

Ambassador for 4 million war prisoners



TRACY STRONG is responsible for keeping up the spirits of more than 4,000,000 prisoners, both Allied and Axis, in 16 countries. He's World Director of the Y.M.C.A.'s War Prisoners Aid Committee, centered in neutral Switzerland. The job gives him the right theoretically to enter Germany, Japan, or any other nation at war with the United States. So far, he hasn't taken advantage of the opportunity, but may have a chance to before many months. He was one of the first to hear of the capture of U. S. airmen by the Germans: the tip-off came when his agents received a request for baseball bats. Strong's Y.M.C.A. men visit thousands of prison camps, talk to the men, distribute musical instruments, garden tools, and the like, plan athletics, theatrical and musical programs, recreation, and study. In one German camp, they gave 25 battle-blinded British prisoners a chance to learn Braille and acquire new skills. He works through neutral agents. In Germany, for instance, the "Y" man is a Dane. A son of a Mt. Vernon, Ohio, preacher, Strong has been a "Y" worker for 34 years. He now lives in New York. Besides a daughter, he has two sons who are following in their father's footsteps in welfare work.