

[PDF] The Man Who Stayed Behind

Amanda Bennett, Sidney Rittenberg - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Author: Amanda Bennett, Sidney Rittenberg
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Rittenberg, the only American citizen to join Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party, befriended Zhou Enlai, debated with Mao and was influential in the '60s Cultural Revolution. Born in South Carolina, this former U.S. labor organizer had his faith in Mao's "sacred revolutionary organization" tested by 16 years in Chinese prisons. His first jail term (1949-1955), after he was wrongly accused of spying, only strengthened Rittenberg's resolve to prove himself a loyal communist. Released, he took a job scrutinizing co-workers' dossiers, sending suspected

counter-revolutionaries to labor camps. His next 10 years (1968-1977) in solitary confinement broke his faith in communism. Coauthored with Wall Street Journal reporter Bennett, this robust, often exasperating political autobiography affords close-ups of recent Chinese history as it was made. Rittenberg, who emigrated to the U.S. in 1980 with his second Chinese wife, now views Mao as a "brilliant, talented tyrant" and a "tragic figure," but he remains proud of what he views as the revolution's accomplishments and his role in it. Photos. Author tour.

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From Kirkus Reviews The dramatic odyssey of an American who cast his lot with mainland China's Communists following WW II--and who lived to regret it. A member of the American Communist Party who had organized coal miners and steelworkers in the South prior to entering the Army in 1942, Rittenberg was trained as an interpreter. Posted to Asia, the author stayed on as a UN employee after V-J Day, and he soon joined forces with the Reds who eventually wrested control of China. The only US citizen ever to be accepted by the Chinese CP, Rittenberg earned his keep as an upper-echelon official in the Party's Broadcast Administration before, during, and after the Revolution. An ardent leftist, he gave his intellectual and ideological all to the presumptively common cause--and, for his pains, he was twice imprisoned, for a total of 16 years. Though rehabilitated following a ten-year stay behind bars that began at the height of the Cultural Revolution, he and his loyal Chinese wife made for the States in 1980. Here, with the help of Wall Street Journalist correspondent Bennett (*The Death of the Organization Man*, 1990), Rittenberg offers an account of his China sojourn that's remarkable, among other reasons, for its near- perfect pitch. At the outset, he tells his tale in the same awed tones as might a callow, hero-worshipping youth. Subsequently, as he gains maturity and perspective, his voice becomes that of an aging radical no longer willing to swallow the metamythical pronouncements of despots whose lust for power has undermined a shared vision. Throughout, moreover, Rittenberg (who turned 70 last year) provides insightful takes on Mao, Jiang Qing (Mao's hard-driving wife), Zhou En-lai, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping, and other notables with whom he treated during his 35 years in China. The gripping saga of an expatriate whose extraordinary experiences left him without illusions about Marxism--but with his personal ideals triumphantly intact. (Eight pages of b&w photographs, one map--not seen) --
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