

ONE YEAR AFTER V-J DAY

VICTORY-JAPAN DAY officially was September 2, 1945—the day General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz took the formal surrender of the Japanese Empire aboard the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Actually, the major fighting in World War II ended August 14, 1945. That was just eight days after the explosion of the first atomic bomb used in war, over Hiroshima, and six days after the second such bomb tore the heart out of Nagasaki.

It seems hard to believe that the war ended only a year ago. So many things have happened since then, in so many parts of the world, that one has a feeling that a decade or worse must have passed since V-J Day. This last year did not run out swiftly.

How is the world doing a year after V-J Day?

The most optimistic answer one can make is: Hopefully, thanks, but not too well.

Hunger is prowling large areas of the earth. The United States, as in the first years following World War I, is carrying most of the burden of famine relief. It looks like a long pull, though it is hoped the worst may be over next month.

Consumers' goods are so scarce everywhere that all major countries are suffering more or less inflation. A wave of big strikes in this country earlier this year slowed production badly, so that it seems impossible for us to freeze our own relatively mild inflation at its present point.

The best way to fight inflation, regardless of what our friends of the leftist and funny-money persuasions have to say on the subject, is to produce more and more consumers' goods, to postpone further big strikes until we're reasonably sure that the dollar is going to continue worth striking for.

Internationally, the picture is anything but good.

Russia's Communist government and Great Britain's Socialist government oppose each other heartily, and there is uneasiness in this country lest we be drawn into some sort of showdown between Great Britain and Russia.

In the Security Council of the United Nations, Russia has been stubborn and unco-operative. Comrade Andrei Gromyko has exercised his veto power in such petty disputes that gossip now buzzes around about a possible Russian intention just to walk out of the U.N. someday, as Germany and Italy walked out of the old League of Nations.

Jitters concerning the atomic bomb and how to control and peaceably develop atomic energy go on afflicting people. These jitters are not precisely alleviated by the fact that the Baruch plan and the Russian plan are in conflict with each other and no compromise has been worked out as this is written.

In the matter of the defense of the United States, we have already relaxed into the apathy which overtook us soon after World War I. Congress has passed an essentially phony extension of the draft law—though it has had the good sense to up Army pay in all echelons, in hope of attracting enough volunteers to carry on our Japanese and German occupation tasks and maintain a respectable Army at home.

We're still doing fairly well by the Navy and the Air Forces, which is one bright spot in the postwar picture. But we wouldn't care to predict how long it will stay bright. There are other bright spots if you look hard enough—not big, but encouraging.

For one, such things as the revived Ku Klux Klan don't seem to be getting very far this time, whereas hatred and intolerance were sweeping the nation a year after the end of World War I.

For another, the long-predicted postwar crash in employment hasn't come to pass. Some 52,000,000 Americans have jobs, most of them reasonably well paid, and only about 3,000,000 are drawing unemployment insurance of any kind. The latter figure includes a lot of veterans who want to rest up a while on their \$20 a week before looking for work.

We've come to a lull in the big strikes. Though our labor leaders by and large go on talking big and tough for publication, the word from the inside is that most of them are now highly sensitized to the general public's state of fed-upness regarding strikes.

Still another bright spot in the picture is the fact that General MacArthur has done and is doing a superb job in occupied Japan.

Our occupation forces in southern Germany are not doing so well, chiefly because four nations are trying to run Germany jointly. But MacArthur, flatly insisting on being the big and only boss in his bailiwick, has made such a hit with the Japanese that they are now eagerly lapping up a tale that one of his forebears by some unexplained miracle was a Nip.

So no more than a year has passed since the biggest, most devastating war in history came to a close.

You don't get over such a catastrophe as that in one year. Most of Europe was in turmoil for 20 years after the Napoleonic Wars. Trouble, hatred and financial upsets went on for fully 10 years after our Civil War, and there are places in the South that haven't really got over that conflict yet.

If the human race can muddle through the next 10 years or so in its immemorial dogged, never-known-when-it's-licked fashion, that will be about the best we can expect. Then, if it can manage somehow just not to fight World War III, the race's future should begin to look more than promising.