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The Four-Power Pact

The Washington Conference has achieved—the four-power pact. What further may have been effected, we know not, not being seers, for the Conference has comported itself comely and courteously, as becometh international peacemakers; and has spoken the suave language of diplomacy. But in good time we shall know and, haply, understand.

This much belauded Pact, which is alleged to have simplified, so greatly, the question of the Pacific, is an agreement between Britain, France, America and Japan, whereby the H. C. P. bind themselves all and severally "to respect" each others "rights" in the Orient; and if trouble arises in the fulfilment of the bond, to discuss their differences in conference. A fine example of the high plane of bourgeois morality. This pledge is conformable with the Root "resolution" to respect integrity of China. It all turns on the definitions given to "right" and "integrity."

Diplomatically considered, Chinese integrity does not mean that China shall exercise full sovereign power within the borders of China. It does not mean that "backward" China can take the same rank as those progressive champions of democracy, Britain and America. Before China can have such power, she must—as Japan has done—put on the glittering panoply of civilization. Then will she find favor in the eyes of the Janus nations of the West.

Integrity, as an American concept, implies that the government of China shall not give to any one power any undue or undercut advantage. That is that the more or less foreign financed and influenced government of China shall not, "sub rosa" grant concessions to any preferential nation. That all nations shall have "equal opportunity" and identical treatment. In a word, the open door. That, is the American view, because it satisfies American financial and business interests. The Anglo-Japanese idea of "integrity" is the individual exploitation of Chinese resources to the greatest exclusion of all competitors. For the same reason precisely—it suits the "interests" of those nations. If any group of nations were to pledge themselves to "protect" "British integrity" one can imagine the cynical insolence of a Balfour, the flinty vituperation of a Churchill, the blunt unadorned rage of a Carson. Or of America! How those sapient descendants of Puritan rigidists and half-caste Europeans would rend the crystal day with the florid wrath of their indignation! Such a simple change of cases shows up the count that underlies the whole affair, and puts the matter in its true historical perspective,—business, trade, the ceaseless traffic in human slavery.

The "rights" of those H. C. P. are necessarily of a similar nature. It is the right to enjoy whatever has been "acquired" in possession. All those parties have possession in China, and possession is always "unco sweet" to let go. And, just as all those nations are ready and willing to disarm, if only the other will just begin (except on some particular count) so they are all equally ready to disgorge, if only the other will set the example. France will gladly forsake Kwangchow if Britain will leave Hong Kong; Britain will leave Hong Kong if Japan will vacate Port Arthur; and Japan will leave Port Arthur if only the good America will just stick close to the eastern edge of the mis-called Pacific.

Unfortunately, those are the very things which

the nations cannot do. The Empire of Capital knows no frontiers, it can brook no limitations. Expansion is inevitable. And according to their several differing circumstances, the various nations have different necessities and, of course, conflicting policies. France, more nearly self supporting, aspires to the

ports to China (1920) were \$119,000,000. Those powers are thus commercial rivals, and as rivals they well know what rivalry means. But under temporary duress they are brought together, for the purposes of cheap exploitation. Britain seeks to pacify France in the hope that she may not be involved in European affairs while possible complications arise in the East. Britain is playing with America for position; in alliance because their several interests do not, as yet, edgedly conflict. And Japan bows, in Oriental inscrutability to the stern mandate of immediate circumstance.

It is my belief that the essential relations between Britain and Japan remain unchanged,—pact or no pact. Britain and America meet, but do not coalesce, either in the Orient or anywhere else. Oil, steel, minerals, shipping, all stand opposed. And their individual textiles and manufactures must find markets. On the other hand the resources of China are of greater life necessity to Japan—and Britain—than to America, while France and Britain cannot harmonize, for long. And Egyptian nationalism, Indian Swaraz and Bolsheviki "depravity" cannot but be potent in their influence on British policies and alliances. For the moment, Japanese Imperialist aggression is a present help to British Imperialist control of a threatening East, while conversely, Japan temporarily welcomes British countenance to her forward developments. And the "21" points (now 15) were advanced under the aegis of a secret treaty with Britain. However, I have no proof to offer, and my beliefs are valueless. But . . .

"We want peace," says Briand, "but to preserve peace we must have a France prepared to meet an offensive." "We desire peace," says Britain. But meanwhile the war office plans for the erection of 23 general hospitals with a capacity of 30,000, and diligently follows up chemical research and air developments. "We agree in principle," says the astute Balfour, "but, for British protection, we must have Hong Kong." "We are willing to scrap some (obsolete) capital ships and submarines, but our peculiar circumstances demand fast cruisers." Because fast cruisers are the "motherships" to airplanes and the distant, and of necessity, movable, bases of arial warfare. "We are pledged to peace," says Prince Tokugawa, "without jeopardizing the safety and existence of Japan." "We are out for peace," shouts the bustling Yank, "but we must have the Monroe Doctrine in America and the open door' in China."

So it comes about that Britain maintains, with self sacrificing zeal, her rights territorial, and extra territorial, in China, Japan holds on to Korea and Manchuria and negotiates with whatever government she can influence at Peking on the Shantung question, and America strives, with whatever southern Republic she can conjure to her cause, for "concessions" and "equality"; and all are agreed, that be the result as it may, and take it who may, the doors of China shall be open wide for trade.

Those are the forces on which we rest our hops for "peace in the Pacific," the guarantors of "Chinese integrity," and the very worthy gentlemen who have pledged them to "respect" each others "rights."

So we conclude, as we began, that the conference has achieved—the Four-Power Pact. That is—nothing.

WATCH YOUR LEADERS!

The regular propaganda meetings of Local (Vancouver) No. 1, are held every Sunday evening at 8 p.m., at the Royal Theatre.

A program of lectures is being arranged. Announcement of details will be made in the "Western Clarion" from time to time.

Interest in our meetings grows upon a labor press campaign of silence, instituted to convey the impression that our meetings are discontinued.

Instead of that, we are more active than ever!

The program makers, the new reformers, have committed themselves to a policy of leadership and have elected themselves as the leaders—the saviors of the working class. Amen!

WATCH YOUR LEADERS!

Attend to the education of the workers. Present events show that to be the essential need.

Out of their troubles and distress the workers themselves must find the way; they have been plagued with the leadership idea long enough.

Ignorance and leadership go hand-in-hand. Workers led "out" can be led "in" again.

An educated working class will need no leaders.

Attend the propaganda meetings at the Royal Theatre every Sunday at 8 p.m.

SPEAKERS:

January 29th.—W. A. PITCHARD.

February 5th.—J. D. HARRINGTON.

Subject: Revolution and Counter Revolution in early Peru.

February 12.—T. O'CONNOR.

Subject: Collapse of the Coal Industry of South Wales.

hegemony of Europe. That is why she wants submarines. In continental Europe she is isolated. She is at variance with Britain, quarrelling over the Near East. Fearful of that "red monster" Russia, whose default has verged her on bankruptcy; troubled lest a despairing Germany may also see "Red"; mindful of her own miserable masses and her crazy budget she has decreased military service in France, but has evened up by increasing her African forces. Hence her need of submarines—in addition to her other equipment. Britain, far-flung and dependent, opposes the submarine, for the "sub" is deadly to the merchant fleet. But, to her, capital ships and cruisers are essential—yet, for she must hold the keys of her Empire; Ireland ("Freedom" notwithstanding); Gibraltar (Spanish integrity or not); Suez and Aden (with or without Egyptian consent); Singapore and Hong Kong. These are the gateways of trade, and with their fall, falls Britain. Japan, with Vladivostock, Port Arthur, Korea and Kian-chou is in an identical position. And America, driven by fateful profit is steadily forced south and west, meeting whomsoever she may.

Actually, in the East, Britain is now the dominant figure, France the least. Then Japan and America. British exports to China in 1919 were something like \$900,000,000. Japanese exports for the same year were about \$200,000,000. America ex-