

GANGSTERS and OPIUM

THERE is in Shanghai a curious district outside the Settlement where the roads belong to the International Settlement and are under its law, while the land on either side is Chinese territory, the whole being inside what used to be the British Defence Lines. It was in this district, having been shelled out of our previous premises, that we reopened our school.

But as I went to and from school in early 1939 my attention began to be attracted by strange behaviour in the compounds of certain very large houses. Chinese plain clothes detectives were obviously hanging round the doorways, gates would be opened furtively and scouting parties sent out before a certain motor-car emerged, then the gates would be hastily relocked. At the same time there was a marked increase of bad characters in the district, and armed robberies occurred even in daylight. Nos. 76 and 96 Jessfield Road, were adjoining, and through their tall bamboo fences I could see large numbers of men drilling.

Comic Opera Situation

The explanation came shortly after England and Germany declared war. One morning going to school I saw large numbers of uniformed men headed by Japanese non-commissioned officers patrolling the pavement. Technically they were still on Chinese territory. Then suddenly No. 76 was gaily painted, the furtiveness ceased, and we heard that the opportunist Wang Ching-wei had made the house his headquarters, and given himself a special municipality police force. The next door house blossomed not so gaily as the Japanese Gendarmerie Headquarters.

A week or two later the road space was invaded. A Special Municipal Policeman, complete with white sleeve and black and white painted baton, was directing the traffic, while our own Settlement Policeman was standing a few feet away looking rather foolish and unnecessary. By lunch time our own man was also directing the traffic, and as the signals of the opposing police forces did not always agree, the traffic went its own cautious way. Meantime on the pavement stood a group of Settlement Policemen with automatic pistols, and on the opposite pavement a large group of Ta Tao police—Wang Ching-wei's gangsters—armed with rifles. There was no shooting, but both sides were prepared.

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thoughtful, kind, and sweet — in fact she is "One Girl in a Million." This new serial will be heard each morning from Tuesday to Friday at 10 a.m., starting from 22B on February 3, 12B February 10, 32B, February 17, and 42B, February 24. It will play for the first time from 22A on March 3, at 7.45 p.m., and thereafter each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening at the same time.



BARRICADES in the streets of Shanghai. A street scene during the critical days when the British were doing everything in their power to preserve calm and confidence

This comic opera situation lasted for several weeks throughout the district, while the International Municipality tried through the Japanese military and consular authorities to negotiate a "modus vivendi" with the suddenly arisen Wang Ching-wei puppet. A week later, within a stone's throw of the British Military Headquarters, one morning I found the footpath blocked by sand bags, a concrete pillbox was being built, and a machine-gun post had been established on the pavement with seven Ta Tao police and two Japanese on guard. They had fixed bayonets and loaded guns.

"Anything Might Happen"

At the end of October, for instance, two well-known Americans were stopped by Chinese one night, and our Municipal Police came up to extricate them. But the Chinese set on our police, firing some sixty shots, disarmed them, and stole their revolvers and watches. It was conclusively proved through the bullets that the men were Ta Tao Japanese agents. A week before, when challenging a suspicious motor-cycle trio, the Settlement Police were fired upon again. The police gave chase, and the trio turned into a house near Wang Ching-wei's headquarters, which must have been full of his thugs, for suddenly machine-guns barked and a hand grenade was thrown. Police reinforcements rushed up, together with a group of Italian Marines; then a squad of Japanese police were called in, and after negotiations with Wang Ching-wei's gang the matter was called off after the life of a British police officer had been lost. All these things happened in broad daylight. Residents in the district were constantly being molested, armed burglary was rife, and most people had their houses protected with live wires or kept fierce dogs in the garden. One hesitated to go out at night even in a car, and in daytime anything might still happen.

Britain Withdraws

It was at this point that the British troops were withdrawn from Shanghai to Singapore, and the sector was taken over by the Japanese. It was useless to struggle more. Negotiations were started by the Shanghai Municipality for the settling of the Extra-Settlement road question. Japan's puppets demanded as a pre-requisite to the settling that full policing rights should be given them and full rights of administration. A special police force of the area was formed with a Japanese at the head. Wang Ching-wei's gang had been successfully foisted on Shanghai and recognised. He and his crowd were then transferred with much pomp to Nanking and set up as a government to serve as a further smoke screen to Japanese intentions.

As soon as the British troops left, barbed wire barricades were set up and we had to pass before Japanese sentries and submit to search. Then came incidents. A few weeks before I left Shanghai, for instance, my rickshaw coolie came to me one afternoon and asked me if he might sleep in the basement of my home. A Japanese soldier had been shot in the "special" area near our school, all barricades had been shut, and no one could go in or out. For three days we tried to get into the area to get to our school where our boarders were short of food, but we could not get permission. Not even to the hospitals in the district was food allowed to come, and doctors could not reach their patients. A house-to-house search was being made, Chinese and foreigners alike had to submit. Then a certain part of the area was opened, but one long street remained closed. For ten days we passed that street but could do nothing to help. Both ends of the street were boarded up and armed Japanese sentries and Wang Ching-wei men stood on guard. The people inside were standing at the entrances calling to us

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for food and water but we could not get near them. It was heart-rending. Gradually the calling ceased. At the end of ten days the gates were unbarred to the survivors, and a hundred bodies were brought out.

Opium as Weapon of Attack

Meantime the district was growing full of opium dens. Our 1940 police report stated that in the Wang Ching-wei Japanese area over 42 opium firms, 100 opium dens, 24 gambling dens, and 200 lottery dens were operating. An Amusement Supervisor's office had been set up by the Japanese to collect a regular percentage from all these places. Nearly all the large private houses of the district were taken and converted, brightly lit with neon lights and guarded by black uniformed men wearing heavy steel helmets and carrying automatic pistols. The places opened about five o'clock of an afternoon and shut about breakfast time. Dance halls were run in conjunction with gambling dens, and the adjoining opium rooms had their own armed guards. I spent Christmas of 1939 in the district with American missionaries. At four o'clock on Christmas morning I was awakened by the sound of shots and, jumping out of bed, I saw down below in the street a man rushing out of the cafe opposite, firing as he ran. The next afternoon we were again disturbed by the sound of firing in the street. Some Japanese Special Service men (equivalent to the Gestapo), having lost heavily at the gambling tables, had started firing on the management. The den was closed for a few days till it paid sufficient "squeeze" to the Japanese Amusement Supervisor's office to be allowed to reopen.

In a report on the condition of Nanking by Dr. Bates, a Baptist missionary engaged in anti-opium work, it is stated that there are 30 public stores, 14 hotels with licences, and 175 licensed smoking dens. The drug is supplied at 19 dollars per ounce by the Opium Suppression Bureau, and passed on to buyers at about 22 dollars an ounce. In Dairen, from where the opium comes, it costs 8 dollars an ounce and 2 dollars for transportation. So the wholesale price of 19 dollars provides 9 dollars to cover a tax of 3 dollars per ounce and leaves plenty to spare for individual "squeeze." The Japanese Military Police and the Special Service Section receive substantial shares in these profits. The average daily sales in public stores are about 3,000 ounces, or 66,000 dollars retail. The Wang Ching-wei government receives about 3,000,000 dollars monthly from its opium sales. It is estimated that in Nanking alone there are over 60,000 addicts.

All pretence at registration of smokers has been stopped and anyone may buy at any time. Missionary friends have assured me that up country in occupied China, drugs are even being introduced into schools, but I have no means to authenticate this.