

in a wider Chinese political community. The profound repercussions of this failed attempt at nation-building on China's Tibetan frontier continue to this day.

The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier relies on sources primarily generated by the party-state, such as internally circulated reports (*neibu cankao*), gazetteers, Party histories, and state-sponsored oral history collections (*wenshi ziliao*), and as such, it is “largely told from the perspective of the Party-state and its representatives” (p. xv). In researching this book, Weiner consulted a remarkable collection of 2,500 individual folios, which were created between 1953 and 1960 and stored in the Zeku County Communist Party Committee Archives and the Zeku County People's Government Archives. Weiner readily acknowledges the dearth of Tibetan voices in these archives that were not at some level sanctioned by the Chinese party-state. Rather than attempting to tell this narrative from Tibetan secular and religious leaders' perspectives, Weiner reminds us that his book is firmly focused on the Chinese party-state itself. He carefully reads between the lines of his archival sources, and in the process, he makes an exceptional contribution to our understanding of the CCP's “achievements, frustrations, and fiascos” as it attempted to create a new socio-political order on the Tibetan frontier (p. xv).

Given that access to CCP archival materials from inside Tibetan areas has become increasingly restricted in the Xi Jinping era, Weiner's meticulously researched and theoretically ground-breaking study makes a critical and timely contribution to both Tibetan studies and Chinese studies. While other recently published monographs, such as Melvyn Goldstein's *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume IV: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957–1959* (University of California Press, 2019) and Xiaoyuan Liu's *To the End of Revolution: The Chinese Communist Party and Tibet, 1949–1959* (Columbia University Press, 2020), analyse the CCP's involvement in Central Tibet, Kham and Amdo, Weiner's study is much more narrowly focused on one specific Tibetan county in Amdo. This narrow geographic scope enables him to closely trace the evolving relationships between Party cadres, United Front representatives, and local secular and religious leaders in Zeku County in the 1950s. Scholars of empire, nationalism and socialism in East Asia and Inner Asia will significantly benefit from reading *The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier*. Instructors teaching graduate seminars and upper-level undergraduate seminars in modern Chinese and Tibetan history could productively assign this book alongside Nakstang Nulo's memoir, *My Tibetan Childhood: When Ice Shattered Stone* (Duke University Press, 2014), which chronicles his life as a nomad on the Amdo grasslands in the 1950s. Finally, this volume is a must read for specialists in modern Tibetan history and anyone seeking to understand the history of CCP policies along China's ethnically complex frontier.

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Music as Mao's Weapon: Remembering the Cultural Revolution

Lei X. Ouyang. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2022. xvii + 198 pp. \$28.00 (pbk). ISBN 9780252086212

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The songs and sounds of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) are still present in China today, and this is largely the result of their intense promotion and omnipresence in daily life during the final

decade of the Maoist period. Half a century later, much has been written and said about Cultural Revolution culture and music, its socio-cultural persistence and market value. Lei X. Ouyang herself has contributed a PhD thesis and several articles since 2004. For *Music as Mao's Weapon*, she re-organized her material and findings in book form, and set the focus on individual musical experience, supported by five Chinese interviewees (plus one retrieved from an oral history project); all experienced the Cultural Revolution before migrating to the US.

Music as Mao's Weapon is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one, "Researching the battlefield," serves as an introduction to the book project, which is based on interviews and fieldwork carried out in the PRC and the US between 2001 and 2018. Ouyang's focus is on the "weaponization" of music and its impact on politics, childhood and memory, which also reflects the three main chapters of the book. Central to her study is the anthology *New Songs of the Battlefield* (*Zhandi xin ge*), published in five volumes from 1972 to 1976. As an ethnomusicologist, she is "interested in how the songs trigger powerfully emotional memories of a different time and place," and how "for many who came of age during the Cultural Revolution, the songs and the memories they evoke are distinctly separated from the overtly political content and function of propaganda music" (p. 10). She approaches these questions by "listening to witnesses" and relates the once widely circulating set of "five-hundred plus songs" to individual lived (musical) experience. Listening, here, refers to the interviewees.

Chapter two, "Music and politics," investigates China's political development and the revolutionization of music until 1976. From Mao Zedong's "Yan'an talks" (1942), the author moves to Zhou Enlai's influential "three processes of transformation" (revolutionize, nationalize, popularize) and then onto the cultural politics of Jiang Qing, which led to a period of silence (1969–1972). A return to tradition was initiated by Zhou Enlai and led to the compilation of the *New Songs of the Battlefield*. Ouyang offers revealing insights into the production and editing process of this extremely popular anthology that aimed at including songs from workers, peasants and soldiers from all provinces, as well as from the officially recognized national minorities. Ouyang admits that "the exact criteria for selecting the songs remain unclear" (p. 43), and in her analysis she expands the original four main song categories to six, emphasizes the practice of collective singing, and illustrates the everyday sonic environment which accompanied the political campaigns and slogans, arguing that "the lyrics alone cannot account for the impact of this moment of singing" (p. 69).

One of the six thematic categories is explored in chapter three, "Music and childhood," where the author introduces selected examples from altogether 92 songs directed towards children and youths, which "were essentially the only approved songs for the generation that came of age when the CCP strictly censored all music and arts" (p. 77). Aside from musical structure, lyrical content and the semiotics of propagandistic children's songs, lyrical repetition is highlighted as one promotional strategy of the anthology, reflected in the frequent use of specific vocabulary in song titles, such as the words "women" (we; in 50 titles), "hong" (red; in 54 titles) and "da" (big/great; in 103 titles).

Chapter four, "Music and memory," distinguishes listener generations and involvement in nostalgia to explain the songs' ongoing mnemonic productivity, which is "not generated by the music itself ... but rather by a song title or a snippet of lyrics" (pp. 109–110). Ouyang argues convincingly that emotional responses differ among four specified generations: pre-socialist, socialist, Cultural Revolution and reform generations. Most important and positively responding, she argues, is the Cultural Revolution generation (ages 6–16 in 1966): "These are people who still remember every word of a Cultural Revolution song. ... And when put in contrast to the present of contemporary China, many remembered moments of goodness in the face of evil" (pp. 111–112). Goodness amidst traumatic experiences of violence and loss refers to moments of unity and solidarity inspired by song lyrics, to emotions generated by collective activities and singing. The interviews illustrate this clearly, as in the case of erhu musician Wang Guowei, living in New York City, who was asked if he knew the *New Songs of the Battlefield*: "Yes! I know them all. I can sing them all" (p. 122). He still likes them because of their musical and melodic qualities: "I am not talking

about politics.” Memories of childhood combine with a sense of familiarity, “that is something I can’t cut off” (p. 122).

Chapter five, “Conclusions,” reflects on music’s weaponization and the long-term consequences in China. It is hardly surprising that the children’s songs, for example, “have the strongest long-term impact” today (p. 140). The emotional intensity at a young age, associated with traumatic violence and moments of goodness, is captured in these songs and still resonates in post-revolutionary China today. Finally, Ouyang takes this musical heritage, its politics and memory, into the “battlefield” of the Xi Jinping era, points at continuities and asks us to seriously consider the sensory experience of propaganda culture.

Music as Mao’s Weapon is well written, occasionally a little redundant, and comes with detailed background information, photographs, music examples and song lists, which makes it attractive also to the non-China expert. It exposes strategies of revolutionary music composition and investigates its effects on the individual in the highly politicized and violent context of the Cultural Revolution. For many, this “music serves as the soundtrack of their youth” (p. 140), and either music, melody, lyrics and/or a song title can trigger memories of the past. Framed in a carefully explained ethnomusicological approach and centred around the *New Songs of the Battlefield*, the interviews affirm the emotive long-term power of revolutionary songs. The book, however, would have benefitted from a more nuanced approach towards divergent memory content. This also includes the interviewees, who mention that they rarely get the opportunity to talk about this period since they live in the US. Does their situation abroad affect individual memory and feelings of nostalgia differently? Notwithstanding that the reader may still be a little insecure about what exactly is remembered or forgotten, Ouyang’s book offers stimulating insight into why, how and to whom this musical heritage is still meaningful today.

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Agents of Subversion: The Fate of John T. Downey and the CIA’s Covert War in China

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John Delury has written a beautifully constructed narrative history that moves back and forth between the US and the PRC. The focus is on the aggressive secret tactics designed by Washington and made operational by the CIA in the 1950s and 1960s. The goal was to destabilize the Beijing regime and at best replace the existing government with one that was led by Third Force Western friendly leaders like General Zhang Fakui. Beijing took the threat seriously and reacted in a proactive, paranoid fashion. Delury argues that Beijing’s leadership effectively applied “paternalist terror” methods to quickly eliminate any hint of domestic opposition. To humanize an otherwise long and complicated tale of the CIA and American policy failures in China, Delury highlights the fate of John T. Downey. Downey was the CIA agent who was captured after being shot down in the mountains of Manchuria during a botched munitions and supply drop to local agents in November 1952. Downey rotted in a Beijing prison until 1973, when his freedom was part of the