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THE PICTURE WAS REVERSED

James Bertram Revisits Japan

WHEN James Bertram wrote six articles for *The Listener* recently on the war in the Far East, the fall of Hong Kong, and his experiences as a prisoner-of-war in the hands of the Japanese, we had no idea, nor had he, that by this date he would have been to Japan again, and come back with the feeling of having closed the last chapter of that story. He is back in New Zealand now, and has just made his report to the Government on the war crimes cases he helped to investigate on this last trip, as a member of the New Zealand delegation to the Far Eastern Commission. While he was in Wellington we interviewed him, and asked him to bring the account of his adventure up to date.

The last of his six articles was chiefly about the Omori prison-camp near Tokyo, and about some of the jobs he was made to do while he was there. Since that was published, Mr. Bertram has been there again, landed at the very docks where he used to work, identified some of the Japanese guards who maltreated prisoners, at Omori brought away as souvenirs the boards on which he scratched verses and quotations while in solitary confinement, eaten lavish salads (out of a bowl carved in ice) at a luxury Japanese hotel, travelled in the Emperor's private railway train, visited old friends in China; and altogether enjoyed the satisfaction of reversing the whole picture of his relations with the Japanese.

"There was Old Scarface"

He left New Zealand on December 19 for Honolulu. After a week there he left for Japan on the Mt. McKinley, an American command ship that had been used in the invasion of the Philippines. Already he began to go back over old experiences—he shared a cabin on board with Major Charles Boxer, his friend of Hong Kong days (who in the meantime had married (in America) Emily Hahn; the author of *China To Me*).

The Mt. McKinley reached Yokohama on January 9, and then went on to dock at Shibaura, the railway docks in Tokyo harbour where Mr. Bertram had once loaded and unloaded trucks and boats for the Japanese.

"So I landed right on the spot where I'd been working, and in my first hour or two I had found some of the bosses still on the job. Some of them started to tell me how some prisoners had travelled a long way to give evidence on their behalf, but not all of them could do that; and there was old Scarface sliding away into a shed, and one or two others who didn't want to be seen. I was able to pick up, one or two men there who oughtn't to have been at large."

Extraordinary Transformation

Then began the Commission's work in Tokyo. Headquarters of Supreme Command, Allied Powers, were in Tokyo itself, and at first there were conferences every day with all the various staff sec-



Alan Blakey photograph
JAMES BERTRAM
Freedom was no illusion

tions, exchanging all the information that had been collected, and so on. In between conferences, the Commission made trips into the country, to other cities, factories, and so on.

"We went to Myanoshita, the great tourist place near Fuji, and that's where we had this magnificent banquet. The hotel staff were being all very formal and polite, and the salads were in big bowls carved out of blocks of ice. But the star turn was a great American eagle carved in ice, dripping from his wings. And there was a cake, with the flags of 11 nations stuck in it! It must be an extraordinary transformation for the whole Japanese propaganda machine, and the tourist industry, to begin quite suddenly to turn on all this sort of thing for Americans and British, to go right back to what they were doing in 1930 or thereabouts.

"We made a couple of other trips, both in the Imperial train, which now belongs to General Eichelberger, and they gave me great pleasure—I used to work on the railways. One trip was to Nikko. I think it's the most beautiful part in all Japan, with marvellous shrines, and avenues of thousands of cryptomerias—Japanese cedars. And the other was to Sendai; we saw the gaol there.

"I made another trip, to Kyoto. The rest all went on to see the British occupation area, and Hiroshima, and I stayed in Kyoto. It was interesting to me because it was the one large city that hadn't been bombed. I had been there before the war, and it is still much the most pleasant Japanese city. It was modelled on Peking, and still has the atmosphere of old Japan.

Hopeful Sign

"One most interesting thing I saw there: a man showed me some old back copies of a Japanese socialist paper of the early 1900's, which was attacking the conduct of the Russo-Japanese war, and even in 1904 was saying that the

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