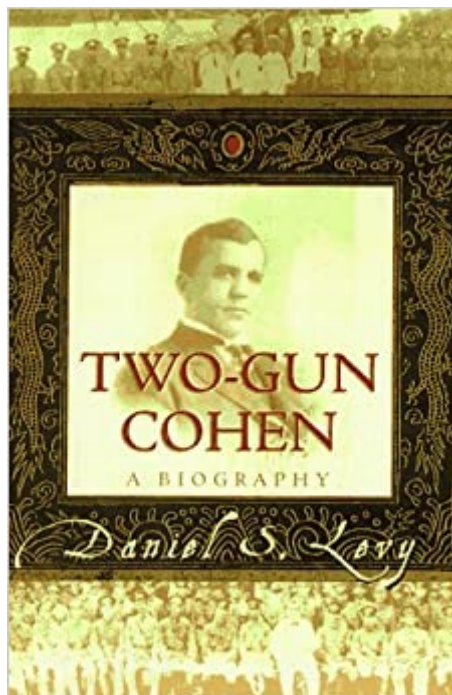


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Two-Gun Cohen



Synopsis

A chunky Jewish battler from the East End of London, a con man, card sharp, and charlatan-with-a-heart who became a general in the Chinese Army, Morris "Two-Gun" Cohen was one of the most unusual adventurers of the 20th century. The story of Cohen's long and adventure-filled life is sure to capture the imagination of readers. of photos.

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Customer Reviews

Levy, a staff reporter for Time magazine, tells the picaresque story of Jewish adventurer Morris Cohen, who in a small way helped influence events in China. Born in Russia of Orthodox Jewish parents and reared in England, Cohen was a hustler, card sharp, and con man who was eventually forced to emigrate to Canada. There, he did the unthinkable in the early 20th century when he came to the aid of a Chinese man. This singular event endeared him to the Chinese community and changed his life. Ultimately, Cohen went to China, where he became the bodyguard of Sun Yat-sen, unifier of modern China. Well researched and written, Levy's biography lets us view the events that shaped history through Cohen's eyes. Although sympathetic to Cohen, Levy has written an unbiased account of his life that is particularly strong in its portrayal of life in Russia, England, Canada, and China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Recommended for all readers. ?Richard P. Hedlund, Ashland Community Coll., Ky. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Soon after the turn of the century a Jewish Cockney adventurer arrived in Canada, seeking his--or

somebody's--fortune. How he evolved into a general in the Chinese Republican Army, and a notorious soldier of fortune as well, is carefully recounted by Levy, a reporter for Time magazine, in his debut biography. Morris Cohen, scion of a religious Jewish family, spent his youth much like the Artful Dodger, picking pockets in the East End of London, precincts which were haunted by the likes of Jack the Ripper. After multiple arrests and a stint in a reformatory, the young hustler made his way to the Canadian prairies, where he became a sometime carny huckster and a full-time card shark, often attracting the attention of the local constabulary. But after service in the Great War, through force of personality and a loud voice, he became something of a community leader, especially among the beleaguered Chinese of the Canadian West. His affinity for the underdog soon made him their sole Caucasian lodge brother and eventually brought him to the attention of the father of the Chinese Republic, Sun Yat-sen. Cohen instantly became a Sun worshipper and, with guns on both ample hips, a bodyguard to the great man and, later, factotum to his widow, the redoubtable Soong. Through a hellish internment during WW II and the turbulent events in postwar China, Two-Gun plied his adventurer's trade. Alas, there's no retirement plan for that trade, and the aging rogue, without savings, became a tiresome Mnchausen, ever expansive about his powers. Levy attempts to set the tangled record straight after exhaustive, detailed research and interviews on three continents. The man he brings to life isn't Lawrence of Arabia; he is a sweeter character. He is Cohen of China. A diverting tale of the life and crimes of a unique Old China Hand, intertwined with the story of modern China. (8 pages photos, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Morris Cohen was a blowhard, a card sharp, and a petty criminal. His life story begins in a country plagued by pogroms, takes him to the streets of London, the wilds of Canada, into the chaos of China in the pre-WWII era, into a Japanese prison camp, and back into China in the post-war era. It is a fascinating tale. But, it is also a touching picture of a man of no great moral character or strength who is made into more than anyone thought he could ever be by his relationship with Sun Yat-sen and his family. Cohen was wise enough to recognize greatness and offer himself up in its service, despite all his own personal flaws. The book covers an interesting time in China and Cohen's almost miraculous trip through those years. He was a rogue of the first order, but unlike many of those upper class English diplomats who looked down their thin noses at him, he was full-blooded in his support of what he saw as China's best hope and understood much about the China that those diplomats never knew existed or cared to understand. I would have loved to have shared a number of afternoons with Morris Cohen, but I hope I would not have been a foolish

enough to play poker with him.

It was a very interesting story which related to the historic immigration of the Chinese to Canada and U.S., the changes in the Government of China from Sun Yet Sun to the present, the development of trade, the pressures of various countries, the changes in Hong Kong, the invasion of the Japanese. Early in the book it talked about the treatment of Jews in Europe, the transportation of orphans to England. It spoke of how the British shipped orphans and undesirable people off to Canada and to Australia. In the center of this historic period was this Jewish man that was a small time pick pocket and card shark, con artist who became very influential in the Chinese society in Canada and later in China. He certainly promoted his accomplishments, but he really did a lot of good. I learned a lot and enjoyed the story; what more can you ask from a book?

Two Gun Cohen is bigger than life. Like most biographies it is not a fast reading book, but it is a great book for anyone interested in the history of western Canada, China or interested in Jewish biography. I read the book after visiting places in England where Two Gun Cohen spent his youth, in the cities of western Canada where he spent his youth and China where he spend his mid life. The book is not for anyone that is not interested in history or biographies of unusual people. For me it was a great book; I wish that it was still available in hard cover, I am buying two additional copies for two friends of mine.

If you want to learn the early 20th Century history of Western Canada you never learned in school, this book is terrific. One surprise after another, particularly how intimately tied the history of Western Canada is to the history of modern day China! This book is fascinating history and a fascinating yarn. 4 instead of 5 stars only because it occasionally is repetitive and a bit disjointed in places, but that should not deter any history buff about reading about an bigger than life Canadian adventurer who, if he had been American, would probably have a theme park based on his adventures and a national holiday named after him!

The story didn't seem to go past the details, inconsequential names and nitnoid minutiae of the writer's obvious research.

What a character! I admire people who live by the seat of their pants. The Chinese make a toast that goes something like: "May you live in interesting times" and it doesn't necessarily translate into

"Good Luck" but Mr. Cohen certainly did live during interesting times...and survived! It is an interesting but somewhat overpriced book , in my eyes.

A very detailed description of Chinese history where the story of Cohen gets a little lost. A very scholarly work & I was happy with the service & the condition of the book I received.

Excellent book about a fascinating subject, with interesting part of history thrown in. Worthwhile reading. Excellent packaging and on time delivery.

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