

CHINESE STUDENTS IN DEFENSE OF THEIR NATION*

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Immediately after the Sino-Japanese war broke out in the summer of 1937, many of my foreign friends were puzzled by the question "What can students do in this war of liberation, and how can they keep on pursuing their studies in this national crisis?" The answer is that they can pursue them in a hundred different ways. First of all, let me tell you what our students were doing in the first stage of the war. They lost no time in giving their services to the country. Some of them joined the Regular Army, and some of them acted as volunteers to serve the soldiers fighting at the front and those wounded in the base hospitals.

Students of medicine were organised into Red-Cross Units, girls in the middle schools were trained in nursing classes for the relief of the sick and wounded in the battle-field, students of political science found opportunity to put their classroom theories into practice. Even the primary school students organised hundreds of propaganda teams to rouse the people in the country side to prepare to defend their homes against Japanese invasion. Refugee children organised dramatic corps and toured the country to stimulate the people's resistance. In short, the whole Chinese student body was mobilised *en masse*.

THE UNIVERSITIES MOVE TO THE INTERIOR

Then the Japanese occupied the seacoast, a large part of our territory, our port-cities, and our principal arteries of contact with the outside world. Our universities, colleges and middle schools were compelled to evacuate from the war-zones, and removed into the interior. Tremendous obstacles were encountered—obstacles that might easily have defeated another people,—but they were overcome. In spite of the hardships, the students were given a golden opportunity of developing their physique, and broadening their mental outlook. Many of them travelled thousands of miles to attend schools, and they studied *en route* the social and economic conditions of the province. This "Road-side" education is indeed invaluable, and we firmly believe that it constitutes an important asset in the building up of a new China.

STUDENTS AT THE FRONT

The chief responsibilities of the Chinese youth to-day are two-fold: first, the war of resistance, and second, the National Reconstruction. Both of these responsibilities are equally important.

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Since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, the students have done splendid work on the battle field. Many of them have sacrificed their lives. They have left behind them the memory of their heroic and glorious deeds, which inspire those who are living and which can never be forgotten. The substantial achievements of our students on the many different fronts during our war of resistance cannot be forgotten. For instance, at the beginning of the war at Shanghai, in 1937, several thousands of students from the different universities and colleges around Shanghai joined the Regular Army, and many of them were killed in action in the Shanghai and Soochow sectors.

In Central China after the fall of Ying-sui, an important city in Kiangsi Province, several hundreds of patriotic students made a sudden attack on the Japanese vanguards as they marched into the city.

In North China, many students gave their services to the Eighth Route Army, and many of the leaders of the Guerrilla detachments are college students, who temporarily laid down their pens to take up arms. In the Province of Shansi students took an active part, and rendered invaluable assistance to the army. Again, students of Kwangsi Province have formed an effective militia under the guidance of the Government.

THE SCHOOLS PLAY THEIR PART

On July 17, 1937, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek told the educational leaders at the Kuling conference that if war could not be avoided, we must prepare for two things: first, to fight a long war of retreat and defeat, and secondly, to be ready to endure the most acute suffering. There are tens of thousands of students ready to suffer such hardship and who have hurried voluntarily into the training camps of the anti-Japanese university at Yen-an, and into the camps of the Chekiang Eastern Front in Central China. Besides the regular training camps practically every university and senior highschool is devoting some of its courses to guerrilla tactics and military science, so that if future demands it, the students will be prepared for recruitment. It is obvious that if the war of prolonged resistance is continued, millions of young men must undergo military training.

Thus spurred by the fire of patriotism, some of them joined the army. Others followed the advice of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek who, in his stirring speeches, exhorted the students to continue their studies, and to prepare themselves adequately to meet the demands of the present time. As a result, many boys and girls have gone to the interior to pursue their studies; the school curriculum has been revised, various branches of science and courses on first aid are popular subjects. All of these schools are making progress in extra-curriculum military training. Besides their studies, they work to promote rural education, the New Life Movement, the National Thrift Campaign, the Offer Gold to State Campaign, the Promotion of Home Products, and the Chinese Indus-

trial Co-operatives. They comfort their heroic comrades at the front by sending them clothes, foodstuffs, books, magazines, musical instruments and other appropriate presents.

WORK BEHIND THE LINES, THE GREAT TREK

The second task of the students is their work in the rear. Many students have taken refuge in the north-western and south-western provinces of China where the "Free China" is in the making. These boys and girls have left the occupied areas such as Manchuria, North China, East and South China, in order to be in "Free China" and to carry on the work of resistance and reconstruction there.

These students travel days and night to "Free China" by all kinds of primitive and ultra modern ways of transport. In unorganised groups of two's and three's, in the companies of a dozen or a hundred, a couple of friends or a group that a common destination has thrown together, boys and girls made their way on foot, wheel borrows, mulecarts or by train, steamer, rowing boat, bus, car or truck. A trek of a thousand miles forces one to cut down personal baggage to a minimum. Sometimes one saw groups of boys and girls on the road, with nothing but their tooth-brushes and the clothes on their backs, and they marched on singing patriotic songs.

When they reached their destinations they entered the schools. Chinese civilisation has moved from the East into the great West. These tens of thousands of students, including more than twenty Universities and Colleges have already become a great force in building the New China, which is rising strong and United.

THE NEW UNIVERSITIES

During the war 25 secondary schools and 16 colleges have moved into Szechuan Province. This province alone now has 49 middle schools and 306 secondary schools, including vocational schools. West China Union University in Chengtu, the capital of Szechuan, has truly become a full fledged university. At present there are eight universities and colleges located in that city. Four universities and parts of two others live on its campus and are affiliated to the West China Union University. The students there work together united in performing patriotic dramas to raise money for the soldiers at the front and to carry rural education into the villages and towns around the city. They lead a very simple life, they eat rough food, they have changed their mode of living, and are trying to improve their work in school to help the Government extend rural education. For instance, the National Szechuan University is one of the few universities that has not yet been destroyed by the Japanese. The student body numbered 500 before the war but it has now increased to 1500, and most of them came from the occupied areas. Hitherto 70 per cent. of them were students of arts and political science, now 70 per cent. are studying natural science and agriculture. They

have found that China must have a foundation of scientific knowledge, if it is to survive. During the week-ends and holidays they do rural work voluntarily. They visit the nearby countries to keep the peasants informed about the war, or to teach them scientific methods of farming.

LIFE IN THE SCHOOLS

Life in the schools is Spartan in its simplicity. Some of the students live in caves and others in huts, temples, guilds and monasteries, while some even have their lessons in the open. Each student costs the Government 20 cents a day for food, and four dollars a month for books, clothes and pocket-money.

Chungking, the war capital of China, is another great educational centre. The National Central University, the Nanking middle schools, and the Provincial College of Education are close neighbours, and the buildings of those institutions stand proudly in the valleys and the hills about ten miles from the city. The National Central University is at present conducting its work in sheds which have been built quickly and temporarily on the hill. It took only 42 days to complete the construction. Though the present school buildings are imperfect, the students work harder than they did in Nanking. The university is now taking care of over 1700 students. These students have overcome many difficulties, and their spirit is still completely undaunted. That they are not in the least dismayed is shown by the way in which they moved the university from Nanking, and the way in which they are carrying on their work against very great odds. Even the cattle, sheep and pigs of the Department of Animal Husbandry have been evacuated to Chungking—trotting slowly along for over a year from Nanking. The students double the work to show that they are not down-hearted.

The Nankai Middle school has at present 1400 students. Started three years ago with one building, it now has seven buildings. It has become the continuation of the Tientsin Mother School, which was totally destroyed by the Japanese after the out-break of war. During the last "Offer Gold to the State" campaign, the student body alone raised over \$12,000 for the war chest.

STUDENTS IN EMERGENCY SQUADS

When Japanese airplanes raided Chungking, hundreds of thousands of refugees moved on the highways which were connected with nearby towns and villages. Students of these institutions organised many transportation teams to help the refugees to move their belongings from place to place.

Immediately after Chungking experienced the terrific havoc wrought by Japanese planes, over 10,000 boys and girls of the San Min Chu I Youth Corps were mobilized within 24 hours, to aid the victims, and the refugees of the vicious bombings. Divided into hundreds of teams, the youth performed the herculean task of fighting fire, maintaining order,

helping refugees, and caring for the wounded. On the smouldering streets of Chungking's business district which still bore the typical scenes of Japanese destruction, were to be found scores of girl members who were appointed to police the ruined districts and give first aid to victims. Others were scattered far and wide over the roads leading from Chungking to aid in the mass evacuation of the town. Some simply carried loads for the refugees from one place to another, while others acted as stretcher bearers.

The emergency services of these youths started immediately after each raid. They were among the first group of rescue workers rushed to the scene where the incendiary bombs landed. No less than ten boys and girls were wounded, some severely by the collapse of burning buildings and crumbling walls, while they were attempting to remove the injured who had been trapped by fire.

The San Min Chu I Youth Corps was officially organised for emergency work. It had laid down a definite programme for helping in evacuation, establishing rest stations, and giving first aid to every person in need. The whole city of Chungking, including its suburbs was divided into service zones for carrying out emergency relief and for precautionary measures. What Chungking lost materially was more than compensated for by the development of an even firmer and more indomitable spirit.

Another result of the Japanese bombing of Chungking was its effect on the youths of the city. Out of the debris of the fallen buildings and the carnage of blasted bodies there arose a spirit of more determined resistance. In one week, six hundred young men and women joined the training camp for volunteers. Among the six hundred volunteers that entered the camp were ninety-two girls. Upon their completion of training they will be sent to the front for service.

LIFE IN A GIRLS SCHOOL

The writer is now helping a lady-principal to run a "Girls School for Physical Education" in a suburb near Chungking. There are 650 girls in this school, living in mat-sheds and having their classes in these sheds. Sometimes when it rains the sheds begin to leak very badly, and on waking up the girls have to roll up their bedding which had been soaked through by the drops from the leaking sheds. So they sit up on the few dry places in the sheds and sing songs until the rain stops. They do not use textbooks, as most of the textbooks are hard to get from the bookstore. They attend classes and take notes of all the lectures given by the teachers. Moreover every night they go to the surrounding villages to teach the farmers to sing patriotic songs and to help the farmers' wives to take care of their children. They also tell the people how to keep their houses clean by giving lectures in hygiene.

THE UNIVERSITY OF YENAN

In the North-west, the great University of Yen-an is training over 15,000 students in six centres. Most of the work is carried on in the caves. The students work as well as study. More than 10,000 graduates are already behind the Japanese lines, training the people in resistance, and leading guerrilla troops. These guerrillas have turned the back of the Japanese lines into another front. They built caves and worked on the land and in the industrial co-operatives. The spirit of these students is wonderful. There are over 25,000 students who have taken part in all this work. At sunrise thousands of these young people climb the mountain in small groups to break open with newly wrought implements barren lands which yield food of all kinds. These students who receive seven cents a person per day from the Government will soon be self-supporting.

STUDENTS CO-OPERATIVES

Recently a "Productive-Agriculture" movement was launched in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia border region in China's North-west, in order to fulfill the principle of people's livelihood of the San Min Chu I, and better the living conditions of the people. The movement is intended to add a 100,000 acres of land to the cultivable area in the border region, and to increase the agricultural yield by 20 per cent. within the fiscal year. The students of Yen-an University have promised to provide the Government with 3,300 Tann (1 Tann = 150 lbs.) of grain and 1,000 uniforms and padded coats by the end of the year. Each student cultivates from one-sixth to one-half of an acre in addition to pursuing his studies at the university. This movement has been carried out according to a detailed scheme of co-operation and division of labour. Each organisation is responsible for the supply of a certain amount of grain and other materials at the end of the fiscal year for the Government's use in the prolonged war.

STUDENTS AND PLAYS IN THE TRENCHES

Besides giving their services in the rear and behind the Japanese lines, many students are fighting in the front-line trenches. More than 250 Kwangsi students, who have been divided into two units, are now engaged in different kinds of war-services at the front. They are now working with the fighting forces on the Northern Hupeh, Anhwei and Honan fronts. They are to be found in the first line trenches giving first-aid to the wounded, bringing in ammunition and joining in actual fighting whenever necessary. These Kwangsi students edit and publish newspapers and pamphlets for the fighters, and entertain the soldiers with patriotic plays and songs. In the evening they enter the first-line trenches, mixing with the fighters, talking, playing and singing with them. Their presence in the trenches and their fighting side by side with the common soldiers serves to no small extent to maintain the high spirit of the army in these sectors.

STUDENT CORPS: THEIR KIT AND TRAINING

To reinforce the first batch serving at the front, the Kwangsi authorities called for 1200 members for the second corps, more than 18,000 applied. In order not to disappoint the youth the original number of 1200 was raised to 5,000 and divided into three regiments.

Military training is the first requisite in the training of these students. Then political training receives the most attention, as the members of the corps are to be assigned to do political work among the fighters and the masses. The curriculum consists of a political period, international affairs, publicity, first aid, and current events. For classroom and bedrooms the students use the numerous caves in the Kwangsi hills. A bundle of hay forms their bedding. Every article in their marching kit is put to double use. For instance their raincoats are painted with war-slogans and cartoons serving both as publicity media and as camouflage.

STUDENTS HELP IN RECRUITING

The corps is now divided into a number of companies, touring cities and towns in Kwangsi to help the authorities in recruiting. With the help of these young publicists and political workers, the Chinese army in Kwangsi has experienced no shortage of recruits. The province, it may be noticed, has sent out more than 400,000 men to various fronts, and has now another 500,000 under training. Since these students are one of the most effective agencies for raising the moral of the soldiers, another 5,000 high school students of Kwangsi, both boys and girls, are now under training in the south-western province for service at the front.

WORK AMONG THE WOUNDED

Not to be outdone by their brethren (who are carrying on war-service activities in every corner of the country, a battalion of 1,000 girls from Yen-an University went to the northern front to fight side by side with their brothers, after completing their training last March. 250 college girls in Hunan Province are giving their services to wounded soldiers in a simple but novel way, now they cook and wash for them while in pre-war days they scoffed at such domestic tasks. Now they are found in the laundries, washing clothes that are frequently soaked with blood, and in the kitchens, preparing food for the soldiers who have so gallantly borne the brunt of the fight. Constant practice has enabled them to wash out not only light arteries but also heavy quilts and padded suits. Six times a day two members of the team visit the hospitals and serve food to the soldiers, who are given a diet of rice, lotus flour, milk and tea.

In addition to washing and cooking, these young girls give the wounded elementary medical care—first-aid, dressing of wounds, and dispensing medicines. Because the corps is so near to the Kiangsi war-

front, many soldiers pour in day and night. It is the first duty of the girls to meet the wounded upon their arrival at Hengyang, to give them first-aid, and if necessary to help carry them to the hospitals.

THE KWANGTUNG YOUTH CORPS

In Kwangtung, the youth corps has had a history of three years. Organised by five youth organisations in Canton among which were the Chungshan University Association, and the Kwangchih Middle School National Salvation Association, it now has a membership of 3,000 middle school and university students all of whom are engaged in wartime service.

Following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, three units were immediately organised to accompany the Cantonese troops to the front. Their services included letter-writing for the soldiers, care of the wounded, and liaison work between the army and the people. Additional units were organised to visit factories around Canton and rural districts for propaganda work. Three training headquarters have been established by these students to organise young men for wartime service. The district authorities are helping the students to register unemployed young men for this purpose. So much interest has been aroused by their activities that the majority of middle school and university students are determined to take part in wartime service at the close of their school careers.

These young men entered the rural districts in the war-zones to help the peasants. Follow troops everywhere to bring about closer co-operation between the army and the people, and to organise patriotic movements among students, laborers and peasants. They have helped the peasants to reap crops, and they hold reading classes in an effort to stamp out illiteracy. Whenever a unit reaches a village, the members take a practice of calling on the elders to learn of the condition and needs of the village. The members have thus quickly won the respect of the community, and their work is there by facilitated.

Stationed close to the front-lines are 72 of these students, who form an advance unit. 32 of them are helping the military authorities in a key-city to give political training to a People's Self Defence Corps. The students are attached to the headquarters of a guerrilla unit.

THE WORK OF THE GIRL GUIDES

One of the outstanding youth organisations in China which is giving services in wartime is the Girl Guide Association. Out of a total number of 78,000, 2,400 girls are serving at the fronts. The majority of these guides are doing less spectacular but equally important work behind the lines. Such work as collecting funds, clothing and medical supplies, publishing wartime literature, giving moral encouragement to the wounded, and running errands, they make their special concern. They are divided into 300 units, with an average of 200 per unit.

Although the number of the girls serving at the firing-lines is comparatively small, tales of their heroism continue to trickle into the Association headquarters in Chungking. At the Nanchang front for example, one of the girl guides, Miss Wang Chu-wen, remained at her post to the last moment, and was captured by a Japanese tank unit, never to be heard of again. Another of the guides, Miss Li I, a member of the same unity, was shot and wounded in the chest by the Japanese, because she too remained at her post to the last. Although two of her ribs were broken, she was fortunately rescued by her comrades who carried her away to a hospital in the north-west of Nanchang, where she is receiving treatment.

Those working in the rear are busy with wartime work of every description. In Chungking, one of their activities has been to organise the sending of 20,000 "comfort-letters" to Chinese soldiers fighting at the various fronts. The girl-guides in their own comfort letters enclose handmade handkerchiefs, drawings and photographs.

Working as loyally for the nation's cause as these guides, 16,000 boy scouts true to their motto of "Wisdom, Kindness and Bravery", are active in the war areas. A number of them have sacrificed their lives while carrying out their duties. Up to last February, boy scouts from Shanghai alone gave first aid to 3,700 wounded, transported 7,600 refugees to safety zones, and collected 94,000 articles of winter clothing for the wounded and refugees.

MADAME CHIANG KAI SHEK'S BATTALION OF GIRLS

Under the guidance of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, a unique battalion of 450 refugee girls, from the lower Yangtse valley, are being trained for service in war areas. Those girls are tanned and healthy and their manner of marching tells of the regulated and disciplined life they lead. These girls, the youngest only 14 years old, have all had some military training while they were in Hunan. In a few weeks time they will be leaving for actual work behind the lines following in the footsteps of more than 100 graduates of Mme. Chiang's previous classes, which were conducted in Hankow, under the auspices of the Women's Advisory Committee of the New Life Movement Association. The Committee is also encouraging girl students to learn farming, to help women in the rural areas to produce more food and clothing materials.

SCIENTIFIC WORK STILL GOES ON

A group of 40 college graduates, led by 16 experts and specialists, are leaving on an extensive scientific tour of investigation of mineral and agricultural resources in the Szechuan-Sikong regions, formerly known as China's Wild West. The expedition which is organised and financed by the board of trustees of the British Boxer Indemnity Fund, is one of three projected trips which are to undertake scientific studies and re-

search in the border provinces of China. Two other similar investigation parties are to be sent to the North-west, and to the South-west.

The trip to Sikong, so difficult of access to ordinary travellers, will afford thrilling experience and great educational value to the forty qualified youths who have been selected for the journey. The expedition, which is divided into sections of economics, sociology, agriculture, metallurgy and geology, each of which is headed by well-known professors and experts, will spend six months on its travels in Western Szechuan, and Eastern and Central Sikong. Under the leadership of Professor Y. C. Hsiao, head of the engineering college of the National Wuhan University, and Professor K. T. Huang head of the Department of History and Geography of the North-West Union University, the group started its tour from a Western-Szechuan city, situated on the main river of the Province.

RURAL WORK

The New Life Student Summer Rural Service, with Mme. H. H. Kung, the wife of China's Finance Minister, and the President of the Executive Yuan as its sponsor, was started in 1936, and has now become part of the programme of the New Life Movement Headquarters since then. In the first year nearly 400 students volunteered their services and the number increased to over 500 the next year. Armed each with a "Students' Work Manual" issued by the headquarters the students went to the country, mostly, to their homes, to teach the farmers reading, writing, hygiene, and improved methods of agriculture, and to tell them of the importance of the New Life Movement, the latest news of the Government, and the seriousness of the situation. Some of the medical students opened dispensaries to take care of sick farmers. The work was very encouraging.

Since the outbreak of the war, the rural service work has been continued by the headquarters, in spite of many handicaps, but they have had to continue their activities in the three provinces of Szechuan, Kweichow and Yunnan. In 1938, nearly 300 students joined. They went to the country in groups and carried the works out more effectively than before. A group of students, about 50 strong, went to the Tibetan border under the direction of their professor to carry out war-propaganda work among the people of the remote areas.

A NEW PLAN

This year a plan has been drafted to recruit 400 college students who will be divided into groups and sent to different areas to work. A special selected group will be sent again to the western borders. The work is now in full swing, and it is evident that the quota of 400 will soon be reached. Lantern slides, pictures, posters, stage-plays etc., will

be used extensively in propaganda work. Groups of medical students with contact equipment furnished by headquarters will do public health work among the farmers.

Everywhere new material and spiritual forces are at work,—there is a new spirit in the youth. This gives us confidence in our ultimate victory in the war of resistance. We must remember that China is in a crisis uncomparably in her history. This is not only a war for independence, but a fight for freedom, righteousness and justice. Aggression not only devastates China, but menaces the peace of the whole world. The world is at a turning-point. The youth of the world must dedicate heart and soul to the cause of freedom. Let us look forward to a reign of Peace and Internationalism.

