

A TRIBUTE TO AGNES SMEDLEY

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AGNES SMEDLEY, who died last May in England, will be forever remembered by all who have a belief in the future. It was she who first brought to the West the true story of the Great Chinese revolt. She spent over 10 years in China, recording with fire and with tenderness the tremendous tasks of the revolutionary armies and their leaders. When their victory was certain, she returned to America to win sympathy and understanding for the New China.

This brought about her destruction, for she was hounded out of America by General MacArthur and his friends. They accused her, on the basis of pre-war Japanese police files, of being a Soviet agent in China. Far from being docile to such insults, she reviled her accusers with heroic contempt, even threatening to sue the War Department for libel. The charges were withdrawn, ignobly. Though she won this first round of the battle, she knew that sooner or later another trumped-up charge would be found; and she was so officially hated and feared that a gaol sentence seemed ultimately certain.

She was 57 years of age, and although the fight against the slanderers had taken time and ruined her health, she had already started to write the life and work of Chu Teh, the Chinese leader. In a desperate attempt to regain some moment of peace and health to finish this work, she came to England. Even here, she felt the petty threat of the official bullies. Her American passport was only valid for one year and for the British Empire. She was therefore forbidden to go to China, and she saw little likelihood of her passport being renewed even to stay in England.

To write her last work on China, she was racing against time—legal and lethal. As it turned out, death beat the State Department, although her end was encouraged by the continuous official threat to her peaceable existence. She died of duodenal ulcers, in an Oxford nursing home.

Agnes Smedley should never have died in England—she should never have been in England at all. Her choice for living and dying would have been China (to which she gave her life) or America (which took it). Even so, she died a heroine and a visionary, and if her vision was mainly of a new existence for the wretched millions of China, she embraced equally the dispossessed of every land, par-

ticularly those of America, for she herself was of humblest working-class origin.

So, too, she loved America no less for loving China so much. She was American to the heart's core: and, may it be said by an Englishman—a very great American.

TERROR BOMBING IN CHINA

Agnes Smedley's last article

[Written by Agnes Smedley on March 11 (shortly before she died in the nursing home at Oxford), this article, which discloses terrible facts and sounds a serious warning, is all the more significant in view of the shameless smear campaign which has continued even after her death. The growing nearness of the war danger alone makes this last article a powerful aid to the fight for peace.—Ed., L.M.]

AS everyone knows, the main coastal and some of the inland cities of central and south China, and also Tsingtao in the north, are being subjected to wanton air-raids in which thousands of people are being killed. Following the first raid on Shanghai some two weeks ago, the nationals of some 19 nations living in that city sent a protest to the United Nations stating that around a thousand people had been killed and the city deprived of light and water. The United Nations has done nothing in reply to this protest.

For weeks now, the Chinese press in China proper, and in Hong-kong, has been publishing serious reports about Japanese troops, officers and pilots who were being secretly sent to Formosa from Japan—with General MacArthur's permission and undoubted assistance. The *Ta Kung Pao*, the greatest Chinese newspaper combine that publishes dailies in a number of Chinese cities, recently reported that there are some 100,000 Japanese troops alone on Formosa, and that at least some of the pilots in the 'planes bombing Chinese cities today are Japanese, while others are Americans. The entire Chinese press reported the arrival in Tokyo of Chiang Kai-shek's chief representative, General Wu Teh-chen, to negotiate with General MacArthur for the use of Japanese troops and pilots against the new China—following which the Japanese concentration on Formosa began. They were, of course, called 'volunteers' just as any American there is called a 'volunteer'. American military officers have been shuffling back and forth between Tokyo and Formosa by air for some time.

Even the London *Times* (the first week in March) has carried a story from Tokyo in which *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* was quoted as admitting that a number of Japanese Army officers had gone to Formosa. The names of a number of Generals were mentioned.

The concentration of at least a part of the American fleet, including an aircraft carrier, in the coastal waters of China, is also of vast significance, particularly in the recent bombing of Tsingtao which, in so far as I am informed, cannot be bombed from Formosa.

The *New China News Agency* of Peking has repeatedly published reports charging that Japanese and American pilots are in charge of the 'planes bombing Chinese cities today. It reported, among many other similar tragedies, that American-made bombers dropped incendiary bombs on the coastal city of Foochow on March 3, burning down 1,700 houses and rendering 6,000 people homeless. It further stated that 'Kuomintang remnants, aided by the U.S.A., are building a new airdrome on Taishan Island in the Chushan Group, near Shanghai', and that 'a scheme is on foot to use a base in South Korea for bombing the major cities of Manchuria and North China'.

Spokesmen of the Chinese People's Republic have repeatedly declared that Japanese and American pilots are in charge of the 'planes bombing Chinese cities today because Chiang Kai-shek cannot trust his own pilots to do the bombings. Large numbers of such Kuomintang airmen took their 'planes and went over to the People's Republic in the past, and Chiang cannot trust the others. The best testimony we have about the reluctance even of Kuomintang airmen to bomb their own people is given in the U.S. State Department's White Paper, entitled *United States Relations with China*, which was published in Washington last summer. On page 338 of this book there is a report by General Barr, an American officer, dated June 2, 1948, which states in part: 'Although it has among its personnel over five thousand United States trained pilots, it (the Kuomintang Air Force) accomplished little. . . There was an ever-present reluctance to take a chance on losing equipment and personnel, which was clearly reflected in their constant refusal to operate at other than high altitudes. *There was an ingrained resentment in the Chinese Air Force against killing Chinese Communists who had no air support*'. (Italics mine, A.S.) This reluctance of Kuomintang airmen to kill their own people explains why Chiang Kai-shek cannot trust his own men to do in 1950 what they did not want to do in 1948, particularly since his rôle as an American puppet has become more and more clear.

The conduct of the Kuomintang airmen as described by General Barr differs drastically from the precision bombings of Chinese cities today, which are exact replicas of Japanese bombings of Chungking and other Chinese cities during the war. Nor have we any reason to doubt the soundness of reports of the Chinese press and of the People's Government at Peking. The famous newspaper, *Ta Kung Pao*, for one, for decades has had an excellent staff of experts on Japan and has kept correspondents in every major city in the Far East, while the Chinese People's Government has an excellent intelligence service even in the heart of Chiang Kai-shek's puppet régime on Formosa.

In view of these wanton raids on Chinese cities, we must consider Chiang Kai-shek's loudly-proclaimed plans to invade the China mainland within a short period of time, the plans for which were submitted to the American Government last summer and the outline of which was published in at least one American magazine, the *New Republic*. Let us consider Chiang Kai-shek's invasion force, which totals no more than 250,000 Kuomintang troops and an additional 100,000 Japanese. Since he lost all the rest of his four million army to the People's Liberation Army in the past, he would not dare to invade the China mainland today unless he had the most serious assurance from American warlords that they would come to his aid. Furthermore, Chiang has been joyously proclaiming the coming of the third World War for months, and even before the war with Japan ended, he boasted before a Kuomintang Congress in Chungking that 'I forced the United States to fight Japan and I'll force it to fight the Soviet Union'. He may be insane, but he is nevertheless a treacherous little rattlesnake, just as General Joseph W. Stilwell called him during the war, and there is no doubt but that he, and various American rattlesnakes with him today, hope that by an invasion of China, they can draw the Soviet Union into the *mêlée* and precipitate their long-hoped-for third World War.

A dreadful war plot is being hatched in the Far East, and it includes not only Formosa and Japan, but Indo-China. Yet the secret forces behind this plot are not yet known to the people of the world, certainly not to the peoples of Japan, America, Britain, and the peoples of some of the countries of Europe. To expose and protest, and finally to appeal to the people of America in particular, is the rôle of every peaceable man of the Western world. But it must be done soon, otherwise the plot will reach its fulfilment in a new world war, beginning in the Far East.