

# Why Russia Looks Eastward

SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE FAR EAST. By David J. Dallin. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1948. 398 pp. \$5.

Reviewed by SIDNEY HARCAVE

IN 1942, only two years after his arrival in this country, David Dallin, Russian-born anti-Bolshevik, prepared his first work on Russia for the American public: "Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942." It was a timely and useful book. Now, with "Soviet Russia and the Far East," his name appears for the sixth time on the title page of a study of the USSR. This book also is timely and useful and will sustain the author's reputation as a well-trained, careful, and hostile student of Soviet affairs.

Though many in this country have deplored our lack of knowledge of Russia, few have been able to add much, so limiting have been the lack of data and the absence of perspective. The late Samuel Harper, one of the ablest of American students of Russia, had, at his death after forty years of study, completed only three slender volumes on that country. Dallin, however, has not hung back. He has the language, the scholar's diligence, an emotional interest in his subject; and he has courageously preempted a very special position for himself as a writer on Soviet affairs.

In this last book, he investigates a phase of Russian diplomacy about which our information has been even frailer than our general knowledge of that state. We often remember that Russia is a Eurasian power and that the balance of power has been upset in the Far East with the disappearance of Japan as a military factor; yet, aside from Harriet Moore's able but limited work on the subject, there has been little published material to turn to. In "Soviet Russia and the Far East," Dallin has again narrowed the limits of our ignorance.

Relying mainly upon Soviet publications, assorted memoirs, and published Nazi documents, the author takes us back to 1931, the year of Japan's descent on Manchuria. Russia had lost almost all of her influence in China and was seeking to avoid war with Japan. From that period of the nadir of Soviet influence, Dallin traces the story of Russia's reappearance as a Great Power in the Far East. He covers here much material which, though not unknown to the specialist, is not generally known: the cyclical relations of Moscow and Nationalist China, the Chinese Soviets, Soviet influence in Sinkiang, the mysterious Mongolian People's Republic, and the annexation of its even less



known neighbor, Tanna Tuva. He carries the story on through the war and into postwar diplomacy.

"Soviet Russia and the Far East" is more satisfying in its picture of the Thirties, for which data are more available, than in its portrayal of the Forties, for which surmise and opinion must often be substituted for

facts which are not yet known. Dallin's conclusion that Russia intends to erect "a Soviet 'co-prosperity sphere' for the Chinese, Mongol, Korean, and Japanese peoples" is neither borne out nor disproved by his evidence. Generally speaking, he is not entirely convincing in his projection of future Soviet policy in the Pacific. His implicit assumption that Russian policy is affected by United States policy only in so far as it checks Russian ambitions is questionable. Surely the Far Eastern policy of the United States is more than the containment of Russia, and surely the Russians are affected by what they take to be our policy as much as we are affected by what we take to be theirs.

As a whole, Dallin's work is a triumph of content over style. His straightforward but less than inspiring prose and his episodic organization may weary the reader, but they cannot dull one's appreciation of an important and able work which will probably maintain its reputation for many a publishing season. In 1949, a companion work by Dallin on Russia and the Far East from 1860 to 1930 will appear; it should add to the value of the present work.

## Ships and Sailors vs. Nippon

THE RISING SUN IN THE PACIFIC, 1931-April, 1942. History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. III. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1948. 441 pp. \$6.

Reviewed by PHILIP A. CROWL

IN a foreword to the first volume of this series, James Forrestal described how the author had been expressly commissioned by the Navy Department to prepare a history of the Navy's wartime combat record in World War II. He then concluded with this statement: "This work, however, is in no sense an official history. The form, style, and character of the narrative are the author's own. The opinions expressed and the conclusions reached are those of Dr. Morison, and of him alone." In short, Morison was offered full access to all official documents and records of the Navy Department without having to bind himself to any particular party line or official point of view. On the face of it, it was a nice bargain and the more so since the second party to the contract was a branch of the armed service which had been traditionally sensitive to lay criticism. However, some scoffers argued that it was the Navy that got the best of the deal; that by commissioning a widely known and reputable scholar to write its history,

the department was merely buying insurance of a favorable treatment of its particular role in the late war. If there are any such cynics remaining who expected this study to be little more than an elaborate whitewash, they should be silenced forever with the publication of this the third volume of the series.

The first four chapters of this study are devoted to a summary of the events leading up to Pearl Harbor, the growing tensions between Japan and the United States after World War I, the rise to power of the Japanese military clique, the attack on China, and the gradual stiffening of American resistance to Japanese demands for an "East Asia Monroe Doctrine." This is probably the weakest, or at least the most vulnerable section of the book. Although succinct and highly readable, it adds little to what is already known and well reported. Since the limitations of space and the subject matter naturally prevented any exhaustive examination of the complexities of American-Japanese relations from 1920 to 1941, it appears to this reviewer that the subject might better have been omitted entirely.

The chapter on the Pearl Harbor attack is superb both as narrative and as an assessment of responsibility for that near-disaster. Dr. Morison concludes that nobody in Washington or

# The Military Mind in Japan

JAPAN DIARY. By Mark Gayn. New York: William Sloane Assoc. 1948. 517 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by STUART LILICO

Pearl Harbor remotely expected an attack on that base and there was no good reason why they should. All signs pointed to a quick Jap thrust toward the Philippines and the East Indies. On the other hand he agrees with Admiral King that "an unwarranted feeling of immunity from attack . . . seems to have pervaded all ranks at Pearl Harbor, both Army and Navy." It was, in Morison's words, "an outpost . . . where military men are supposed to be better alert at all times, like a sentry walking his post." The author neither completely exonerates nor roundly condemns Admiral Kimmel and General Short. He points out their errors in judgment, but acknowledges that most, though not all, of them were understandable. As to some of the silly theories current then and now—that these two officers were barely on speaking terms, that all the officers on the island were drunk, or that some high personage in Washington deliberately withheld news of the impending attack in order to precipitate war—these are summarily dismissed in a mere footnote, as is proper.

The remaining three-fourths of the book are devoted to the dreary story—though not drearily told—of allied reverses through April of 1942, when the gloom was somewhat brightened by the Halsey-Doolittle Raid on Tokyo. Dr. Morison points out that it was not Pearl Harbor alone that was responsible for this monotonous series of setbacks. The truth is that, even regardless of Pearl Harbor, our Navy in the Pacific was inferior to that of the enemy. Our base defenses were inadequate or non-existent, our logistics were hopeless, our ships not as well constructed or equipped as those of the enemy, our planes inferior, our co-ordination with Allied Naval forces unplanned. Finally, in at least one case (the failure to relieve Wake Island), we were frustrated, according to Morison, by the indecisiveness and simple poor seamanship of ranking Naval officers who should have known better. Indeed, almost the only real asset the Navy had in this first year appears to have been guts.

No one could tell this story as it should be told who is not a sailor as well as a scholar, and of course Dr. Morison is both. No amount of poring through action reports and ships' logs could alone supply the authentic ring which these pages have. And that authenticity is more than a mere saltiness of expression. It is basically a soundness of judgment that only experience at sea can impart. Seaman-ship is by no means an obsolete art even in modern naval warfare and it requires a seaman, which Morison obviously is, to assess properly the successes and failures of the ships and sailors whose record he is writing.

PRACTICALLY everyone knows by now that the savagest battles are usually fought between the correspondents and the Army censors. In the recent unpleasantness, the generals generally had things their own way while the shooting was going on, but the writers have come into their own since VJ Day. In his forthright and forceful "Japan Diary," Mark Gayn (whose distinguished record of reporting from the Far East dates back nearly two decades) scathingly denounces the Military Mind at Work in MacArthur's Japan.

Mr. Gayn arrived in occupied Tokyo early in December 1945, when the surrender was less than four months old. On his second day there he had his first unhappy reaction to Army rule—in this case to the attitude toward special correspondents of Brig. Gen. Frayne Baker, MacArthur's public relations officer. A year and a half later, on the eve of his departure for New York, he is still berating the Military Mind.

In the months between, Gayn covered a great deal of Japan and touched a host of subjects, although his greatest interest lay in the problems of land ownership. Wherever he went, he talked with farmers and landlords, with policemen and labor organizers and town officials, with waitresses and retired political assassins. The information and opinions these people provided constitute a striking picture of Japan in the first year under MacArthur.



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Near the end of his stay, Gayn dined with Sanzo Nozaka and Yoshio Shiga, two of Japanese Communism's "Big Three." During their after-dinner conversation, Nozaka listed a number of American achievements.

The new constitution [he declared] has had a deep effect on the nation. It has reduced the Emperor's powers. The various reforms have dealt a heavy blow to the feudal forces. The blow is not fatal, but it's heavy.

If the occupation forces remain here another five years, the progressive forces will be strong enough to block the efforts of the Old Guard to seize power.

Such comparatively kind words from two men whose integrity Gayn obviously respects are notable. They go materially beyond anything that the author says on his own initiative.

The present reviewer was in Japan during the period covered by "Japan Diary." He must submit that he did not see Nippon in the same light that Mr. Gayn did. To this reviewer the occupation—for all the blundering and the personal selfishness—was an inspiring attempt by the American people to convey to the Japanese the rudiments of what they consider to be the most satisfying system the world has yet devised. If we sometimes seem to be riding off in all directions at once, it is not because we are cheats and fools, but only because we refuse to have our philosophy dictated or our speeches written for us. But Mr. Gayn looks upon the whole business as sordid, mistaken, and venal.

In writing "Japan Diary," Gayn adopted a technique that is frequently discussed but seldom carried out. He wrote detailed letters home to Mrs. Gayn, then later edited and expanded them to produce a book.

There is, however, at least one fault inherent in the letter-home method which Mr. Gayn has not fully overcome. Unless it is edited beyond all recognition, the material tends to be episodic and even misleading. Today's crisis—about which the author is writing so copiously—may have an entirely different complexion tomorrow, but there is no assurance he will be writing about it then. "Japan Diary" goes into great detail on a number of problems that have long since ceased to exist. The uninitiated gets the impression no issue is ever settled in Nippon.

Despite this defect and a strong leftist bias, "Japan Diary" contains an undeniable wealth of material on men and events in Japan and Korea.