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**“What Exactly Is China” in Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler’s  
*Die Maßnahme (The Measures Taken)***

John Gabriel, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music

*What exactly is rice?*

...

*What exactly is cotton?*

...

*What exactly is a person?*

- The Young Comrade, *Die Maßnahme*, Scene V<sup>1</sup>

Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler’s theatrical collaboration *Die Maßnahme (The Measures Taken, 1930)*, opens with four Communist agitators returning to Moscow from a mission to China. They appear before a “Control Chorus,” an allusion to the International Control Commission (ICC) of the Communist International (Comintern).<sup>2</sup> While in China, they found it necessary to kill a fifth agitator, and they ask the Control Chorus to evaluate whether this action was correct. They then reenact scenes from their mission that led to their comrade’s death, each followed by discussion. In some scenes, the Chorus participates as the background masses and also sings several numbers directed at the audience.

The first scene shows the four surviving agitators crossing into China. At the border, they

are joined by the Young Comrade, and all five agree to the conditions of their mission, including strict obedience and the total secrecy of their identities. The agitators disguise themselves as Chinese workers, and the next four scenes portray their work in China. The Young Comrade is repeatedly overwhelmed by his sympathy for the Chinese workers and acts to alleviate their immediate suffering rather than following his orders to organize a Communist revolution, which will ostensibly eliminate the root causes of their suffering. In the final scene, he prematurely initiates an unsuccessful uprising, during which he reveals himself to be a foreign agent. This puts him, his fellow agitators, and even the Soviet Union at risk. For should he be captured, it would prove the Soviets were supporting Communist subversion abroad. To protect them all, he agrees to be shot and have his body dissolved in a lime pit so that it cannot be identified. The Control Chorus concludes that these actions were correct.

*Die Maßnahme* was the fourth of Brecht's *Lehrstücke*, or teaching pieces, and the first with music by Eisler. As with *Der Jasager* (*He Who Says Yes*), on which *Die Maßnahme* is based, Brecht's collaborator Elisabeth Hauptmann also contributed to the text. While there is compelling evidence that Hauptmann wrote almost all of the text of *Der Jasager*, her specific contributions to *Die Maßnahme* are more difficult to determine.<sup>3</sup> The *Lehrstück* was a didactic genre, structured around a *Lehre*, or lesson.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the "moral of the story," the form of the *Lehrstück* is itself didactic, intended not just to passively instruct, but also to stimulate discussion. As Joy Calico has argued, music was essential to the Brechtian *Lehrstück*, and *Die Maßnahme* was arguably the closest Brecht came to realizing his theories about the genre in practice.<sup>5</sup> *Die Maßnahme* is typical of the way Brecht and his collaborators combined his ideas about epic theater with a musical-dramatic form reminiscent of an oratorio, and *Die Maßnahme* is sometimes labeled an oratorio or dramatic cantata.<sup>6</sup>

The question of how to understand *Die Maßnahme*'s Chinese setting has vexed the work's reception since its premiere. Given the work's didacticism, an obvious conclusion has been that China allegorizes Germany. As a police report in 1932 concluded: "The choral work is to all appearances disguised. It supposedly takes place in China. The content, however, shows that one need only insert the word 'Germany' in place of the word 'China,' and that the entire choral work could be applied to the German situation."<sup>7</sup> The specific role China plays in this allegory – that is, why the work is set in China and not somewhere else – has been less clear. To adapt the Young Comrade's questions in Scene V quoted at the opening of this chapter, "what exactly is China" in *Die Maßnahme*?

Early reviews demonstrate that *Die Maßnahme* was initially understood as both concretely set in China and as an allegory of Germany. Critics struggled, however, to align the allegory with the then-current party line. After World War II, reception split. The dominant position has been, in the words of Waleria Nasarowa, that the Chinese setting "could just as well be exchanged for any other arbitrarily chosen land."<sup>8</sup> This position, however, disavows the contextual knowledge of recent events in China that *Die Maßnahme*'s creators and audiences brought to the work. A minority of scholars have argued instead that *Die Maßnahme* is directly inspired by specific events in China and reconstructs them with varying degrees of accuracy.<sup>9</sup> However, these scholars downplay *Die Maßnahme*'s undeniable allegory. By mapping events in the work onto specific events in China, they reduce the lesson of *Die Maßnahme* to international solidarity or the "correct" interpretation of recent events in China. Its applicability to the German situation is scant.

A recurring argument against the relevance of the Chinese setting of *Die Maßnahme* has been the lack of references to China beyond statements by the characters that they are or were in

China. Unlike other works, Brecht does not integrate elements of (his understanding of) traditional Chinese theater, poetry, or philosophy. Similarly, Eisler does not imitate Chinese music or include exoticist markers of China in his score. Eisler's writings about his music, however, explain why he and also Brecht eschewed traditional Chinese influences.

In this chapter, I argue that *Die Maßnahme* specifically draws on the then-current political situation in China, but abstracts it so that the setting can be understood allegorically. The former demonstrates the urgency and relevance of the lesson, and the latter its applicability to German workers' situation. My position closely resembles that of *Die Maßnahme*'s early critics, but I clarify the difficulty early critics had reconciling *Die Maßnahme* with the party line, which I contend was due to a fundamental misunderstanding of the lesson of the work. In order to teach a lesson about obedience, *Die Maßnahme* followed the Comintern's strategy in China, which differed from its strategy in Germany. These differences led to critical confusion: Many critics interpreted the strategy – and not obedience to it – as the lesson of the piece, leading them to question the work's applicability to the German situation. Further, I argue that the lack of exoticist markers of China and references to traditional Chinese literature, philosophy, or music is explained through the work's setting in (the German imagination of) modern China. This mode of portrayal facilitated the allegory of the piece and was consistent with the internationalist aspirations of Communism at the time. It also typified the quasi-neocolonial approach taken by Soviet and European Communists to Communist movements in the colonial world.

### **Political Inspirations and Lessons**

Post-World War II debate over the setting of *Die Maßnahme* is politically charged. Six years after the composition of *Die Maßnahme*, Stalin accelerated purges of political opposition in

the Communist Party with show trials in which defendants were made to confess to fake charges and accept punishments including execution and exile to Siberia. Many leading figures associated with the Comintern's China policy in the late 1920s were among those tried, executed without trial, or simply disappeared.<sup>10</sup> After World War II, Eisler's Communist, but anti-Stalinist sister Ruth Fisher linked *Die Maßnahme* to the show trials, and the work played a central role in Brecht and Eisler's hearings before the House Unamerican Activities Committee.<sup>11</sup> Brecht and Eisler returned to East Germany and prohibited any future performance of the work. In a 1958 radio interview, Eisler explained that the ban would last until "we [are able to] see a parable as a parable and not as a naturalistic plot."<sup>12</sup>

Many scholars have cited this interview as evidence that the setting of *Die Maßnahme* has no relation to the real China. Jürgen Schebera claims: "[Brecht] certainly did not want to (nor could he) write a piece about the Chinese Revolution. ... For Brecht, the events in the far eastern land are only a frame for the ... parable."<sup>13</sup> Antony Tatlow, meanwhile, writes that "we can accept the plot as parable, as fiction, not as a description of the Silesian, Manchurian, Canton or any other concrete revolutionary situation."<sup>14</sup> The context of Eisler's statement, however, complicates his intentions. Eisler was discussing a proposed production of the work in the United Kingdom and was worried the press would use the show-trial interpretation not only against the work, but against the Communist cause more broadly.<sup>15</sup> The specificity of the Chinese setting was peripheral. Eisler's use of the word "parable" more likely referred to how audiences should understand the death of the Young Comrade. In fact, "parable" was used in this way in the program of a 1936 production of *Die Maßnahme* in England.<sup>16</sup>

Within the Eastern bloc, Brecht and Eisler would likely have also wanted to downplay any specific political references.<sup>17</sup> Neither Brecht nor Eisler's position in East Germany was as

secure as their official positions and accolades may suggest, and Brecht specifically was suspect for his openness to non-doctrinaire Marxists like Trotsky and Karl Korsch and for his sympathies towards the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>18</sup> As we will see, connecting *Die Maßnahme* to specific events in China draws the work into the machinations of Stalin's power struggle with Trotsky and the rise of Mao Zedong. The former was subject to continual reinterpretation and played a prominent role in purges from the late 1920s to the show trials of the late 1930s. Even after the post-Stalin Thaw, Brecht and Eisler had good reason to discourage critics from associating *Die Maßnahme* with historical events. In East Germany especially, Stalin's legacy and the Thaw were highly contested. Ralph Ley captures the perils of the ever-shifting political landscape when he notes that just as Ruth Fisher used *Die Maßnahme* as evidence of Brecht's Stalinism in the West, East German literary scholar Hans Mayer used *Die Maßnahme* to criticize Brecht's insufficient Stalinism in the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, given potential connections to the rise of Mao, it is notable that Brecht and Eisler's decision to prohibit future productions of the work and Eisler's interview coincide with the Sino-Soviet split.

Such political considerations also impacted postwar scholars. Those in the Eastern bloc likely shared Brecht and Eisler's concerns, both regarding *Die Maßnahme* and their own scholarship. Those in the West confronted bias against both Communist and any explicitly political art, regardless of its orientation. As Graham Bartram and Anthony White note, *Die Maßnahme* was one of Brecht's works that were often "dismissed as tediously didactic idealizations of Communist Party ideology and discipline."<sup>20</sup> Western scholars who did take *Die Maßnahme* seriously often wrote to advocate the value of Brecht and Eisler's work and were thus inclined towards interpretations that dissociated it from Stalin's atrocities and instead emphasized its politics in a broader, philosophical sense.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, it is clear that viewers at the time interpreted *Die Maßnahme* as concretely set in China and inspired by events there. German Communist critic Alfred Kurella argued:

We must identify the plot of the work and the entire selected milieu (Chinese Revolution, revolutionary mass movement, coolie organization, anti-imperialist Chinese capitalists, Chinese Communist Party, Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union, etc.) with reality. ... We cannot proceed from the assumption that the authors planned to use this entire background as circumstantial, only as a 'maneuvering ground,' which could just as well have been chosen differently. ... The authors created their work not for the desk drawer, but for a concrete audience, that is for concrete portions of the workers' organizations (the Workers' Choral Movement) for whom the basic facts of the Chinese Revolution and the other circumstances portrayed are known, so that they form concrete associations with them. Indeed, these associations must be made, if the *Lehrstück* is to make any sense at all.<sup>22</sup>

Kurella's stance was typical of Communist critics and is understandable given the context in which *Die Maßnahme* was written and premiered. Representations of current events in China were widespread. While the success of the Russian Revolution and the failure of the German Revolution were old hat, the ongoing Chinese Revolution captivated the imagination of Communists and other Leftists.<sup>23</sup>

Most Communist and leftist portrayals of the Chinese Revolution aimed for near-documentary accuracy. As Gregor Streim has shown, leftist literary works about China took the form of journalistic travel writing.<sup>24</sup> Agitprop revues, like "Alarm Hamburg-Schanghai" (Alarm Hamburg-Shanghai) or "Hände Weg von China" (Hands off China), both from 1927, were

presented as Living Newspapers in which stories from the news were acted out and interpreted politically with explicit statements, leading rhetorical questions, caricature, etc.<sup>25</sup> Radio works like Otto Zoff's 1930 "Revolution in China" also pulled their material directly from news reports.<sup>26</sup> On the traditional stage, Sergei Tretiakov's *Brülle China!* (*Roar China!*, original: Рычи, Китай) produced in Frankfurt in 1929 and Berlin in 1930, and Friedrich Wolf's *Tai yang erwacht* (*Tai yang awakes*) premiered in Berlin in 1931, purported to reconstruct real events.<sup>27</sup>

Brecht and Eisler had many connections to this context, and thus the decision to eschew such techniques in *Die Maßnahme* is striking. The agitprop revue "Hände Weg von China" was performed by the *Rote Sprachrohr* (Red Megaphone), a troupe Eisler joined as music director in 1927. Brecht was close with leftist travel writer Karl Wittfogel (one of the authors Streim discusses) and Sergei Tretiakov. Wittfogel led post-performance discussions about *Die Maßnahme* with audience members, and *Die Maßnahme* contains oblique references to *Roar China!*. Brecht likely also drew on Tretiakov's first-hand experience in China and then unpublished novel, *Chinese Testament*.<sup>28</sup>

This context partially explains why critics in the 1930s interpreted the work as concretely set in China, and why they also, as we will see, criticized the work for not being realistic enough. It also helps explain why a minority of modern scholars read *Die Maßnahme* as "an imaginative rendering of events that occurred in China," and seek to identify specific uprisings that inspired it.<sup>29</sup> Promising proposals include the Canton Commune of 1927 and the Sino-Soviet conflict of 1929, but none fully aligns with the action or politics of *Die Maßnahme*.<sup>30</sup> As Kurella noted in 1931, if one tries to align the action of *Die Maßnahme* with the events of the Canton Commune, the Young Comrade actually follows the Comintern's orders, while the other agitators advocate the "right opportunism" blamed for the uprising's failure.<sup>31</sup> The politics of the Canton Commune

were especially treacherous, as it played a key role in Stalin's conflict with Trotsky. However, Stalin's positions shifted several times, meaning that regardless of which side one supported, one could always be denounced as a Trotskyist.

Efforts to connect *Die Maßnahme* to a specific uprising also falter on the degree of abstraction through which the events are portrayed. The setting is not constructed with documentary accuracy, nor is the central conflict of any scene necessarily Chinese. Manually hauling barges along rivers, for example, was a widespread practice.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese setting is always mediated by the Moscow setting. The reenactments of events in China are not staged as flashbacks, nor do they have substantial scenery, props, or costumes (besides masks, discussed below). Rather, the audience witnesses the agitators reenacting scenes in their Moscow attire inside a Moscow committee chamber. While the audience understands the events being reenacted to have taken place in China, they are constantly aware that the reenactments themselves are taking place in Moscow.

This abstraction of events was central to the didactic function of *Die Maßnahme* because it enabled audiences to understand the Chinese setting as an allegorical stand-in for Germany. It raises the question of what lesson the audience was supposed to apply to their situation in Germany. The literature on this issue is substantial, but much of it revolves around two issues. The first relates to the necessity of killing the Young Comrade, which is only tangential to the question of the Chinese setting. The second, however, is highly relevant: How should a Communist act in a revolutionary situation? Communist critics at the time largely condemned *Die Maßnahme* for advocating a false strategy, which they believed Brecht and Eisler arrived at because their approach was too "idealistic." Critic Durus, for example, claimed that *Die Maßnahme* was "not a powerful work full of lived experience, because it artificially constructed

the Chinese revolution in a laboratory and did not reconstruct it from the reality of the proletarian revolution.”<sup>33</sup> Kurella, meanwhile, sought to discredit the allegorical lesson of *Die Maßnahme* by reproducing Brecht’s text but changing the characters’ names to those of the leaders of the unsuccessful Communist uprisings in Saxony in 1923.<sup>34</sup> As with the Canton Commune example, *Die Maßnahme* again seems to advocate “right opportunism.”

This is where the specificity of the Chinese setting becomes important. Critics like Kurella and Durus focus on Germany and overlook the differences in Comintern strategy in China. In Communism’s teleological model of historical development, Germany was an industrialized, bourgeois-dominated country, and thus primed for socialist revolution. China was a semicolonial, semi-feudal country only beginning to industrialize. Its path to socialism was less clear. Shelia Delaney has demonstrated that the four older agitators in *Die Maßnahme* follow Comintern’s strategy for China: a multi-class, united front.<sup>35</sup> The proletariat was to ally with the peasantry, the bourgeoisie, and even the old feudal upper classes to overthrow the foreign colonial powers. Then, the proletariat, peasantry, and lower bourgeoisie would turn on the wealthy bourgeoisie and feudal upper class, and so forth, until the proletariat (and/or peasantry) came to power. This strategy aligns well with *Die Maßnahme*, where the Young Comrade is faulted for failing to revolutionize the peasantry (Scene III) and for refusing to work with the wealthy bourgeoisie (Scene V). As Delaney describes, the details of this strategy shifted substantially throughout the 1920s and 1930s (and were a key front in the Stalin-Trotsky conflict), but the overall approach endured from the early 1920s into the Cold War.

This strategy in China was in the front of the German consciousness while *Die Maßnahme* was being written and premiered in mid to late 1930 because of the conflict surrounding the Li Lisan Line.<sup>36</sup> Li Lisan led the Chinese Communist Party from 1928 to 1931.

His power base was the urban, industrial proletariat, but this demographic had been largely eliminated in the bloody split with the Nationalist Party in 1927.<sup>37</sup> As a result, power was shifting to agrarian leaders, most notably Mao Zedong.<sup>38</sup> When a border conflict broke out between the Soviet Union and China in 1929, the Comintern ordered a new military campaign combined with workers' uprisings in China. While the Soviets quickly prevailed and signed a treaty, the Chinese Communists' campaign faltered and uprisings failed to materialize. Nevertheless, Li continued the campaign, at least in part to consolidate his hold on power. The Comintern now claimed that Li was acting against their orders, and its agents spent the second half of 1930 maneuvering to remove him from power, which they finally did in early 1931.

Brecht, Eisler, and their audiences would have been familiar with these events thanks to prominent coverage in both mainstream and Communist journalism. As Weijia Li notes, the leading Communist newspaper, *Die rote Fahne*, "published at least one article per week" on the conflict in China between 1929 and 1931, with seventeen reports "in July 1929 alone."<sup>39</sup> It is tantalizing to speculate that Brecht and Eisler also received firsthand information from Eisler's brother Gerhart, who was stationed in Shanghai as an agent of the Comintern during the events of the Li Lisan line.<sup>40</sup> While Gerhart's duties are unclear, it was the Shanghai Comintern office that wrested control away from Li. Given the secret nature of Gerhart's mission, it is unclear how much direct information Brecht and Eisler received from him. At the very least, they would have been extra motivated to follow news coverage of China.

Several of the controversies surrounding the Li Lisan Line align well with the events of *Die Maßnahme*. Like the Young Comrade, Li was blamed for beginning a campaign before the necessary support was in place (Scene VI), not working with the peasantry (Scene III), and failing to (re)build an adequate base in the cities (Scenes IV and VI). Li was faulted for leftist

deviation and putschism, which helps explain why *Die Maßnahme* presents the rightist approach of the other agitators as correct and not, as some German critics thought, as faulty right opportunism. This is not to argue that these scenes were based on specific events, but rather that the dramatic action was invented to illustrate general strategies. The setting lends the lesson of the work relevance and urgency and also aligns with agit-prop practices on which Brecht and Eisler claim to have drawn.<sup>41</sup> Although *Die Maßnahme* does not reenact scenes from the news, it does resemble a Living Newspaper in that the lesson presented on stage reinforces what one has been reading in the press.

What critics at the time missed, however, was that the lesson of the work is not a specific strategy, but the importance of following orders, or, as most modern scholars put it, of subsuming one's subjectivity to the collective.<sup>42</sup> Setting the work in a different country makes this lesson even clearer. Like German audiences, the Young Comrade approaches the events in *Die Maßnahme* from a different revolutionary context. Like him, German audiences' first response to these situations might not align with the directions of the Comintern. However, as the chorus "Lob der Partei" (Praise of the Party) makes clear, the party (and by extension, the Comintern) knows better than the individual. At the beginning of *Die Maßnahme*, the Young Comrade agreed to suppress his individualism and follow orders, and the work shows the consequences of his failure to do so.

In order to appreciate this message and the role the Chinese setting plays in conveying it, it is important to go beyond Brecht's text. For example, one likely reason critics at the time – who saw the work performed – more frequently understood *Die Maßnahme* as concretely set in China than post-WWII scholars – who approach the work primarily as a text – was the use of masks. Before entering China, the agitators don masks that will supposedly enable them to pass

as ethnically Chinese.<sup>43</sup> The racial specificity of the masks in early productions served as a constant reminder that the events are taking place in China. According to first-hand accounts of the premiere, “the four agitators ... wore yellow half-masks with slanted Chinese eye-holes.”<sup>44</sup> However, as Yasco Horsman and other contemporary scholars who take the masks into account have argued, the act of masking also represents the suppression of individual subjectivity and submission to the will of the collective that is the main lesson of *Die Maßnahme*.<sup>45</sup>

Another key component of *Die Maßnahme* was Hanns Eisler’s music. Eisler neither imitated Chinese music nor incorporated exoticist markers of China. This may seem to demonstrate that the Chinese setting was inconsequential. He did, for example, make use of recorded Chinese music in his soundtrack to the 1939 documentary about the Japanese invasion of China, *The 400 Million*.<sup>46</sup> A similar argument is often made of Brecht’s text. Unlike many of his other works, in *Die Maßnahme*, Brecht does not include references to traditional Chinese theater, poetry, or philosophy, or create specifically Chinese characters or settings.<sup>47</sup> Eisler’s explanation clarifies this feature of Brecht’s text: He sought to portray modern China as already well-advanced in Marxism’s teleological vision of history. Just as feudal and capitalist social structures were fated to disappear with the rise of socialism, so too national culture with the rise of an international proletarian culture. (*Die Maßnahme* predates the rehabilitation of national folk cultures under Socialist Realism.) Eisler claimed his music was international, but in many ways it was distinctly German. In this, Eisler shared an ideological blind spot with other Communists of the time. European and Soviet Communists claimed to support anti-colonial struggles, but their support was conditional and a means of quasi-neocolonial control. Financial, material, and military aid only flowed when anti-colonial organizations followed orders from the Comintern or European and Soviet “advisors,” while efforts to establish organizational structures

independent of the Comintern were sabotaged and suppressed.

### ***Kampfmusik* and International Proletarian Culture**

With two notable exceptions, Eisler's music for *Die Maßnahme* conforms to his unique idiom of Communist propaganda music, or *Kampfmusik*, whose internationalist ambitions explain his decision not to include musical markers of China. Eisler sought to create a new proletarian music that would sweep away existing folk and bourgeois music (Western classical and jazz). It would not be just the music of the German workers' movement, but of every nation's workers' movement. Class-consciousness would supersede differences of language, culture, or tradition. Like the agitators in *Die Maßnahme*, individual nations and national cultures lack the perspective and wisdom to achieve revolutionary change, and therefore need to suppress their individuality and submit to the will of the collective of international Communism.

Despite Eisler's ambitions, his *Kampfmusik* remained distinctly German. It achieved substantial popularity abroad but was generally recognized as Eisler's unique style, not as a model for imitation. Instead, national Communist movements tended to pursue their own nationally-inflected approaches.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, Eisler's *Kampfmusik* incorporated distinctly German musical influences, like Lutheran chorales, J. S. Bach, military marches, and interwar Germany's idiosyncratic approach to jazz. From the perspective of effective propaganda for German audiences, there is a clear logic to the German-ness of Eisler's music. From a global perspective, however, Eisler's agenda is symptomatic of residual (neo)colonialist ways of thinking in European and Soviet Communism.

Eisler's internationalist ambitions and his use of musical styles in *Die Maßnahme* follow the Marxist view of music history articulated in his writings. Citing the economist and armchair

anthropologist Karl Bücher, Eisler claimed that music originated in the work songs used to maintain the rhythms of communal labor in early human societies.<sup>49</sup> In one of the two exceptions to the use of the *Kampfmusik* style in *Die Maßnahme*, Eisler composes a work song, the “Gesang der Reiskahnschlepper” (Song of the Rice Barge Haulers). In this scene, the Young Comrade observes laborers pulling a barge up river, but they keep slipping on the flat river bottom. Rather than organizing them, he succumbs to sympathy and lays down rocks to improve their traction and temporarily ease their labor. As the song is diegetic, we might expect to hear Chinese-sounding music.<sup>50</sup> Instead, Eisler’s music alternates between two styles, the first of which is of interest here. A slow tempo, open octave harmonies, and minor/modal melodies imitate a folk work song. One critic compared it to the Volga Boat Song.<sup>51</sup> Where the use of recognizably Chinese-influenced music would have reinforced the Other-ness of the Chinese setting, Eisler kept the music ambiguous, facilitating an allegorical understanding of the scene.

Jumping ahead in Eisler’s Marxist conception of music history, the final stage of bourgeois musical culture was jazz, whose international spread served to liquidate previous, local forms of entertainment and art music, paving the way for a new international proletarian musical culture. As he wrote in 1932:

Light bourgeois music has transformed ... into an international, industrialized intoxicant. One hears the same jazz music in the bars of Berlin, Shanghai, or Chicago. ... At the same time, the death of folk music is completed: in the industrialized nations, there is no more folk music, the farmer in Germany, in Scotland, ... in North America, the Negro in South Carolina listens to the same international popular music on the radio.<sup>52</sup>

Eisler parodies jazz in the music for a rich merchant in Scene V of *Die Maßnahme*. This is

another quasi-diegetic song by a Chinese character, and thus somewhere where we might expect Chinese-influenced music.<sup>53</sup> However, the merchant also represents the nascent capitalist developments in China that served a similar historical-materialist function of sweeping away the feudal order and preparing the way for socialism. Thus, jazz both fits the historical function of bourgeois capitalism represented by the Merchant and expresses the negative associations these held for Eisler. As he and Brecht explained in their “Notes on *Die Maßnahme*”: “The music of Part 5 ... is an imitation of a music that reflects the fundamental attitude of the merchant: of jazz. The brutality, idiocy, self-assurance, and self-contempt of this type of person could be ‘represented’ in no other musical form.”<sup>54</sup>

Beyond these two moments, Eisler’s music is in the style of his *Kampfmusik*. These sections provide all of the work’s non-diegetic music as well as diegetic music in proletarian contexts, like the factory workers’ strike in Scene IV. This use of *Kampfmusik* matched Eisler’s ambition to replace folk and other national idioms with a new international proletarian culture. Folk songs originating in pre-industrial labor were inappropriate to the modern worker:

Folk songs arise under primitive economic conditions, especially in agrarian economies. Modern capitalism is unsuitable ground for the growth of folk songs. ... But we have something else – the mass song. The mass song is the fighting song of the modern working class and is to a certain degree, folk song at a higher stage than before, because it is international.<sup>55</sup>

Or as he wrote elsewhere: “The *Kampflied* is the true folk song of the proletariat.”<sup>56</sup>

From this perspective, Eisler’s use of his *Kampfmusik* idiom for diegetic music in the modern China is understandable. For example, the “Strike Song” in Scene IV is sung by striking Chinese workers. Eisler was famous for composing such songs for German workers, and

audiences would recognize it as such, with its relatively easy to sing, unison melody; steady beat with occasional syncopations; and triadic harmony with pungent added dissonances. Similarly, the choral numbers sung by the Control Chorus draw on Eisler's music for the German Worker-Singer Federation (Deutsche Arbeiter-Sänger Bund) and Fighting Organization of Worker-Singers (Kampfgemeinschaft der Arbeitersänger). The "Lob der USSR" (In Praise of the USSR), for example, begins with an imitation of traditional counterpoint and moves to a homophonic chorale texture. The harmony, as in other numbers, is minor with modal inflections and occasional added dissonances. Techniques like counterpoint were chosen for their didactic applicability; Eisler believed that contrapuntal repetition of text served to reinforce the meaning of the words.<sup>57</sup>

Eisler's use of such traditional techniques brings us back to the residual (neo)colonialism in the way his internationalist ambitions failed to recognize his explicitly German sources. Following his Marxist approach to music history, Eisler believed it was possible to refunction musical materials. Eisler described this procedure in 1934: "We will apply our critical methods, separate craft from [ideological] content, purify craft from the influence of content, and then out of this new technique we will bring something new into development by giving it other uses and content."<sup>58</sup> For Eisler, refunctioning musical techniques stripped them of problematic associations, like the feudal associations of early religious music, and allowed them to be applied to revolutionary ends, like the contrapuntal techniques we have just seen.

Eisler's sources, however, were overwhelmingly German, including Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert.<sup>59</sup> Other sources were exclusively European, like the old church modes.<sup>60</sup> Although Eisler argued that these sources had been stripped of ideological content, there can be little doubt that audiences — especially those familiar with the German choral tradition via the German

Worker-Singer Federation — recognized the German sources that grounded Eisler's *Kampfmusik*. His assumption that German traditions could be the foundation for an international, intercultural music is not far removed from the ideology surrounding many of his nineteenth-century models that German music was somehow universal, while other national music traditions remained merely national. That Eisler's ambition encompassed cultures outside of Europe was made clear by Brecht, who approvingly claimed in 1938 that Eisler's mass songs had become the shared heritage of "millions of workers of white, black, and yellow race."<sup>61</sup>

Eisler understood his music to be part of the international Communist movement and was likely oblivious to the (neo)colonialist implications not just of his approach, but of the Communist movement generally. Despite the fact that the Chinese Revolution was progressing while the German Revolution had stalled out, Germans pictured themselves traveling to China to serve as leaders, while Chinese Communists who came to Germany were exclusively students seeking a German education.<sup>62</sup> This dynamic is reproduced in *Die Maßnahme*. One agitator is identified as coming from Berlin, while the Chinese workers are an anonymous, leaderless mass who passively receive instruction from the agitators. The Young Comrade is even faulted for beginning the uprising in Scene VI based on the input of the unemployed workers he has been organizing.

This bias went all the way to the top. While the Comintern included representatives from around the world and occasionally drew on the insight of those with local knowledge, final decisions largely rested on Russian representatives.<sup>63</sup> As in the case of Li Lisan, independently-minded local leaders were undermined and replaced with Soviet/European representatives or de-facto puppets. Any paternalistic claims to justify this approach are discredited by the way anti-colonial activists were regularly reduced to pawns in the internal Soviet power struggles, as in

the case of the Canton Commune of 1927, when Stalin cynically ordered Chinese Communists to launch a hopeless uprising as part of his efforts to expel Trotsky from the party.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding *Die Maßnahme* as both concretely set in modern China and as an allegory for modern Germany helps to clarify the meaning of the work and its reception history. It also reveals contradictions in the portrayal of China that contributed to the initial confusion. Brecht and Eisler recognize the differences in the ways that the Comintern approached Germany and China. Germany was an industrialized, bourgeois-dominated country ready for class-against-class social struggle, while China was semicolonial, semi-feudal, and only beginning to industrialize, calling for a united front strategy. While the lesson of *Die Maßnahme* was the importance of following orders, the orders the agitators were given only made sense in the context of a united front struggle. Thus, when German critics assumed the lesson of *Die Maßnahme* was the specific strategy followed by the agitators, they found the work at fault for right opportunism.

But why did German critics so quickly assume that *Die Maßnahme* was teaching a specific strategy to apply in Germany? I contend that this was, at least in part, because Brecht and Eisler eschewed markers of traditional Chinese culture, and the supposedly-international Communist culture with which they replaced it was recognizably German. Without the distancing and Other-ing effects of exoticist tropes or imitations of traditional Chinese drama and music, Brecht and Eisler obscured the line between what elements of the work were distinct to the Chinese setting and what elements could be applied to Germany.

In some ways, this may suggest a progressive reconfiguration of the usual practice of

representing China or the Orient. In both older exoticist works and more recent Yellow Peril/Yellow Hope works, China is presented as radically Other to Germany, and German cultural identity is defined by China's difference, or Otherness.<sup>64</sup> Brecht and Eisler reconfigure this paradigm. In *Die Maßnahme*, China is presented as both Other and radically similar to Germany: Other in that it recognizes the Comintern's different strategies in each country, and similar in that Brecht's dramaturgy and Eisler's musical style assume that both countries are modern, industrial states united under the banner of international Communist revolution and a corresponding international proletarian culture. It is this sameness of China and Germany that allows China to allegorize Germany. As we have seen, however, the progressive potential of portraying China and Germany as radically similar is undermined by the way that it is achieved: China's unique cultural identity is erased by modern German culture, disguised as international and universal.

The contradiction between recognition and erasure of China's difference to Germany likely left critics unsure how to interpret the work. What aspects of the portrayal of China were they to understand as representing China as Other to Germany, and what aspects as representing China as similar to Germany? We can also think of post-WWII reception as modern critics trying to sort out this confusion by reading *Die Maßnahme* through one of the more familiar frameworks of China as Other. For those who interpret the work as a parable that could just as easily be set anywhere else, *Die Maßnahme* reproduces the interchangeability of exotic locales in Orientalist works, in which differences between Persia, India, China or other Asian lands were less important than that they were an exotic Other onto which Western fantasies could be projected. Some Brecht scholars have explicitly recognized this.<sup>65</sup> For those who read *Die Maßnahme* as a dramatic reconstruction of a specific uprising or event in China, the work

becomes another representative of the Yellow Hope (or depending on one's political perspective, a Communist Yellow Peril). The essential otherness of China in such a portrayal allows it to serve as inspiration to Germans, to reinforce the need for revolution, or to build international solidarity, but not to allegorize Germany itself. As a lesson, China could at best serve as a case study.

In some ways, my argument places the portrayal of China in *Die Maßnahme* between these two positions: China does allegorize Germany, but the work is also very specifically set in modern day China. While it does not seek to reconstruct recent events, it does assume familiarity with them. However, thinking about whether China is portrayed as an Other demonstrates how far my argument is from those two positions: While they both assume that China is being presented as radically Other to Germany, I show how Brecht and Eisler reconfigured portrayals of China. It is at once Other and similar. The potential for confusion opened up by this contradiction was only exacerbated by the way in which the similarity of Germany and China was presented. For in seeking to subsume national differences to a new internationalist class-consciousness, Brecht and Eisler were also asserting their own national culture as the basis of the new, "universal" international culture, thus confusing which elements of China in the work were to be understood as Other and which as similar.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> On the ICC, see Bernhard H. Bayerlein, "Vorzeichen des Terrors und der Moskauer Prozesse: die Internationale Kontrollkommission, die Disziplinierung und Kriminalisierung der Komintern und des Internationalen Kommunismus," in *Centenaire Jules Humbert-Droz. Colloque sur l'Internationale Communiste, Actes*, ed. André Lasserre (La Chaux-de-Fonds: Fondation Jules Humbert-Droz, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Paula Hanssen, *Elisabeth Hauptmann: Brecht's Silent Collaborator* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1995), 69-70; John Fuegi, *Brecht and Company: Sex, Politics and the Making of the Modern Drama* (New York: Grove Press, 1994), 245-47.

<sup>4</sup> On the Brechtian *Lehrstück*, see Roswitha Mueller, "Learning for a New Society: the Lehrstück," in *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, ed. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Joy Calico, *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 17 and 26-27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 32 and 188n60.

<sup>7</sup> “Auszugsweise Abschrift I AN 2162 e/21.12 aus den vom Polizeipräsidenten, Landeskriminalpolizeiamts Berlin — I2 e 3330/P 13,” in Bertolt Brecht, *Die Maßnahme. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Steinweg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 410.

<sup>8</sup> Waleria Nasarowa, “Gedanken zur Maßnahme,” in *Hanns Eisler Heute. Berichte – Probleme – Beobachtungen*, ed. Manfred Grabs (Berlin: Akademie der Künste der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1974), 58.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Weijia Li, “Otherness in Solidarity: Collaboration between Chinese and German Left-Wing Activists in the Weimar Republic,” in *Beyond Alterity: German Encounters with Modern East Asia*, ed. Qinna Shen and Martin Rosenstock (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 85.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander V. Pantsov, “Comintern Activists in China: Spies or Theorists?” in *Foreigners and Foreign Institutions in Republican China*, ed. Anne-Marie Brady and Douglas Brown (New York: Routledge, 2013), 99-100, 103.

<sup>11</sup> Ruth Fisher, *Stalin and German Communism: A Study in the Origins of the State Party* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 618.

<sup>12</sup> Nathan Notowicz, *Wir reden hier nicht von Napoleon. Wir reden von Ihnen. Gespräche mit Hanns Eisler und Gerhart Eisler* (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1971), 193.

<sup>13</sup> Jürgen Schebera, “Die Maßnahme – ‘Gescheidigkeitsübung für gute Dialektiker?,’” in *Brecht 83*. Inge Jahn-Gellert, ed., *Brecht und Marxismus* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1983), 97.

<sup>14</sup> Antony Tatlow, *The Mask of Evil: Brecht’s Response to the Poetry, Theatre and Thought of China and Japan. A Comparative and Critical Evaluation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1977), 200.

<sup>15</sup> See Klaus-Dieter Krabiel, “Die Maßnahme,” in *Brecht Handbuch*, vol. 1, *Stücke*, ed. Jan Knopf (Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 2001), 264.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Ringrose, “Bush and the W.M.A. — The Early Years,” in *Alan Bush: An 80th Birthday Symposium*, ed. Ronald Stevenson (Kidderminster: Bravura Publications, 1981), 80-81. The program misdates the work, and Ringrose’s volume misdates the English performance.

<sup>17</sup> Even before WWII, portraying recent events in China was a balancing act for Soviet artists. See, for example, Nicholas J. Cull and Arthur Waldron, “Shanghai Document—‘Shankhaiskii Dokument’ (1928): Soviet film propaganda and the Shanghai rising of 1927,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 16, no. 3 (1996).

<sup>18</sup> Fuegi, *Brecht*, 504-5.

<sup>19</sup> Ralph Ley, *Brecht as Thinker: Studies in Literary Marxism and Existentialism* (Ann Arbor, MI: Applied Literature Press, 1979), 18.

<sup>20</sup> Graham Bartram and Anthony White, “Introduction,” in *Brecht in Perspective*, ed. Graham Bartram and Anthony White (Burnt Mill: Longman Group, 1982), ix.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Ralph Ley has criticized Western scholars for overemphasizing Karl Korsch’s influence on Brecht in order to dissociate Brecht from Stalinism. Ley, *Brecht*, 20-28.

<sup>22</sup> Alfred Kurella, “Ein Versuch mit nicht ganz tauglichen Mitteln” (1931), in *Die Massanhme. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Steinweg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 380.

<sup>23</sup> See Renata Berg-Pan, *Bertolt Brecht and China* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1979), 16-24.

<sup>24</sup> Gregor Streim, “Das Erwachen des Kulis. China in den Reisereportagen der Weimarer Republik (Richard Huelsenbeck — Arthur Holitscher — Egon Erwin Kisch),” in *Deutsch-Chinesische Annäherungen. Kultureller Austausch und gegenseitige Wahrnehmung in der Zwischenzeit*, ed. Almut Hille, Gregor Streim, and Pan Lu (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2011).

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<sup>25</sup> “Hände weg von China” was a Communist slogan at the time. See Werner Fuhr, *Proletarische Musik in Deutschland 1928-1933* (Göppingen: Verlag Alfred Kümmerle, 1977); W. L. Guttsman, *Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment* (New York: Berg, 1990). Richard Bodek notes that the Living Newspaper took hold in Germany after a tour by a Soviet troupe whose performances included “a sketch about conditions in China.” Richard Bodek, *Proletarian Performance in Weimar Berlin: Agitprop, Chorus, and Brecht* (Columbia: Camden House, 1997), 101.

<sup>26</sup> On Zoff’s piece, see “Die neue Woche. Szene aus *Revolution in China*. Lehrstück für den Rundfunk von Otto Zoff,” *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 8, no. 20 (16 May 1930).

<sup>27</sup> See Sergei Tretiakov, “Author’s Note,” in *Roar China* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1931); Mark Gamsa, “Sergei Tret’iakov’s *Roar, China!* between Moscow and China,” *Itinerario* 36, no. 2 (2012); Friedrich Wolf, “Weshalb schrieb ich Tai Yang erwacht?” (1949/50), in Friedrich Wolf, *Gesammelte Werke in sechzehn Bände*, vol. 16, *Aufsätze 1945-1953* (Berlin, 1968).

<sup>28</sup> Sheila Delany, “The Politics of the Signified in Bertolt Brecht’s *The Measures Taken*,” *CLIO: A Journal of Literature, History, and the Philosophy of History* 16, no. 1 (1986), 77; Berg-Pan, *Brecht*, 276-77.

<sup>29</sup> Delany, “Politics,” 70.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Li, “Otherness,” 85. On the Canton Commune, the 1929 Sino-Soviet Border conflict, and related contextual history, see Bruce A. Elleman, *Moscow and the Emergence of Communist Power in China, 1925-30: The Nanchang Uprising and the Birth of the Red Army* (London: Routledge, 2009); Richard Thornton, *The Comintern and the Chinese Communists, 1928-1931* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).

<sup>31</sup> Kurella, “Ein Versuch,” 383.

<sup>32</sup> Pace Tatlow, *Mask*, 261. As we will see, critics linked this scene to the Russian “Volga Boat Song.”

<sup>33</sup> Durus [pseud. Alfred Kemény], “*Die Maßnahme*, ein Lehrstück” (1931), in *Die Maßnahme. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Steinweg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 374.

<sup>34</sup> Kurella, “Ein Versuch,” 381-82. On these uprisings and Weimar-era analysis of them, see Aleksandr Vatlin, “The Testing-ground of World Revolution: Germany in the 1920s,” in *International Communism and the Communist International 1919-43*, ed. Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> Delany, “Politics.” This was opposed to the Comintern’s “class against class” strategy in Germany. Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, “Introduction,” in *International Communism and the Communist International 1919-43*, ed. Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 4-5. The “United Front” initially referred to the Communist-Nationalist alliance. After the Communist-Nationalist split, the language of the “United Front” was maintained. It was claimed that the revolution had passed into the next phase where the United Front came into conflict with the bourgeois Nationalists. Elleman, *Moscow*, 122-24.

<sup>36</sup> Delany’s discussion of events in China extends only through the 1927 Communist-Nationalist split and does not take into account those events immediately before and concurrent with the composition of *Die Maßnahme*. On the Li Lisan line, see Elleman, *Moscow*, 203-5; and Thornton, *Comintern*, 103-217. The historiography of the Li Lisan Line is politically complicated. Questions remain over the behind-the-scenes machinations of Li, Mao, other Chinese Communists, and the Comintern. For an alternative perspective, see A. M. Grigoriev, “The Comintern and the Revolutionary Movement in China under the Slogan of the Soviets (1927-1931),” in *The Comintern and the East: The Struggle for the Leninist Strategy and Tactics*

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in *National Liberation Movements*, ed. R. A. Ulyanovsky (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> Michael Weiner, "Comintern in East Asia, 1919-39," in *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin*, ed. Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, 1996), 181.

<sup>38</sup> While Thornton emphasizes the role of the Li Lisan Line in the rise of Mao, it was also a short-term setback for Mao, as it led to the short-lived leadership of the so-called "28 Bolsheviks," a group of Chinese students trained in Moscow and deeply loyal to Stalin.

<sup>39</sup> Li, "Otherness," 81.

<sup>40</sup> Gerhart was in China from 1929-1931. Pantsov, "Comintern activists," 104; Notowicz, *Wir reden*, 231. *Pace* John Willett, *Brecht in Context: Comparative Approaches* (London: Methuen, 1984), 162; Delany, "The Politics," 76, there is no evidence that Gerhart was present at the Canton Commune in 1927.

<sup>41</sup> Hanns Eisler, "[Geschichte der deutschen Arbeitermusikbewegung seit 1848]" (undated, ca. 1934), in *Gesammelte Schriften 1921-1935*, ed. Tobias Fasshauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2007), 201-2.

<sup>42</sup> See, among others, Yasco Horsman, *Theaters of Justice: Judging, Staging, and Working Through in Ardent, Brecht, and Delbo* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Erich Speidel, "The Individual and Society," in *Brecht in Perspective*, ed. Graham Bartram and Anthony White (Burnt Mill: Longman Group, 1982), 52.

<sup>43</sup> The text identifies the agitators as German, Russian, and Tatar. As John Fuegi notes, Comintern agitators did not actually try to disguise their ethnicities. European agitators in East Asia posed as Western businessmen, military advisors, teachers, etc. Fuegi, *Brecht*, 650n5.

<sup>44</sup> Sergej Tretjakow, "Hanns Eisler" (1935), in *Sinn und Form. Beiträge zur Literatur. Sonderheft Hanns Eisler 1964* (Berlin: Ratten und Leoning, 1964), 123. See also Krabiel, "Die Maßnahme," 258. Several photographs of the premiere survive, but the quality is too low to make out what the masks looked like. *Pace* Berg-Pan's discussion of Brecht's practice of using colored masks and similar descriptors to portray different races, they almost certainly also served as racist caricature. Berg-Pan, *Brecht*, 62-63, 69, 191-92.

<sup>45</sup> Horsman, *Theaters*, 91-132, esp. 103 and 112.

<sup>46</sup> William Brooks, "A Child Went Forth: Hanns Eisler, American Progressives, and Folk Song," in *Crosscurrents: American and European Music in Interaction, 1900-2000*, ed. Felix Meyer, Carol J. Oja, Wolfgang Rathert, and Anne C. Shreffler (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), 261-62.

<sup>47</sup> For a detailed overview of these in Brecht's other work, see Berg-Pan, *Brecht*.

<sup>48</sup> For example, on the short-lived and marginal influence of Eisler on the American Composers Collective, see Howard Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein: His Life, His Work, His World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 103.

<sup>49</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Die Kunst als Lehrmeisterin im Klassenkampf" (undated, ca. 1931), in *Gesammelte Schriften, 1921-1935*, ed. Tobias Fasshauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2007), 124.

<sup>50</sup> The use of diegetic songs with Chinese-sounding music was common in other Communist theatrical productions, including of Tretjakov's *Roar China!*. Edward Tyerman, "Productive Rhythms: The Sounds of China through Soviet Ears," *Ulbandus Review* 16 (2014): 148.

<sup>51</sup> Fechter, "Bert Brecht: 'Die Maßnahme. Philharmonie'" (1930), in *Die Maßnahme. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Steinweg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 332. Fechter also referred to Chinese elements in the music, but did not specify what these might be, nor was this observation shared by any other critics. Likely, he was referring to modernist elements of

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Eisler's music, like the driving rhythmic pulse or dissonant harmonic language. Critics often struggle to distinguish such modernist features from exoticism. See, for example, Nancy Rao, "From Chinatown Opera to *The First Emperor*: Racial Imagination, the Trope of 'Chinese Opera,' and New Hybridity," in *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance*, ed. Mary Ingraham, Joseph So, and Roy Moodley (New York: Routledge, 2016), 59. The only other critic to make a similar observation was Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, who merely likened the song to "a lamentation of oriental-psalmic character." Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, "Politische Musik zu Brecht-Eislers *Maßnahme*" (1931), in *Die Maßnahme. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Steinweg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 347.

<sup>52</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Die Aufgaben der Musikkonferenz des MRTÖ" (1932), in *Gesammelte Schriften, 1921-1935*, ed. Tobias Fasshauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2007), 159.

<sup>53</sup> Reiner Steinweg, ed., *Brechts Modell der Lehrstücke. Zeugnisse, Diskussion, Erfahrungen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), 98. I say quasi-diegetic because the song is a moment of magic realism: The character announces he is going to sing a song, and then does. It is not realistic action, but we assume the song to be taking place in the diegesis of the work.

<sup>54</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Anmerkung [zu *Die Massnahme*]" (1931), in *Gesammelte Schriften, 1921-1935*, ed. Tobias Fasshauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2007), 118.

<sup>55</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Problems of Working Class Music. Interview with Hanns Eisler" (1935), in *A Rebel in Music*, ed. Manfred Grabs (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1978), 99.

<sup>56</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Das revolutionäre Lied. Einiges über die Aufgaben der Arbeiter-Gesangvereine" (1934), in *Gesammelte Schriften, 1921-1935*, ed. Tobias Fasshauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2007), 224-25.

<sup>57</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Die Erbauer einer neuen Musikkultur" (1931), in *Gesammelte Schriften, 1921-1935*, ed. Tobias Fasshauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2007), 138.

<sup>58</sup> Eisler, "Das revolutionäre Lied," 229.

<sup>59</sup> On Bach, see Calico, *Brecht*, 32 and 188n60. On Schubert, see Thomas Phelps, "Die Kunst zu erben oder Was haben Hanns Eislers 'Wiegenlieder' mit Franz Schubert zu tun?" *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 149, no. 11 (1988).

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Dietrich Stern, "Soziale Bestimmtheit des musikalischen Materials. Hanns Eislers Balladen für Gesang und kleines Orchester und ihre Beziehung zur Musik Kurt Weills," in *Angewandte Musik der 20er Jahre. Exemplarische Versuch gesellschaftsbezogener musikalischer Arbeit für Theater, Film, Radio, Massenveranstaltung*, ed. Dietrich Stern (Berlin: Argument Verlag, 1977).

<sup>61</sup> Brecht, "Kleine Berichtigung" (1938), in *Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, ed. Werner Hecht, et.al, vol. 22 (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), 402.

<sup>62</sup> Li, "Otherness."

<sup>63</sup> This dynamic is central to scholarship on the Chinese Revolution cited throughout this chapter. See also Wendy Singer, "Peasants and the Peoples of the East: Indians and the Rhetoric of the Comintern," in *International Communism and the Communist International 1919-43*, ed. Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Roy Hofheinz, Jr., *The Broken Wave: The Chinese Communist: Peasant Movement, 1922-1928* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); Robert North and Xenia Eudin, *M.N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist-Koumintang Split of 1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). Nor was this tension limited to Asia; on Latin America, see Marc Becker, "Mariátegui, the

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Comintern, and the Indigenous Question in Latin America,” *Science & Society* 70, no. 4 (Oct. 2006).

<sup>64</sup> On the “Yellow Hope,” see Dagmar Yu-Dembksi, “Traum und Wirklichkeit. Rezeption und Darstellung Chinas in der Weimarer Republik,” in *Exotik und Wirklichkeit. China in Reisbeschreibungen vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Mechthild Leutner and Dagmar Yu-Dembksi (Munich: Minerva, 1999); and Streim, “Erwachen,” 157.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Tatlow, *Mask*, 261.