

THE LAST 125 DAYS

ALL OVER THE WORLD THINGS SEEMED TO HAPPEN
ALL AT ONCE IN THE FINAL FOUR MONTHS

It seemed impossible for the war to go on for more than a matter of months, but the public was hardly prepared for the swiftness of the Japanese collapse. Early on the morning of August 10 the enemy threw in the sponge. By way of Domei, the Japanese news agency, came word that the Tokyo government was prepared to accept the Potsdam terms provided the "sovereignty" of the Emperor was left intact. Four days of uncertainty followed, days of feverish consultation in high places and tentative jubilation in places both high and low. One thing was certain: the end of the second World War was imminent. The day longed for by an entire world through six tortured years was about to dawn.

In four short months this planet had come a long way. Three figures who had dominated the news of a decade were gone—Roosevelt, Mussolini and Hitler—and a fourth, Winston Churchill, had passed from leadership of an empire to leadership of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Nazi Germany had been ground into the dust and its ruthless leaders either driven to suicide or brought to the prisoner's dock. The foundations for a durable world security organization had been laid, and the outlines drawn for a reconstructed Europe. A Labor government had swept into power in England, with possible repercussions in all the liberated countries of the Continent. And the most widespread and devastating war in history was brought to an end with the capitulation of those Japanese jingos who had threatened to fight if necessary for a hundred years. Finally, towering above even these massive events, a revolution had taken place in science, which promised in time either to make the mighty atom work for man or to destroy man and his world in another war.

After a streak like that it would not be surprising if a revulsion against "big news" should set in. It may well be that people long to pick up a paper in which nothing more cosmic is reported than the city's reception of a visiting channel-swimmer, and nothing more violent than a tie-up on the Magnolia Avenue trolley line.

On the other hand, "big news" is a potent drug. On the day between Russia's entry into the Pacific war and the Japs' bid for peace more than one American was heard to complain that things were slow, "nothing new." For such jaded addicts nothing will do now but an extra with the eight-column streamer: MOON COLLIDES WITH EARTH AS MARTIANS CHEER—unless it is that equally exciting head: ALL GIs DISCHARGED AS ARMY SCRAPS RED TAPE. But let's not be fantastic.

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