

**EAST ASIAN LIBRARY RESOURCES GROUP OF  
AUSTRALIA****Newsletter No. 59 (January 2012)****Researching with the Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China at the  
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This article is based on a paper which I presented at the library panel during the 12th Biennial Chinese Studies Association of Australia Conference, held at Australian National University, July 2011. In my paper, I examined the special resources which the East Asian Collection, the University of Melbourne Library collected in recent years to support the research of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, 1966-1976. In addition, I offered an overview how these resources were built and be accessed by the Chinese Studies researchers.

Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 due to his lost power to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and later to Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao. Red Guards were formed by Mao as a campaign to purge the "Four Olds" [1] in order to regain his power in the Communist Party of China. Intellectuals were sent to the countryside and schools were closed. Classical works, religious and historical publications were considered as the "Four Olds". According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the publications published in China hit record low [2] during 1966-1976. The ten years of Cultural Revolution China was suffering a severe 'book drought' at the end of 1976 [3] and publications published nationwide at that time were works with political themes and propaganda materials to spread Mao's ideology.

The University of Melbourne Library started to collect Cultural Revolution resources about 10 years ago. Materials collected comprise propaganda materials, textbooks, children books, posters, Red Guard newspapers and working diaries ..... They were gifts presented to the Library as well as purchased from private collections and the second-hand book market.

#### **The R.F. Price Collection [4]**

Dr. R. F. Price is a scholar of comparative education. He donated his private Chinese book collection, over 1200 volumes to our Library in 2007. The collection was purchased during his visits to China 1965-67, and his later subsequent visits to China and Hong Kong. It has a strong focus on politics, the propaganda of Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts, textbooks and children books.

The textbook collection covers a wide range of subjects from art and humanities to sciences, from primary to high schools. There are basic reference works for vocational practices such as for "barefoot doctors", workers and peasants. Among the textbooks, worthwhile to mention is that there are many "trial editions" (试用本). These trial editions were adopted due to that the older textbooks were considered one of the Four Olds and were banned. By examining the textbooks, interestingly I found that Mao's quotations were quoted in black and boldface in the context, including science subject textbooks.



Textbooks – The R. F. Price Collection

There are more than 200 volumes of children books in the R. F. Price Collection. Children books ranging from nursery rhymes to stories and children literature published during the Cultural Revolution were appeared to urge children to follow Mao's instruction and the communist ideology, such as class struggle and Maoist thought [5]. Examples are books on Anti-Confucianism and the Lin Biao Campaign, books about revolutionary heroes, little Red Guards, anti-US imperialism. There is a good representation of juvenile science literature.

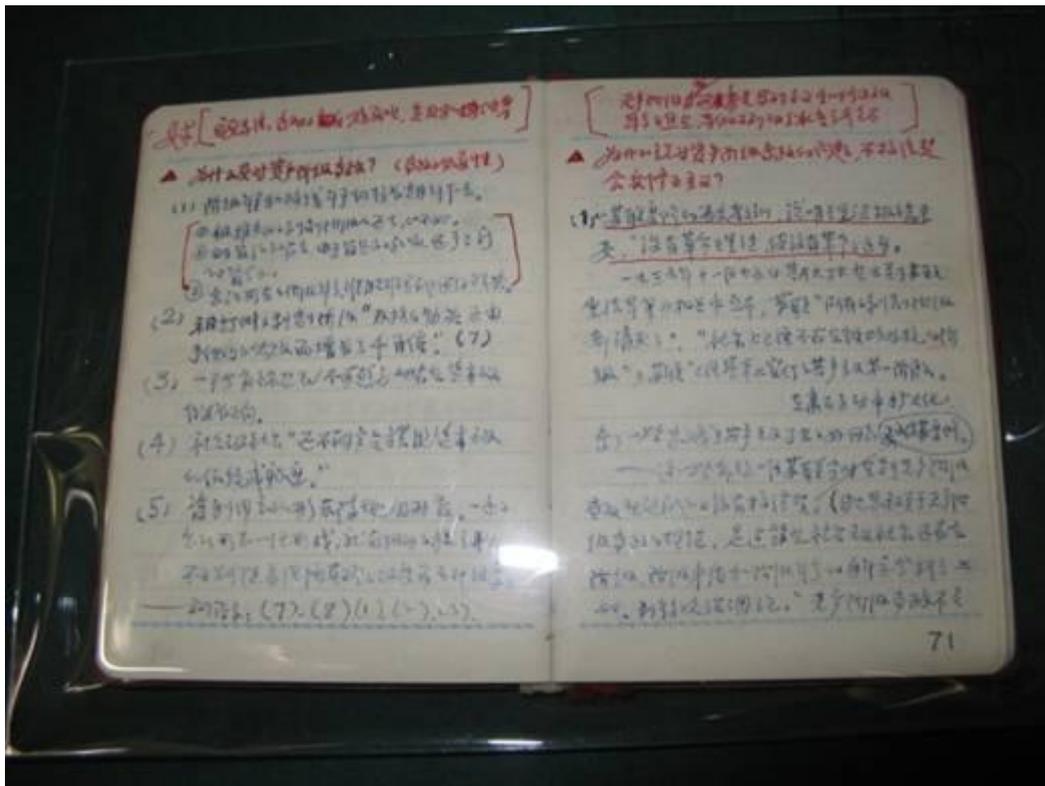


Children books – The R. F. Price Collection

### **Working Diaries (Manuscripts)**

The 1st batch of working diaries containing 70 items written during the Cultural Revolution was added to our collection 10 years ago. These are unpublished working diaries mixing with some private diaries. Authors were anonymous. The contents of the diaries mainly were the reflections of Mao's thought learning and the diaries of daily activities.

The Diaries Collection grows to 140 titles during the past decade. New titles were selected and acquired from China's second-hand book market. Authors of the diaries were students, red guards, teachers, staff from learning institutions and government officials. The contents consist of authors' learning notes and reflections, working notes, diaries and documents. Some diaries even contained newspaper clippings and photos of the author and families.



Working Diary (manuscript)

### Red Guard Newspapers and publications

Our library has several hundred pieces of Red Guard Newspapers and publications.

In 1967, registered newspapers in China reduced from 343 titles to 43 titles [6] due to political movements. Instead, Red Guard Groups all over the nation had published more than 5000 title of newspapers. These Red Guard Newspapers were the major propaganda materials published locally to support the political struggle movements. Chen [7] classified the contents of these newspapers into the following five categories:

“大批判” Criticism on attacking party members.

“首长讲话” 和文件 Party leaders' speeches and documents.

“派性斗争” 和武斗的消息 News on purges and fights between parties.

“路线斗争” 的历史资料 Historical information on the Correct Line Struggle.

“文革” 组织学习毛主席著作、首长讲话、中央文件的心得体会，分析讨论形势的意见 Learning from Mao's thought, leaders' speeches and party's documents.

Among the Red Guard publications, many were pamphlets which had individual titles and each title had a special topic.



Red Guard Newspapers

### Acquisitions

Apart from the R.F. Price Collection, the acquisitions of above-mentioned materials were purchased from the second-hand market in China. I searched the Kongfz.com 孔夫子网 and the following subject areas have been my favorite categories for selection:

Children books 少儿类

Red documents 红色文献

Story picture books 连环画

Cultural Revolution resources 文革书刊资料

I have dealers in China and in Melbourne assisting me to obtain the books which I had selected from the Kongfz.com. In many occasions, the contents of these materials were still politically sensitive that dealers in China were unwilling to acquire for us. As a result, I have to rely on our Melbourne book dealer to supply the politically sensitive materials. On the

other hand, my selection is heavily relied on the information provided by the web, there are potential risks that what I select might not be what I get.

## Access

The Cultural Revolution materials we collected are in different sizes and in different formats. It has been very time consuming to catalogue each title in full record. We managed to catalogue every printed book, included children books. Each title can be searched by author, title, subject headings and keywords. For posters, diaries and Red Guard newspapers, we gave each type of material a collective title and added the individual title of each piece of work in the content field of the bibliographic record. This arrangement allows each individual piece of work to be searched and retrieved by title and keywords, sometimes by subjects.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the bibliographic record for the R. F. Price Collection. The browser is Internet Explorer, and the URL is <http://lib.its.unimelb.edu.au/search=330218+P+Price+Collection&searchtype=3302&id=69+P+Price+Collection&scope=3302&id=69>. The record includes the following information:

- Title:** The R. F. Price Collection.
- Published:** [S. l. : s. n., 195-197.]
- Location:** UnM Bal EA SpC/PRICE
- Call No.:** (blank)
- Status:** NOT FOR LOAN
- Physical description:** 1268 volumes.
- Notes:** The R. F. Price Collection in the East Asian Rare Book Collection at the University of Melbourne Library is a collection of Chinese books published from the 1960s to 1980s. It is unique in western libraries, with its strong focus on school textbooks, children books and books associated with education in China. It was donated to the University by Dr. R. F. Price in July 2007. Dr. Price is a scholar of comparative education, who has written widely on education in China. Born in the UK, he taught there, in Bulgaria, Ghana, and in the School of Education at La Trobe University. In 1965 he went to teach English at the Second Foreign Languages Institute, Beijing, returning to the UK in the summer of 1967. Some of the collection items were purchased by Dr. Price during his stay in Beijing, others in subsequent visits to China or Hong Kong. In 1966, during the first period in which Dr. Price taught in China, Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, leading to ten years of chaos in China with widespread suffering and loss of life. During the Revolution China suffered from a severe shortage of books. Publications during this period had a strong emphasis on politics: the propagation of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought. The R. F. Price Collection has a good coverage of this type of political publication. The Collection includes a comprehensive collection of Chinese primary and high school textbooks, books on a variety of education disciplines such as educational theory, administration and systems, educational history, biographies of educators and directors of educational institutions in China. There is also a rich collection of children's books, which are rarely found in Australian libraries. The R. F. Price Collection is stored in the closed stack of the East Asian Collection in the Ballieu Library. Bibliographic information on the books can be searched from the University of Melbourne catalogue. The status of each item is assigned as 'not for loan'. They are available for research use and may be used in the Cultural Collections Reading Room on the 3rd floor of the Ballieu Library. Material can be ordered at the East Asian Information Desk, or on (03) 8344 3365.
- Local note:** Gift of Professor R. F. Price, 2007.
- Subject:** China -- History -- Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976; China -- History -- Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976 -- Biography; China -- History -- Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976 -- Sources; China -- History -- Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976 -- Cartoons and cartoons; Education -- China; Education -- China -- History -- 20th century; Children's literature, Chinese; China -- Politics and government -- 1949-1976; Anti-Confucianism; Education, Compulsory -- China; Education -- China -- Curricula.
- Variant title:** R. F. Price Collection.
- Local title:** R. F. Price Collection.

The bibliographic record of the R. F. Price Collection.

I am putting together the information of our Cultural Revolution resources in a LibGuide entitled "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China". When it is completed, it will serve as a one-stop guide for researchers how to access to this valuable collection.



The LibGuide – under construction

Our Cultural Revolution of China materials are not for loan. Items can be searched and requested from the University of Melbourne library catalogue (<http://cat.lib.unimelb.edu.au>) and they have to be used at the Reading Room of the Special Collections, 3rd floor, Baillieu Library. For further enquiries, please email Bick-har Yeung (bhy at unimelb.edu.au)

Remark: Photos in this article are photographed by the author.

Endnotes:

[1] The Four Olds: "Old ideas, old culture, old customs, old habits."

[2] National Bureau of Statistics of China, ed. Books, Magazines and Newspaper Published, In 50 Years of New China 1949-1999: China Statistics Press, 1999.

[3] Barme', Geremie. "Notes on Publishing in China, 1976-1979." *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 4: 167-74.

[4] Yeung, Bickhar. "The R. F. Price Collection." *University of Melbourne Collections*, no. 5 (2009): 41-43.

[5] 杜晓沫. "百花不见, 杂草横陈: 简论处"文革"十年的中国儿童文学." *作家杂志*, no. 2 (2009): 23-24.

[6] 贺吉元. "文革初期的红卫兵报纸." *文史博览*, no. 4 (2005): 38-41.

[7] 陈东林. "文革群众组织报刊研究" *历史研究* (2006),  
<http://go.paowang.net/news/3/2006-10-15/20061015210431.html>