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CHINA GOVERNMENT TERMED FASCISTIC

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Agnes Smedley Warns of Post-war Civil Conflict If Democracy Defeated

There will be civil war in China following the defeat of the Japanese if the National Government goes on suppressing democracy, Agnes Smedley, journalist, author and lecturer who has spent more than 10 years in China, said last night at the People's Forum at Montreal High School.

The present government has promised democracy one year after the war, but has no intention of keeping the promise, she said, because any change of government or policy means the end of the Kuonimong and the ruling class.

She said the present government was fascist in principle, and when asked if Chiang Kai-shek was a fascist, stated, "I do not think he is democratic."

General Chiang, she added, had linked the different parties of China together for war and at present was keeping the fight against the Japanese going in spite of internal unrest, but that was all she would say on the subject of his real political views.

Miss Smedley stated that China was made up of two camps, the government and the communists. The reason she gave for this statement, in view of the fact that there are other political trends of thought in China, was that in a country where democracy does not already exist, the only claim any party has to existence is an army, and the Kuonimong or the fascistic National Government party and the communists are the only factions with armies behind them. The people in general, in spite of government suppression, are democratic, Miss Smedley said.

The Chinese communists are really the democrats of China, Miss Smedley stated. They had fought imperialism, raised the people to higher social levels, welded them together and "pointed the guns of China outward toward the enemy."

There is more than a negative side to the Chinese picture in the war against Japan and "the struggle for the birth of democracy," Miss Smedley said.

When Japan attacked China the Chinese people thought of themselves as did Japan and the rest of the world — that they were a backward race that did not care who ruled them. Perhaps that was so, the speaker said, but the rape of Peiping — of which Miss Smedley told some horrible stories — brought a new life to the Chinese and the Japs became the devils of humanity to them. The Chinese armies fell back from Peiping and made their stand against the enemy further up the Yangtze valley. When word of the horrors in the old capital came to their soldiers one division withstood the Japanese attack although it had to be rebuilt nine times, before it retreated and no Japs were taken alive.

Perhaps the greatest thing that has come out of the war is the spread of education to the soldiers and civilians, Miss Smedley said.

Working on the assumption that the war was going to be long and that soldiers would not endure hardships forever when they did not know what they were fighting for, the government began to educate the army. A special "political education" branch was set up to teach the soldiers the reason why they were fighting. This education, said Miss Smedley quoting from actual observation on the front line and with guerilla bands in occupied China where she served as a volunteer Red Cross worker, has made the Chinese army twice as effective.