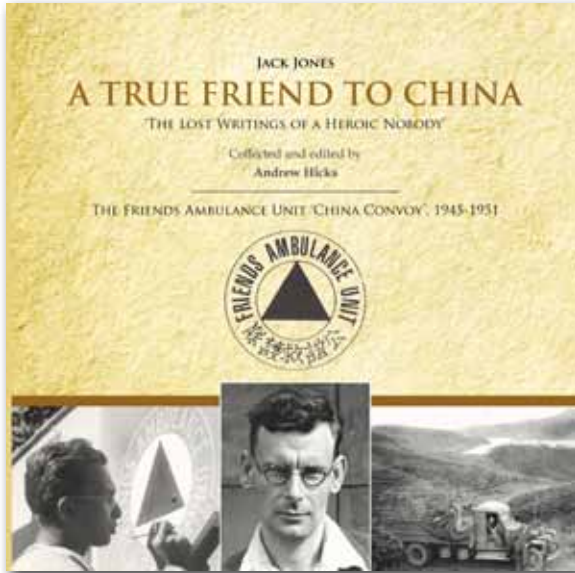


# A TRUE FRIEND TO CHINA

Andrew Hicks



The story of how the Friends Ambulance Unit 'China Convoy' brought medical supplies and services to a devastated China in the dark years of the 1940s. This large-format book includes the recently-discovered contemporary writings in China of the FAU's Chungking-based Transport Director, Jack Jones. Lavishly illustrated with over 500 photo images.

China in the late 1940s was another world, an ancient society still in the grips of feudalism, desperately poor and in need of modernization. Jack Jones is among the few foreigners to have written contemporary accounts of day-to-day life there. Together with his fellow members of the Friends Ambulance Unit 'China Convoy', his long struggle to bring medical supplies and services to the poorest regions of China is vividly evoked in this book. Written by him as articles for the China Convoy's newsletter and lost and unread for more than half a century, they have recently been discovered in Quaker archives in London and Philadelphia. An edited selection now tells the remarkable story of how Jack and his team battled against all the odds in life-threatening situations to help relieve the overwhelming suffering of the Chinese people.

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## A Unique Story of China

Jack Jones was an obsessive writer and with a bottle always to hand he tirelessly beat the keys of his battered typewriter in the heat and humidity of the Chungking transport depot. Published in the FAU's regular newsletter for a tiny audience of staff scattered across China, his articles were lost and forgotten until Andrew Hicks rediscovered them in the Quaker archives in London and Philadelphia. This book tells of a feudal China wracked by civil war, of Jack's personal story of his Quaker unit's contribution to the Chinese people that toted neither guns, drugs nor bibles.





## Jack Jones' China Writings

Jack tells engagingly of the FAU's struggle to distribute medical supplies across vast distances over washed out roads, using battered trucks that broke down daily, facing the assaults of extreme heat and cold, of marauding soldiers, bandits and obstructive bureaucrats. Jack, with Lord Hugh, the son of the Duke of Bedford on board, drove his truck off the edge of the road, falling sixty feet into a ravine. He was captured by bandits and beaten with the flat of a sword and he nearly died of typhus; improbable tales but all true and powerfully told by Jack in the book. Somehow the China Convoy succeeded in supplying hospitals against all the odds, thus saving many lives, and weathering the arrival in Chungking of the communist regime, though not for very long before China was closed to foreigners.

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The story of a Quaker unit's selfless efforts  
in war-torn China, with a huge number of  
never-before seen photographs



# 10 NEW LIFE UNDER THE COMMUNISTS NOVEMBER 1949 TO APRIL 1950

The Peoples Liberation Army arrives in the village

PSU Chronicle 108, January 21, 1950

## EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

JACK JONES, Chungking, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1949. Liberation passed off peacefully enough as far as we are concerned. We had a couple of false alarms over the weekend and all our employees not already living on our premises moved into the big godowns and camped out there. Talk about the Hongkong project - this was a real refugee camp in our very backyard. We first heard gunfire in the morning on Tuesday [29 November], just after starting the clinic. There were signs of activity all round and gunfire all that day and the next night, quite heavy, just like Guy Fawkes night. (What, have we got to explain this to you [American] too?) There were heavier explosions, caused by [ammunition] dumps which had been aimed going up and one almost one, almost instinctively reached for my tin hat and stretcher but it was all right. [Jack was in London when the V2 bombing began in late 1944 and presumably worked with the FAU fire-quad] Next morning when we woke up we found Communist soldiers in our yard. [Thursday, 1st December] Later that morning they borrowed three of our trucks and a few minutes after that an officer came in and told us our trucks were not KMT trucks and so further use would be made of them. There was no more excitement until that night at 10 when Fieds looked up and said, "Oh, what a lovely pink sky. There must be a fire somewhere." We just had time to duck when the wall by my ear came in about a foot

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and went back again in the old familiar way and the windows burst open over our heads and a sound of tinkling glass was heard all over the shop. This really was a hevt and blew in our bedroom wall in one place and busted several walls of godowns, etc. Nobody was hurt but we have been dealing with some dreadful casualties since. The next village down the road was completely destroyed as I saw when I was called to T's Ch'iao the next day to see the Communist Staff Officer in this district. I must say this officer and the other Communists I have met this far have made an exceedingly good impression. The officer asked us about the Unit. We were told to carry on as usual until the political officers arrived, and this we are doing to the best of our ability.

The Frons and White [Dwenn and Dave], who on Monday had set off for Pei P'ei, were meanwhile having fun and games on their own. They went to Pei P'ei loaded down to the gunwales with refugees and troops. The changeover there was peacefully made. All nationalist troops passing through were fed by the populace, then posters were stuck up to welcome the Communists, then they turned out to be more Nationalists and the posters were taken down again, then the Communists really came and they put the posters up again. Dave was asked to take Communist troops to Ch'ing Ma Kuan and as he figured that we have had to help the Nationalists before but are supposed to be neutral, he took it as an opportunity to even things up, he had no difficulty in getting a permit to leave.

### Dave and Dorothy describe being liberated

David White's widow, Carol, has sent me Dave's letters home from Chungking. One of these, nine typed pages long, tells the story of clearing the JCRR godowns at Pei P'ei of the final medical supplies and it tallies precisely with Jack's account. Dave tells in detail how the town's authorities were desperate to placate and feed the fleeing Nationalist rabble and to move them on as quickly as possible before welcoming a small, polite contingent of communist soldiers. His full story of being commandeered to transport the communists, an unknowable crowd of soldiers with whom he could not communicate, was in fact a far more challenging experience than Jack makes out.

Dave's letters also describe how on the eve of the communist liberation Chungking city was waiting in terror as its occupants saw the currency collapsing and sat on the roadsides selling what little they had before evacuating in all directions to places they hoped might be safer. Ragged bands of Nationalist soldiers could be seen retreating up



### MAY DAY PARADE, CHUNGKING, 1950

On 8th May 1950 Bob Reuman wrote home to his family about the May Day parade. 'Monday was May First which as any good socialist knows is an important day to the workers of the world. There were big parades in town, although it is rainy and grey, and Dave and I represented the American people. It was a long affair stretching at least several miles... with a basic unit constantly reiterated of large red People's government flags, followed by posters of Mao Tse Tung and Chu Teh, Stalin and Lenin. After this a drum and cymbals played, arrayed in flashy pinks, greens, reds and yellows, using the hesitation stride and flailing arm stroke that I have described to you before. It is very impressive. After this came a cheering section, waving flags and chanting exhortations after the leader shouted a brief phrase. A most colourful display. I managed a few pictures, both colour and black and white. The latter I developed tonight and they are sharp enough but went hardly further than the heads of the spectators in front of me.'

The pictures now reproduced are from Bob's colour slides that were sent back to the USA where they could be developed.