



Protest

Young-G

Themes of rap include politics, the economy, religion and race. Ironically, the more situations revolving these issues worsen, the more powerful the lyrics become. Born through block party culture, hip hop is a form of music, message and culture. According to Chuck D of the hip hop group Public Enemy, "rap is black America's CNN." In America, where rap music most flourished, hip hop has also functioned as songs of revolution. For example, during the Los Angeles riots of 1992, the lyrics of songs such as *Fight the Power* by Public Enemy and *Cop Killer* by Body Count (Ice T), *Black Korea* by Ice Cube embodied emotions of anger towards forces of authority and discrimination. At the time, radio DJs could be fired by program directors for playing such songs but they never ceased to attract listeners who expressed sympathy with the lyrics. As with the Black Lives Matter movement that unfolded this year, hip hop continues to function as songs of protest that impact the times.

Public Enemy - *Fight the power*

Public Enemy - *Fight The Power* (2020 Remix) feat. Nas, Rapsody, Black Thought, Jahi, YG & QuestLove

In Asia also, rap continues to raise various contemporary issues pertaining to governments and administrations. In November 2020, as of this writing, Thailand is mired in confusion, with the prolonged protests against military power magnifying more than ever before. Under these circumstances, the rap group R.A.D. (Rap Against Dictatorship) has produced this song:

RAP AGAINST DICTATORSHIP - REFORM

Speaking of democratic revolutions in Thailand, perhaps the most famous incident is the “Bloody Sunday” riot that was led by students in 1973. It was the music genre of “phleng phuea chiwit” that inspired the masses at this time. Also known as the “songs for life,” this type of Thai folk music encouraged people while criticizing society through sharp humor, and gained the support of people that were at the time experiencing hardships in life. These songs were sung at gatherings as “theme songs” for democratic revolutions. Members of the band Caravan, which is known to have initiated this movement, fled from military and police forces and took shelter in the forest of Isaan, located northeast of Bangkok. The members radio broadcasted phleng phuea chiwit songs from the forest through a radio program. And now today, the same is done by R.A.D. through smartphones. Theme songs for democratic revolution and anti-dictatorship campaigns are being widely disseminated through smartphones, encouraging those engaged in protests. The spirit of defiance transcending genres of music, as exemplified by R.A.D. and Caravan, has continued to steer the nation both in the past and the present.

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