

# THE PRICE OF PACIFIC VICTORY

THE hour approaches when the Japanese will be fighting with their backs to the wall, on their final lines of defence, that is, in the homeland and on the Asiatic Continent. The Far Eastern war will be decided in China. There its bitterness will be intensified. The sort of no-quarter-asked-or-given suicidal defence the Japanese have lately been waging on little volcanic islands off the coast of the homeland may be expected all over the continent, likewise in the many cities yet held by the Japanese, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Rangoon, Bangkok, Saigon, Batavia, Samarung, Sourabaya and Macassar. The list is long and formidable. To contemplate it gives you some idea of what the Asiatic war has still to mean before it is over.

## Dizzied with Success

When the Japanese spread out all over the Pacific—much too far from their point of view, as now appears—they established first of all what may accurately be called a strategic front. This stretched from Dutch-Portuguese Timor all the way around by Papua and Bougainville through the Admiralty and other island-groups to the Gilberts, Marshalls and Carolines, and back to Japan itself by way of the Bonin and Volcanic Islands.

Within this, and the western lines down the Indian Ocean, was comprehended a formidable sector of the whole globe. Perhaps no nation in history has grabbed so much that belonged to other people at one time. Moreover, most of it fell into the Japanese lap like ripe fruit. Their successes were so fast and complete that they were dizzied with them. They talked of conquering the world. Their propaganda in the occupied regions referred day by day to Australia, "doomed orphan of the Pacific," which would be all theirs presently. Then they would take over New Zealand "by telephone," it would be so easy. A prominent Japanese in Manila told this correspondent that Hawaii would be a "hard nut to crack," but would be taken in due time. After that, five years would probably suffice for America. "Then," screeched the Japanese press, "we plan a great victory parade off New York. It may be that the Emperor will be graciously pleased to be present. The thought fills us with trepidation and awe."

Possibly it filled New Zealand with a little trepidation too. Nor was Hawaii altogether without apprehension for some time after Pearl Harbour. Even the California coast was a good bit excited and maintained a rigid black-out for many months. Australians literally held their breaths while their grand fighters stood side by side with the Americans on the ridge of the Stanley Range overlooking anxious Port Moresby.

## The Economic Front

However, whether the actual leaders in Japan expected all the foregoing is doubtful, though they were certainly

## "Be Under No Illusion That It Will Be Other Than Very Costly Indeed"—says

THE other day, Marc T. Greene, a well-known American journalist and authority on the Far East, called at "The Listener" office. This was the first time we had seen him since he wrote several articles for us about four years ago. Since then he had been a captive of the Japanese in the Philippines (between 1942 and 1943) and had been repatriated to America. When we saw him he was on his way back to the scene of action again.

The article which we print here is the first of two specially written by Mr. Greene for "The Listener," dealing with the Far Eastern position as it is to-day and as it is likely to be to-morrow.

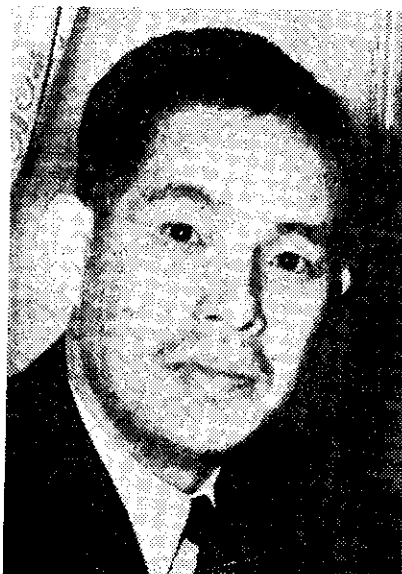


MARC T. GREENE

pretty confident of Australia. But inside this far-stretching strategic front, protected by it for two years or more, was their economic front. That is to say, the occupied lands of great wealth and boundless natural resources, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, New Guinea, the Celebes, the Philippines. From all these the conquerors started without delay to drain their richness, to milk dry their economy, to store the homeland against the probability of a long-drawn-out war.

In this process they used their biggest ships, the scofs or so of modern liners of which only two or three have even yet been destroyed. They used also seized modern liners of other countries, big Dutch and French and even British Oriental ships. Nor has any information yet been disclosed that they have lost any considerable number of these.

In ships of 15,000 tons and such the Japanese transferred to the homeland the wealth of the conquered territories through a period of two-and-a-half years. Only when MacArthur re-occupied the



Yamamoto: he talks losses in millions

Philippines was such traffic seriously interfered with, and no one can compute how many millions of tons of all war essentials, from quinine to chromium, the Japanese have carried from the islands and south-east Asia to Japan and Manchuria.

## Japan Expected to Fight Alone

It is necessary to bear in mind that Japan commenced preparations to fight America, and probably Britain at the same time, more than 20 years ago. She expected to fight them without aid. That is, her plans at the start comprehended no European war. Clearly, then, the end of the present European war will be very far from having any such result as to discourage Japan from continuing the Asiatic war.

As a matter of fact, it will only intensify her defensive struggle. Facing the world, she will go down, when she does go down, as a martyr in the eyes of her own people, in the eyes of all Asiatics if she can so far influence them by propaganda. And she will make victory as costly to us as she can. Be under no illusion that it will be other than very costly indeed.

Japan is fully prepared for a long war, and it is far from an idle boast when her leaders declare that she can keep on "for ten years, possibly for 20."

But it is worse than idle to prophesy the probable length of this, or any war; idle and perhaps dangerous to our own war-effort. There has been far too much of it and the Americans are the worst offenders. There has been induced in America a confidence far from justified, which is now implementing itself in desertion by thousands of their war-industry jobs in order to seek places in more permanent industries. That has resulted in a slackening of the war-effort, which is just as necessary to-day, and in just as large volume, as it ever was.

The Japanese have perhaps two million soldiers in China and can throw in two million more. Whether they lose 20,000 men on Iwo Jima and twice as

many on Luzon makes very little difference. Admiral Yamamoto, having stated that he intended to dictate peace to Mr. Roosevelt in the White House, told a correspondent that Japan was prepared to lose ten million in this war. "How many," he demanded, "is America prepared to lose?"

How many are any of us prepared to lose? Four or five thousand American marines killed on Iwo Jima may be "far less than we expected," according to the American commanders, but Iwo Jima is a very small place beside all of China. And in all of China the Japanese will fight just as bitterly as they fought on Iwo Jima.

## Can America Take It?

The Japanese have always believed America could not "take it." That is, they believed the Americans hadn't the stamina to endure large losses and make heavy sacrifices. It was really partly on the basis of that conviction that the Japanese started the war in the first place. They admitted America's boundless resources and highly-developed industrialisation. But they thought—beyond doubt they really thought—that their stronger spirit and greater willingness to accept the losses and make the sacrifices would overcome this.

They have been to some extent disillusioned, but not wholly. They still believe, the Japanese leaders believe, that if they can drag the thing out long enough, kill sufficient Americans, and incidentally a few more Anzacs, we will get fed-up with the whole show and be willing to call it off on a basis that will leave them virtually intact as of 1941.

## Japan Hopes for "Compromise"

They get confidential inside information from America that gives them some ground for this hope. They hear of industrial unrest, strikes and such—not of course wholly confined to America, but more important there—of men leaving war-industries for peace-time jobs under the groundless impression that it is "all over but the shouting," as the Americans say, of the screechings of isolationists and America-Firstists, of let-us-get-togetherists of various kinds and extractions, and they argue that if only they can keep it up for a couple of years more we will agree to some sort of "compromise." America will never, the Japanese leaders tell their people, stand for throwing two million men into China. And that is what the winning of the war on the Asiatic Continent will cost. We have got to ask ourselves, and we will do better to face the question and answer it now, are we prepared to pay that cost and to fight the Asiatic war out to the bitter end? If we are not prepared to, then all we have gained so far, and at such tremendous cost, may well go for nothing. The Japanese knew when they went into this thing that, though they might conceivably be beaten by greater power and resources, it would be—as old Oom Paul said—at a cost that would stagger the world. And that is the cost we have to pay.

(To be concluded)