

The Russian Policy in the Orient

[From New York "Nation"]

The following statement of the policy of the Soviet Government in the Orient was contributed by the chief of the Oriental division of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Arsene Voznechenski, to the "New Orient." It is here translated from the "New Yorker Volkszeitung of December 8:

Our policy in the Orient has already been stated in the peace decree unanimously adopted at the session of October 26, 1917, of the All-Russian Congress of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. The imperial regime created in the East a special sort of hidden annexation, based upon so-called rights of European "concessions," or, as they used to be called, "factories," and upon the institution of "capitulations"—the arrangement by which persons belonging to foreign countries were withdrawn from the domestic jurisdiction and thereby from the laws and regulations of Oriental countries. Thus imperialist countries, supported by the armed force which they had at their disposal on foreign territory, consisting partly of their own military forces and partly of native organizations formed on the spot, created conditions in the Oriental states in which their citizens and their interests were especially protected at the expense of the Oriental state. They have their own "concessions"; that is, they have created for themselves settlements within which the native population are on the level of slaves or even are not permitted to remain at all. They have put on the armor of complete independence of the authority of the state in which they live, and in this way they have to a certain degree erected an unapproachable citadel from which they can gradually extend their power over the subject peoples of the East. Although this state of things may appear to have been sanctioned for centuries, Socialist Russia, from the first days of the October revolution, has made known to the enslaved peoples of the East that it was not only ready itself to renounce such rights, but that it would also exert all its powers to secure, in union with the peoples of the East themselves, the abolition of this crying injustice and to make it possible for them to win back again their lost freedom. We have abrogated all secret treaties which the ruling classes of Oriental countries had made with the Czar's Government, whether from their own interest or from fear of foreign violence, and by means of which the masses were kept in subjection for decades and even for centuries. In the same way we have withdrawn our troops from the occupied territory of Persia, and recalled our military instructors who were in command of a native army for the protection of the interests of Russian capitalists and the support of Persian absolutism. We announced to China that we renounce the annexations of the Czars' regime in Manchuria, and that we restore the sovereignty of China in those regions in which lies the most important channel of trade and communication—the Chinese Eastern Railway, the property of the Chinese as of the Russian people, which has swallowed up many millions of the people's property and for this reason can belong only to the two peoples and to no one else. We intend to permit China to acquire the interest of the Russian people (in that railway) even before the date set by the contract that was forced on China, if China repays the amount spent by the Russian people on the construction of the road. We have recalled all our consular guards which the Czar's Government, and the Kerensky Government likewise, had sent to China to maintain the autocracy and arbitrary power of the old Russian bureaucracy. It is our purpose to renounce the right of extra-territoriality of our citizens in China, Mongolia and Persia. We are ready to renounce all those contributions which were imposed upon the peoples of China, Mongolia and Persia under all

sorts of pretexts by the old Russian Government. We wish only one thing, that these millions of the people's property may be spent to the advantage of the cultural development of the Oriental masses and for the cause of Oriental democracy.

What an impression the October revolution has made upon the masses of the people of the East is easily conceived. The events in our country have naturally found an echo first and foremost among our eastern neighbors, and the great upheaval has awakened in them an effort toward a new life. Not even the official representatives of the capitalist government are able to hide this fact from us. The party that brought about the "coup d'etat" in Russia is called in China, "huan-i-t'ang," the party of the most far-reaching humanism. In Persia, which is torn to pieces and has no power in herself to fight for her existence, there has nevertheless arisen a movement which regards the creation of democratic organs, similar to our Soviets, as the only means of salvation from the yoke of foreigners and of the ruling classes who have sold them to the foreigners. In south China, with its more awakened population, open revolution already rages, and we have ourselves received recently the admission of the leaders of this movement that the fact of the eight months' existence of a Socialist government in Russia is alone sufficient to convince the peoples of the East that they, too, need such a new, firm order of society. There in the Far East, also, the people are struggling against the secret treaties that have been forced upon them. The representatives of revolutionary China have given public notice to all the democracies of the world that China does not recognize the recently-concluded alliance with a neighboring power—a treaty which robs the Chinese people of the right to determine for itself its own destiny and draws it irresistibly into the bloody war.

Intelligible also is the great influence which the Russian revolution has had upon the capitalist system in Oriental countries. Already in February, there was a rising of the working masses of Tokio. The movement was nipped in the bud by the Japanese Government, and five of the most important representatives of the embryonic Social-Democratic party were arrested. The Japanese censorship exerted itself most zealously to prevent any publicity regarding events in Russia. Our revolutionary Siberia is still threatened with foreign interference, and since April 5, moreover, a Japanese detachment has occupied Russian soil. But in Japan the struggle for the right of the people to determine their own destiny is slowly and surely beginning, and this struggle has also already had results in the struggle over intervention in Russia. The man who must be regarded as the author of the Japanese intervention policy—a representative of the dying but still strong feudal system, Count Monoto, the former ambassador to Russia, who stands in close relation with the Russian reactionary "emigres" who have fled to Japan—was obliged to leave his office. Today, the chief opponents of intervention are the moderate liberal elements who would, indeed, be glad to get from us certain definite advantages for themselves by peaceful means, but who do not wish to create in Russia an everlasting enemy of themselves. They understand fully that interference in Russian affairs might shape in momentous ways our mutual relations and also, possibly, the history of the whole further development of the Far East.

We are ready to concede to the Japanese citizens who desire to develop the natural resources of Siberia opportunity to take a larger part in our industrial and commercial life. We declare ourselves ready also, in case China will agree, to renounce our rights to a part of the Chinese Western Railway and to let Japan take by purchase the southern subsidiary lines of this road. We are also ready to

grant every possible facility in regard to both export and import of Japanese wares to and from Russia. We are also ready to renew the commercial treaty and the fishery treaty with Japan, the latter of which is the basis of popular welfare for Japan, the Russian fish being not only the most important element of the food of the Japanese public but an almost indispensable fertilizer for their rice-fields. The Japanese Government is informed as to these intentions of our and a formal exchange of views concerning them has already taken place.

The Japanese people should know this. They should be aware how far we are ready to go to meet their wishes and what significance this has for them. But perhaps it is kept secret from them, like so much else that happens in Russia. Perhaps the Japanese people are not even aware that the Russian people are eager to offer them their hands to build up Russo-Japanese relations on a sounder and firmer basis. The Japanese public should know that if this is not done, if our outstretched hand is not taken, the blame falls on those classes in Japan who, knowing all this well, have kept it secret from the Japanese people for the sake of their own predatory interests. If it should happen that Japan, fooled and blinded by its military class, decides on a reckless step against the Russian revolutionaries in order to stifle them, then the working classes of Russia will rise like one man to the defence of their greatest and dearest good—the winning of the Socialist revolution.

[The Paris "Populaire" of November 10 has a summary of events in Russia from November, 1917, to November, 1918.]

LONDON ANXIOUS

LONDON, Jan. 2.—Russian affairs are causing the British foreign office considerable anxiety, says the Mail. The necessity of formulating a definite Allied policy as to Russia is extremely urgent and it has been decided that the Russian question will be the first to be discussed at the peace conference.

The International Revolution

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have gone through the course of study in the new proletarian military schools, and other thousands who have only gone through the hard school of war itself. Our southern front is the front against the whole Anglo-French imperialism, against the most important opponent we have in the world. But we do not fear this opponent, for we know that it will soon face the struggle with its "internal enemy." Three months ago it was said that only the half-crazy Bolsheviks could believe in the German revolution; but today we see how in the course of a few months Germany has changed from a mighty empire to a rotten tree trunk. The force that has overthrown Germany is also working in England. It is only weak today, but with every step that the English and French advance in Russia, this force will steadily rise to power and will even become more terrible than the Spanish influenza.

The seriousness of the situation must be apparent to every worker who knows what he is aiming at and he must make the masses see it, too. The mass of workers and peasants is mature enough to be allowed to know the whole truth. The danger is great, but we must, and shall overcome it, and for this purpose we must develop and solidify the Red Army without halting. We must make it ten times as strong and large as it is. Our forces must grow with every day, and this constant growth will give us guarantee, as before, that international Socialism will be the victor.

Propaganda meetings every Sunday at 8 p.m. at Columbia Theatre and Royal Theatre.