

II - 66 - 15. "Success at Front Buys Soviet Interest in Orient"
New York Herald Tribune December 10, 1944.

Success at Front Buys Soviet Interest in Orient

By RALPH PARKER
Staff Correspondent

(Copyright, 1944, by Field Publications)

MOSCOW, Dec. 9.—The third anniversary of Pearl Harbor this week finds Russia, freed from the invader, taking a keen interest in Far Eastern affairs. Significant articles about Japan and China, published within the past week, provide most tangible evidence of this attention to the affairs of its Eastern neighbors.

Criticism of the Chungking government's war effort and towards the Communist 4th and 8th Route Armies was paralleled with accounts of a deepening crisis in the Japanese domestic military situation.

Five and a half years lie between March, 1939, when in a report on the work of the Central Committee to the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—Joseph Stalin branded Japan as an aggressor in league with Germany and Italy, and the Soviet leader's speech last month, when he returned to the charge in a pointed reference.

Between the two dates the Japanese have seen their freedom of movement in the strategically important regions off the Soviet Union's Pacific Coast progressively diminished by the limitation of fishing rights and the cancellation of concessions in North Sakhalin. Simultaneously, the Russians,

keeping strictly within international law, have put their Far Eastern ports to use with the result that, as a message to a Moscow newspaper recently put it, the Pacific seaboard and its rich hinterland have been built up into "an unconquerable bastion."

As many observers here see it, there are three main factors in the situation today. Each is of a somewhat hypothetical nature. Yet each probably is being taken into account.

Firstly, Japan's defeat may be brought about by the coalition of powers presently ranged against her.

Secondly, victory over Japan may still find in power in China a regime reluctant to cooperate with the Chinese Communists, and thus preventing the unification of China.

New Adventure

Thirdly, the Japanese Army, which, despite reverses, is as strong or perhaps even stronger, on the Asiatic continent than three years ago, may be tempted to set out on new adventures while the German war is progressing.

Little can be written about how the Russians feel concerning the third hypothesis, except that Marshal Stalin's latest reference to Japan as an aggressor reveals an attitude of vigilance.

Recent articles in influential Moscow reviews, however, show that the Russians are aware of the implications of the other two hypotheses.

In its current issue, *War and the*

Working Class attributes the recent Japanese successes on the Asiatic mainland to organic political defects at Chungking, where, it states, personal and group interests prevailed over China's true interests increasingly during the past year. Through the influence of the Chinese "Mikhailovitchs," the paper states, the policy of waiting for the Allies to save China and in the meantime maintaining a reckless displacement of strength to blockade the areas where the 4th and 8th Armies are fighting has placed China in a new peril and condemned millions to needless death.

China's Place

"It is abundantly clear," *War and the Working Class* concludes, "that uniting of all the forces in the Chinese nation on the basis of a democratic policy is vitally important."

Some Russian views on China's weakness by no means imply an exaggerated opinion of Japan's strength. A writer in the current issue of *World Economy and Politics*, analyzing the position in Japan subsequent to Premier Tojo's resignation last July, describes in detail what he called "Japan's disenchantment." Germany's defeat is inevitable, the writer continues, "and Japan is now faced with a war with mighty and victorious lands."

The calculation that her economy would grow to a powerful stature as a result of conquest, proved false, mainly as a result of the shipping shortage. There are rice riots in Burma while Japan goes hungry; cities are short of even the staple food—fish—because the fishing boats and fishermen have been mobilized; villages are depopulated of men; the war which cost 40 of the 50 billion yen budget for this year, will cost 50 of the 60 billion in next year's budget, the article states.

The writer says that he has difficulty in forming an opinion about the internal situation, but he considers credible the reports of strikes

and dissatisfaction among the owners of small enterprises forced out of work and of the peasants' reluctance to accept fixed prices, demonstrated by hoarding and limitation of production.

Though he considers that the present Japanese Government has effected a compromise between the military extremists and the politicians put up by big business, his

conclusion is that the crisis in Japan is showing a tendency to deepen.

Russian criticism is directed against Chiang Kai-shek only insofar as he tolerates persons around him, whose policy is considered inimical to China's and the United Nations' interests. It is against these persons, not against the Generalissimo that the Russians bring the charge of "reactionary."