

HANKING INTERNATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE
REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

Nov. 22, 1937-April 15, 1938.

The International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone was organized on November 22, 1937. The first problem was the establishment of the zone itself. This meant the selection of a favorable site and the securing of recognition for the zone by the Chinese and Japanese authorities. After careful inquiry and much discussion, that part of the city lying roughly west of Chung Shan Road between Han Chung Road and Shansi Road, and east of Sinking Road and a line from the southern end of that road to the intersection of Han Chung Road and Shanghai Road, was chosen. The Chinese authorities readily agreed to the idea of the zone, though the military were naturally reluctant to move out of the area before the very last minute. The Japanese authorities never formally recognized the zone, but did say that they would not attack an area which was not occupied by Chinese troops. On this narrow margin of agreement, the Chinese promise to evacuate the area and the Japanese statement that they would not intentionally attack an unoccupied place, the Safety Zone was finally put through.

The co-operation of the local Chinese authorities with the Committee was all that could be desired. Twenty thousand bags of rice and ten thousand bags of flour were assigned to us, and \$30,000 in cash was given us. Of the rice, owing to difficulties of transportation, only 9,067 bags were finally brought into our godown (the University of Nanking Chapel!) before outbreak of hostilities around the city. None of the flour allotted to us by the City Government was secured though one thousand bags were obtained from the Ta Tung Flour Mill. The city also gave us 350 bags of salt.

The people on coming into the zone were urged to bring with them what food supplies they could and it was well they did so, as these private stocks were what carried most of the population during the six weeks following the Japanese entry, when little in the way of food could be brought into the city.

It is estimated that about 250,000 people entered the zone. Only a relatively small number, probably not more than ten thousand in all, remained outside. Of these refugees approximately 70,000 were cared for in twenty-five large concentration centers of "camps", in whose management the International Committee co-operated, either by giving food or fuel, or providing supervision or both. The work for the refugees was carried on at first by three commissions, Food, Housing, and Sanitation. These commissions were under the direction of Mr. H. L. Han, Dr. C. Y. Hsu, and Rev. Y. S. Shen respectively. Later a fourth Commission, the Rehabilitation Commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. Walter Lowe, was added to the other three. Dr. T. M. Tang has had charge of the secretarial and translation work of the General Office, and Mr. Wang Chen Dien, and later Mr. Chen Wen-shu have conducted the Business Office. To all of these gentlemen, and to their many colleagues and associates, the International Committee would like to express its appreciation of the way they have carried on their work under many and often insuperable difficulties, and sometimes even at the risk of life itself.

When the Safety Zone was first organized the International Committee hoped that its task would soon be over, and that once the actual fighting around the city was ended the people might speedily go back to their homes. However these hopes were doomed to disappointment. The looting, burning, rape, and murder which followed upon the entry of the Japanese Army into the city made the Safety Zone the only part of the city where there was any semblance of order and protection. Even there, there was little enough, but by dint of frequent protests and much police work on the part of members of the International Committee and other foreigners in the city conditions were gradually improved. On December 27th orders were issued by the Japanese authorities to the troops to stay out of the Safety Zone. These orders were often flagrantly disregarded, nevertheless there was after that time a slow but gradual improvement in the situation. By the end of January, the authorities began to put pressure on the people in the Safety Zone to go back to their homes, or into refugee centers provided by the Self-Government Committee. This movement was slow at first, because the people were naturally hesitant as to their safety, but gradually many have now gone back. Our "camp" population has dropped during this period from nearly 70,000 to about 22,000 and ten of our refugee centers have been already closed. Nine more of these centers will be closed this month and the remaining six are to be closed by the end of May.

In this connection it should be noted that this closing down of the camps does not mean that the need for relief work will disappear by the end of May. This is far from being the case. The closing of the camp merely means that this phase of our work can by that time be discontinued. When the great loss to thousands of families due to the murder, imprisonment, or abduction of the wage earner, is added the tremendous economic loss which the people have everywhere sustained, relief funds, even if multiplied a hundred fold, would still be inadequate. To the truth of this statement the Economic and Agricultural survey which the International Committee has been conducting and the careful case studies of more than 25,000 families which have been made by the Rehabilitation Commission bear ample testimony. The camps may be brought to a close by May 31st, but the need for relief will continue long beyond that period. Whatever the Committee's ability to meet the need after June 1st, may be, the need itself will still be there. What has been destroyed in a month, can scarce be replaced in a decade.

Appended to this report are a financial statement covering the period from December 1st to March 31st and a budget for the months of April and May. By that time the International Committee's present resources in cash and supplies now in Hankow will be exhausted, save for a reserve of \$10,000 specially set aside for the care of certain widows, orphans, and other dependents and for an estimated stock of 2450 bags of wheat that can be carried forward into June. For meeting relief needs beyond the end of May, the Committee is dependent largely upon its friends in Shanghai and elsewhere. It appreciates the support already given to its work, and asks for such a continuance thereof as may be possible. In any case, no matter how generous the response may be, need will outrun resources.

Aside from the organization and general care of the Refugee Zone, which gave invaluable though incomplete protection to 250,000 persons in the most critical weeks, the Nanking International Relief Committee has carried on four main types of work since its beginnings in Nov. 1937.

1. Provision of Camps. The Committee has directly provided housing, management and most of the needed food for a camp population that started at a figure of 77,000 persons, and has gradually been reduced since February. In the partial easing of the situation during recent weeks, the Committee has sought to conserve its small resources for the most serious needs, and has encouraged the diminishing of the camp population to 25,000, among whom widows, orphans and the dependent women and children are a large fraction.

2. Cash Relief. After careful investigation of each applicant family, small cash grants were made in considerable numbers during March, and are being continued in declining quantity. This method has given some help to the bottom groups outside the camps, and has aided the return to homes and independent effort outside the Refugee Zone, besides stimulating a much-needed private trade in rice from the few country places that can temporarily provide supplies for Nanking.

3. Work Relief. Labor projects on a moderate scale have been employed to meet special public needs and to take advantage of the few opportunities for skilled management. Projects have included: sanitary work of several ~~gross~~ types; food production; preparation of bedding and clothing for the destitute; burial squads.

4. Health Services. In co-operation with the University Hospital and with the International Red Cross Committee, hospital treatment has been provided for serious cases from the camps; an extensive program of vaccination and inoculation has been carried on; the meager rice diet of children and some others was supplemented by the provision of beans, cod liver oil, and a little milk.

In addition to the forms of co-operation already suggested, the Committee has worked in various relationships with the Red Swastika Society, with the local Red Cross Society, and with the Relief Section and other organs of the Self-government Committee. There has been no conflict of interest in any of these connections.

In order to understand the fundamental problems of the people and to have reliable information on which to base relief efforts henceforward, the Committee has completed surveys of losses and of needs along the following lines: (a) investigation of the occupants of each fiftieth occupied house in Nanking (including the sections just outside the gates); (b) check-list of the general condition of every building in Nanking; (c) investigation of the loss of every tenth destroyed building; (d) special inquiry among market gardeners; (e) investigation of farm losses and shortage of means of production in the six hsien (Counties) of the Ningshu area.

Results of these surveys will soon be available in fairly complete form. Here we mention only that 31% of all buildings in Nanking were burned, and a higher percentage of shops; that the direct destruction and looting in Nanking caused a loss approaching \$100,000,000; that the farm

areas along the main roads were practically stripped, and amid shortage of seed, animals, labor, and tools they are planting only 10% of the usual rice crop; that the loss of animals and tools throughout the Ningshu area is critical.

Financial statements of the Committee's activities and balances are available in the offices of the Nanking International Relief Association, Shanghai. The funds in hand will support the present curtailed program within the city only until June. What then? And what of the farmers upon whose products Nanking and the whole area are more completely dependent than in any recent decade?