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Missionary Believes That Central China Peasants Will Support Nanking's Reconstruction Work Masses Do Not Change In Spite Of War, Disaster

The people of China, workers and peasants alike, are definitely through with communism and radicalism in this generation and today China is truly united and the national government has the wholehearted support of the masses, Reverend G. W. Shepherd, veteran Christian missionary who is engaged as a consultant in the rehabilitation work in Kiangsi recovered communist areas, told members of the Rotary Club at their tiffin meeting yesterday at the Metropolitan Hotel. Reverend Shepherd spoke on "The Soviets in China and Reconstruction Work in Kiangsi Province."

The speech of Reverend Shepherd, who is regarded by many as one of the foremost foreign authorities on Chinese communists, follows:

"All who have the good fortune to live in the country know that the Chinese farmers are industrious. They arise early and toil late, stopping only to enjoy company with friends at weddings and burials, and to celebrate the festive seasons of the year. As a rule they are good farmers and know how to co-operate with mother nature in extracting a living from the soil. Where climate permits and holdings are large enough the Chinese farmers diversify their crops. In many parts of South China crops may be grown 12 months in the year.

Now Breathe Freedom

"Honest, religious, co-operative, and extremely conservative, the farmers of Kiangsi, Fukien, and a few other sections have been reported as being strong supporters of the Chinese Soviet. For a time it appeared as if this might be true, but recent events have proved that the people of these rural regions are glad to be back where they can breathe the air of freedom under their own flag. It now remains for government administrators to prove that this is real freedom and that the faith of the farmers is well founded in fact. The Chinese farmers know that peace and prosperity belong together. It is this which makes them so ready to compromise rather than to stand up for their rights. If a communist invasion offers them peace and prosperity they are willing to submit to the invaders. If a return of the national forces promises justice, freedom and a chance to till the fields in peace then they will accept that, too. Theories and all manner of schemes for reconstruction and the uplift of the farmers are very dear to the hearts of reformers and so-called rebuilders of nations. As he bends his back over his plough and whips up his slow-moving buffalo, the farmer says, 'Gentlemen, give me peace.' The responsibility for all this spilling of ink and useless shedding of blood cannot be laid at the door of the farmer.

"A great many people are puzzled over what happens when the communists divide the land and the government later allows the landlords to return. There is nothing unusual about that in rural China. For centuries landlords have bought and sold the farmer's fields, and officials have fought for the right to collect the taxes. The inarticulate masses are quite used to being mere pawns in the game. By order of the national government the landlord is forbidden to collect the

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rent from farmers in a communist recovered area, but all around me the farmers pay as much as they are able for the current year, and apologize for not being in a position to pay the back rent that has accumulated during the communist occupation. The deeds may have been destroyed but in the soul of the farmer is a law higher than that which is usually referred to in courts and yamens. The farmer and worker of China is still a moral being unaffected by years of exploitation, civil war, and communist invasions. Who would not be proud to rule over such a people, or to be known as their friends?"

Friendship Unchanged

"By choice many years of my life have been spent among the farmers and workers of Kiangsi and Fukien. I have found them hospitable, kind and loyal. Once a friend, always a friend. Many a time I might have been betrayed into the hands of bandits and communists, but my farmer friends remained loyal. Even years of propaganda and abuse have failed to change our lasting friendship. Those who take the pen or wield the sword may issue edicts, reorganize society, divide the fields, curse and betray their friends, malign the missionary and incite the people to apparent rebellion, but always the farmer and the worker remain unchanged. When scholars and statesmen emulate these humble tillers of the soil, China will truly become a great nation.

"There are many factors contributing to the rebirth of China in this generation. I have time to mention only two. The rebirth of the government itself, and the determination of China's young intelligentsia to get out and serve the people without excessive remuneration.

China United Today

"Where the 'New Life Movement' has had time to sift down through the administrative machinery of the national government the people say that they have the best government they have ever known. After all, the people have the final verdict as to whether or not a government is good or bad. The people of China are through with communism and radicalism in this generation. Everywhere there is appearing a faith in the national government and a determination to support it in the interest of national unity and universal prosperity. Today China is truly united and the national government has the wholehearted support of the masses. It

the national government fails it will be because it is unequal to the great responsibilities placed upon it, and not because the people have refused to support it. That the leaders of the government in Nanking, and to a large extent in many of the provinces, are straining every nerve to prove themselves worthy of this great trust is already apparent. In their fight to eliminate corruption and give the people a square deal they deserve our support and our constructive criticism.

"In the Kiangsi Christian Rural Service Union we have a group of young college trained people devoting themselves to the welfare of the people. With their headquarters right in the villages (I want to emphasize the word 'villages') these young people are giving themselves rather than their ideas to the needs of this generation. The first year is being spent very largely in making friends and discovering first hand knowledge of the farmer's problems. Work is under way in rural health, agriculture, village industries, education and co-operatives. Sharing the life of the people and receiving the support of the local government, this Christian group is pointing the way to a new day. Fresh from their studies in the universities of China and some from their studies abroad, these young men and women are a rebuke to all who criticize and refuse to lend their hearty cooperation to the remaking of rural China. Young people of great promise are dedicating their lives, and men of affairs might very well dedicate some of their wealth to proving that a nation may be reborn without a violent and destructive revolution."

Work With Essentials

Mr. Shepherd, who stated that his foregoing speech was especially for the press, emphasized informally in general remarks that communism will be a problem for generations to come. He pointed out that the farmer wants peace and prosperity and that the farmer offers a compromise either to the communists or the national government. He gave an interesting personal experience in regard to his escape from communists and probable death through his friendship with a Chinese farmer, and then answered several questions:

Q. Do you carry firearms for pro-

lection when you travel in the communist areas?

A. No. I rely on good will.

Q. Is the "New Life Movement" concentrating on constructive work in the rehabilitation areas or does it concentrate its work, as in the cities, in anti-smoking drives and other "empty things."

A. The "New Life Movement" is definitely constructive. It is the driving force in our work. In Shanghai and the cities such aspects as you describe are no problem in our work. We are working with essentials, with such essentials as cleanliness and other things which are no problems in the cities. But essentially the "New Life Movement" is out to give everybody a square deal, and that is what the farmers want. We want to stop graft and squeeze.

Q. What becomes of the red troops and civilians captured?

A. There are few true red civilians, there are more troops. Now all are treated humanely, but to work at constructive tasks, and given medical treatment if necessary. Two years ago all this was not true.

Books Are "Propaganda"

Asked by a CHINA PRESS reporter his opinions of the books on the Chinese red situation by Miss Agnes Smedley and Mr. Victor Yakontoff, Mr. Shepherd refused to comment other than stating that the works on the subject of these two authors was "propaganda." Questioned by a Rotarian as to whether there is a differentiation between communists and bandits, Mr. Shepherd said that there decidedly is. "Bandits are bandits, gangsters, thugs, while communists are international revolutionaries working for a world revolution. The government calls Chinese communists 'communist-bandits' for political reasons for it is not convenient for them to admit the existence of another form of government in China."

Preceding the meeting, boys of the Cathedral School Choir sung two Christmas hymns. The chairman of the Rotary Fellowship committee announced that a sum of \$1,000 would be disbursed for Christmas charity.

More than 467,000 tons of water pass over Niagara Falls every minute.