

learned since from any official American adviser or wise man: how to behave in an air raid. Yardley's theory was that if a direct hit landed on you, nothing would save you. The chief danger of an air raid, he said, was splintered glass from windows. Thus, when one hears the siren, one should get a drink, lie down on a couch and put two pillows over oneself—one pillow over the eyes and the other over the groin. Splintered glass could hurt those vital organs, and if the eyes or the groin were injured, life was not worth living. It was good advice for any groundling in the age before atom bombs; and I took it. Yardley was excessively kind to me, as were so many older men in Chiang K'ai-shek's Chungking.

I was thus, among American advisers to the Chinese government, the lowest man in the hierarchy, so low as to be almost imperceptible. Twenty-three years old, fresh from the Ivy League—which was accepted as fresh from the cathedral seminary by the Americanized Chinese government—totally inexperienced, I was titled Adviser to the Chinese Ministry of Information. In this job I was a thorough failure. I did not understand the job. No one could explain it to me. I thought of myself in the stiff Socialist rhetoric of my youth as a “fighter against Fascism.” But in reality, I was employed to manipulate American public opinion. The support of America against the Japanese was the government's one hope for survival; to sway the American press was critical. It was considered necessary to lie to it, to deceive it, to do anything to persuade America that the future of China and the United States ran together against Japan. That was the only war strategy of the Chinese government when I came to Chungking in 1939, and my job was to practice whatever deception was needed to implement the strategy.

Technically, I was supervisor of the news-feature stories of the “China Information Committee.” I was paid four hundred Chinese dollars a month, worth at the then rate of exchange, sixty-five American dollars; but I was free to do my own free-lancing, for anything I could publish would serve the Chinese cause.

For the first few weeks I lived in a mission compound; then the expected bombings began and the mission was blasted out. After the bombings, I moved into a government dormitory on the downstairs floor of the information service office, where I slept with Chinese roommates and ate breakfast and lunch at their mess. Later, when the bombings flattened more and more of Chungking, the Ministry of Information built, in the back yard adjacent to it, a press hostel for