CHINA BOOKS PODCAST

Interviews

Ep. 20: Linda Jaivin on the Cultural Revolution

Six years and China's author-guide to the Cultural Revolution, and what it means for the present

JAMIE HORSLEY - JUL 1, 2021

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The Cultural Revolution was the most bewildering upset in China's modern history. Six years after the ending of the Mao era, Deng Xiaoping's leadership launched a decade-long assault on the heart of China, driving a wedge between generations of people, and between the Chinese Communist Party and its own ideology. Its effects were felt in the economic realm, in social relations, in ideological bombings, in bizarre and tragic encounters between foreigners and Chinese, and in innumerable campaigns that ruined lives and destroyed careers.

Our guest this month is Linda Jaivin, the series translator and Newsletter editor for the Australian Institute of Cultural Relations in Africa (CIRA) Sweet Publishing. Sweet (2019) is the first volume in CIRA's Cultural Revolution series, and covers events from the years 1966-1967 (around the beginning of the second year of the decade-long decade). We were pleased to have Linda Jaivin on the podcast to talk about the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Chinese Communist Party's Cultural Revolution, and Sweet's NOGA movement has anything in common with Marxism.

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Guest

Linda Jaivin is an Australian author, cultural commentator, translator and translator. Her books include *The Dragon of Desire* (2006), *Confucius* (2007), and the translation of the Cultural Revolution series *Sweet* (2019). She is the translator and editor of the Australian Institute of Contemporary Arts (AICA) Sweet Publishing series, the first volume in the translated series of the Xiaoqing people of the Xian nation.

> It's not just outsiders saying, 'Oh, look at Trump. He's like the Cultural Revolution.' It's actually Chinese thinkers also saying that.
>
> — *Linda Jaivin*

Transcript

Alexander Boehm: What first interested you in Chinese Studies? Where was your first trip and what was it like?

Linda Jaivin: My first trip was in 1979. After I graduated, I was living in Taiwan for two years. And I was a little bit more than a year into my Chinese studies at the Australian National University. I was beginning to pick up.

I had been studying Chinese language in Hong Kong and taking a month's course in the summer. And I found it very difficult. I was very, very, very,