2-1-2000

*Xinbian hongweibing ziliao*

Wen-kai Kung

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation


This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of East Asian Libraries by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

During the catastrophic decade from 1966 to 1976, the violent and anarchic Cultural Revolution devastated the People’s Republic of China and almost led to a collapse of Chinese economy and social order. In the succeeding years many secondary works of scholarship on this subject have been published, but only the Center for Chinese Research Materials (CCRM) has compiled and published original research materials. The lack of documentation and inaccessibility of vast amounts of material hampers the study of this tumultuous period, and our knowledge of the Cultural Revolution still remains inadequate.

From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, American government agencies and the academic community recognized the importance of collecting materials documenting it that would become valuable research sources, such as the Red Guard’s xiaobao 小报 (small newspapers), pamphlets, and other publications of military organizations, including directives of the Chinese Communist Party and speeches of party leaders, including Mao Zedong.

The Joint Committee on Contemporary China (JCCC) of the American Council of Learned Societies and Social Science Research Council was asked by the academic community to collect and gain access to more materials on the Cultural Revolution, and in May 1968, CCRM was established.

In 1975 CCRM published a 19-volume set of Red Guard Publications containing about 1,000 titles of xiaobao, periodicals, pamphlets, special readers, and other miscellaneous items, all reproductions of the microfilm collection on Red Guard publications of the U.S. State Department. In 1979 an additional volume, a comprehensive table of contents of the entire 19-volume set, was published. This 20-volume set of Red Guard Publications was highly valued by the scholarly community, and the materials in it have served as major primary resources for studies of the Cultural Revolution. In 1980, CCRM published Red Guard Publications: Supplement I (76 titles in 8 vols), and Red Guard Publications: Supplement II (70 titles in 8 vols.) was published in 1992.

In 1999 CCRM published the title under review, A New Collection of Red Guard Publications, Part I (20 vols.). This new publication is comprised of about 500 titles of small newspapers of the Cultural Revolution. Newspapers published by official media and other materials which are not small newspapers, such as announcements, periodicals, and pamphlets issued during the Cultural Revolution by various organizations, were all excluded.

Of the 500 titles, eighty-seven were published by various units of the People’s Liberation Army and other military agencies. Thirty-six titles, including such famous titles as Xin Beida 新北大, Jinggangshan 井冈山, and Dongfanghong 东方红, are reproduced in complete runs. The reproductions in this new set were made directly from the original newspapers rather than from microfilms, and the majority of the small newspapers in this set have never been previously reproduced. Moreover, the quality of this new set is greatly improved in comparison with the previous publications.
According to Yuan Zhou, the editor of this set, these small newspapers have special value as a source of political news and information. They contain speeches and directives of Mao Zedong and other leaders of the Cultural Revolution. They also include statements, policies, and regulations of the Red Guard and other organizations. Zhou mentions two unique aspects of these small newspapers. First, they provide detailed accounts of the plans and progress of the Cultural Revolution in various parts of China. They are most useful in examining the impact of the Cultural Revolution on Chinese society, and often they are the only available documents on the developments of the Cultural Revolution at various localities. The second unique aspect is that the small newspapers preserve the contents of a large number of big character posters (dazibao 大字报 ) which played a crucial role in the Cultural Revolution. These posters were effective instruments for the masses to participate in the Cultural Revolution by criticizing authorities and inspiring rebellious activities.

The Table of Contents arranges titles of newspapers alphabetically according to pinyin romanization. The editorial unit, publisher, publication place, publication date, issue number, and page number are provided. Because each volume has its own separate table of contents arranged alphabetically by newspaper titles, the user may not be able easily to locate the newspapers needed.

Yuan Zhou and his colleagues undertook the publication of this new set in order to help overcome difficulties in gaining access to these original newspapers. Those individuals who contributed to the publication of this set deserve special commendation. For the past thirty years, under the leadership of Eugene W. Wu and with the tireless efforts of its directors, CCRM has continuously provided the scholarly world with important and difficult-to-obtain materials for modern and contemporary China studies. Its essential and excellent service should be gratefully recognized. CCRM has already started its next project, to publish additional important research materials in 40 volumes in 2001. We look forward to the project’s successful completion.

Wen-kai Kung, Yale University