



CIVILIAN RELIEF NUMBER - June, 1938  
Released by Mary S. Robinson

I have two purposes in sending out these echoes from China, which I have collected from letters of the Editor of The Chinese Chimes, and friends; and from bulletins which have come to me from various sources. I should like to share with you bits of news which do not get into the newspapers, and to call to your attention the urgent need for civilian relief in China. We are informed about the bombings and bloody battles, but we learn little of the aftermath, which often is more horrible than war. The condition of millions of innocent civilians is desperate and we in America seem so unconcerned.

NEWS FROM CHINA

The following paragraphs are from a letter from Rob from Techow. He must have sent the same report to the National Christian Council in Shanghai, for it was broadcast from there on April 28, and came to me a few days ago in a Foreign Missions Conference Bulletin.

"I have visited some of our churches in the country and have been to some of the villages near here where soldiers lived and fought. It is a sorry sight and I marvel at the calmness with which the villagers have met the calamity which has overtaken them. In one village the visiting army had burned the doors, windows, furniture, farm implements, and other articles; had eaten and destroyed large quantities of grain, and prevented the harvesting of crops, and had taken away most of the farm animals and carts. I went through home after home where there is nothing left but the empty shell. When I asked if they had any pigs or chickens the villagers burst into a laugh. To them it sounded ridiculous even to ask if any pigs or chickens had escaped the invaders.

"In another hsien city I saw similar conditions. When we arrived not even a food shop had opened. We were able to buy shao ping, tou fu and fried cakes, so we made out a supper. The next day food shops opened and we were among the first customers. In addition to the usual damages, a strip of buildings from the east city wall to the west city wall was completely destroyed. About 35 homes were nothing but a heap of ruins. Some of them were first burned and all of them had the walls razed. I saw one man who had returned and with some others was trying to clean up the debris which formerly was his home. He was a man of means and had about 80 chien fang tzu. Not a wall was left standing, not a bit of wood was to be seen. Even the stone for grinding grain, which was in the yard was cracked, so great was the heat when the buildings were burned. He lost about \$600 worth of wheat.

"I visited one church where the lay-leader gave an 'address of welcome' in which he said that a few months ago the church was dead. The missionaries had all left this part of the country, and there was no Chinese evangelist; foreign soldiers were living in the church and burning up the furniture, and many of the church members had fled for some place of safety. The speaker's heart was heavy indeed, but later a letter had come which changed his whole outlook on life. It told him that even though the missionaries were not present in body, they had not forgotten their Chinese friends. Then came a letter saying that Pastor L and I would actually visit their church. It was like hearing rain after a long drought, like learning that the doctor is coming

when one is very sick, like getting a new pair of legs when one is a cripple.

"Of course one has to discount some of this as overdone, but it was not mere words of the lips. It came from the heart, and our whole service was full of deep spiritual content. The church members had wept when they first came to the church after it had been occupied by the soldiers, but they cleaned the place, raised some money, elected officers including some lay-leaders, and had arranged for a church member to live in the property. The condition of the church which a few months ago was dead is now better than ever, the leader said. Were it not for such evidences of growth from the hardships that people have gone through and are going through, it would be a discouraging situation which surrounds us. There are so many needs that one hardly knows where to begin nor how to serve. We are starting a training class for lay-men next Monday which will last a month.

"We have opened the Academy in which there are about 70 students, including 13 girls. One of the girls walked 20 miles to get here, and others came nearly as far on foot. Most of them have to be helped financially, and one boy reached school with his father without even money for one meal. They had formerly been well-to-do and usually plant about 80 mu of wheat. There were 20 members in the family, and their home was destroyed by fire. The father and son have no idea of what has become of the others.

From Rob's Most Recent Letter, Dated April 24

"Today I was told by a man who has been out south of here for a few days that an army of about 400 left here in auto trucks last Monday or Tuesday and went along the motor road towards Ensien. When they came to a place where the road had been made impassable, they punished the village by cannonading it. Eight people were killed or wounded. At Ensien they did more cannonading and burned about 40 homes. More than 20 were killed there. From there they went to Huang Hu Yeh and P'ing Yuan, between which the railways had been cut, and those places were cannonaded. A local self preservation society resisted but could not do much. Two who were wounded showed up in P'ang Chuang for medical treatment. Villages in that area were burned. We could hear cannon one day here."

(Note. This area was occupied by the Invaders early in October, but irregular fighting continues in the countryside.)

From a Report By Hugh Hubbard of Paotingfu

"The losses due to the war were especially heavy in the vicinity of Paotingfu. A survey of fifteen selected typical villages showed that the average village family lost \$124.00 (about \$27.50 U.S. currency). This is about two-thirds of the average total annual income of a farm family. Of course some lost less than the average, but others lost all their means of livelihood including grain, food, bedding, winter clothing, furniture, farm implements and animals. To the most needy cases in these villages we distributed \$900.00 worth of millet. The amount to each person was necessarily small, at the most only enough to keep one person alive two weeks. Further grain distributions of grain are greatly needed this spring."

Mr. Hubbard summarized the needs for the Paotingfu field, including the work of the Presbyterian Mission and Hospital, Anglican Mission Hospital, and the Salvation Army as \$25,000. Among these needs is money to care for 300 destitute women and girls in a refugee school.

From a Recent Letter from MR. Hunter of Tungchow

"There is tremendous need for relief everywhere the fighting has gone. Crops, supplies, and money have been taken. The N.C.C. has suggested that all Christians throughout the country give a cent a day for relief and send it to them." (Note. The N.C.C. Broadcast for March 20 announced a surprising amount

collected in that way.)

"Speaking of N.C.C., they have moved their main office to Chengtu, Szechuan so that they can be under the Central Government, but they are keeping the officer in Shanghai going.----- The N.C.C. gives a broadcast in English every Sunday night at 10:45. That should be 9:45 Sunday morning for people on the Chicago area. They broadcast in 1420 kc, and they have a lot of cheerful news for you if you can manage to get them."

I have cited Techow, Paotingfu and T'ungchow because we have lived in these places. I am sure that the same conditions or worse are to be found any place where the fighting has gone. Only Paoting fu has for a length of time maintained a refugee for women and girls. At one time there were as many as 1000 to be cared for.

#### HERE AND THERE

Not all letters and bulletins are discouraging. Here is an extract from a letter written by Frances B. Roots, telling of a journey to Shansi with a relief party. It has been sent out by the Foreign Missions Conference.

"One outstanding feature of the farmer folk in the northwest was their attitude towards the Japanese. We talked with the family that was housing two Japanese prisoners at headquarters. They were on the best of terms with their foreign guests. When we asked how this was, they replied unhesitatingly. "But they are not responsible for this war. We do not hate the Japanese people. We hate the militarism of Japan." We found this same reaction everywhere, even in some who had refuged from scenes of terror in the north.

"It is impossible to do more than mention here the boys and girls in Ting Ling's dramatic group, the young leader of Yen Hsi San's 'Dare to Die Corps', our slow speaking peasant guards from Kansu and Szechuan, and Chu Teh's young wife, sturdy, resourceful, and rich in her heritage of her native Kiangsi countryside. (Chu Teh is a 'Communist' General, now in command of the Shansi armies). Here indeed was a new China-new people and a fresh spirit of sacrifice and courage. As we crept slowly over the repaired tracks into Chengchow, we felt somehow the futility of such bombings. A courageous spirit, born of pain, will not easily be killed".

Recently Rob wrote that a British missionary of a neighboring mission stationed had been slapped by a Japanese sentry because he had not removed his hat and made a deep bow in salutation. Rob's reaction was that if they began that in Techow, he was going bareheaded!

However, he and a colleague have been told that when they drive the hospital car, they must stop and get out in order to greet the sentry properly.

Speaking of hospitals, the nurse at Techow wrote that bed bugs had appeared at the women's hospital, and that the patients were much concerned about their nationality - whether they had come in on the beds which had been borrowed by the Japanese soldiers on their occupation of Techow, or had been carried by native patients. She said the women felt much better if she told them she thought the bb's were Chinese.' She added that duty and pleasure was calling, the duty of cleaning out the bugs, and the pleasure of vaccinating students. She wrote, too, that the hardest strain came not from overwork, but because of the constant drain on sympathies, the many calls for help which could not be adequately cared for because of lack of resources, and the feeling that it was not soon to end.

From Shansi comes the story of a missionary wife into whose home a Japanese soldier made his way, to greet her, "I want some s-h-u-g-a-r". When she gave him some from her very scanty store, the man made himself as

tall as he could and said, "I am an educated Janapese". The lady, drawing herself to her full height replied, "I am an educated American."

A very urgent bit of relief in our Te-Lin field is the repair of the Lintsing Dike, which has broken by floods last summer. Repair is imperative before summer rains, and the money paid in wages will keep many families from starvation.

Seed grain is needed.

#### PERSONAL NEWS

You who received the Chinese Chimes last January may remember that Rob was waiting for an opportunity to return to Techow, from which he had evacuated in October. He did get back about the middle of January. The invaders had occupied part of the Mission Compound, living in both Boys' and Girls' School buildings, and had carried away many articles from our foreign homes. It seems that the Robinsons lost most of their bedding, a victrola, and part of their silver. My new pewter tea set is gone. It was bad enough to lose it, but I felt even worse when a friend suggested that it had gone to make ammunition!

James will sail from Kobe on the Empress of Canada, and will probably arrive here about the middle of July. He seems satisfied with his year at Yenching University. I think he has not yet decided where he will be in college next year.

Elizabeth and I hope to return to China in August or September. She will enter the American School at Tungchow and I will proceed to Techow, where I feel sure I shall find plenty to keep me busy.

Harold will enter pre-medical at Dartmouth next fall. At present he is looking for a summer job with good pay.

#### A LAST WORD

I want to quote part of a cablegram sent by Roger Greene to the Foreign Missions Conference from Shanghai:

"DEFICIT FOR SHANGHAI LOCAL RELIEF THROUGH JUNE ABOUT \$ 500,000 CHINESE DOLLARS FOR 175,000 PERSONS.

"NEED IN HINTERLAND ENORMOUS BUT INCALCULABLE SINCE TRAVEL STILL IMPOSSIBLE. GREATEST NEED FORESEEN FOR NEXT AUTUMN AND WINTER OWING DISORGANIZATION OF FARMS AND INDUSTRIES, LOSS OF EQUIPMENT, SHELTER SEEN. AN EFFECTIVE MEANS TO REDUCE LATER RELIEF APPEARS WOULD BE PROVISION OF \$50 CHINESE DOLLARS AVERAGE PER FAMILY FOR SUCH REHABILITATION OF 10,000 FAMILIES IN ADDITION TO IMMEDIATE FOOD RELIEF."

REMEMBER: Three cents a day will keep starvation away - if we send the cents. One dollar will care for a Chinese refugee for one month.

Your church mission board will accept contributions, or remittances may be made through your local Red Cross. The Foreign Missions Conference, 156 Fifth Ave., New York City will forward relief funds. I shall be glad to forward to Rob anything you wish to send to him.