

Excerpt from *The Lost War: A Japanese Reporter's Inside Story* by Masuo Kato, 1946

To the Japanese at war's end, the entrance of Soviet Russia into the struggle was far more sensational than the bombing of Hiroshima. The Hiroshima bombing was followed in Japan by more than twenty-four hours of absolute silence, while the rest of the world heard with wonder and excitement the first torrent of news about the development. Not until the afternoon following the bombing did the Japanese Government issue a communique. Its announcement said only that "the enemy seems to have used a new type of bomb" and reported that "details are under investigation." Restless curiosity stirred among the people of Japan, and strange tales of horror filtered out of Hiroshima by word of mouth, but there were no further details for two more days. When the second bomb fell, on Nagasaki, the Army hastily planted rumors that America had only two such bombs and that no more would fall. The ordinary Japanese knew no more details nor the true significance of the atomic bombings until after the war. Many of the facts of Japan's . . . defeat, however, had long been exposed for any shrewd Japanese to see. On the eve of surrender the Empire was in literal ruin. About eighty of Japan's cities had been completely destroyed or damaged to the point where they could scarcely be regarded as cities.

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