

Time Bomb in Hong Kong

By Martha Gellhorn

You can't hold your breath for months, so the people of Hong Kong talk of other things. But when they pause they hear the time bomb ticking. Their island will be difficult to capture, but no picnic to defend. Collier's staff writer in the Orient sends by radio a picture of this uneasy fortress of British prestige

THE island of Hong Kong rises in green peaks straight from the smooth blue-gray sea. In a circle around it are small islands like uninhabited hilltops, dotting the ocean. The port of Hong Kong faces across a bay to the city of Kowloon and the New Territories. The New Territories, a wedge-shaped mountainous piece of mainland, is Hong Kong's bridgehead into China. In winter the green peaks of Hong Kong and the brown ridges of the New Territories are blanketed in mist and rain and low gray clouds. But now the air is bright and soft and spring has come suddenly as it does in Florida or California or the south of France.

The masts of the anchored sailing junks make a hedge along the harbor front of Hong Kong. Beyond this hedge, green top-heavy ferries connect Kowloon and Hong Kong, blowing their steam whistles as they go. Freighters lie in dockyards on the Kowloon side and liners anchor offshore. A gray British cruiser heads out to sea with sampans rowing wildly away from its sharp bow. Tugs and pleasure yachts, armed mosquito boats and harbor-police launches crisscross the water. The harbor of Hong Kong is as violently alive and crowded and noisy as the city itself.

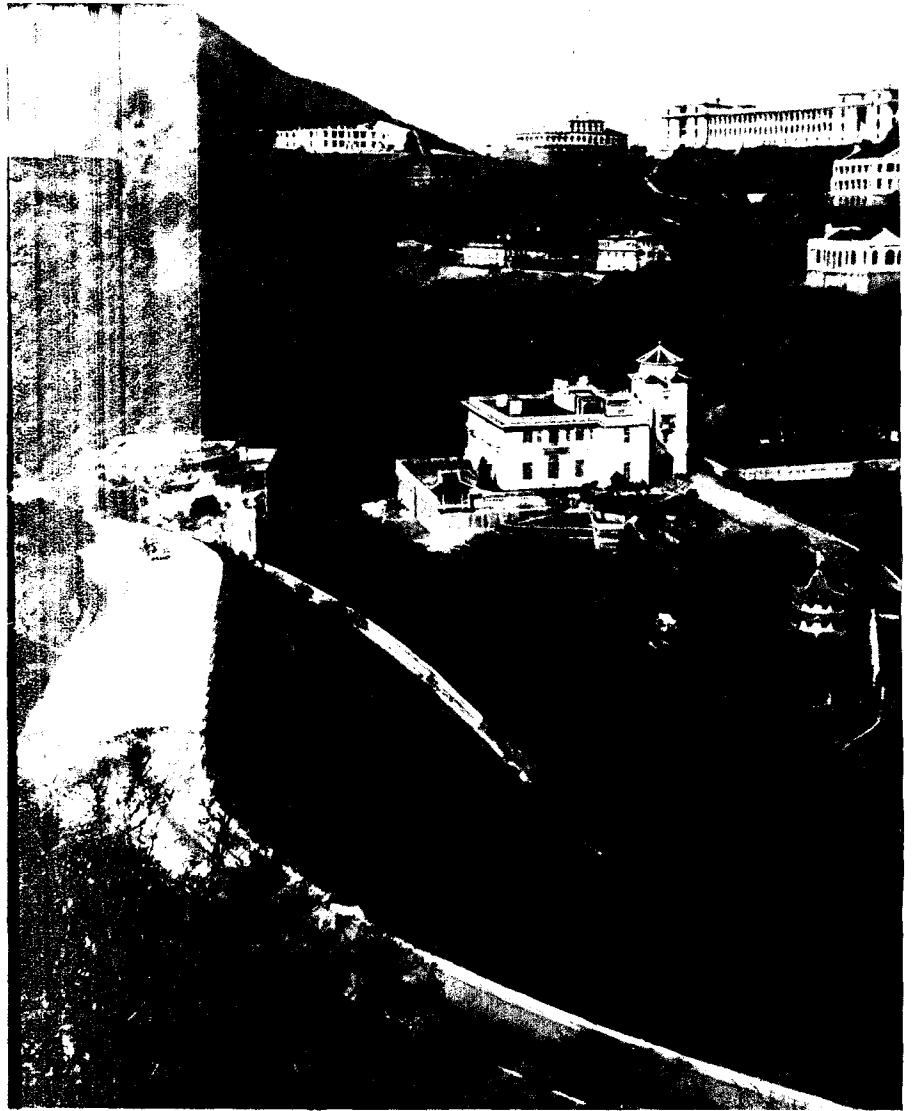
To newcomers, Hong Kong seems like a combination of Times Square on New Year's eve, the subway at five-thirty in the afternoon, a three-alarm fire, a public auction and a country fair with the calliope playing. The streets are laid out parallel to the harbor and for the distance of three streets the town is level; then the city starts to climb. Side streets are nothing but steps with shops and houses laddered up them. Halfway up the side of the peak, the city's solid mass of gray stone and cement gives way to a band of green foliage. Above this, bursting out of the mountain or outlined against the sky, are the vast white palaces of the rich. The Peak dwellers can see all the beauty of their harbor and their terraced city, but they can neither hear it nor smell it.

The City of Many Noises

Approximately 800,000 people live in Hong Kong and most of them live eight or ten in one room. The city smells of people. It smells also of Chinese cooking and of old sweaty clothes, of dust, of refuse in gutters and of dirty water in drainless houses. From time to time a breeze blows in from the green land and then the city smells sweetly of grass and sun and drying seaweed. But you have to hear Hong Kong to know what it is like.

There is always a Chinese funeral going on. The brass bands that accompany the coffin and the jolly parade of mourners play Chinese tunes, occasionally breaking into Happy Days Are Here Again, Yankee Doodle and other cheerful selections. Coolies shout and grunt to clear the way as they pull their rickshas. People argue in shrieks at food stalls, shouting for ten minutes over the purchase of a Chinese cabbage. Six women lift an enormous packing

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Hong Kong is enormously wealthy, as the lush homes of the Peak testify. All the buildings shown here are private residences; the one in the foreground belongs to Sir Robert Ho-Tung, Chinese millionaire

Hong Kong is also incredibly poor. Below is a native-quarter street, showing hawkers and hairdressers before a native market. Squalor and extreme poverty plus disease, is the lot of most of the Chinese natives



British mosquito boats patrol Hong Kong's harbor, part of the defenses by means of which Britain is serving notice on Japan that Hong Kong won't be easy to take. A submarine net closes the harbor entrance

Coolies prepare trenches and gun emplacements. Searchlights, air-raid shelters, barbed wire and munitions dumps have been set up and stocks of food and gasoline laid in. Hong Kong expects trouble



Great Day

By Kyle Crichton

PHOTOGRAPH FOR COLLIER'S BY PAUL NESSE

Laraine Day is unique in Hollywood history. She doesn't smoke or drink and she teaches a Sunday school. The gossip columnists play her for a dead loss

IF LARAINÉ DAY ever went out on dates, she would be the finest girl anybody ever took out on a date. She doesn't smoke, she doesn't drink liquor, she doesn't even drink tea or coffee. She doesn't go out on dates because she's too busy teaching a Sunday-school class and acting nights in a Little Theater company. She doesn't drink because she happens to be a practicing Mormon. As far as Hollywood is concerned she is a strange bird.

Since the age of ten she has been studying to be an actress and nothing will ever change her view that anybody can be an actress who takes the profession as a holy endeavor and works hard. She has intelligence, she has humor, she insists she has no glamor.

"If you want glamor," she says, "come out and see our new musical—Lame Brains and Daffodils. One act, three scenes. I wrote it myself."

She is always writing something herself, in those times when she isn't acting for M-G-M and studying with Florence Enright, the coach. When the gang she runs around with isn't putting on a play, it is making a movie. They made one called Strictly an Ickey for a total outlay of \$60. More than that, they had a world premiere at the Culver City Woman's Club, using a box of sand for famous footprints just as they do at Grauman's Chinese Theater. She played a streetwalker.

"If she ever does a streetwalker in a real picture," say the sourpusses in Hollywood, "twelve bearded men will come down from Salt Lake City and ask to see Louis B. Mayer."

Strictly Non-Hollywood

It is a certain and true thing that she is an active Mormon and takes pride in her Sunday-school class. She will come away from doing an emotional scene in The Trial of Mary Dugan and spend the rest of the evening stirring up a wacky debate among her pupils. She wants them to think, she wants them to be alive. Although she is a beauty, she has never, so far as history reports, been at Ciro's or the Macombo; she has never eaten at Chasen's; she has never "been that way" about the town wolves; the gossip columnists play her for a dead loss.

"The first case in Hollywood history of a dame so normal she seems nuts," say the critics.

She was born in Roosevelt, Utah, as Laraine Johnson and took the name Day after her first dramatic teacher, Elias Day, who used to run the Long Beach (California) Theater Guild. Day was the teacher of such actors as Dean Jagger and John Qualen and employed a method which is held to be sure-fire if the subjects can stand it: he was cruel and hard, bawling the actors out in front of the troupe until they broke down

completely. After that he would start them acting.

"He'd send us out to talk with people on busses," says Laraine. "Also we'd sit on a park bench with other people and suddenly start crying. We'd study our own reactions and the reactions of the others."

From the time she was ten, she went every day after school to the Theater Guild and stayed till midnight. They would do a new play every month and run it for two weeks, the rehearsals never stopping. When she was thirteen she was sent with the road show of Conflict, which got as far as Salt Lake City, where she was the object of attention by hundreds of relatives, her grandfather having possessed six wives and fifty-two children, who in turn had children of their own.

And Nothing Always Happened

All this time she was acting as a normal California girl, i.e., trying to crash the movies. When she was fifteen Rufus LeMaire at Universal gave her a test and nothing happened. Warners' tested her for Coquette and nothing happened. Marty Martyn saw her at Long Beach in John Hayden's Lost Horizon and signed her, managing to palm her off to Sam Goldwyn for a bit in Stella Dallas. She was the girl who sat at a soda fountain and spoke four lines.

"Ate seven banana splits during the day's shooting," says Laraine.

That much was enough for Sam and she next turned up at Paramount, where she had a small part in Scandal Sheet, with Lew Ayres, this being so bad that it has never to this hour seen the light of day. It finished her with Paramount and she popped up at RKO doing Westerns with George O'Brien. The publicity department said Laraine Johnson was the greatest woman rider ever to reach Hollywood, having been taught by the Utah Indians of the Salt Lake section, but the camera knew better. Laraine herself was trying to stave off the inevitable by grabbing a handful of comment cards at every sneak preview and filling them out with raves about her own performance, in different styles of handwriting.

"Got me two pictures," she says, "but the third time—nothing. The director knew I couldn't ride a lick."

After getting the gate she retired as usual to Long Beach, where by this time the entire family was located, and waited for fate to smack her. To some people it might seem that the fact of Billy Grady's signing her there for M-G-M might prove that propinquity helps in getting screen breaks but Laraine accredits it to perseverance. She needed perseverance and a touch of luck because she was just about to be known as the cinema jinx. Her first at M-G-M was I Take This Woman, with Hedy Lamarr and Spencer Tracy, and that one was also shelved for a year.

"It just happened," says Laraine defensively. "You can't blame it on me."

However, M-G-M saw enough to warrant a long-term contract and put her into Sergeant Madden and later in the Dr. Kildare series, where she will doubtless remain until either death or the Latter-day Saints rescue her. Her jinx was following her, however, because

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