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Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 6

Finding Aid for

National Christian Council of China Records, 1919 – 1950



The Ninth Biennial Meeting of the N.C.C. of China, May 1933
MRL6: Edwin Carlyle Lobenstine Album, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Gregory Adam Scott, December 2009

Reviewed and Updated by Cecile Queffelec and Brigette C. Kamsler, April 2014, with financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation.

Summary Information

Creator: Foreign Missions Conference of North America and MRL Staff
Title: National Christian Council of China Records
Inclusive dates: 1919 - 1950
Bulk dates: 1929 - 1946
Abstract: The Council was an interdenominational consultative and advisory organization for Protestant Christian groups in China, founded in 1922 as a successor to the China Continuation Committee. Correspondence, publications, and meeting reports.
Size: 6 boxes, 2.75 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Many of these records were originally copies produced by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, which had had a close relationship with the independent Missionary Research Library. These records were accessioned to the Burke Library upon the closure of the MRL in 1976.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 6: National Christian Council of China Records, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The National Christian Council of China (Chinese: *Zhonghua quanguo Jidujiao xiejin hui* 中華全國基督教協進會) was formed in 1922 following a National Christian Conference held in Shanghai. The council was seen as fulfilling the mission of the China Continuation Committee, which had been set up in 1913 to continue the work of the Edinburgh World Missions Conference. In 1922 the committee was disbanded and the N.C.C. of China took its place, also absorbing other institutions such as the China for Christ movement, which had been founded in 1919. The N.C.C. of China was designed as a representative body made up of delegates from missions and churches, one which would play an advisory role to the many Protestant groups operating in China. It was hoped that it would facilitate greater cooperation among churches and interdenominational work among missions. Among those excluded from the council were the Roman Catholics, who had created an Apostolic Delegation of China in the same year that the council was established.

In 1923 the council set up the Society for the Advancement of Christian Literature. Based in Shanghai, it published Christian literature in Chinese and was run by Chinese Christians with missionaries acting as advisors. The council and its sub-committees published a number of books and pamphlets, as well as the *China for Christ Bulletin* in Chinese, and the *N.C.C. Bulletin* in English. In 1926 the China Inland Mission and the Christian and Missionary Alliance withdrew from the council, citing the liberal direction of the organization as their reason. By 1932, however, the council represented about 70% of the Protestant presence in China. Similar councils also appeared in other countries, such as the N.C.C. of India which was founded in the early 1920s, and the N.C.C. of the Philippines, established in 1929.

C.Y. Cheng (Cheng Jingyi 誠靜怡) served as the chairperson of the 1922 National Christian Conference and general secretary of the N.C.C. of China from 1922 to 1933. In the late 1930s Wu Yi-fang (Wu Yifang 吳貽芳) was chairperson, Ronald Rees was a secretary, Earl H. Cressy

was secretary of the commission on Christian education, and Edward Hicks Hume was secretary of the commission on Christian medical work. Edwin Carlyle Lobenstine had a position as honorary secretary, and T.T. Lew (Liu Tingfang 劉廷芳) headed the National Committee for Christian Religious Education in China.

The council ceased functioning in the early 1950s as leadership of the Chinese Christians in the PRC was taken over by the proponents of the Three-Self movement.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of material related to the council's meetings, publications and reports. It includes some documents that predate the council's official founding in 1922 and which are related to the China Continuation Committee's plans for the council. The collection is divided into 4 series:

- **Series 1: Records, 1919 - 1950 (3 boxes, 1.50 lin. ft.)**
This series contains reports, meeting minutes, and other official materials produced by the council or its sub-committees and related organizations.
- **Series 2: Administrative Correspondence, 1928 - 1945 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**
Correspondence of an administrative nature and related to the council's work is collected in this series.
- **Series 3: N.C.C. China Bulletin, 1938 - 1941 (1 box, 0.25 lin. ft.)**
The council published a news bulletin during the early years of the war with Japan in China. This series contains copies and originals of the bulletin, covering nearly the entire run of the publication.
- **Series 4: Publications, 1922 - 1950 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**
Pamphlets, published reports, and other publications appear in this series.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper, and items in an advanced state of deterioration were photocopied on to acid-free paper.

In 2014, the collection was updated as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant. At this time, materials were reorganized in series 1, and additional material was added.

Further Sources

Several other archival holdings in series 6 of the MRL collection have connections to the N.C.C. of China, including:

China Continuation Committee

Organization that preceded the NCC of China.

Earl Herbert Cressy Papers

Cressy worked with the council on projects related to Christian education.

Edward Hicks Hume Papers

Hume was involved with the council on issues related to medical work.

Higher Educational Institutions in China

The National Christian Conference was involved in issues of higher education.

Timothy Tingfang Lew Papers

T.T. Lew was one of the organizers of the National Christian Conference in 1922, and headed the committee on Christian Higher Education from 1930 to 1935.

Student Evangelism in Government Universities

The council was one of the main organizations involved in this effort.

The MRL Pamphlets collection, folders 473 - 475, contains several publications produced by the N.C.C. of China. In addition, Yale Divinity School library has 12 folders of reports from the council, and the *Bulletin* exists in microfilm form in several libraries.

Contents list

Series 1: Records, 1919 - 1950

Series Box Folder Contents

Annual/Biennial Meetings

1	1	1	National Christian Conference of China: Meeting Record, 1919; Annual Reports: 1922 - 1923,; 1923 – 1924
1	1	2	Seventh Annual Meeting: Reports, 1929
1	1	3	Eighth Biennial Meeting: Minutes, Reports, 1931
1	1	4	Tenth Biennial Meeting: Reports, 1935
1	1	5	Eleventh Biennial Meeting: Impressions, 1937
1	1	6	Twelfth Biennial Meeting: Memoranda for Discussion, December 1946
1	1	7	Twelfth Biennial Meeting: Recommendations, December 1946
1	1	8-9	Twelfth Biennial Meeting: Special Papers, 1946
1	1	10	Twelfth Biennial Meeting: Reports, 1946
1	1	11	Twelfth Biennial Meeting: Papers on Legal Matters, 1946

Executive Committee

1	2	1	Meeting Minutes, November 1934
1	2	2	Enlarged Committee Meeting: Resolution Adopted, May 1943
1	2	3	Meeting Minutes, April 1945
1	2	4-5	Enlarged Committee Meeting: Minutes, Reports, Appendices, January 1946
1	2	6	Meeting Minutes, October 1946

Religious Education

1	2	7	Committee on Religious Education: Minutes, Reports, 1923-1927
1	2	8	Committee on Church in Worship and Religious Education, 1927-1928
1	2	9	China Christian Educational Association: Reports, 1929
1	2	10	Meeting on Religious Education Work and the Five Year Plan: Report, 1929
1	2	11-12	Committee on Religious Education: Minutes, Reports, 1930; 1932-1933

Ad Interim Committee

1	2	13-17	Meeting Minutes, 1934-1941
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Christian Literature

1	2	18-20	[19??]-1945
1	2	21	Transcripts of Articles and Broadcasts, 1936 – 1939

General (in chronological order)

1	3	1	Administration Committee Meeting: Minutes, 1929
1	3	2	Canton Conference: Reports, Findings, 1929
1	3	3	Regional Retreat Conferences: Correspondence, Reports, 1929
1	3	4	Conference on the Peoples' Livelihood: Conference Papers, February 1931

Series 1: Records, 1919 - 1950 (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	3	5	Committee on the Training of Missionaries: Reports, 1934
1	3	6	Cooperation in Mission Work: Correspondence, Reports, 1934
1	3	7	Reports; Committee Meeting Minutes, 1934
1	3	8	Sub-Committee on Studies: Meeting Minutes, 1937
1	3	9	Visit Reports, 1937 – 1941
1	3	10	War Relief: Minutes, Reports, 1937 – 1941
1	3	11	East China Regional Conference: Meeting Minutes, March 1939
1	3	12	Cooperation in West China: Reports, 1939 – 1940
1	3	13	Related Boards and Organizations: Correspondence, Reports, Minutes, 1939 – 1944
1	3	14-16	Rees Report, 1940 (3 copies)
1	3	17	Evacuation to the West: Reports, Correspondence, 1940 – 1941
1	3	18	Essay, Reports, Minutes Extracts, 1939 – 1941
1	3	19	Child Welfare Project Committee Meeting Minutes, 1941
1	3	20	Budget, 1944 – 1945
1	3	21	Committee for Student Work in Government Universities: Reports, 1944-1945
1	3	22	Relief Committee: Reports, 1945
1	3	23	Letters sent to Dr Decker, 1945
1	3	24	Report on State of Churches in China Today, December 1946
1	3	25	Memorandum, Notes, Report, [19??]

Series 2: Administrative Correspondence, 1928 – 1945

2	1	1-14	Administrative Correspondence, 1928 – 1945
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Series 3: N.C.C. China Bulletin, 1938 – 1941

3	1	1-9	Bulletin, 1938-1941
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Series 4: Publications, 1922 – 1950

4	1	1-4	Publications, [192? - 194?]
4	1	5-6	Revised Directory of the Protestant Christian Movement in China, 1950
4	1	7	<i>Directory of Protestant Missionaries in China</i> , June 1950