control over the sale of radio equipment and registered radio sets. In Shanghai, it was estimated that 40％ of the quarter million radios had shortwave capacity and could receive Voice of America. In order to "cut off the enemy's tongue so that it couldn't spread rumors," the Public Security Bureau planned to mobilize 800 radio technicians to physically disable shortwave on all the radio sets they could get their hands on. At the rate of seven radio sets a day per technician, this would have taken a whole month to finish. Meanwhile, Shanghai's propaganda department was to mobilize public sentiments against listening to Voice of America; trade unions and youth leagues were all supposed to persuade their constituents to submit to the registration and refitting of their radio sets. (2020, 28)

Yu Wang (2019) has also documented the various movements against the VOA, particularly at the beginning of the Korean War, when the *People's Daily*, paraphrasing a recent article in the regional Northeast Daily, "labeled the VOA as a tool of American imperialism and

the world's most prominent rumor mill that used electromagnetic waves to confuse listeners" (142). Interestingly, this supposed usage of "electromagnetic waves to confuse listeners" calls to mind the American accusations against the Communist countries of brainwashing, and is suggestive of the types of hypnosis described by Hunter.

In a different *People's Daily* article from 1950, there is another striking similarity between descriptions of the VOA's impact on its Chinese listeners, and how Hunter, Meerloo and Dulles depicted the results of listening to the Communist soundscape, broadly conceived (listening to the radio in Communist China, or being brainwashed). In both cases an individual could become a part of their adversary's soundscape, as a piece of audio technology. The *People's Daily* article is an attack on those that listen to the VOA, who have no hatred for the "poison" of the enemy, who "lack love for the motherland," and believe that they are being "objective" by listening to a foreign station. Such people were deemed "voluntary propagandists" for President Truman and Douglas MacArthur. They were "flesh loudspeakers" (*Rou laba*, 肉喇叭) who were spreading "Imperialist toxins" in the PRC (Yang 1950). The way in which the VOA is described in this *People's Daily* article (which also uses vulgar language at the beginning) appears to confirm the veracity of the following description of a cartoon concerning the VOA from *Brainwashing in Red China*:

> In the caricature … a man, unmistakably President Truman, was shown kneeling behind a microphone on top of a coffin draped with the Stars and Stripes. He was breaking wind – the caption uses the plain word – into the mike, and the message that comes out is labelled Voice of America. A fat "Wall Street Boss" has handed him sheets of broadcast script on which are written "rumors, slander, anti-Communism," while Truman reads from one entitled "Plan for aggression in Korea (229)

In another full-page cartoon detailed by Hunter, in which each frame was part of a large "paper tiger," in one particular section, "a devil was shown at a microphone representing the

[VOA] while a ranting figure stood alongside with a swastika over him. The caption: "Plotting to start the war" (227). The conspiratorial nature of this cartoon, along with the various descriptions of VOA attacks detailed in Yu Wang's dissertation, provide several interesting parallels with American accusations of Communist brainwashing. As Yu Wang outlines, the VOA was criticized specifically as a "rumor mill" and a "tool of American Imperialism," and various "intellectuals, students and shop owners, homemakers etc. were compelled to publicly voice their opinions on the VOA to demonstrate that they no longer had any connections with it" (143). One particular worker claimed to have been "addicted to" the station, because it brought him a sense of being "well-informed," mostly because he could receive news from it so much quicker than he could get information from domestic newspapers (144). The VOA appears here to be a malign influence in China, with a sort of seductive quality, that the Chinese People needed to understand and guard against, because the VOA was only really delivering "reactionary and false" information.

These attacks on the VOA set the tone for the remainder of the Mao years, in terms of how foreign radio stations and their Chinese listeners were officially regarded, and how other Chinese citizens were encouraged to think of those that "listened to the enemy." It is evident that many Chinese citizens of the time had a fear of being caught listening to foreign radio stations, and even owning radio equipment could potentially bring danger. For example, in *Ten Years of Madness*, by Feng Jicai, an oral history collection concerning the Cultural Revolution period, one woman recounts the following story:

> My youngest son loved the radio, and there was [sic] always antennas on top of our house. One day, the neighborhood committee and the police came on the excuse of checking out the electrical wires. Later, when the case of the Petofi Club[86] was made

[86] As Feng Jicai explains, "Petofi is a Hungarian poet who is well-known in China. The term "Petofi Club" was first coined by Mao Zedong in 1966. It referred to underground organizations aiming at sabotaging the Communist Party." 199

> public, they became intent on finding an enemy transceiver. They wanted to find it, and then go to Beijing to tell the news to Chairman Mao himself. It was not until then that I realized we had been watched all along. I was horrified just thinking about it. My son-in-law brought some electrical parts and [earphones] back from the Korean war. They had been left behind by American GIs. Fortunately, my youngest son took all of them with him when he went to study in Xinjiang. Otherwise they would have been used as undeniable evidence that the transceiver was in our home, and we would all have died" (195).

In Ningkun Wu's memoir *A Single Tear: A Family's Persecution, Love, and Endurance in Communist China* there are various similar anecdotes concerning the perils of radio ownership and listening to foreign broadcasts. He describes one instance in the mid 1950s of having four public security agents "ransacking" his house, searching for a "radio transmitter," which Wu understands is essentially an accusation that he is a "hidden spy" (38). Later on, during a "relative lull in class struggle," in the early 1960s, Wu was "assigned to teach a course in listening comprehension, using selected items from the [VOA], the BBC, the ABC, and the NHK, in addition to Radio Peking, as teaching material" (187). The course was popular with the students, "partly because," Wu guesses, students "did not fail to notice the differences in news reporting between Radio Peking and the Western media" (188). The university had to "apply … for special permission for [Wu] to monitor all foreign stations and make necessary recordings," and Wu points out the irony that he, as someone who had been previously labelled an "enemy of the people," was "of all the populace of the capital city of the province" the only one "who could listen in to subversive enemy propaganda with impunity," as listening to "enemy broadcasts" was a penal crime (188). He was later reported for "stealthily listening in to enemy broadcasts" (300).

In my oral interviews there were varied reactions to the topic of listening to foreign radio stations. People expressed different attitudes towards illicit listening according to their personal situation at the time, and how likely they were to face trouble. In one interview, an individual

who lived in rural Jiangxi throughout the Mao years, told me that listening to foreign radio stations was important to him, and for this reason he had been willing to spend a significant amount of money on a radio:

> It cost me half a year's income to buy a radio of my own … it was of low quality … in 1972 I bought a radio of my own, through which I listened to the Voice of America, the BBC world service, NHK, [German and French radio], but the radio was of [such] low quality that the radio was disturbed by the government so it was difficult … only at midnight [could] I hear it clearly … I had to listen secretly for fear that someone might find out and then report [me] to the authorities, that would [have put me] in great trouble. (Interview Two)

It was only from secretly listening to overseas radio (using earphones) in the early 1970s that he began to "know something about the world," and it caused him not to believe in the Chinese political slogans of the day. The radio, for this interviewee, was something that had value in that it allowed him to hear sounds from outside of China, alternative perspectives on what was happening in China being particularly important, but it was also a tool that could have brought trouble. Another interviewee said that "naturally [he] was frightened" to listen to foreign radio stations because it was "illegal" and he could have been reported on by people around him (Interview Seven). This man's family had suffered political persecution in the past, and had been exiled to Tianjin, so he grew up being particularly wary about doing anything illegal. The story of another interviewee provides a good example of why many people of the Mao era practiced caution when it came to listening to foreign radio stations, either by not doing it at all, or by only listening in secret, alone. This interviewee told me that as a sent down youth in the countryside (of Shanxi), he and a group of five people tuned into a Taiwanese radio station late at night and heard a crosstalk that satirized how the CCP gave money to the army and spent money on developing an atom bomb, when the Chinese People had no food to eat or clothes to wear. Later on, one of the interviewee's roommates reported all of the other listeners to the authorities after

he was arrested for publicly writing something critical of the CCP at a railway station. To help his own case, this man told the authorities that he "had four other roommates, [who] are not for the Communist Party, and they listened to the foreign radio stations." All of the roommate's names were taken down, but the interviewee luckily escaped any recriminations because he had since moved to a different region (Interview Nine).

Another person I spoke with gave quite a different opinion about listening to foreign radio stations. He said that he was able to listen to French radio stations, the VOA, and Radio Free Asia via a shortwave radio, but he chose not to. He said that such stations were "too biased" and never said anything positive about China. They were "completely negative" and although the interviewee knew that China certainly did have problems, he considered these radio stations to be "slandering" China because they never said anything positive. He was not afraid to listen to foreign radio stations; he just had no interest in listening to them. He also said that few people around him were interested in listening to foreign radio stations (Interview Five). This last point is perhaps explained by several other interviewees who told me that they either had no access to foreign radio stations, or the sound quality was too poor for them to persist in trying to listen to them.

My interviews indicated that the CCP's "sound wall" was relatively successful in combatting foreign radio influence, or American/western brainwashing, in Mainland China. First, people at that time, especially those who were already considered to have a "bad family background," were often frightened of being overheard by others listening to foreign radio, or of being reported on. Second, poor sound quality, or high-quality radios (which could be tuned to foreign stations) being financially out of the reach of many people, would have resulted in fewer people being able to access foreign radio stations in the first place, and fewer people being

willing to endure poor sound quality. Third, some people would have believed the propaganda of the CCP that listening to foreign radio stations was essentially just listening to the lies of foreign adversaries, and some patriotic Chinese people might have been simply uninterested in listening to strong criticisms of China. Fourth, even if an individual chose to listen to foreign radio stations, and valued the information they were receiving, and perhaps began to doubt the official Maoist soundscape, they would still have been frightened to confide in others about what they had heard, of being a "flesh loudspeaker" for the imperialists, so information accessed from foreign radio stations could not circulate freely amongst the populace. All of these reasons indicate that the CCP had some success in curtailing foreign propaganda encroachments via radio in Mainland China, even if some individuals were able to access foreign radio stations.

Cold War on the Airwaves (II): Radio Peking and Foreign Friends in Broadcasting

As well as the visits to foreign countries by Chinese broadcasting specialists like Zuo Ying, detailed in chapter two, the CCP made several other efforts to find "foreign friends" through its broadcasting activities. The CCP sought to broadcast content aimed at making foreign friends abroad, and it also made use of its foreign friends already in China in its broadcasting efforts. In this section of the chapter, I will briefly outline some of the ways in which the Party attempted to use radio broadcasting to combat the opposing American led sphere of ideological influence.

Sidney Rittenberg, in *The Man Who Stayed Behind*, describes his experiences as an American foreign friend of the CCP, someone who stayed in China from the 1940s until the Cultural Revolution, and someone who was directly involved in foreign (English) language broadcasting. Rittenberg began helping with English language broadcasting during his time in Yan'an, before the establishment of the PRC. The station he worked at, Radio Yan'an, was set up in order to "take [the Party's] case directly to the American people," and as Rittenberg was

the only native English speaker around, and was supportive of the CCP's cause, he helped out with correcting the "grammar and style" of the broadcasts, and with "translating and correcting scripts and training broadcasters" (70). Rittenberg went on to work for Radio Peking (Radio Yan'an was the precursor of Radio Peking) after 1949, and the station gradually expanded to broadcast abroad in many different languages.

When Rittenberg began his involvement with broadcast work, at Yan'an, he was "thrilled" by the future that he saw opening up before himself, as "if the Communists won, [he] imagined a historic role for [himself] acting as liaison between their government and the American government" (77). It was "exactly the kind of job [he] had been hoping for," and "although the operation had plenty of skilled translators and interpreters," he was still needed to "polish their English" (77). Later on, however, after the Party came to power and its various organizations began to mature, Rittenberg became frustrated with how the radio station was run, particularly in terms of its decision making. He felt that because the collective was always deemed superior to the individual, his taking the initiative about anything could lead to trouble. His expertise on what reporting would appeal to foreigners, and what information could combat the propaganda of the west, therefore, was being wasted (181). Eventually, the "stifling bureaucracy" of Radio Administration caused Rittenberg to feel unenthusiastic. Rittenberg observed that "there was no content to our stories, few facts in our economic reports," and the station was "like a court gazette, leading off [their] daily newscasts with bulletins about the happenings of the Royals. Mao met this world leader. Zhou Enlai went to the airport to see this visitor. Liu Shaoqi hosted this delegation" (260).

From Rittenberg's descriptions of his time in Radio Administration, we can understand that although the radio was a powerful tool, whether or not it was being used for its full potential

was dependent upon how the whole broadcasting operation ran. Suspicions about foreigners living within China during the Mao years – Rittenberg spent a number of years in jail in this period – also meant that foreign friends could be reluctant to be too assertive in shaping Chinese propaganda. This inhibited their ability to make Radio Peking's output more palatable and believable to other foreigners, or at least interesting to listen to. The case of Rittenberg, who was arrested once again in 1968, was mentioned in the British Foreign Office archives, where P. J. Weston explains in a letter that he recently met with someone named Amada, from Niger, who was "currently working for Radio Peking," who told Weston that people like Rittenberg, often "made the mistake of trying to appear more Chinese than the Chinese, and this was bound to lead to trouble sooner or later" (FCO 21/114, 4). According to a *New York Times* article of May 1 1968 (included in the same archives), diplomats in China dubbed expatriates such as Rittenberg "the 300 percenters," such was their dedication to the CCP and New China (FCO 21/114, 2). That these people, despite their devotion, were often still met with suspicion or sometimes incarcerated, underlines the fact that foreigners in China needed to carefully consider their contributions.

Other British Foreign Office documents, as well as a Chinese publication from 1996 entitled *Chinese International Broadcasting Reminiscences* (中国国际广播回忆录) attest to the other admirable aspects of Chinese foreign language broadcasting that Rittenberg mentioned, however. Clearly there were many skilled linguists and Party members eager to communicate to people overseas, and many dedicated workers at Radio Peking. A British Foreign Office document from 1957 details how from "November 4, Radio Peking will start broadcasting regularly in Arabic, Persian and Turkish" after "[trial] broadcasts earlier [that] month [had] already proved successful (FO 371/127390, 3). *Chinese International Broadcasting*

Reminiscences contains numerous accounts from individuals that worked on Russian, Malay, Indonesian, Burmese, Bangladeshi, Urdu and other foreign language broadcasting. Workers at these stations endeavored to tell listeners about Chinese "foreign policies and political positions" and introduce the "huge achievements" of China (particularly after the Reform and Opening Up of China in the late 1970s, the *Gaige Kaifang* 改革开放) and "help [listeners] understand China and the Chinese people, and enhance the friendship between Chinese people" and the people of other countries (192).[87] Whether or not they could do this, however, was contingent on the quality of the station's scripts, their announcers, their equipment and a range of other factors that can truly determine the appeal of a broadcast.

One account that sheds some light on this issue concerns the everyday workings of Radio Peking (referred to as Radio Beijing in the online version of this article) in 1980, published in *The Quill* magazine (March, 1982).[88] It gives a sense of the strengths and weaknesses of China's foreign language radio broadcasting, describing the English language station and its daily operations a few years after the death of Mao, when China was just beginning to open up. In this article, by Gail Pellett, someone who had previously worked as a radio producer in the United States, some of the broadcasting problems mentioned in Sidney Rittenberg's account of his time at Radio Peking can still be recognized. It can be surmised that Pellett's descriptions are therefore also reasonably representative of the everyday running of Radio Peking throughout the Mao years.

Pellett spent time in Beijing as a "foreign expert," editing scripts and teaching classes on broadcast journalism at the English department. At that time Radio Peking broadcasted in 49

[87] This description of some of the basic aims of foreign language radio is from an essay on the Bangladeshi language station.
[88] I use quotes from the online version of this text, which does not have page numbers; see works cited for details.

different languages, and "each language department [hired] at least one "foreign expert" who [polished] scripts and sometimes [announced]." English and Japanese were the largest departments, and the English department produced a one hour show on news and other features that was rebroadcast nineteen times each day. Pellett's article begins with a description of a lesson she taught in the English department where, in the hope of discussing the content, form and style of the radio's output, she asked her students (the workers at the radio station) "how many of you ever listen to the broadcast?" To which the leader of the features section responded, "the comrades decided a long time ago that the program was boring." In fact, as Pellett noted, "every morning, when [she] arrived in the office, the workers in both the features and the news section were listening to Voice of America." The article concludes on the same theme, "if the workers themselves cannot stand to listen … how can they expect that anyone else will?"

The majority of Pellett's piece details the various shortcomings of Radio Peking's operations in 1980. For reasons of space, it is not possible to list all of these flaws here, but some of the significant ones included: the "consistently dreadful" scripts, that were "too simplistic, to the point of cant" and were sometimes "copied directly from Chinese publications printed in English like *Women in China, China Reconstructs*, or *Sports in China*," and while some broadcasts were "lively and interesting" (particularly those that involved interviews conducted outside the grounds of Radio Peking), most broadcasts:

> [Had] all the classic pitfalls of radio journalism: long, complicated sentences, unnecessary use of the past tense and passive voice, too many statistics and lists. The formal language and print style ensured lifeless delivery. The overall effect was like listening to magazine articles. In fact, program segments usually began with "This is an article about…," a device that I later traced to Radio Moscow.

Also, there were various issues connected with announcers and announcements that could have caused listeners to feel unengaged, for example:

> While some announcers have pleasant voices, there was little indication that they cared about what they were saying. There was no anchor to connect pieces of the program or speak directly to the listener. For years, announcers were nameless, but a few months after I arrived this changed, to the delight of long-time listeners.

The "delight of long-time listeners" at this recent change suggests that the personal connection that many listeners wished to develop with an announcer was not at all present during the Mao years.

The material conditions of the station were poor. As Pellet observed:

> Despite the heavy heat of Beijing's summer only those offices in which foreign experts worked [had] electric fans. The halls were dark. Most comrades used ball-point pen refills wrapped tightly with paper. We used straight pins instead of paper clips. There wasn't one good microphone available for interviews. There was no Xerox machine available for anyone but the top leaders in Central Broadcasting, the super-agency that runs both domestic and overseas broadcasting. And, I had been told by Ma, that for economic reasons they had never in Radio Beijing's thirty-year history spliced a piece of tape. As someone who had spent thousands of hours in editing booths with tape coiling in pyramids at my feet, this fact was more significant than any other.

Some of these details speak of an amateurish technological set-up, and suggest that foreign listeners tuning in to Radio Peking on shortwave radios probably experienced various audio quality problems. Of those that did listen in to English language broadcasts from Radio Peking, the actual reasons for their engagement were a mystery to the workers at the station. Listeners did not offer any feedback about the broadcasts. From the following exchange recorded by Pellett, it is evident that the staff of Radio Peking were not aware of who exactly their audience was:

> Listeners don't usually say anything about the programming" said one young staffer in the Letters section. "They only want their frequency cards confirmed." The Letters section was run by four [comrades] who handled a bewildering pile of listeners' mail. "Many of our American listeners seem to be fourteen-year-old boys," said Fan, looking at me as if I was secretly responsible for this peculiar phenomenon of American culture. Shy and nervous, Fan [had] the sweet, self-conscious demeanor of a sixteen-year-old although she [was] past forty. "Americans listen to radio for music and news headlines," I

> tried to explain, "In the U.S. few people have short-wave radios. Short-wave has been a hobby with young boys since the 1920s and is part of the fascination with the technology of radio rather than with the content of programming. Fan looked at me disappointed. I, too, wished I had a sexier or more radical explanation. Since most radios manufactured or sold in China have short-wave bands, this tiny sub-culture of short-wave listeners in the land of high-tech seemed odd.

This is a significant piece of information, at least insofar as the potential that Radio Peking ever had for converting any foreign listeners based in the United States (or other English-speaking countries where short-wave radio was also mostly a hobby for young technology enthusiasts). It shows once again that simply having the technology was not enough to spread CCP ideology. Radio Peking was mostly unsuccessful therefore, because they did not understand their listeners from abroad, and also because of the other deficiencies mentioned above: the inability to make best use of foreign friends living within China and various technological weaknesses.

It can be surmised that the Radio Peking broadcasts in other languages had even more significant shortcomings, because the English and Japanese departments were significantly larger and presumably better funded than other departments. Numerous details from Cagdas Ungor's article "China Reaches Turkey? Radio Peking's Turkish Language Broadcasts During the Cold War" suggest that this is the case too. Most of that department's problems derived from the Chinese cadres' "lack of proficiency" in the Turkish language (24). The staff did not even have access to a Chinese-Turkish dictionary, and was excessively reliant on the help of foreign experts from the Soviet Union for translations. This meant that Radio Peking's Turkish news item broadcasts often came "two or three days" after events had occurred because scripts had to be translated from Chinese to Russian to Turkish. After the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, Turkish language broadcasts "were off the air for 12 days" because the station could not even operate without the assistance of the Soviet experts, and some listeners thought that perhaps the "regime

had collapsed or … Mao Zedong had died" (25). Also, as was the case with the English language broadcasts, staff in the Turkish language section were not given "leeway" to adapt programs to the tastes of Turkish listeners. As a consequence, and also owing to other factors Ungor outlines that were specific to the political situation of Turkey in the Cold War era, Radio Peking had "unsatisfactory audience numbers" in Turkey at this time (19). Though, as Ungor explains, Radio Peking did help to forge some important ties in Sino-Turkish relations, and we can view some aspects of their soft power endeavors as successful (19, 31). As I will explain in the conclusion to this chapter, from the more *longue durée* perspective Radio Peking's efforts can at least be regarded as the foundation from which China gained experience in broadcasting to the rest of the world, and learned some difficult lessons in how to approach its propagandizing and soft power appeal.

Foreign Friends, Radio and Chinese National Day

In this section I return to the subject of chapter one, Chinese National Day, to briefly consider how sonic infrastructures at home and abroad helped to bond the PRC and its foreign friends, and how this information was imparted to Chinese citizens. The PRC's relations with other nations, both friendly and hostile, were brought to the fore every time that China's National Day was held, and another year of the PRC epoch was celebrated. It was common to hear castigations of foreign countries during the parade (such as the United States and later, the Soviet Union), and China's visiting allies were referred to during the live radio broadcasts too. Another way in which the sonic infrastructure was used to show the international support and admiration that China was receiving, was in the broadcasting of speeches from foreign dignitaries who attended National Day.

These speeches were broadcast on the Central People's Broadcasting station and later printed in the *People's Daily*, again underscoring how information was circulated across the mediascape to ensure that the maximum number of eyes and ears received it. The speeches typically praised China, the Chinese People, and the CCP and lauded the achievements of the Party since it ascended to power. To give an example of the standard content of such speeches, the Mongolian delegation's representative, Damdinsüren, in a speech transcribed for an October 27 1951 *People's Daily* article, made the following remarks:

> China is great. The spirit of the Chinese People is like the majestic flow of the Yangtze and Yellow rivers. The scale of construction projects that the Chinese People are now working on is unprecedented in Chinese history. The Chinese People, under the leadership of the CCP, has smashed the evil and vain attempt of the Americans to monopolize the world and swallow up Asia, and has established the People's Republic of China. Since the establishment of the PRC two years ago, there has been admirable achievements, such as curbing inflation, stabilizing prices, realizing land reform and building water irrigation businesses. All construction undertakings continue to be vigorously developed. Under the CCP and the great Mao Zedong's leadership, all social classes, led by the proletariat all across the country are showing that they are united. With Asia having this strong, just, and democratic country for the cause of Asia and all the people of the world, this is the greatest contribution. Heroic Chinese laborers! The great achievements you have produced have already strengthened the world peace and democracy camp, led by the Soviet Union.

The same article details a similar speech by the secretary of the China-Britain friendship association. Such speeches show how the large-scale festivities of National Day generated propaganda, and evidence the fairly extensive efforts of the Party to garner praise for circulation amongst the citizens. Visiting foreigners, who would already have been deemed friendly to the regime, would arrive in China and were taken to visit various carefully chosen sites that would prove to them the progress that had been made since 1949, and the enthusiasm and happiness of the People, and then these visitors would be asked to give speeches on the positive things they had seen. These speeches were broadcast on the radio and then printed in newspapers, sometimes

weeks after October 1, which helped to keep PRC success stories within the media ecosystem for quite a long period of time each year.

On the occasion of Chinese National Day there were also similar speeches from Chinese officials broadcast in foreign nations (FO 371/158441), which were broadcast and circulated around the mediascape in friendly countries. Such speeches, like those by visiting foreigners, were necessary because they came at a time when the PRC had not yet established diplomatic relations with many of the more economically developed foreign powers – for example, diplomatic relations with France were only established in 1964, with Canada in 1970 and most crucially with the United States in 1979 – and they would have given some legitimacy to the CCP and some reassurance to Chinese listeners that the PRC was not isolated. Clearly the content of the speeches was also intended to convince the Chinese People that the country was making great progress in all sorts of areas too, and this might have been persuasive to some, given that foreign observers of the revolution in China, even some from hostile nations (British Communists for example), were effusively praising the country, and this was taking place not long after China's "century of humiliation" and semi-colony status.

As one interviewee told me, these speeches could be genuinely impactful. He explained:

> The international news reported the congratulatory messages sent to China by foreign governments and fraternal parties, [which] congratulated China on its National Day, [and the news also reported] which National Day events were held by the CCP, and which foreign diplomats and foreign friends attended etc.," these things, along with reports on China's various achievements, "made us young people feel very inspired and proud. I thought China was so great and had so many friends around the world. It cannot be said that this type of propaganda is ineffective on the young. (Interview Nine)

With regards to China's National Day, and also the Maoist soundscape as a whole, this chapter has shown how the Party attempted to construct something akin to a "sound wall," to use

Schafer's term, in order to shut out the noise of the American/Western/Imperialist sphere of influence. As Schafer explains (1993), radio "was the first sound wall, enclosing the individual with the familiar and excluding the enemy. In this sense it is related to the castle garden of the Middle Ages which, with its birds and fountains, contradicted the hostile environment of forest and wilderness. The radio has actually become the bird-song of modern life, the "natural" soundscape, excluding the inimical forces from outside" (152). These "inimical forces" were what the Party attempted to shut out with their "sound wall" in the Mao era, and in some respects this sound wall can be seen as a precursor of the "Great Firewall" of today, the common name for the set of restrictions that prevents people in Mainland China from accessing many foreign websites.[89] I will now turn to briefly detail this and the various other legacies of the international Maoist soundscape, in this chapter's conclusion.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the ways in which the American and Chinese soundscapes intersected with conflicts between their respective ideological spheres of influence during the Cold War era. For their part in this constant competition, the CCP's efforts to utilize their sonic infrastructure for attack and defense occurred on the everyday level, at significant public events and during national security flashpoints. Radio technology was an asset as well as a liability for the CCP, as it was for many other governments in the 20th century (Castro 2016) (Bergmeier and Lotz 1997), but the perspectives from the outside on what the Party was using its sonic infrastructure for – essentially brainwashing its entire population and making robots out of them

[89] The Great Firewall was "planned and developed in the first few years after the Chinese public began to access the Web in 1995" and in the beginning, "blocked websites run by banned religions and cults, those advocating Tibetan and Taiwan independence and the sites of some Western news organizations" (Goldkorn 2015, 117).

- were Orientalist and also reflective of the long-term Anticommunist nature of the U.S./Western news media. This is not to say that all of what Edward Hunter and Joost Meerloo wrote about was untrue, but the assumptions that were made of the transformative power of radios and loudspeakers was greatly overstated (especially in Hunter's work), as was the susceptibility of the Chinese listeners, and the effectiveness of Party propaganda. The work of Meerloo and Hunter was not reflective of the reality at the grassroots in Mao's China.

The CCP's efforts to shut out foreign sounds and extend the Maoist soundscape worldwide were mixed. Some PRC citizens of the time were too afraid to listen to foreign stations, and avoided doing so, but "listening to the enemy" was also not especially uncommon. When it came to extending the Maoist soundscape worldwide, Radio Peking appears to have been mostly unsuccessful, primarily because there was a lack of understanding of how the propaganda would be received. Radio is a sonic medium, and there are many factors that make a broadcast appealing for listeners, besides the ideological content, which could not win over people as easily as Mao and the Party wished to believe – a common theme throughout this dissertation. Sidney Rittenberg, Gail Pellett and Cagdas Ungor's descriptions of Radio Peking's operations make it apparent that, owing to the isolation of PRC citizens at the time and the political bureaucracy of the station, there was a stifling atmosphere that limited the propaganda potential of radio, and an unclear understanding of who might listen to the station. In this way the "sound wall" erected by the CCP was a hindrance to the regime, as much as an advantage. Though the Party was able to shut out or drown out much of the noise from outside, it also inhibited Radio Peking's workers' ability to appeal to foreign listeners.

One thing to bear in mind, however, is that the CCP was not only concentrating on appealing to the West. We should not think of their success or failure only from a western

perspective, and tied too much to the Cold War paradigm. As the section on the international aspects of China's National Day shows, the Cold War period also saw the growth of China's alliances with numerous other nations around the globe. We should not forget that the CCP and Radio Peking were set up to broadcast worldwide in a wide variety of languages, and these direct cultural links were important, as Ungor argues regarding Radio Peking's Turkish broadcasts. This facet of the international Maoist soundscape, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation, encourages us to think outside the confines of the Cold War era and consider an important legacy of sonic infrastructure usage in the Mao years: China's alliances with numerous nations other than the United States (and Western Europe).

This issue, alongside the idea of shutting out foreign media, and the practice of incorporating foreigners into the Chinese (then Maoist) soundscape/mediascape, are the most important legacies of the Mao era soundscape. The seeds of such things as having foreigners speaking in positive terms about China and the CCP,[90] which can be disseminated much more easily now via the Internet; banning/demonizing foreign media channels;[91] the CCP devoting resources to broadcasting abroad;[92] and more broadly establishing connections with a large

[90] In 2021 there has been media reports of YouTube "influencers" being funded by the CCP (via China Radio International) to spread pro-China propaganda, producing videos that include criticisms of Hong Kong protestors, defend the detention of Muslims in camps in Xinjiang and rail against "Western media brainwashing." Ben Ellery and Tom Knowles, "Beijing Funds British YouTubers to Further its Propaganda War," *The Sunday Times*, 01/09/21 https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/beijing-funds-british-youtubers-to-further-its-propaganda-war-x5gqp5fg0 accessed 02/17/21

[91] BBC World News was banned from broadcasting in Mainland China in February 2021. "China Bans BBC World News from Broadcasting," *BBC*, 02/12/21. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56030340 accessed 02/17/21. The websites of many major western media outlets and tech companies cannot be accessed in Mainland China as of 2021. Paige Leskin, "Here are all the Major US Tech Companies Blocked Behind China's 'Great Firewall,'" *Business Insider*, 10/10/19. https://www.businessinsider.com/major-us-tech-companies-blocked-from-operating-in-china-2019-5.

[92] China Radio International (CRI), funded by the Chinese government, has been accused in the western media (Reuters) of covertly funding 33 radio stations in 14 countries to disseminate Chinese propaganda. The companies and individuals that operate them have not registered under FARA (Foreign Agents Registration Act). Koh Gui Qing and John Shiffman, "Beijing's Covert Radio Network Airs China-Friendly News Across Washington, and the World," *Reuters Investigates*, 11/02/15. https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/china-radio/ accessed 02/17/21.

network of nations (to counter the United States' sphere of influence),[93] were planted during the Mao era. There are clear parallels between the Mao era and now also in terms of how this information/propaganda emerging from the PRC is supposedly countering American "brainwashing," and in how Chinese media and supporters of the CCP (their foreign friends) are treated by the western media and western politicians.

Though propaganda and Chinese soft power are spread much more smoothly now, due to the wealth of contemporary China, the global nature of modern communications, and the vastly increased knowledge of the West and its culture in China, we can still look to Mao era soundscape developments as a way to understand how the CCP uses the domestic and international mediascape to achieve its various aims. Many significant aspects of current international relations between China and the West are connected with developments in the Maoist soundscape, and prove again that by listening more to this important era, we can gain a better understanding both of the period itself and major developments in modern global history.

[93] The Belt and Road Initiative started in 2017 could be considered a modern parallel. Also, with the United States withdrawing from the Paris Agreement (on climate change) under the Trump administration, and China making various climate pledges in recent years, some western commentators have posited that the PRC has taken a world leadership role at the expense of American influence on this issue, for example: Kevin O' Sullivan, "China's Scaled-Up Climate Targets 'Send a Pointed Message to US," *The Irish Times*, 10/22/20. https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/china-s-scaled-up-climate-targets-send-a-pointed-message-to-us-1.4387390 accessed 08/14/22.

Conclusion

My preliminary inquiries into the Mao era soundscape were technology focused, and I was interested in considerations of how and when certain audio technologies appeared, and the impact of their proliferation and increased capabilities throughout the Mao years. As I started to gather documents and consult a wider range of sources, however, using Schafer's "earwitness" concept to piece together an impression of the sound of the Mao era, my research became more focused on the human, rather than the technological elements of the soundscape. What emerged from my research and writing, through my sound studies and media studies informed examination of textual sources concerning sound and technology, and through my conversations with those who actually lived through this tumultuous period of history, was a narrative about the vicissitudes of human relations, and about the ways in which sound can impact on the human body and mind. The primary relationship that I concentrated on was the relationship between the Party and the People, which was inevitable considering the era I was studying.

Each chapter of this dissertation has shown how the relationships between the Party and the People were fundamentally altered by the introduction and usage of sound technologies, but were also constantly being renegotiated, and were contingent upon a range of factors both intrinsic and extrinsic to the sonic infrastructure. This soundscape study has elucidated the plurality of impact narratives concerning the histories of the radio and loudspeaker in China, and illustrated how, although the Party did not achieve its aim of a "total soundscape," directed from Party Center, its partial fulfilment of these goals had numerous negative and painful consequences for many people. The desire to create a "total soundscape" refashioned the relationships between the Party and the People, and among the People more generally; broadly

speaking, what ultimately occurred was the increased presence of the Party and its ideology in everyday life. This suffusion of sonic politics did not occur for everyone, however, and it sometimes brought unpredictable or scant results; it was sometimes neutered by technological failures, or it was abundant to the extent that it became meaningless or easy to tune out. Also, no matter how much a political "sound byte" might have circulated, or how much it might have "grown wings" and penetrated people's minds (to use Mao's terms) to become permanently lodged there, it could still be rendered entirely ineffective if it did not accord in any way with reality. As one interviewee told me, before being sent to the countryside in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution (in the "Down to the Countryside Movement" (上山下乡运动)) he had heard countless times over loudspeakers about how "great" the countryside was and how the peasants would be able to teach him about ideology and about "right from wrong," but once he arrived there and understood that he could not learn from the peasants, that they were poor, and that they wished they could live in the city, he realized that the Party had been "lying" all along (Interview Nine).

In other interviews people also gave a sense of how, though they may have contributed to the Maoist soundscape, in terms of recirculating its "sound bytes" and thus making the soundscape seem "total" and unified, in fact they did not contribute in a genuine or meaningful way. One interviewee told me of how, during Cultural Revolution era parades, he used to make meaningless garbled chants, rather than chant the words he was supposed to, because he felt like he "was not himself," and felt "very sad," when he was expected to chant things he did not believe in (Interview Seven). Another person told me of her perfunctory struggle session shouting, where she tried to be "passive" rather than active (Interview Ten), while another

interviewee claimed that he "always lied" during discussions after broadcasting conferences, because he just said what he knew the note-taking cadres wanted to hear (Interview Two).[94]

These sounds counted as contributions to the soundscape, however, and they had real time impacts, along with becoming a part of the historical record, in the form of newspaper reports and archival documents. Chanting at struggle sessions, detailed in chapter four, brought much fear, anxiety and pain to struggled against individuals, and it would have been impossible for these people to discern whether shouts directed against them were sincere or not. It is also possible that individuals who lived through the Mao era, and who participated in struggle sessions or parade chanting, would wish now to downplay their level of engagement or culpability with a movement that has since been officially condemned by the Party in their 1981 Resolution on CCP History (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 2009, 456). Nevertheless, when we consider these accounts in relation to the numerous other examples in this dissertation of the reception of propaganda (even that which was related to long-term goals and ideology), being not at all what the Party would have desired, it is evident that the bond between the Party and the People, as expressed in the recirculation of sonic politics, was not as univocal as it might have appeared.

Despite this, and despite discrepancies and failures in the sonic infrastructure, the proliferation of amplified sound sources nationwide did markedly reshape the connections between the Party and the People in the Mao era, and radios and loudspeakers were essential for the Party's propaganda work because, as was mentioned in the introduction, the overall literacy rate was low, and China was poorly equipped with transport facilities. As has been shown in various accounts in this study, because of the efforts expended to increase their communicational

[94] Follow up interview. See appendix.

reach, the Party was able to make its presence heard and felt in daily life to a degree beyond the imagination of all previous leaders and regimes in Chinese history. Upon direction from Party Center, the soundscape could be shifted abruptly or altered piecemeal, so that the People were compelled to pay attention and to make sense of historical change, both rapid and gradual, through sound. As I detailed in the introduction, in this era before the television, the Internet, and even the uncomplicated nationwide circulation of newspapers, sound was the medium through which information and news were transmitted. Shifts in the soundscape, whether subtle or overt; in terms of the music that was played; the tone of voice used by broadcasters; the frequency of broadcasts, or the volume at which audio equipment was set; all compelled people to acquire audile techniques or develop techniques of inattention in response to their sonic environment.

"Campaign time," because of these variations in broadcasting, would have felt qualitatively and quantitatively different for many people, contrary to what has been argued elsewhere (Brown and Johnson 2015, 6). In *Wild Swans*, Jung Chang describes how the beginning of the Great Leap Forward (*Dayuejin* 大跃进) in 1958 was heralded by "uplifting music" being "blared by loudspeakers" all around her at school (218). A number of people I interviewed also described how general changes in the soundscape during their childhood years indicated changes in the wider political world, particularly how folk songs and romantic songs from the 1950s gave way to "revolutionary" songs, which one interviewee described to me as being more "intense" and more "martial" in nature - the rhythms and tones of this music still caused her anxiety because of how potently they reminded her of unpleasant events in her early life (Interview Ten).

More sudden changes in the soundscape were certainly noticeable for many too; they could also be inescapable and sometimes disturbing. When Mao died in 1976, mourning music –

Luo Lang's funeral dirge - was heard across China.[95] One interviewee, born in 1968, told me that when she heard the music at school she felt "scared" and "sad" and could not help by cry, not because she was actually sad – she did not really understand what had happened – but because the sound of the music was so loud, and it gave her such a strong impression of fear and sadness (Interview Eight). A similar account appears in a recent work from the collection *A Clear Dawn: New Asian Voices from Aotearoa New Zealand* (2021):

> The year Chairman Mao died, Hong was in kindergarten. The entire nation heard Luo Lang's funeral dirge three times in that year. When public loudspeakers broke out with the mournful music, men and women looked at each other nervously and wondered who it was this time. First Premier Zhou Enlai. Then Chairman of Congress, Zhu De. Then Chairman Mao.
>
> The music started with a gentle sob, as if reflecting time long lost, then evolved into a sorrowful sigh. After a brief brooding recovery, three bangs thundered – the unbearable agony of grief, the fatal blow, the great loss. Like the wail of an impoverished peasant from the North. Raw, earthy, devastating. Music that smelled like fresh soil dug up for a tomb.
>
> How the people cried. Fully grown men with deep throaty roars; women, boys and girls with their shrill wails … Hong felt guilty that she was not able to shed tears at the nationwide funerals. But she was terrified by the way grownups cried. 'Who's the dearest to you? Your mother? Your father? Or Chairman Mao and the Party?' the lyrics of a song asked. (Xu 2021, 309)

This section of a novel, Sherry Xu's *Ever-red*, gives the perspective of a child on the peculiar sounds and sights experienced on that momentous day in September. From this fictional account, the medium Shafer considered ideal for an "earwitness" description, we can gain an impression of how people born after 1949 made sense of their world, and of relations between the Party and the People, by listening, perhaps even more than by attending to visual cues. The specific

[95] "The music was first played in 1945 to mourn the military martyrs who died in battle at Zhangjiakou. It was also played at the cornerstone laying ceremony for the Monument to the People's Heroes at the Tiananmen Square in Beijing, where the central government declared it the official national mourning music. "Mourning Music" was later played at the funerals of Chinese leaders such as Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. All through the decades, this score has been played at funerals for both officials and common people all over China." From: Zhang Rui. 2015. "Chinese Funerary Music Composer Dies," *China.org.cn*, Jul 15th http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2015-07/15/content_36068430.htm. Accessed 08/20/22.

elements of the music that Xu describes were all evocative of death and mourning, and the terrifying nature of the crying, which seemed to represent such a sharp departure from everyday emotional expressions, forced the child to contemplate their own relationship with Mao and the Party.

It was in moments such as this, in which people did not have the "freedom of silence" (to return to Hu Shih's phrase) either to avoid hearing the mourning music, or to avoid also having to join the chorus of wailing – unless they were a child – that people were compelled into some manner of relationship with the Party. Whether or not an individual chose to comply with the correct behavior, and affirm the values of the soundscape – even insincerely – to join the sonorous envelope and avoid censure, was a decision of vital importance. Being outside of the sonorous envelope often led to persecution and violence, which was more often than not doled out to the accompanying noise of the assailants' protective barrier of sound. In this way, even accounting for technological malfunctions and human error (deliberate or genuine) within China's sonic infrastructure, amplified and unamplified sound was the means by which people experienced and made sense of their lives as citizens of the Socialist New China and as human beings in the turbulent Mao era.

Appendix: Interview Details

Interview One, 10/24/19: Man; born in 1955; spent the entire Mao era in Jiangxi province; sent-down youth during the later stages of the Cultural Revolution.

Interview Two, 10/29/19: Man; born in 1951; spent the entire Mao era in Jiangxi province; became an agricultural worker in 1967. Follow up interview by phone on 12/07/19.

Interview Three, 11/07/19: Man; born in 1946, in Sichuan province; worked as a product designer in a glass factory in the 1970s.

Interview Four, 11/21/19: Man; born in 1970; grew up in Anhui province, and moved to Shanghai after Reform and Opening Up.

Interview Five, 12/20/19: Man; born in 1943 in Jilin province; lived in Liaoning province in the 1960s; worked from the late 1960s as an office worker; worked in a steel factory in Liaoning in the 1970s.

Interview Six, 12/20/19: Woman; born in 1947; grew up in Shenyang; attended Peking University in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution.

Interview Seven, 12/23/19: Man; born in 1948, in Chongqing; lived in Beijing in the 1960s and Tianjin in the 1970s; also sent-down youth/agricultural worker in Shanxi during the Cultural Revolution.

Interview Eight, 12/23/19: Woman; born in 1968; grew up in Tianjin.

Interview Nine, 12/26/19: Man; born in 1951; grew up in Tianjin; sent-down youth in 1969, first in Shanxi, then in Heilongjiang province from 1972; worked in construction. Follow up written interview on 09/21/20.

Interview Ten, 12/27/19: Woman; born in 1951; grew up in Tianjin; sent-down youth from 1968 to 1975 in Inner Mongolia.

Interviews Eleven and Twelve, 09/26/20: Man and Woman (joint interview); born in 1944 in Tianjin; went to college in 1963, and started working as doctors in 1969, also in Tianjin.

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