

# Bright Red Star

( original title unknown )

China : 1975 : dir. : August First : ? min  
prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

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Cast unknown

| Ref:  | Pages | Sources | Stills | Words | Ω □ ∅ Z ∞ | Copy on VHS | Last Viewed |
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*The boy has revolutionary fervour, not rabies, although the symptoms are often similar. It's a great face all the same. Source: International Film Guide 1976*



*Heroic Pan Tung-Tzu (11) and his heroic mother, uncowed by the capitalist running dogs of the Kuomintang, welcome the Red Army to their village.*  
*Source: International Film Guide 1976*

**International Film Guide 1976 review:**

“Produced by the August First Film Studio. Main characters: Pan Tung-tzu, the eleven-year old son of a poor peasant and the film’s hero; Pan Hsing-Yi, the hero’s father; the hero’s mother; Hu Han-san, tyrannical village landlord; Wung Ming, a Left opportunist; Wu Hsiu-chu, a Red Army soldier; Grandpa Sung; Chun Ya-tzu, a friend of the hero and of about the same age. This adaptation of a novel of the same name is set during the period of the Second Revolutionary Civil War.

In 1931 the Red Army comes to Pan Tung-tzu’s home village. There the villagers celebrate their liberation and the founding of a democratic government of workers and peasants. Tung-tzu is active in expropriating the landlord’s land and dividing it among the poor. He joins the Children’s Corps. Owing to the erroneous leadership of Wung Ming, the Red Army is unable to break the Kuomintang encirclement and is forced to leave the Central Revolutionary Base and begin the Long March. The hero’s father gives the boy a red star before leaving with the army. Soon after, news comes that Mao’s line has won out over Wang Ming’s opportunist tactics. Wu Hsiu-chu, a red army fighter who has stayed behind to lead the guerrilla force, tells the boy’s mother about decisions made by Mao and the

Party Central Committee at the Tsunyi Conference.

One night the landlord and his gang suddenly appear when the boy’s mother is telling the news to the villagers. She dies a heroine’s death in covering the retreat of the others, and Wu Hsiu-chu now takes on the job of looking after the young Tung-tzu. One day the guerrillas attack the village. Aided by Grandpa Sung, the boy tears some planks from a wooden bridge and cuts off the enemy, who then surrender. The landlord replies by imposing a blockade preventing the guerrillas from getting their essential supply of salt. The boy hero tricks the guard, passes through the blockade, and brings the salt up the mountain to the revolutionary fighters.

The Party sends Tung-tzu to a rice store in Yaowan as an apprentice, where he sends out information, sinks the rice-boats of the enemy, and in co-ordination with the guerrilla attack on Yaowan kills the landlord Hu Han-san. The film ends with the resounding victory of Mao’s policies on the anti-Japanese national united front. The Red Army units south of the Yangtze are ready to march to the front to resist the Japanese invasion. Tung-tzu’s father comes to escort Wu Hsiu-chu and his unit. Father and son meet again and the boy joins the Red Army.”

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Self-evidently, a Chinese counterpart to the Nazis' **"HITLERJUNGE QUEX"**. It reads as such a blunt instrument of Maoism that one would have thought the Reagan/Bush era would have made it required viewing in US schools. It is, however, easier to recognise crude propaganda when it expresses the policy and approved history of a totalitarian state. In that sense, films as blatantly partisan as this one are refreshingly honest when compared to American or British cinema, which too are often laced with propaganda but – which is more insidious – a subtler, oblique propaganda (for consumerism, "family values", the political status quo, the right of Anglo/US global supremacy, the "evils" of communism, etc). It would be exceptionally naive to suppose "the free world" (as it pleases to call itself) does not massage and reshape the truth just as compulsively as Fascist and Communist systems. Indeed, with the contemporary emphasis on "spin-doctoring" and "news management", we might reflect that Western politicians seem more preoccupied with propaganda tactics than the practical realities of power. Image is everything. Boy partisans and freedom fighters are a favoured film motif in any ideological war, and are frequently promoted, as Quex was, to little martyrs to the cause.

See subject index under **ASIA, THE CHILD AS POLITICAL OR PROPAGANDA SYMBOL** and **WAR / BOY SOLDIERS**.