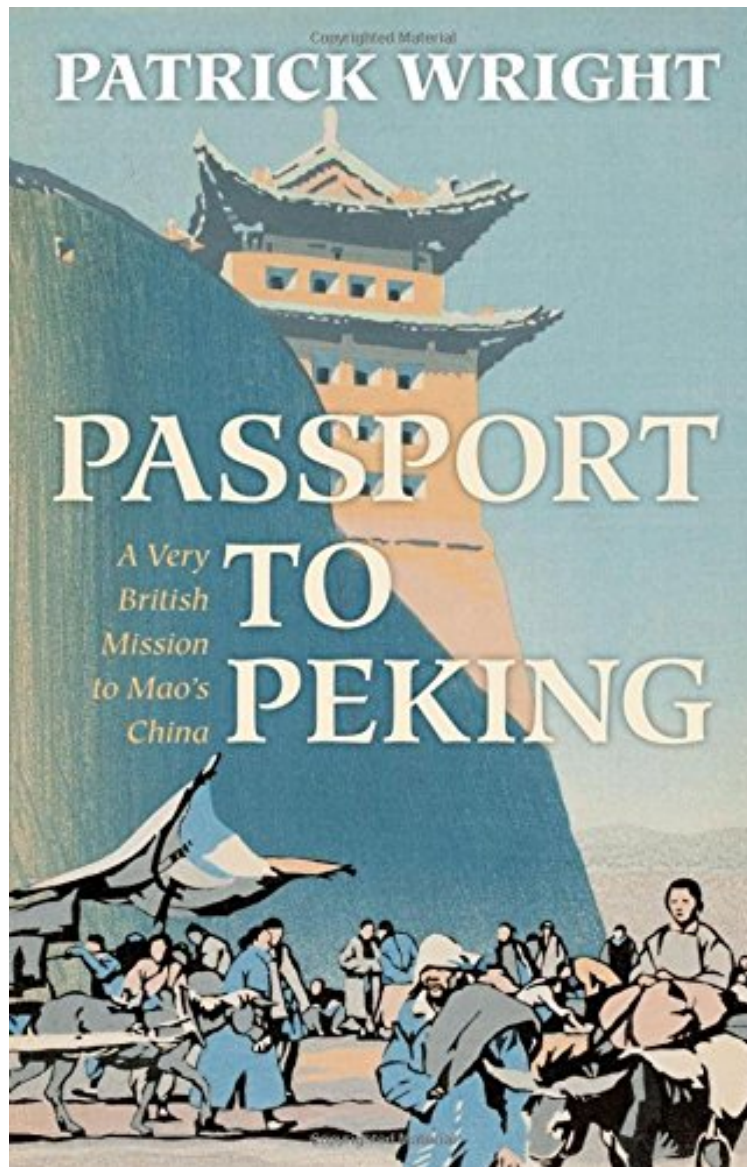


[Pdf free] Passport to Peking: A Very British Mission to Mao's China

Passport to Peking: A Very British Mission to Mao's China

Patrick Wright

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Patrick Wright : Passport to Peking: A Very British Mission to Mao's China before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Passport to Peking: A Very British Mission to Mao's China:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting Western view of the early PRCBy HowardAn interesting book that illuminates well the nature of official dealing with the fledgling Peoples Republic of China as well as the interesting characters of the credulous fellow travellers , jaded Labour Party politicians, alcoholic

Trotskyists and eccentric artists that made up the British delegations to the new communist behemoth. The details of how the Chinese side presented the carefully crafted and fairly artificial image of new China to the Western visitors makes for interesting reading and has much in common with what a Western tourist in North Korea today would experience than that of a contemporary tourist in the PRC, notwithstanding the artificial shut down of Hangzhou last week (at time of writing). China nowadays is of course far more open, but the uncompromising insistence on the official version of reality and the brazenly self-interested interpretation of historical and political events remains. The details of the travel arrangements are, on their own, interesting stories - particularly the stop off in Russia. There are certainly familiar echoes for those of us who have travelled around Asia. One minor criticism would be that I believe the author falls in to the common trap of assuming that Zhou Enlai was somehow a great guy. There have been plenty of charming psychopaths in history and being the human face of Maoism doesn't require very much humanity at all! I would argue that Zhou was merely more conscious of the fact that the various crimes of Mao and the Communists would inevitably come out at some point and he quietly made sure he was politically well positioned to look like a break on the madness instead of a complicit part of it when the inevitable critical historical scrutiny comes to the Mainland.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Beeyunggreat
book 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fellow Travelers
By Christian Schlect
When the revolutionary People's Republic of China came into being out of the ashes of World War II, it was firmly in the orbit of the USSR with the United States hostile to its existence. While the government of Great Britain was supportive of the United States, many of that country's artists, intellectuals and labor leaders favored the overthrow of Chinese warlords, wicked land-owners, and corrupt politicians: they celebrated the arrival of a clean communist state of the workers. Patrick Wright's book tells the story, from a British perspective, of a number of these left-leaning, if not communist, individuals (mostly men but a few women) who made their way in the early 1950s to Mao's new China. While the central focus of the book is on the PRC, there is a good amount of interesting material on travel through Russia while en route to the Middle Kingdom. One comes away from reading this book with a reminder of how hard it was to travel long distances in the days before commercial jets; how isolated China was from the Western world; how the success of group travel always comes down to individuals; how truth fell victim to the needs of the new rulers; and how innocent were these good people of the terror that Mao would soon unleash on his country's people. I most appreciated the cultural and political comparisons made by the author related to art and artists, specifically telling insights involving Paul Hogarth and Stanley Spencer.

In 1954, eighteen years before Nixon's momentous visit to China, scores of European delegations set off for Beijing, in response to Prime Minister Chou En-Lai's invitation to "come and see" the New China and to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Communist victory. In this delightfully eclectic book--part comedy, part travelogue, and part cultural history--Patrick Wright tells the story of the remarkable Britons who made this journey, including former Prime Minister Clement Attlee; dapper and self-important philosopher A. J. Ayer; the brilliant young artist-reporter Paul Hogarth; poet and novelist Rex Warner (a former Marxist who had just married a Rothschild); and the infuriatingly self-obsessed Stanley Spencer, who emerges as the unlikely hero of the story. Using a host of previously unpublished letters and diaries, Wright captures the impressions--both mistaken and genuinely insightful--of the delegates as they wandered behind the bamboo curtain. Full of comic detail, this book is also a study of China as it has loomed in the British mind: as both the primitive orient of early western philosophy and the alluring site of revolutionary transformation.

"An exuberantly rich chronicle teeming with personalities, stories, encounters and ideas, filled with the strangeness and wonder of colliding worlds." --David Hayes, Books of the Year, Australian Policy Online
"An impressive and unusual book... that succeeds by presenting a wonderful cast of characters set in a dimly remembered period... a depth and resonance that make it more than the sum of its considerable parts." --Jonathan Fenby, Literary 'Acerbic and fair-minded. . . social comedy with a rueful edge' --Wall Street Journal
As ever with Wright's work the sheer density of thought, allusion and fact is staggering - but what is more amazing is the deftness with which he spins from this a gossamer and entrancing narrative thread. --Will Self
"Entertaining." -The New Yorker
"Intensely researched and comical. Impressive." -Yorkshire Evening Post
About the Author
Patrick Wright is a writer and broadcaster and the best-selling author of several highly acclaimed history books.