

VI - 73 D - 12. "Chinese Fight For Democracy" - Miss Agnes Smedley Speaks at High School Columbus, Georgia - newsclip - date and newspaper not identified.

## CHINESE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

### Miss Agnes Smedley Speaks At High School

Despite the incalculable death and destruction in China," Miss Agnes Smedley, traveller and author, told her audience at the Columbus High School auditorium last night, "all over the country I found the same sentiment—that this is a holy war, something that is worth fighting for, and worth dying for."

Miss Smedley, who spoke under the auspices of the Friedlaender fund, also stated that the Chinese believe they are fighting for "a world democracy."

There are a number of reasons, she continued, why the Chinese, after six long, bitter years of war, can go on and fight some more and retain, even strengthen, their sentiments of faith in a great new China and an enlightened world.

#### Political Training

Chief among these reasons, the lecturer believes, is the system of political training departments maintained by the Chinese Nationalist army. Others include China's size, which enabled her to trade space for time; the feeling engendered by Japanese atrocities; the growth of a national revolutionary movement which tended to remove powerful and harmful

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## Chinese

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internal elements in the government; and, also very important, the progress of socialized medicine and organization of the Red Cross Medical Corps, the National Health Administration, and the Friends of The Wounded Society.

"Politics in China refers to anything that is not military," the speaker remarked, "and consequently the political training offered in the army includes nearly everything." The organization was begun by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in 1938 and, according to Miss Smedley, its few years of existence has had a far-reaching effect.

In courses which extend from six months to a year, Chinese soldiers study the arts, political science, the history of China, anatomy, public speaking, propaganda methods, natural sciences, the Japanese language, and other subjects. Hundreds of soldiers have learned to read and write since they entered the army, due to their political training courses, Miss Smedley said. Every unit down to companies has its politically trained members, whose duty it is to spread their knowledge as far as possible, and thus educate their fellow soldiers. They also turn their knowledge toward presenting plays, publishing newspapers and magazines, and attempting by other means to keep up the morale of the front-line fighters.

#### Poverty of Chinese

The unbelievable poverty of the Chinese army and civilians was vividly described by Miss Smedley. There is scarcely a village that has not been touched by ruthless warfare, and there are no highways, no water systems, no electric facilities, no trucks or railroads, and a pitifully high rate of sickness and death from malnutrition, a pitifully low rate of those who survive battle wounds.

"And yet," Miss Smedley stated, "China is a singing nation. All through the war the troops have continued to sing, wherever they are." This, she believes, is because China, through political training, through medical education, through the rigorous and bitter experiences of war itself, is developing a national consciousness which increases with each step taken by the Japanese and because accompanying this national consciousness is an international consciousness of the hope for a world democracy and a belief in the brotherhood of mankind.