

Review

CHINA—

It is now somewhat over a year since I expressed certain views in these pages on conditions in China, and the Red Menace therein. I do not remember if I expressed the conviction that China was not a proper ground for Communist propaganda, since the Chinese mind is essentially a reverent one, but that conviction was in my mind. The line-up with Russia by the Chinese Nationalists a year ago was looked upon by the Chinese as an alliance—the only one available then. Koumintang, essentially Nationalistic, soon revolted when the Russian designs were unmasked last summer. Borodin, the Soviet agent in China, realized the situation, but the Moscow Government imagined that their control was so complete and their aid so indispensable that they judged the time ripe to range China in the front of a World Revolution.

As things were, and in spite of the lack of community between the Chinese Intelligentsia and Russian Marxism, the Bolsheviks came within an ace of success. The embroiling of Chang-Kai-Shek with the Powers was an important initial success, but the wisdom of the British and American Naval Commanders in the Yangtze saved the situation. In fact the timely aid they gave the Moderates enabled the latter to survive and establish a government of their own at Nanking, April 18, 1927. This separation of the Right and Left in Koumintang marked the beginning of the Communist phase. Thereafter Russian influence declined in Hankow, and ultimately the Hankow Government itself broke up.

On January 1, 1927, Russian influence was at its height, though even in its moment of triumph the comments of the "Iszvestia" showed a realistic doubt of its continuance. Before last Autumn the doubt was realized. It is easy after the event to trace effects to obvious causes, when there may be no more than a chain of coincidences between them, especially in China, where things go by inconsequences, *post hoc ergo propter hoc* the most abused of all processes. None the less there are events in 1927 which, taken together, form a significant picture. And as they lead in succession from the summit of Russian success down through the chaos of last Spring, and up again to the situation today, they are worth glancing at.

First we had the rapid Koumintang advance under Russian leaders, the capture of the Wuhan cities and the establishment of the Hankow government, which boasted that it was not only Nationalist but National. Then came the unmasking of Russian

plans and the consequent fall of the Russo-Chinese Entente. The winning slogan by last October became "Down with Communism."

Russian assistance had promoted rapid success, but at a heavy price, and to pursue the Russian method meant, not stability, but renewed disorder.

The "unequal" treaties still bulk largely in the Chinese mind and the combination of foreign and domestic problems leave China a difficult situation to solve. Still—

"The Sword sang on the barren heath,
The Sickle in the fruitful field;
The Sword he sang a song of death
But could not make the Sickle yield."

The Sword of War still sings its song of death up and down the land, yet the people still reap and sow—buy and sell. Such is the vitality of Chinese Commerce that it survives even the worst disorders. But there is a limit to human patience, and in the land of Sinim one of the factors that will make for stability is the knowledge that incessant warfare has cut very near the bone, and that the very life of the Chinese people is threatened by its continuance.

Improvement, however, is a relative term. A patient's condition may improve by blood-letting, though the patient's strength does not permit him to take up his bed and walk. In China the improvement is mainly psychological; and the war between the North and South will occupy energies this Summer that ought to be devoted to tasks of reconstruction.

THE ERA OF THE PACIFIC—

When Japan defeated Russia some twenty-five years ago, and brought to universal notice the awakening of Asia, the Japanese victory resounded through the Whispering Galleries of the East, and seemed to portend such momentous things that Theodore Roosevelt was moved to say: "The Mediterranean era died with the discovery of America. The Atlantic era is now at the height of its development, and must soon exhaust the resources at its command. The Pacific era, destined to be the greatest of all, is just at its down!" These words, though perhaps verging on hyperbole, nevertheless were tremendously significant; and recent events have not lessened their meaning. Europe is still the most important continent, but it no longer holds the exclusive place in the politics of the world; the Far East has now emerged on our horizon to challenge its predominance.

The nature of the Far Eastern Question is decided by four events:— The Manchurian War of 1904-5; the Chinese Revolution of 1911; the Great War, and the Russian Revolution. The war of 1904-5 gave Japan a new status among the Powers of the Earth, but changes wrought by more recent events in 1911, 1914, and 1917, have even greater significance, for they have brought the three nations most nearly concerned, China, Japan and Russia, into a new relationship. Under the pressure of new forces their relative positions have altered—both domestic and international—and it is clear a new situation has arisen. In contemplating it from afar the Chinese aspect is likely to bulk largest in our eye, but we must remember that even the domestic policy of China is largely influenced by the policy of her two great neighbors.

Let us take a glance at Japan. In appearance Japan has not changed much in this last quarter of a century. Her institutions and policy remain much the same, but in reality a radical change is going on. The older statesmen who created Japan have for the most part passed away, and new forces have arisen in her domestic life which may yet transform the fabric of her constitution. Japan is passing from the phase of oligarchical imperialism to that of democracy.

In foreign policy, too, new problems undreamed of by the Genro confront Japan. Tokyo has every reason to move with caution in unfamiliar paths—and so we have a moderation in Japanese attitude not to have been expected ten years ago, and a marked uncertainty as to her future attitude in Far Eastern politics.

Russia is too large a subject to discuss in this text, and as for China, upon which we have already remarked, the story runs:

“Blinking embers, tell me true
Where are those armies marching to,
And what the burning city is
That crumbles in your furnaces—”

Canada has a large stake on the Pacific, and some future generation will see her the predominant Power on the World's sea. To our foresight is left the duty of protecting the interest of posterity. We cannot afford to ignore anything that happens in the Far East. Canadians must never forget Asia, a continent far more important to us than Europe, a continent pregnant with force, which may hold our destiny, good or evil, depending largely on ourselves. We must not forget Europe, but let us eagerly watch the rising Sun of Asia.

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