

THE SOUTH PACIFIC

AS N.Z. WAR THEATRE.

(By The " Gook ")

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THE withdrawal of the N.Z. Forces from the European front might appear to you as a tapering off of New Zealand's war effort; to many New Zealanders it might be taken as a sign that the war is drawing to a close. In this article I want to suggest that the withdrawal would mean an increase in New Zealand's war effort, a recognition of the new world forces that have come into play in the Pacific, and that New Zealand will have to be prepared to take a major part in this new alignment of world affairs.

WHAT IS HAPPENING.

IN the past your history has been interwoven with that of Spain, Italy, France Germany, Holland and Russia. It has been the pattern of European history you had to study if you wished to understand your own. You could not know yourselves without knowing European countries. In your day you are witnessing the birth pangs, on your own doorstep, of the Asiatic Nations. Let us take a look at what is happening.

NEW NATIONS.

TODAY new nations have come to the fore. Nations with a vast population and a history that shows they were capable of producing scholars, statesmen and soldiers when England was a horde of hairy barbarians. China, with a population of 422,707,900, and an area of nearly 3,000,000 square miles, is now a World Force. After the war she will be a united, free and independent people. A people whose friendship may well turn the balance of New Zealand history for a thousand years.

JAPAN.

IN the years of our generation, Japan, with a population of almost a 100,000,000, and an area of 250,770 square miles, has made herself a world power capable of challenging the democracies in a world conflict. Japan will continue to be a powerful factor in New Zealand thought in the future. A hundred million people do not just disappear after a defeat.

UNKNOWN PEOPLES.

IF you have a map in your mess hall, take a look at Thailand. There are 15,718,000 people in that area -- a country of 200,000 square miles. Add to that French Indo-China where there are 24,000,000 people in an area of 286,000 square miles. Let those figures sink in as you gaze at your map. Ask yourself what the area of New Zealand is. Then look at the Dutch East Indies, Borneo, Sumatra and the Celebes; again you meet millions of people and thousands of square miles of territory..

WHAT JAPAN TAUGHT.

WHILE looking at the map bear in mind that all the places and people before you have more in common with the Japs than they have with New Zealanders. Remember that the Japs taught them that she could drive the white man before her bayonets; she showed to these millions of people that the divine right of the white man to rule could be shattered. Do not fool yourself that these people will be loyal to you because you can lick the Jap.

Where You Fit In.

IN the past the Pacific has been ignored by European powers, except as a chess board where pawns may be traded. The circumstances that brought you to New Caledonia awakened the millions of whom we have written. They will look across the Pacific to lands populated by people who are closely akin to themselves. They will see all the Islands where rice, root crops, fruit and fish are procurable; they will

learn that on the Islands are people very much like themselves. They will also see New Zealand, Australia, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and the other islands. They may want your highly developed islands, or you may be just in the way. Like a fly that annoys, you will be brushed aside

And You.

AT the same time you, Australia and other Island in the South Pacific look upon yourselves as self-contained units. Within the British Empire, it is true, but geographically you have to be self-reliant. Englishmen made a place for their Nation in Europe. Supposing you have to do the same for yourselves in the Pacific !!!!

Now Or Never.

IF you take yourselves seriously you will have to realise that even today your soldiers will be away from their homes for some years. Instead of repeating the cry " I want to go home ", you will have to become less selfish. You will have to learn that there is a wider loyalty -- a loyalty to your country, to the people to whom you are bound by common ties. Instead of putting your family, your career or your business first, you will have to put your people. That may mean several years in the tropics; it will mean learning to relish dehydrated foods; it will mean putting up with steamy mosquito infested islands. You will have to learn that you are as important there as you were at home.

Both Ways.

IN the years when you were enjoying the movies, the race meetings, the football games and all the amenities of your delightful country, the Japanese were busily engaged in infiltrating into the East Indies, Burma, Indo-China and the Pacific Islands. While you enjoyed life the Japs slugged away in a primitive fashion and looking to the day when they would reap the reward. The defeat of Imperial Japan will not obliterate their work in the