

As the newest encyclopedic work to be devoted to the subject, the text will be found to contain much up-to-date information on figures currently of importance in the Chinese world.

nature, for the editor has chosen to focus attention primarily on political events and the lives of individual political figures belonging to the period in question. In doing so he has given little or no attention to other important dimensions of the modern Chinese experience, such as art and religion. There is, for instance, no entry discussing modern developments in Buddhism, Daoism, or Chinese Catholicism. Moreover, the entries devoted to Chinese Protestant movements, such as the Anti-Christian Movement, Christian Missionaries, and the Tianjin Incident, are unfortunately rather uneven in their coverage of these topics.

The entry devoted to a discussion of various anti-Christian movements, for instance, limits itself exclusively to developments belonging to the twentieth century, thereby failing to inform the reader of earlier, formative incidents of this kind. Also, the Tianjin Incident, while related to anti-missionary activities in the nineteenth century, was neither typical of such movements nor the most important of that century. It is also curious that the entry on anti-Christian movements is placed under the general heading of "Society," while the entry discussing the Tianjin Incident is not. In this same general vein, the reader is also likely to be puzzled to discover that the entry on the Unequal Treaties is classified under the subject headings "Sino-Japanese Relations" and "Sino-Russian Relations," but not "Sino-Western Relations."

Despite these imperfections, this work should prove to be useful to the general reader, and in particular those individuals seeking background data on contemporary politics and leading political figures, such as Jiang Zemin, Li Denghui, Yang Shangkun, and Zhao Ziyang. Similarly, the entries entitled "One Country, Two Systems" and "Taiwanese Independence Movement" that relate to current political realities will be found to be highly instructive for the general reader. Taken as a whole, and the various limitations of the text mentioned above notwithstanding, this reference work should prove quite helpful to students majoring in modern history, as well as individuals seeking to familiarize themselves with contemporary Chinese political realities. ■

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Seasons of High Adventure

Edgar Snow in China

By S. Bernard Thomas

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XVIII + 416 PAGES



To be successful, a biography must make the reader care about the subject. Whether people are depicted as angels, devils, gods or sinners, the reader must come to care passionately about them and what they do or what happens to them in the course of their lives. Some subjects loom large on the historic stage and by this means are an easy subject to attract the attention of the reader. The names are surrounded in mystery, intrigue, or controversy, and the reader is drawn to follow their stories. For lesser-known individuals, the author must provide the interest to carry the reader through. The title of this book comes from a remark in Edgar Snow's diary. "However well I readjust myself to life in America, my youth, the best part of it, lies ever in the Orient. This was the season of high adventure, experience, and unusual thrills" (p. 13). Although the author provides a great deal of information about Snow, he does not quite engender the excitement of the title, and this alone detracts from the book as something to recommend to secondary-level readers.

Thomas gives us a very good picture of Snow as innately liberal-humanistic with individualist impulses. We get a good picture of the beliefs he held and how they changed as a result of his experiences in China and elsewhere. As he traveled in China, he came to see "the necessity for a revolutionary-style 'people's war' against the Japanese invader, one that would simultaneously advance the twin goals of national and social liberation" (p. 7). As a result of his travels and interviews, his vision of a New World emerged, one that was "decolonized, demilitarized, mutually cooperative, interdependent and at peace" (p. 8). In his letters to family, particularly his father and brother, Snow reveals the "targets of his stark and radical analysis of the state of the world were imperialism (Western and Japanese), militarism (Chinese and Japanese) and fascism (European and Asian)—all of them part of a collapsing global order" (p. 82). Snow developed a strong animus toward British colonialism and its

BOOK REVIEWS

condescension toward Americans and racism toward natives. He went to China with neither missionary zeal to save nor revolutionary passion to change it, but a strong desire to accurately represent events in China to his reading public.

Thomas shows how Snow's views matured as a result of his experiences. Although Snow held a hostility toward extra-territoriality and colonialism, he came to realize that these protections were crucial to his own freedom to act and write as he did. Snow developed a deep conviction that the world would be significantly different after World War II. His view of the new global power structure came to "stress the long-term American national interest in a mutually beneficial relationship with a unified, independent, and modernizing China" (p. 15). Snow's warmly engaging personal style, coupled with sharply observant descriptive powers, gave his writing a broad appeal.

Thomas gives some examples from his diary and printed works. One of the strengths of the book is the way it deals with what is known as Snow's major work, *Red Star Over China*. Snow saw in the Chinese Communists qualities he admired: "youthful idealism, optimism, "modern" rational-scientific approach to transforming China". Snow felt in Mao Zedong a "certain force of destiny" (p. 51). Thomas shows how this work not only created Snow's reputation but also affected his future writing. For many people of the time and scholars who came later, this book had an important influence on our interest in China and changed our view of the society from a dynasty in decline to a country in the throes of re-definition.



Some of the important influences on the development of Snow's opinions include Soong Chingling (widow of Sun Yat Sen and outspoken critic of events and people). She encouraged his opposition to the KMT (Chiang's government) and was a "major influence in educating the young Snow on all the above matters from her own political perspective" (p. 43). J. B. Powell, a Missouri journalist, provided Snow with his first job in China. It was under his expert tutelage that Snow began his China journalism career, and Powell continued to be his friend and mentor for many years. Rewi Alley, a New Zealander who stayed on in China until his death, was a lifelong friend and partner with Helen, Snow's wife, in their wartime efforts to aid China through INDUSCO. Helen Foster Snow is described as an ambitious, keen-minded, attractive, upbeat, young woman determined to make her name as a writer. Thomas documents some of the tensions in their marriage but refrains from casting either as the cause. Thomas identifies Lu Xun as a "major force in Snow's development" (p. 92) in that he introduced Snow to writers of the left.

Snow's relationship with Mao, although not a close one, was important to his credibility with both the Communist Party in China and his readers. Although it had given him unique and invaluable advantages as a journalist, Thomas notes that it had also placed an inevitable psychological burden on him as well. Although in his later years, Snow was troubled over the extremes of the Mao cult, he was still convinced that Mao would set the revolution on the right track of peasant-based reform. When they parted for the last time, Mao, reflecting on their thirty-five-year relationship, said, "I never lie to you and I believe you do not lie to me either" (p. 327).

Maybe this is the best thing that can be said about Snow—that he was trusted to accurately report and interpret what he learned from not only leaders of the left, but also from the people he observed. Thomas closes with the observation that Snow's view of a "demilitarized world of liberated nations and uplifted peoples, united in a collectively secure, equitable, and peaceful international order, remains an ongoing quest of our planet" (p. 340). By the end of the book, we come to care about Edgar Snow as a friend and to miss his humane commentary on human events.

I recommend this book as one among a list of biographies for high school English classes that look at the writing form of the biography and at the role of journalists in shaping the response to the news they write. Snow's *Red Star Over China* would certainly appear on a list of books that changed readers' attitudes and understanding of world events. I also recommend it for world history classes where the book would make a nice companion to the study of World War II, imperialism, and Asian Communism. ■

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