VI - 73 D - 63. "Revolution May Follow War If Democratic Rule Denied"
The Montreal Daily Star, February 22, 1944, p. 9.

VI-73D-63

Chinese Puzzle

Revolution May Follow War If Democratic Rule Denied

CHINA'S future after the war is clouded with uncertainty in the opinion of Miss Agnes Smedley, journalist, author and political observer in China over a period of 14 yeads, who declared at a meeting of the People's Forum last night in the Montreal High School. If the government of General Chiang Kai-shek, which she described as "Fascist rather than democratic," yields to the popular demand for a democratic form of government, the country may ride out of the post-war storm; otherwise China is due for revolution, she declared. In her opinion the present government has no intention of fulfilling its promise of democracy for China within one year after the close of the war.

Chinese Fight to Death

Miss Smedley paid tribute to the heroism of the Chinese soldier who was determined to die rather than surrender. One division, she said, was wiped out nine times in three months, was restored and continued the fight. Such a feeling of hatred has now been engendered against Japan that it seems difficult to see how peace can come about, she declared. Even if most favorable peace terms were offered, the common people of China would not accept them in their present mood of hatred, she said.

One of the main democratic forces in China has been the Communist party, Miss Smedley declared. In exchange for the support of its army in the war, the Communist party has welded the national united front into a strong body, has stopped the confiscation of land, has secured civil rights, free press, free speech and freedom for political prisoners of all kinds.

Communists Bring Light

By a strange irony of history, she said, the Communists who had fought the Chinese Government for 10 years before the war, turned their army over to the Government and showed the Government army how to fight against the Japs. If it had not been for the sale to Japan of war materials by Britain, Canada and the United States the war in China would have been over long ago, she believed.

Miss Smedley referred to a vast system of political education carried on in the Chinese Army, which had materially raised the level of Chinese literacy. The army, she said, was both a fighting and educational institution.