

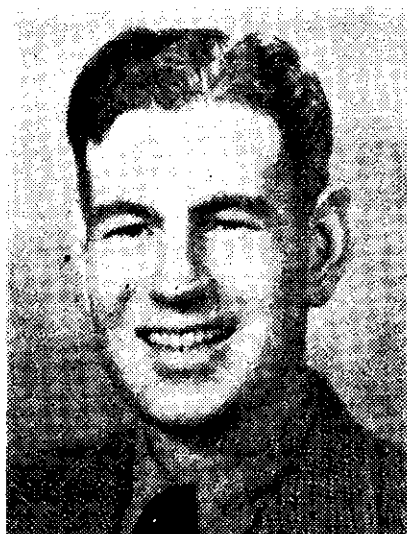
He Warned Us But We Took No Notice

NO prophet expects honour when he returns to his own country whatever his address has been in his absence. We are sure therefore that James Bertram did not expect the band to turn out when he returned the other day from Tokyo; but some of us remembered that it was a prophet who had returned, and if we did not call for the band it was because we had other plans for his reception. We did not forget that he had warned us before he went away that Japan was plotting our destruction; and had even warned Parliament in a private session. But prophets of doom are not popular. He was not, then; but he is one of the few people in New Zealand now entitled to adopt a "Serve you right" attitude. He does not do that, but is as modest and diffident as when he went away, though he was not many months out of New Zealand before he was a prisoner in Hong Kong, and not many months in Hong Kong before he was marked for "special treatment" and sent to one of the toughest camps in Tokyo. That he is still alive is chiefly because there was not close enough co-operation between the civil and military authorities in Japan to make it certain that whoever was "marked" by one group would be removed by the other.

However, we want our readers to get the story from his typewriter and not from ours. He has agreed to write a series of articles for *The Listener* in which he will look both backwards and forwards. We shall not spoil the effect of those by presenting him at second-hand.

"The Truth Should be Told"

But it may be necessary to remind some of our readers that he is a New Zealand Rhodes Scholar, was born in



Alan Blakey photograph

JAMES BERTRAM

He will write his own story for us

Auckland and educated at Waitaki Boys' High School and Auckland University College, and at Oxford took a first in English and Modern Languages. After Oxford came some journalistic experience with *The Times, London*. Then a Rhodes Fellowship enabled him to go to China to spend a year studying Chinese at a Chinese University and the social conditions of China in the country itself.

When we asked him how the Japanese got hold of him when we thought he was in Chungking he explained that he had caught typhoid, fever in Hong Kong and been in hospital there for two months. He was just out of hospital when the war broke, joined the Hong Kong Volunteers, and fought through the brief campaign until the surrender.

"Did the Japanese know who you were?"

wondered how I was to put down all this silent magic in such a way that it would be intelligible in sound only.

Science and Service in Partnership

• However, I knew that must be the start of the programme, and the end of the programme, and the theme running through it. Both R.A.F. and T.R.E. had impressed upon me one fact, had begged me not to forget it. "We could not have accomplished this had not Science and Service worked together, intimately, closely, enthusiastically. The enemy did not do that and we were 18 months ahead of him all the time. What you have seen is the result of a partnership." I did not forget and I have tried to see to it that at least that point will stick in listeners' minds.

There were other things I noticed as I wandered round, things the scientists and the R.A.F. did not tell me. I saw that in these islands are brains as brilliant as any in the world. I saw that there is courage and initiative as great as any in the world. And I felt, with a glow of pride, that if these two are given the opportunity, there is no need to fear for the future of Britain.

"No, I don't think so. When I was taken prisoner they made all sorts of investigations and I was interrogated, but they never quite caught up on the facts."

It was disturbing, he went on, that the Japanese were always able to find both civilian and army co-operators. "I don't know how much of that story will be told, and, at the moment, I don't feel inclined to enlarge on it. But the truth should be told some day."

Conditions in Tokyo

Bertram was in Hong Kong for two years before he was sent to Tokyo, where, he says, conditions were tough rather than horrible. The chief trouble was the complete lack of medical supplies and equipment to deal with malnutrition diseases. People were dying all the time. Camp conditions were very strict of course, but those who were sent out in labour gangs, as he was, contrived to steal enough food to keep going.

"Did the Japanese know your name?"

"Yes, I kept my surname, but did not use my Christian name."

"You returned through Manila. What were the conditions there? Have the Filipinos already taken control?"

"It is military control to a very large extent, but the Filipinos are having a great time. They are making hay while the sun shines and while the American troops are there. The town was badly knocked about when the Americans fought their way through it, and the Japanese also destroyed a good deal of it."

The Communists in China

"Is the situation in China between the Government and the Communists serious?"

"I think it might be. We had Chinese working with us and my best contacts were members of crews of ships on which we worked, loading and unloading. The present position is something like that in the Balkans and Eastern Europe—very unsettled. I am inclined to think the Communists will be manoeuvred right out."

"It astonished us in New Zealand to hear the term 'war lord' used recently of China. We thought they had all disappeared."

"In North China there have been several war lords right through the conflict, but they have been looking after their own provinces."

"Do you think that any kind of democracy is possible in China?"

"Yes, in the north. The Communists have limited themselves to about a third of the posts, so that there is a real basis for the election of a popular government. The Chinese can work a democracy; the Japanese can not."

"How long will it be before the Chinese can interest themselves in any problems but their own?"

"All I can say is that China is in for a few rough years and will have to give all her attention to her own affairs for some time. She will look for Russian support in the North and will probably get it."

"Will Russia surrender Korea?"

"What the Russians want most is control of the railways and the ports. This they are getting. And by the way, if there is ever a Chinese Navy again, it will be a Russian model."



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hunted and destroyed Nazi bombers slipping through the darkness heading for London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol. And, as I wandered about, I



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Advice to Mothers

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