Captivity in the Co-prosperity Sphere

Presbyterian Missionary's Story

Listener on his way to a South Island "hide-out" where he hopes to find quiet to write on the experiences of himself and his colleagues of the New Zealand Presbyterian Mission during the war years in South China, the Rev. E. G. Jansen vividly described life along the fringe of the Japanese conquests.

"It was in autumn of 1937 that the war first hit us — both metaphorically and literally," he said. "By 'us' I mean a sizable community of Chinese and New Zealanders working together on a programme of education, medical services, and religious instruction at a place called Kong Chuen, the first market-town north of Canton on the Canton-Hankow Railway. Our central buildings -- boarding school, hospital church and residences-were dangerously near the railway and the local station and since the Jap airmen who frequently came over to unload bombs on trainnear-by were notoriously poor marksmen it was rather uncomfortable for us. After about a year of that the invasion army

end of the war, we were inside the Japanese 'Empire.'"

"Was that better than continual bombing or worse?"

"If you mean did it shift us out of the front line," replied Mr. Jansen, "the answer is No. Right through the war our district stayed divided-some of it in Japanese hands and some in Free China. Occasionally the Japanese made a big push up some valley towards the north. But they always got ambushed sooner or later and so back came their boundary to our doorstep. Our main hospital remained always in occupied territory, but a branch, 35 miles away, at a place called Kaai Hau, where Miss Annie James was stationed, was in Free China almost always throughout the war."

"And could you still work under those onditions?

"Well, so long as we New Zealanders remained neutrals, that is for the three years or so before Pearl Harbour, we managed to keep both places going. It became desperately difficult, of course, to get supplies even at Kong Chuen itself. I had to fetch everything in person

NTERCEPTED by The itself arrived and from then on, till the from the city as guarantee that our order was not a 'blind' for serving guerrilla forces.

> "Was there any resistance to the invasion in your area?"

> "For reasons known only to the Chinese High Command the regular troops withdrew from the southern part of the province without making a stand; but a few companies of farm lads who had had a smattering of training as a Self-defence Corps held up the Jap Army for ten days at the Tsung Fe River, the stream on the banks of which our town of Kong Chuen stands - or rather stood; it is now in the process of being rebuilt. Those young farmers, defending their homes and families, were the equals of any fighters anywhere. They were beaten in the end, of course, and then the Japanese burnt two whole market towns as reprisal. That left hundreds of people without occupations or homes, though huge numbers had already trekked through into Free China. So we had to turn our 'compound' into a Refugee Camp.'

"Did that bring interference?"



REV. E. G. JANSEN "I have a life-work there"

"Not from the Japanese. But it did lay us open to attacks by bandits, in one of which our only European doctor, Owen Eaton, from Otago, was shot. He was a brilliant fellow, the leading student of his year, gladly serving the

(continued on next page)



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