

IV - 69 - 7. "Troops Led by Woman of 61" - unidentified news clip.

TROOPS LED BY WOMAN OF 61

HOW a Chinese woman of 61 is leading a band of 200 armed miners in guerilla warfare against the Japanese was told yesterday by American authoress, Agnes Smedley, on her return to Hankow from a visit to the interior.

Meanwhile, another Chinese woman—Mme.

Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Generalissimo—was involved in a military.

She has arrived in Hongkong by plane (cables our Hongkong correspondent), but it was impossible to trace her in the city or find out the purpose of her visit.

It was believed, however, that she had gone there for important conferences with Chinese leaders now in Hongkong.

Miss Smedley, who spent three months at the headquarters of the Eighth Route (ex-Communist) Army at Wutaishan in the Chinese "Sacred Mountains," said that the whole population of Shansi Province was uniting, despite almost insuperable hardships, in a struggle against the Japanese.

Barefoot In Snow

She told how many thousand of Chinese guerrilla fighters were marching barefoot, deep in snow, and wading neck-deep in freezing rivers.

She described how many of them had lost their hands or feet through frost-bite during night operations, and how no attention could be given them because of the lack of medical supplies.

"Knowing the Japanese methods with the civilian populations," said Miss Smedley, "the people evacuated their villages on the approach of Japanese soldiers, taking with them foodstuffs and leaving behind them poisoned wells.

"The entire people is becoming an army, training themselves, thus rendering Japanese tenure of North China most insecure. These partisans drill



Agnes Smedley

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themselves in the hills and their numbers increase daily. I saw a group of 1,500 strong grow to 10,000 in a month.

"Recently the Eighth Route Army captured an entire Japanese brigade headquarters in an attack on the rear of a Japanese column.

"Often 100 men set out with 50 rifles. When a man falls a comrade picks up his rifle and continues the struggle until the company is equipped with captured Japanese arms."

Miss Smedley also told how 200 miners from a Shansi coal mine broke open an arsenal when Japanese troops approached, armed themselves, and taking their entire families with them, proceeded to fight their way to safety through the countryside.

Beat Crack Troops

"Then they suddenly appeared in a valley, and helped regular Chinese troops to defeat troops belonging to the crack Japanese 20th Division, who lost 1,000 dead and 500 prisoners.

"But the strangest thing of all," she went on, "is that these miners were led by a woman aged 61, who is affectionately known as the 'Mother of the Partisans.' She is very proud of her two sons who are fighting in the ranks, one with the regulars, the other with the miners."

JAPAN CLAIMS YANGTSE

(By Our Diplomatic Correspondent)

The Japanese are making the Yangtse shipping question just as difficult as they know how.

The British Government has tried to smooth things over by asserting in principle the right to free navigation, while in fact stopping British ships from going up river on the ground that material obstacles (booms, mines, etc.) render navigation too risky.

But the Japanese will have none of this. In a Note to the Consuls at Shanghai they insist that navigation is safe, that a free channel has been cleared.

But foreign shipping must not go up without permission: or they may "invite a misunderstanding with the Japanese Navy."

The Japanese are making the Yangtse resolved to "tell the world" that the Yangtse is closed by its orders, in defiance of treaty rights and of protests from London or elsewhere.

Sir Robert Craigie is again taking up the matter in Tokyo.