

Imperial and Foreign News

RED TERROR ON THE YANGTZE

MANY TOWNSHIPS SACKED

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN CHINA)

Dramatic occurrences like the occupation and sack of Changsha provide the world with a lurid glimpse of conditions in the interior of China. Of the lesser activities of Communists and bandits little is heard except in the areas affected. The scenes at Changsha, however, are continually being repeated on a smaller scale at less important places, and a short account of the outrages reported during the past few weeks shows even more effectively than this episode of Changsha why the people of China sit trembling and waiting for disaster.

Late in July Chungmiaocheu was one of the prosperous towns in Anhwei, but in a matter of hours became a mass of charred ruins as a result of the visit of 200 brigands. Armed with modern rifles the miscreants entered late in the evening and began looting. By midnight the town was in flames, and the brigands retired with their booty and a batch of well-to-do merchants taken for ransom.

Operating from junks on the Grand Canal outlaws raided the village of Tsaochwangchen in Chekiang and had



plundered 20 shops when the arrival of the police from a neighbouring city caused them to leave. On July 16 1,000 bandits entered Luichwang, North Kiangsu, seized the officials, sacked houses and shops, and made captive leading residents. While thus engaged the garrison of Jukao arrived and the bandits were driven away, leaving 100 killed and 70 captives.

Two steamers carrying passengers and goods on the Tai Lake were attacked by a fleet of pirate junks and, after a brief defence by water police, were captured. The steamers were looted, their engines smashed and the passengers and some of the police were taken captives. At Yakong, South Kiangsu, 40 outlaws appeared and shot the chief of police, fatally wounded four policemen, and raided the Bureau of Public Safety for arms and ammunition. The town was then looted.

RAIDERS AND PIRATES

A village near Tsingkiangpu, North Kiangsu, was plundered by bandits who killed three residents and abducted 20. Bandits 200 strong raided Hwangmotachen, Anhwei, looted the town and decamped with 20 prisoners.

Chuenkaichen, nearly midway between Shanghai and Nanking, was attacked by pirates and looted and burned. On July 25, less than a week after the outrage on Liuchwang, 500 bandits visited Tsaochiafu, looted and burned most of the village, and went off with 12 merchants.

On August 4 the police rounded up the pirates who had robbed the steamers on the Tai Lake and succeeded after a brisk fight in releasing three of the prisoners then taken. For their captives the pirates were demanding a ransom of \$500,000. On July 26 troops attacked Meihsien, Kwangtung, which had been occupied by Communists since the spring, and during the battle the Communists ran out of ammunition and had to fly.

They left 300 dead, 200 captives, 30 prisoners being held for ransom, and \$90,000 in hard cash. Twenty-seven bandits were caught and shot, and 200 of their captives released, when troops captured Suichikow, North Kiangsu. Many bandits were killed during the fight with the troops. Four hundred outlaws appeared at Tsingshanchen, near Chinkiang, burned 30 houses and abducted 15 rich residents. This band posted notices in three towns threatening destruction by fire unless six dollars an acre were paid by all the farmers in the neighbourhood.

DEFENDERS DEFEATED

In a battle between bandits and a body of farmers, police, and volunteers near Wuyianhsien, South Anhwei, on August 1, about 200 were killed on each side. The defenders were defeated and retired to the town, whence appeals for assistance were sent to the provincial authorities of Anhwei and Kiangsu. At 2 a.m. on August 9 200 bandits swept into the village of Mokow, Kiangsu, plundering, killing, and burning mercilessly. Every household mourns an inmate dead, and little property remains.

While the bandits were trying to fire a street with kerosine police from Kiangyin City arrived and attacked, but were soon defeated and had to fly, leaving the bandits to complete their work of destruction. Wounded soldiers quartered at Yangchow, Kiangsu, when demanding money incurred the attention of the police and eventually brought 300 of their comrades to attack the police, intending then to loot the shops in the city. Fortunately the merchant volunteers stood by the police, and after an affray lasting two hours, in which many of the soldiers were shot, order was restored.

Two thousand Red bandits entered Liencheng, Fukien, and after looting the town retired with 200 residents, whom they are holding for ransom. A Red army numbering over 900 men looted Kiuwashen, Kiangsu, and the neighbouring countryside, carrying off 40 men and women, for whom a ransom of \$500,000 is demanded. The captives were believed to be confined in an adjacent small island in the Yangtze.

Over 200 houses were burned, 10 villagers and 20 bandits killed, and much looting and burning done at Yahchang, North Kiangsu, pending the arrival of the river police from the Grand Canal, who, taking the bandits unawares, succeeded in driving the band away. More than 500 were killed, 300 houses looted and burned, and 800 residents abducted from Hanchengchen, West Honan, by outlaws who entered the town at the beginning of August.

The band numbered 2,500 and established a reign of terror, during which everything of any value was taken away. Bandits raiding villages near Suihsien, North Anhwei, killed 28 persons and abducted about 70, after looting and burning. Jukao, a large market town, mentioned above, was entered by bandits at

3 a.m. on August 22. They immediately began looting, burning, killing, and outraging the women.

Eye-witnesses leaving the town reported it in flames and the loss of life and property impossible to estimate. It was subsequently reported that 100 well-to-do residents were taken away and are being held for ransom. This large band has been ravaging the district for a long time, and the garrison stationed at Jukao in July seems to have been transferred, like so many of the troops which have been drafted wholesale for the purposes of the war in the north.

The large majority of these outrages occurred in the three provinces most directly under the control of Nanking, Kiangsu, Anhwei, and Chekiang. If lawlessness can be so widespread under the nose of the Government, what must it not be in the provinces where authority is even weaker? References to distant areas are scant, as knowledge of what is happening in them only rarely reaches the Press through escaping missionaries or Chinese refugees. Such outrages are so commonplace that they are regarded as not worth record in Shanghai unless of local interest.

So the horrors farther afield mount up day by day but receive little publicity, and it is only by inference, from the fact that Kiangsu, Hupeh, Hunan, and Fukien are almost completely overrun by bandits and Communists, that it can be assumed that the amount of suffering in these provinces is at least equally great as in the town provinces.

It is instructive that most of the information recorded comes from military sources, where disagreeable facts are usually minimized and only successes exaggerated.