

SHARK'S FINS AND MILLET

By Ilona Ralf Sues



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY • BOSTON

1944

COPYRIGHT 1944, BY RALF SUES
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THE RIGHT
TO REPRODUCE THIS BOOK OR PORTIONS
THEREOF IN ANY FORM

Published January 1944
Reprinted January 1944

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Contents

I	FLIGHT FROM GENEVA	3
	Whales and Disarmament — Opium and Narcotics — Manchuria, Ethiopia — Cat, Camera and Continental — And Look What Happened.	
II	EN ROUTE FOR CHINA	11
	Obstetrics — International Sanctions — Fellow Travelers — Tennis and a Moral — Generalissimo Takes Over — No Ricksha for Me.	
III	CANTON	21
	What Price Pacification? — Cockroaches and Firecrackers — Maritime Customs <i>versus</i> Japan — Romantic Old China? — My Guide — Reconstruction Trends — <i>Maintenant, Couturière</i> — New Life Movement — Swatow: Swiss Embroideries Center.	
IV	SHANGHAI	54
	Donald Talks History — Kill and Kidnap with a Smile — Amazing Labor Leader — Versatile Oxford Group — Raiding Heroin Dens — Meet the Opium Tsar — Red Cross Hospital — Sian Incident.	
V	NANKING	106
	The Capital and My Hosts — Health Pioneer — Schools of the Children of the Revolution — Opium Suppression Day — War Breaks Out — Propaganda Medley — “Madame Appoints You Publicity Expert” — Headquarters, Aid Raids, Ming Tombs, and Riche-lieu — Pygmalion — Madame Chiang the Fighter —	

	The Three Soong Sisters — Political Rivalry — Evacuation.	
VI	HANKOW	173
	Pink Bishop's Menagerie — Demoted to Press Censor — Fired — Guerilla Sister — Front Service Corps — Drama or Tragedy? — Peace with Japan? — The Tiger and the Bishop — Off to the Eighth Route Army.	
VII	SHANSI	220
	China's Sorrow — In Chu Teh's Headquarters — Guerilla Training — United Front — Nine Towns Captured — High Mass — Farewell Picnic — Porcine Interlude.	
VIII	YENAN	253
	League of Nations Experts — Cave Hospital — Guerilla Cubs — Democracy Works if You Apply It — China Incarnate.	
IX	BACK IN HANKOW	292
	Blind Man's Buff — Subversive Activities — The Martins Were Loaded — United Front Cocktail — Radio Colonel.	
X	HONG KONG	312
	China Defense League — The One Who Loves China.	
XI	NEW YORK	318
	Thunderclouds in the East — <i>J'Accuse</i> — Madame Comes to Town — What Price United Front?	
XII	BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CHINA TODAY	327

Illustrations

Col. Li Fang, Ralf Sues and Dr. T. T. Hsiao with Members of China's Central News Agency	38
Ricksha-Schoolbus; Wheelbarrow-Schoolbus	38
W. H. Donald and Madame Chiang Kai-shek	60
War Area Service Corps: George Fitch (<i>second</i>) and Col. J. L. Huang (<i>right</i>)	118
School of the Children of the Revolution	118
Madame Chiang Kai-shek in Her Garden	164
Madame Sun Yat-sen Visiting a Spinning Co-operative	164
United Front: Bishop Logan H. Roots, Anna Louise Strong, P'eng Teh-hwai, Frances Roots, Agnes Smedley	188
Dr. Logan H. Roots, Comdr. Lo Jui-ch'ing, Ralf Sues, Charley Higgins, Mme. Chou En-lai; Bishop Logan H. Roots, Agnes Smedley, Frances Roots; Poku, Chou En-lai, Wang Ming, Mme. Wang Ming	188
Front Service Corps: Comrade Tsen, K'ang Keh-Chin (Mme. Chu Teh) and Playwright Ting Ling, All Wear- ing Captured Japanese Uniform Coats	230
Ting Ling's Front-line Theater	230
P'eng Teh-hwai, Chu Teh and James Bertram at Eighth Route Shansi Headquarters	242
Little Red Devils at a Game of Croquet	242
With Commander Chu Teh, Father of China's Guerillas	252
Farewell, Shansi: P'eng Teh-hwai, K'ang Keh-chin and Chu Teh	252

Yenan Central Hospital; Hospital Ward in a Cave	262
Shen Pei College Anti-traitor Meeting	274
Northwestern Partisans Transporting Wounded Fighters	274
Jen Pei-hsi, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai	286
Guerilla Cubs in front of Their Cave Nursery in Yen-an	286
Madame Sun Yat-sen	314

Shark's Fins and Millet

I

Flight from Geneva

THE WHALES were at the bottom of it all. My first impulse to go to China came from them. Not that I was inordinately interested in these marine mammals, but the League of Nations was entrusted with their fate. And as I lived in Geneva, where everyone and everything revolved around the League, I was naturally aware of the periodical meetings of the Committee for the Protection of the Whale. This small body of politicians and experts had the task of drafting a convention acceptable to all nations, which would prevent the extermination of whalekind by ruthless, gain-seeking fisheries.

Early in 1932 the League was at its peak. The Manchuria Incident, its first major political test case, was still on the agenda of the Council and of the Assembly, and the preparations for the greatest event in history — the Disarmament Conference — were in full swing. Hopes ran high. The flags of fifty-seven nations waved from the façades of the hotels on the Quai du Mont Blanc, indicating the headquarters of the various delegations. International private organizations and individual pacifists had come in swarms; no room was to be found in Geneva and for miles around it. In the new glass palace where the Naval, the Military and the Aviation Committees were to meet, special tall showcases had to be built to display the millions of petitions which poured in from all corners of the globe — prayers, wishes, demands that the Disarmament Conference lay the foundations for a lasting peace.

The League was proud — it had scored successes in several technical domains. The League wanted more people to know about its problems and achievements — millions of people, the whole world. It set up a powerful short-wave broadcasting station at Prangins, just outside Geneva at the foot of the Jura Mountains. Weekly broadcasts in many tongues were to rally all of mankind to that nucleus of the future world society — the League of Nations. Each week one of the problems entrusted to the League was to be explained comprehensively.

Sir Eric Drummond, the Secretary-General in person, inaugurated the Prangins sender on February 2, 1932. The details of the program had been kept secret to provide a greater surprise. I tuned in. Instead of the burning question of Disarmament, Sir Eric had chosen as his subject "The Protection of the Whale"! I turned the knob: "Damn it — I'd rather be in China."

But I did not leave then. Geneva held me, as it held thousands of others, with powerful clutches.

I worked at the Anti-Opium Information Bureau, a very small private organization, whose aim it was to make the League and the individual governments live up to their international pledges.

Opium was produced in the Far and Near East in unlimited quantities. All big colonial Powers had opium monopolies. The dope kept native populations calm and yielded appreciable revenues. In addition, there was unlimited manufacture of opium derivatives, such as morphine and heroin. Such drugs were invaluable to medical science, but the quantities needed for legitimate purposes were very small. Whatever was manufactured over and above the medicinal requirements went into the illicit traffic creating millions of addicts throughout the world. No country was safe. Clandestine factories and traffickers operated anywhere, frequently changing their centers of distribution. The police in many countries collaborated closely, endeavoring to track down the powerful international dope

rings. But, to quote J. P. Gavit, this was like “trying to catch a million fleas with teaspoons.”

The United States was the only big Power which had no opium monopoly. The manufacture of high-powered narcotics was limited to the country's internal use, whereas practically all other countries with well-developed chemical industries turned out tons of them to supply the world market.

The United States was the foremost and most consistent anti-opium champion in the world. It was responsible for the 1912 Hague Convention which called for the gradual reduction of opium poppy cultivation to the limits of legitimate medicinal requirements. If the Convention had been applied, there would be no drugs available in the world today for addiction purposes.

When the League was established, the opium problem was entrusted to its care. Though not a member of the League, the United States collaborated conscientiously with many of its technical bodies. It was represented on the Opium Advisory Committee and participated in every international conference. Two Americans were the spiritual leaders of the good fight waged against the omnipotent official and unofficial vested interests. One was hard-hitting, outspoken Stuart J. Fuller, Assistant Chief of the State Department's Far Eastern Division, who never missed a chance to show up any crooked maneuver. His merciless statements were classics hailed by the press, dreaded by the League Secretariat, hated by the Japanese. Everybody knew that Japan was systematically poisoning China — as a matter of national policy and to prepare the ground for an all-out conquest — but Fuller was the only one who would disclose the details of this crime in public. On his initiative the United States had made an unofficial two years' survey of the opium and narcotics situation in China and Manchuria (a thing Chiang Kai-shek was then still too weak to undertake). Fuller came to Geneva with all the proofs neatly typed out. He wiped the floor with the writhing Japanese. However, the out-

standing feature of his international career was the rallying of all nonmanufacturing and nonproducing countries and welding them into a majority bloc — the “Victim Bloc” — to fight the battle against the “Old Opium Bloc.” These latter could not get away with murder so long as he was in Geneva. But the Americans were there only during sessions. The dirty work of undoing the progress accomplished, of “editing” reports, of “cooking” records, of slipping weasel words into agreed-upon resolutions, was done in the months between the sessions.

That’s where the Anti-Opium Information Bureau came in. We had to be on the alert constantly, watch every word, every move; the vested interests and the League’s Secretariat were up to a new trick every day, to sabotage inconvenient international agreements. As soon as we learned of a novel one, we would tip off the press and the Victim Bloc, raise hell in one of our blue press notes or communiqués, or prepare a meticulously accurate paper for some ambitious delegate in search of a good nonpolitical speech, and get him to “spill the beans” on opium at the League’s Assembly or the Council table. We did good work and were just as proud of the congratulations as of the invectives that were hurled at our heads.

The other American was a broad-shouldered, powerful fellow of few words and an iron fist — Harry J. Anslinger, United States Commissioner of Narcotics — the driving power behind the League’s International Police Conference. The United States with its proverbial prosperity and tempting currency had always been a great attraction to clandestine dope traffickers. Prohibition and bootlegging had widened the possibilities. Anslinger did his best to protect the thousands of miles of coast line and southern border and mop up the traffic inside the country. But you cannot prevent malaria by swatting mosquitoes in your house. The swamps have to be dried up. Anslinger set out to dry up the swamps of the world. He placed his men in and around suspect factories and centers of clandestine distribution, watchful to catch the goods before they reached America. Some

governments collaborated, others refused, still others did not even know. He did an excellent job, cracking down upon factory after factory. The most recalcitrant authorities of a country could not close their eyes and had to collaborate willy-nilly when faced with a public disclosure. But the world is large. Manufacturers indicted in France emigrated and opened factories in Turkey. When Kemal Pasha shut down three big, well-equipped "clandestine" concerns, they moved to Bulgaria. And when the Bulgarian Government finally "discovered" that ten illicit factories were operating in its territory, the enterprising gentlemen moved into the interior of China, where raw material was abundant and war lords complacent.

China loomed large as the biggest victim of her own opium and Japanese-imposed narcotics. There were said to be five million addicts in the Yangtze Valley alone. After Fuller's statement Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek took matters in hand and stunned Geneva by adopting his Six-Year Opium Suppression Plan, providing death penalty for manufacturers, traffickers and addicts. The Old Opium Bloc publicly bemoaned the severity of the plan! Sure enough, six months later Chiang added a revenue-yielding opium monopoly to his radical Suppression Plan.

After years of tremendous effort on the part of the United States, the Victim Bloc and all people of good will, the League finally convened a conference in 1931 which was to limit the output of manufactured narcotics to legitimate quantities. A convention was signed which was perfect. It was so perfect that the whole world acclaimed it as the most far-reaching international agreement ever entered into. It was so perfect that not a grain of dope could be bought or sold in the legitimate trade by any druggist or pharmacist throughout the world without the proper national and international endorsement. The only trouble was that it did not affect the illicit trade! Fuller's proposal for a proper control of raw material, so long as production was not limited, had been voted down for some un-

explained reason. The League gloried in its new international dope-bookkeeping activities and expanding budget. By 1936 the compiling of estimates and statistics in this field had dwindled down to tedious routine.

In reality the situation was hopeless. I had lost faith in a solution of the opium problem. The other international domains were just as gloomy. The "settlement" of the Manchurian Incident left Japan master in the Far East, with all countries vying in their efforts to supply her with the necessary war supplies. The Disarmament Conference petered out dismally. I had many Chinese friends, and their dignity in all adversity was the first thing that attracted me. When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, I started learning Chinese. I was weary of the futility of public sessions. The whole atmosphere was vitiating. The sessions dealing with the Ethiopian Incident were nauseating. I decided upon flight, to escape suffocation. I looked around for a place where something constructive was going on, and found nothing nearer than China. I sold my couch, bought a Leica, packed my three C's — Cat, Camera, and Continental typewriter — and set out as a free-lance journalist. With me I took from Geneva a remnant of love for the human being and a bagful of seasoned skepticism.

I went to China totally unprepared. I do not believe I had read half a dozen books about it. I wanted to see things for myself, to be "the eyes and the ears of the man-in-the-street," to publish "Letters to Tom, Dick and Harry" as I went along. It never occurred to my impractical mind to obtain a contract from a publisher or an assignment from a newspaper. I had a verbal agreement with a London news-photo agency to send them the negatives of any interesting snapshots; they would sell them on a fifty-fifty basis. The agreement worked satisfactorily a few months, then the director was replaced and the new man made a practice of keeping say fifty negatives and sending me seven shillings sixpence as my share, which was rather annoying. So

I had to do some secretarial work or some teaching, now and then. Living is cheap in China and I am anything but ambitious.

The strangeness of this amazing country threatened to knock me off my feet, and it took weeks before I could get my bearings. Then I became so fascinated by everything I learned that I never thought of writing. Even today I think it is presumptuous on my part to do so.

This book is neither a study nor a travelogue nor a political treatise. It is a medley of everything, as unorthodox as life itself — an unconventional set of stories and anecdotes — a series of big and small events, of great and little people observed not through a high-powered microscope but with the imperfect, naked, sympathetic, twinkling human eye.

I was fortunate. Through no merit of mine, Madame Chiang Kai-shek played fairy godmother to Cinderella and chose me as a tool — a chisel, to be precise — in one of her sweeping reorganization schemes. This meant daily work with W. H. Donald, China's publicity-shy Richelieu, just across the road from Generalissimo's Headquarters.

I got my first glimpse of Chinese politics and government factions from Donald on Purple Mountain, before the Ming Tombs, during Jap air raids. From that lofty height I was parachuted into the midst of the Central Publicity Board, some sixty color-fast Kuomintang colleagues whose "rice bowls" I had tried to break. Kid-gloved bureaucracy catapulted me back into private life again. A good-will mission took me to Commander Chu Teh's Eighth Route Army headquarters, and curiosity made me proceed thence to Yen-an, capital of the Communist Border Regional Government, where I met Mao Tse-tung and saw to my astonishment that democracy can work in China, despite all theories to the contrary expounded by people who wish to perpetuate the tutelage of the people by the one party in power. On my return to Hankow, I became English

and French broadcaster for the Political Department of the Military Affairs Commission headed by Generals Ch'en Ch'eng and Chou En-lai.

It was a thrilling experience to live and work with people who make history, to see their real faces undistorted, unembellished by propaganda. And when I say "people who make history," I mean any representative of the spirit of free China: a leader in Headquarters, a Kuomintang official, a racketeer banker, a missionary, a people's educator, a soldier, a campaigning school child. I mean a Communist, a reactionary, a liberal, a fighter for democracy, a pro-Japanese minister. Every one of them counts. Every one of them is in China's tremendous struggle individually, a vibrating human being. Every one of them is part of this most stupendous phenomenon in history — China's United Front — a front where bitter foes stand shoulder to shoulder, ready to fight to the last breath for a free China. To every one of them Free China means something different.

I have endeavored to tell of my experiences as vividly as I have lived them. My only ambition has been to re-create each scene, each personality, so that the reader may get a whiff of the atmosphere. If I have failed in many instances it is because life and mankind and China are so much richer in color than words can tell.

To those whom the title *Shark's Fins and Millet* might puzzle, I wish to explain that shark's fins are the crowning delicacy of sumptuous official feasts, and that millet — a cereal which looks and tastes like London fog — is the rice of the poor in China's indomitable Northwest.

II

En Route for China

"I CAN amputate a leg, and take out an appendix, but bless my soul, I don't know how to deliver a child," said the ship's doctor in dismay, contemplating little Mrs. Hsu, who had just been brought into the ward.

The tourist class passengers in the Italian liner *Conte Verde* — mostly Chinese students on their way home after graduation — stood on the deck in small groups, discussing the situation with concern. Mr. and Mrs. Hsu had met and married in Rome, where she studied law and he political science. Three weeks ago they had both obtained their degrees and were now hurrying back to their families. Mrs. Hsu expected to have a quiet month with her mother before the child would be born. But because of either curiosity on his part or the excruciating heat of the Red Sea, the baby had apparently decided to come earlier.

The Italian doctor and the two nurses stood helpless at the bedside. Her pretty face distorted with pain, Mrs. Hsu held her husband's hand convulsively. They did not speak. He swallowed hard to hold back the tears. The situation was critical.

The door opened and a quiet, plain-looking Chinese girl stepped into the ward, and said in a matter-of-fact tone: —

"I have just finished a year's practical work in the maternity ward of the Berlin Charité Hospital. Will you entrust this case to me?"

Next day mother and baby were fine, and a week later Mrs. Hsu was again at our poker table.

Time had to be killed somehow to escape boredom; it was