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China's Guerilla Warfare

AMERICAN WOMAN WRITER DESCRIBES TACTICS OF ARMIES IN LOWER YANGTZE WAR-TORN REGION

By AGNES SMEDLEY

(Manchester Guardian)

EASTERN FRONT, CHINA.

A GLANCE at the map of China will show the lower reaches of the Yangtze Valley, which the Japanese have considered until recent months as their "sealed zone" or base of operations. This zone, on the southern bank of the Yangtze, extends from Shanghai up the Yangtze to and beyond Wuhu. From Shanghai it extends southward along the coast to the city of Hangchow; from Hangchow a motor highway leads northwestward to Nanking. This region constitutes a vast triangle, one of the most populous regions of China, in some parts as populous as Belgium. From Shanghai to Wuhu there is a railway. South of Nanking and the city of Chinkiang (capital of Kiangsu Province) is a network of motor highways, built in past years by the Central Chinese Government.

THE JAPANESE, operating as they do with mechanized forces and weapons superior to the Chinese, have established garrisons at every station on the railway and in every walled city or town on the highway. However, within this triangle, in the towns and villages, there are few or no Japanese garrisons; instead, within the triangle are large numbers of guerilla (partisan) units or village self-defense corps, while in the "sealed zone" south of Nanking the New Fourth Army operates.

Up to the present time the New Fourth has operated by guerilla warfare; but because of its size, organization, and the new developments in Chinese resistance it is being transformed into a regular army which will operate by mobile warfare, supplemented by guerilla units. Up to the present it has been the most active and most highly disciplined force in the Lower Yangtze.

Other guerilla forces did not have such a high reputation, but in the past few weeks they have been reorganized and large numbers of their men withdrawn to the rear in the Third War Zone for retraining.

THIS REGION is mainly a vast plain of rice fields, with some wheat fields and mulberry estates. There are a few barren hills in the Nanking-Chinkiang region. There are many streams, large and small, and south of Wuhu many big lakes. Rainfall is heavy for months each year, and often villages are transformed into islands. From the viewpoint of defense by an army equipped with inferior weapons, it seems the most difficult region to defend imaginable. Following the fall of Nanking in the 1937 the Chinese

educating the common people, and before entering the region they knew well that they would have to prove, by victories in battle, that people of all classes could afford to have faith in Chinese arms.

ONE UNIT of this New Fourth Army began operation on the north bank of the Yangtze in May, 1938, attacking Japanese transports. To-day they have equipped themselves fairly well in all respects at Japanese expense. The units on the south bank of the river began operations in June directly south of Nanking. Their record is one of heroic struggle and sacrifice, units often fighting two or three times in twenty-four hours. They began to "solve their problems on the battlefield." Up to the present they have captured over 3000 good rifles and many machine-guns and other arms, but in fighting have destroyed many times that number.

They have destroyed many stations on the Shanghai-Nanking railway, torn up countless miles of highway (with the help of thousands of civilians), destroyed bridges, telegraph and telephone lines. They have almost completely isolated the Chinese population from the Japanese, so that only large Japanese force dare venture into villages or towns. Puppet troops have gone over to them or been captured and "re-educated." Puppet Governments have been destroyed and their leaders shot after public trials, while others, seeing the success of Chinese arms, have secretly kept the New Fourth Army informed of Japanese positions, strength, and plans. Rich men, who formerly feared the New Fourth, have at times gone out barefoot in the pouring rain to guide New Fourth units against Japanese positions. The civilian population constitute millions of eyes and ears in the service their armed defenders.

The Japanese have at times tried to isolate the people from the New Fourth by adopting "kind" methods, and have failed. Two months after the New Fourth began fighting the Japanese increased their small garrisons. They have built a network of stone and