

# 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 The charges were withdrawn, ignobly.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.