

Islands Under Shadow Of Red China Guns

This is the last of five articles about the Chinese offshore islands by Maryknoll Father William Richardson who has just completed a fact-finding tour there.

By REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON, M.M.

I sat in the shop of a young merchant named Mr. Ong for over two hours the evening of December 16, asking questions and discussing the problems of Quemoy and its people. We spoke the Amoy dialect of Chinese, which is the common language of the people of Formosa, Quemoy, and Fukien Province on the mainland.

In the pronunciation of some words we differ and several times I had to ask them to repeat or explain a word or phrase. But in general, we had no trouble understanding each other. There were no military personnel or interpreters present.

Their courage amazed me.

"Five hundred or a thousand shells don't bother us — unless they are directed at one particular village. But when the bandits shoot ten thousand or more, we head for our shelters," one merchant told me.

Mr. Ong and Mr. Li, both of whom run small household items shops which they rather presumptuously refer to as "department stores", said that they were watching a movie when the shelling started June 17 at 9:00 p.m. Despite the thirty to forty thousand shells which hit the island in that barrage, they said they stayed for the end of the show.

The movie house, I remember,

bered, sits on a slight rise next to the middle school and is a clear target for the Red guns.

Some are not so lucky. Ng Thian-lai, only 23-years-old is married; Father Druetto delivered his wife's first baby last week. Ng Thian-lai is blind.

The same shell that exploded in old Quemoy City, killing three neighbors, a horse and several pigs, blinded the young man, broke one arm and covered him with shrapnel wounds. He now has a wife, a child, and his mother to support.

"We aren't afraid," one man said to me. "We have withstood their terrific shelling and continue to live our daily lives as before, keeping our shops open and planting new fields."

"The Communists have shelled us and have tried to invade. They failed and will continue to fail. We are free people and don't want to live under Communism. We talk with the escapees from the mainland and with visiting fishermen and we know how terrible life is over there."

"Do you think you can hold out?" I asked the group.

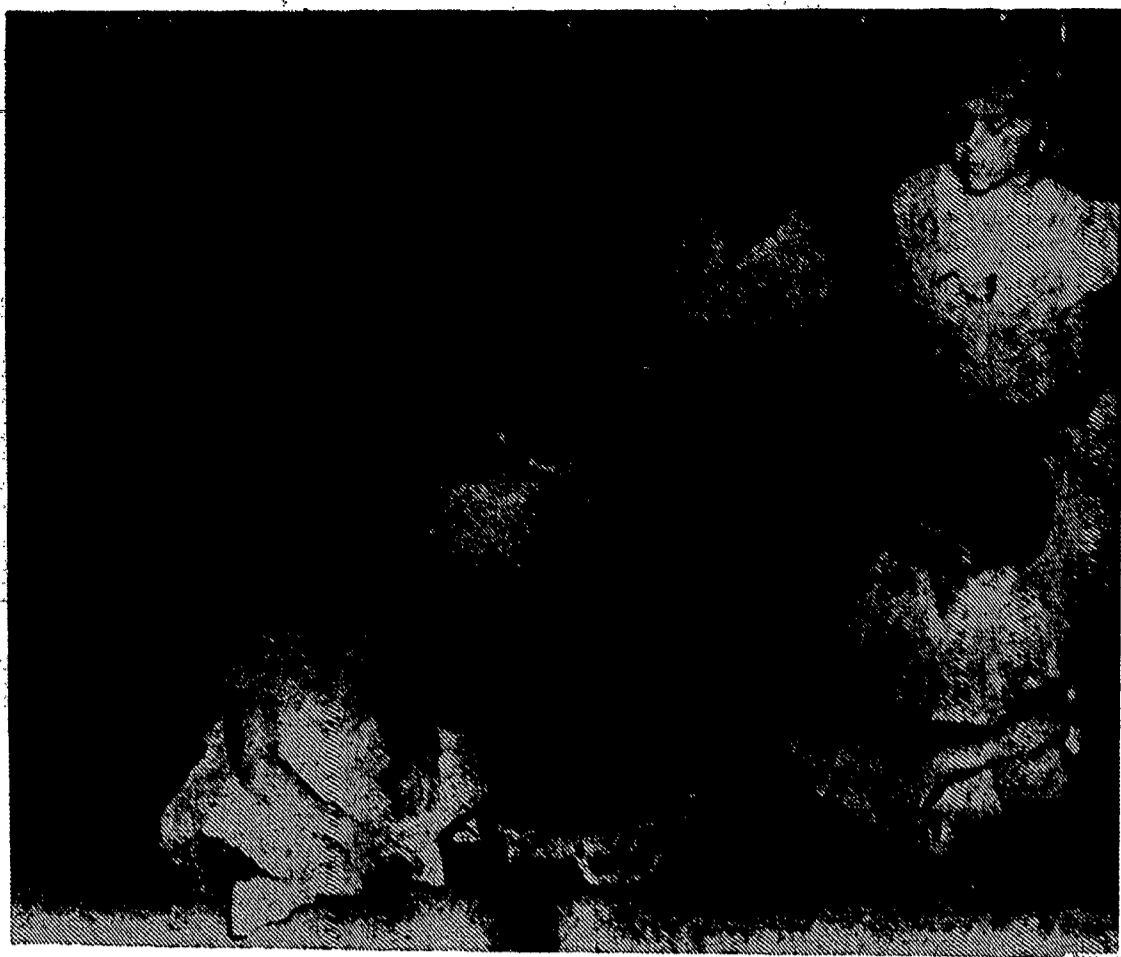
"Yes," they replied.

"You have seen our Army and our defenses," one middle-aged farmer said. "Besides, every able-bodied man of Quemoy is a member of the Bin Hong-Tui, our local militia. We are exempt from ordinary military service, but are trained as infantrymen and keep our uniforms and weapons at home. I myself have a carbine and two hundred rounds of ammunition."

"We are on instant call and often help to patrol the beaches at night. Our local militia was instrumental in defeating the force which attacked eleven years ago, by carrying supplies and ammunition for the regular Army."

"This is our home," one elderly fellow said, smiling. "We have a saying: 'Quemoy born and Quemoy buried.' The old folks especially don't want to leave, because it is Chinese custom to be buried where you spend your life."

With that I left them, carrying with me the little gifts they had offered in typical Chinese form. They had presented me with several sets of chopsticks and a tube of Quemoy-made toothpaste.



Junior Foreign Exchange

Lawton, Okla. — (RNS) — Through Catholic agencies the Volney Hamm family of Lawton, Okla., has made it a practice to bring foreign visitors to the U.S. to their home. Here younger members of the Hamm family carry out the tradition by entertaining young Brazilian guests in their home. Left to right top row are Max Hamm, Marcella Hamm, Carlos Alberto Bastos and Lois Marie Hamm. On the floor are Ana Maria and Eduardo Bastos. Primarily through the efforts of Mrs. Hamm, Lawton was awarded top prize in a nationwide Community Achievement contest for fostering improved international relations.

U.S. Court Convicts Man For Smut Peddler Link

Cincinnati — (NC) — A U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld conviction of a Cleveland man found guilty of supplying information where obscene material could be obtained.

Postal officials in Cleveland hailed the ruling as setting a legal precedent. They said the case was the first in Ohio in which a conviction was obtained on the "supplying information" charge.

EVIDENCE introduced at the original trial in Cleveland showed that the convicted man had used the mails to give information about sources of obscene material in France and Singapore.

In unanimously upholding the conviction, the three-judge Circuit Court stated "The offense of using the mails to give information on obscene matter is committed even though what is sent to the gullible purchaser is as innocent as a Currier and Ives print."

Negro To Be Ordained

Chaska, Minn. — (NC) — Reginald Kellogg, O.F.M. Conv., to be ordained to the priesthood on Feb. 19, will become the first Negro priest in the community's Our Lady of Consolation province.

Father Kellogg will be the third Negro to become a Franciscan Conventual priest in this country.

Prayers For Drought End

Toledo — (NC) — Bishop George J. Rehring of Toledo in a pastoral letter asked his priests and people to offer special prayers for the end of a drought in the area.

The Bishop noted that the Toledo area has been spared from blizzards and snow storms which have hit other parts of the country and that wells and cisterns are almost completely dry.

Better Schools Need Stressed

St. Paul — (NC) — American Catholics should willingly contribute money, time and concern to improve public schools, the editor of a national Catholic review said here.

Father Thurston N. Davis, S.J., editor of America, published in New York, spoke at St. Thomas College here.

Catholics, he said, must never fail "to work positively and constructively for the betterment of all the schools of the nation."

But if Catholics do this, he added, there is "an equal obligation" upon all other groups to consider the financial strain on Catholic parents who send their children to parochial schools.

These parents are exercising their constitutional right to provide for the education of their children in a religiously oriented school, he said.

Mountain Priests Isolated, Lonely

Rome — (RNS) — The life of a priest is often a lonely and isolated one, but perhaps never more so than in the 9,000 remote mountain parishes of the Italian Alps and Apennines that embrace 9,000,000 faithful.

This was emphasized when 100 parish priests from the parishes gathered for a study convention at the Domus Mariae (House of Mary) here.

THEY WERE received by Pope John XXIII, who, in an address of welcome, stressed the "spirit of sacrifice" that distinguishes the lives of the mountain priests.

"More than once," the Pontiff said, "I have visited the loneliest and poorest regions of our country which make up one-third of Italy's ground surface. And I have boundless admiration for the greatness of their silent and uncompromising apostolate."

This loneliness was one of the central themes of the convention here. Another was the small monthly subsidy of \$30 a month out of which the parish priest must provide not only for his own subsistence, but the upkeep of his church or chapel.

Speakers at the convention called for more moral and material aid.

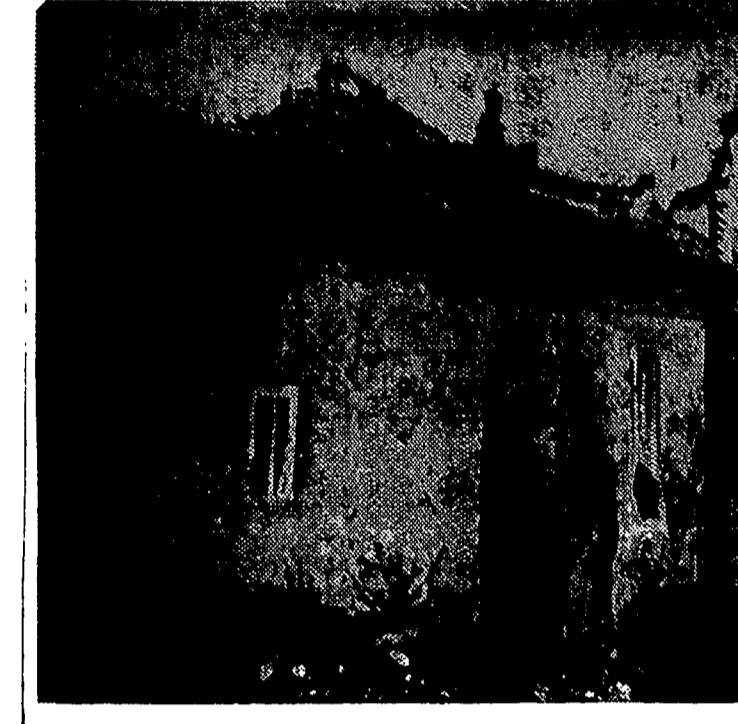
The speakers stressed that in many mountain parishes the inhabitants are forced to emigrate during the summer months to find work elsewhere and thus leave the parish priest alone.

One speaker reported that even the village authorities leave during the summer when calls for extra labor come from other places.

"That means," he said, "that we celebrate Mass in a deserted church, ring the church bells to an empty countryside, work the earth in silence, gathering potatoes for our lonely evening meal, and leading the sheep to pasture."

Other speakers warned that meanwhile populations leaving the mountain villages in the summer are easy prey in their misery to Communist influence.

One priest, who came from Valferno, in Cuneo province, commented: "It is as though we live on a distant planet as pioneers; and our children are suddenly put in touch with a frightening civilization."



Repairs start when bombings stop.

Space Probe 'Refreshing'

Oxford — (NC) — Man's efforts to fathom the mysteries of other planets is a refreshing change from the depressing psychology of self-analysis, a U.S. Bishop said here.

"The modern contemplation of self is necessarily depressing," the Bishop stated. "The new science of the space age may revive the spirit of wonder."

Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh told a Catholic forum at Oxford University that contemplation of the heavens has always turned men's thoughts to God.

Dedicating Hospital Newark — (NC) — Archbishop Thomas A. Boland of Newark dedicated the new five million dollar, five-story St. James Hospital here.

Nuns' Conference

Baltimore — (NC) — School Sisters of Notre Dame will hold their seventh annual education conference August 13 to 15 in Baltimore.

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