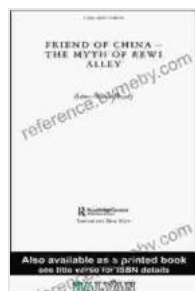


Friend of China: Unraveling the Enigma of Rewi Alley's "Chinese Worlds"



Rewi Alley, the charismatic New Zealander who spent over half a century in China, has been hailed as a "Friend of China" and an ardent advocate for socialism. His life and work have been the subject of numerous books and articles, yet many questions remain about his true motivations and the nature of his relationship with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).



Friend of China - The Myth of Rewi Alley (Chinese Worlds) by Anne-Marie Brady

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2361 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 221 pages



In the recently published book, "Friend of China: The Myth of Rewi Alley's Chinese Worlds," historian Ian McGibbon takes a fresh look at Alley's life and legacy, challenging long-held assumptions about his role in China and the extent of his support for the CCP.

Rewi Alley's Early Life and Activism

Rewi Alley was born in 1897 in New Zealand, and from an early age, he exhibited a passion for social justice. He left New Zealand in 1927 and arrived in Shanghai, China, where he witnessed the horrors of colonialism and the rise of the Chinese revolution.

Alley quickly became involved in the struggle for Chinese independence and worked closely with the CCP. He founded the Gorky School in Shanghai, which became a training ground for young Chinese activists and journalists.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), Alley played a key role in organizing Chinese resistance and promoting China's cause overseas. He traveled extensively throughout the countryside, witnessing the devastation of the war and the resilience of the Chinese people.

Alley's Relationship with the CCP

McGibbon argues that while Alley was initially sympathetic to the CCP, his relationship with the party was always complex and often strained. Alley was a strong believer in democratic socialism, and he was critical of the CCP's authoritarian tendencies.

As the CCP's grip on power tightened after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Alley faced increasing pressure to conform. He was forced to abandon his independent initiatives and accept the CCP's interpretation of Chinese history and politics.

Despite these pressures, Alley remained in China, believing that he could still contribute to the country's development. However, his frustrations with the CCP grew over time, and he eventually became disillusioned with the regime.

Alley's "Chinese Worlds"

McGibbon argues that Alley's experiences in China led him to develop a complex and nuanced understanding of Chinese society and culture. He rejected the prevailing Western stereotypes of China and instead painted a more positive and sympathetic picture of the Chinese people.

Alley's writings and speeches presented a "Chinese world" that was different from both the Western and Soviet models. He emphasized the importance of China's unique history, traditions, and values, and he argued for a socialist path to modernization that was rooted in Chinese realities.

However, McGibbon contends that Alley's enthusiasm for China sometimes blinded him to the darker realities of the CCP regime. He downplayed the extent of political repression and human rights abuses, and he often echoed the party line in his public statements.

Legacy and Impact

Rewi Alley's contributions to China are undeniable. He dedicated his life to the country, and he played a significant role in its development. His writings

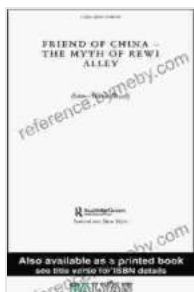
and speeches helped to shape Western perceptions of China, and he inspired countless young people around the world.

However, McGibbon argues that Alley's legacy is more complex than it appears. He was a complex and often contradictory figure, and his relationship with the CCP was fraught with tension and compromises.

By critically examining Alley's life and work, "Friend of China" challenges the myth of an unswerving "Friend of China" and provides a more nuanced understanding of Alley's role in Chinese history.

Ian McGibbon's "Friend of China" is a thought-provoking and revisionist account of the life and legacy of Rewi Alley. By challenging long-held assumptions and presenting a more balanced assessment, McGibbon sheds new light on one of the most enigmatic figures in Sino-Western relations.

This book is essential reading for anyone interested in Chinese history, Western perceptions of China, and the complexities of cross-cultural activism.



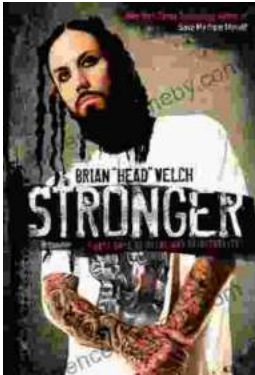
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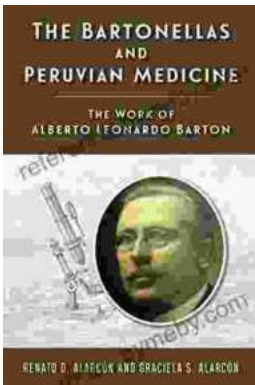
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