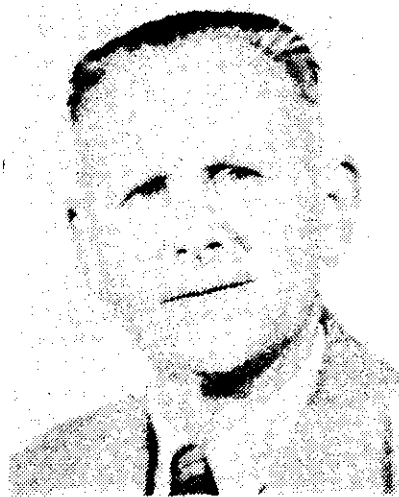


# A Presbyterian Looks at Communist China

A PRESBYTERIAN missionary in the Far East for many years, the Rev. E. G. Jansen is not altogether a stranger to readers of *The Listener*. Eight years ago he described for us his experiences in war-torn China, and when we heard recently that he was back in New Zealand again we asked him to tell us something of what he had seen since he returned to his missionary work near Canton. Mr. Jansen's views on Communism in China are summed up in a talk to be heard from the YC stations at 9.30 p.m. on Friday, June 25, and when we asked about these he said he was one who began by believing about 15 years ago that Chinese Communism was different from the main block of Communism—something adapted to Chinese local conditions without the evils of totalitarianism. "I thought it was, in fact, a form of agrarian reform," he said, "and with that in mind I watched the growing strength of Communism with considerable interest, feeling that the radical reforms it sought to introduce would be a great advance on the ineffectual and corrupt Chiang Kai Shek regime. I was one of the Christian missionaries who hoped that a working agreement—a basis of co-operation—could be found between the programme of the Christian missions in China and this evangelical reforming party."

After living under Communism for a year and a half, said Mr. Jansen, such hopes had not only waned to vanishing point—it was obvious that the Communist Party's intention was to sweep out every trace of missionary activity; and far from joining forces with the indigenous Christian Church on some kind of joint enterprise of social service and uplift, its intention was to compel the Church to serve the ends of the party in a political sense. "From all this experience I came to realise that Communism at the stage when it is a min-



REV. E. G. JANSEN  
Hope waned to vanishing point

ority bidding for popular following is an entirely different thing from Communism in undisputed control. Then it throws off the sheepskin cloak of pleasant promises and reveals itself as the wolf it really is."

When we asked Mr. Jansen if he had had difficulty in getting out of China he said that people leaving the country had to secure exit permits carefully stamped and sealed by the proper government department. "In our case," he said, "it meant a visit to the county seat 60 miles away. We thought the visit would occupy one day, but we found ourselves detained there and living in a hotel for 21 days, and even then the permits were not issued. We were allowed to return home, and a week later were taken back to the county seat under police escort. We were told that the escort was for our own protection, lest the populace, recognising us as objectionable Western imperialists, should

become violent. Actually Chinese who recognised us here and there gave us nods and surreptitious waves. At the county seat we had to undergo a long examination on the details of our past life, all of which was noted. After this the exit permits were issued. With one delay and another it took us altogether four months to get away."

What was the fate of the Chinese Christian Church? we asked Mr. Jansen.

Contrary to what most people in New Zealand expect to hear, he said, there was no direct persecution of the Church. Church services were being held as in the past, and no one was ever arrested and charged with being a Christian. "The Communist authorities, in fact, make much of the freedom of religious clauses which they have included in their constitution," Mr. Jansen continued. "Freedom of religion, however, is more nominal than real. Great pressure is put upon the Christian Church to make it conform to a pattern of activity mapped out for it by the authorities. The aim is not to exterminate the Church but to change its character from within and make it a tool of the party to serve the ends of the State."

Mr. Jansen said that all kinds of pressure were put upon the Church to bring about that end. Ministers had to undergo courses of re-education, and those who showed themselves resistant to the new thought were given intensive "brainwashing." Sermons had to be submitted for approval to a public affairs bureau before they were preached. Those who conform were led progressively into the service of the party, and their work as Christian Ministers became less and less distinctively Christian and more and more political. The objection to missionaries like himself, Mr. Jansen added, was that they were Westerners and a strengthening element in the Church.

Since leaving Communist territory in 1951, Mr. Jansen has been on the staff of a lay training centre established by the Chinese Church in Hong Kong, and he will be returning there with his wife in July next year. Before then, following refresher studies at Geneva, he will be visiting lay training institutions in Europe and on the Continent.

More than a million people had entered Hong Kong in the last four years as a result of the political upheaval in China, said Mr. Jansen. This had created many problems for the government of the colony—for instance, in housing, transport, water supply and education. "The Government of Hong Kong is from the Colonial Department in London, but in recent years there has been a strong movement towards local representation," Mr. Jansen said. "As a result the powers of the urban council, which in the past has been advisory more than legislative, have been enlarged. This trend is likely to go on modifying progressively the forms of government in the colony. It reflects the need for some sort of self-expression and a voice in government." Another interesting development of the last two or three years was the establishment of a Chinese University, Mr. Jansen added. Among other things this gave opportunities to young intellectuals among the refugees from Communist China who, though of equal standing in other respects, lacked the command of English necessary for study at Hong Kong University.

we've been used to. In fact" (she lowered her voice) "she wears Trousers!"

There was a shocked silence. "That dreadful Mrs. Bloomer!" said Mamie faintly. "Who would have thought that her influence would have reached such proportions?"

"So you see possession, in any personal sense, is quite out of the question." "Oh, dear," sighed Mamie. "It's just that, denied as we are all material resources, I do not see how we can restore the house to what it was in dear Papa's day without the assistance of the present occupiers."

"Frankly, dear child, I doubt if I shall ever feel at home there again. I should always be haunted by the patter of tiny feet." She shivered, as though someone had walked over her grave. "That is why I feel it might even be wiser to put sentiment aside and try for something with Vacant Possession. We are reasonably comfortable here in the meantime." She picked up her knitting and once more her hands fluttered silent as moths above its grey folds. "Perhaps one of our friends could look out for something."

"You are right as usual, sister," agreed Mamie, resting resigned hands in her insubstantial lap.

"I should like to find something really comfortable," mused Agatha. "After all, they say you're a long time dead."

(continued from previous page)

the curate was deeply affected. He never married, you know."

"I'm glad," said Mamie gently. "But it was you, dear sister, whom I chiefly remember. So gentle, so selfless—I wish I could have done as much for you."

"Thank you, dear. Yes, the dear west room. I scarcely recognised it. Not a medicine bottle anywhere."

"But is not the wallpaper the same? I always found the water-lilies on the green ground so conducive to tranquillity of mind and body."

"They use it as a dining-room now. One wall is painted red and the rest turquoise. The ceiling is yellow."

"The vandals!" shrieked Mamie. "How could they? That Hudson woman, the vixen! I'll get possession of her! I'll make her change it back!"

"Hush, dear, hush, you must conserve your strength. I forbid you to think of such a thing. You would be most uncomfortable—"

"That's my funeral," said Mamie ungraciously.

"You know the stories they tell about two women sharing a kitchenette? Well, the other sort of sharing is even harder. You have to be really kindred spirits. And I'm afraid Mrs. Hudson, though possibly a gentlewoman, isn't quite what

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