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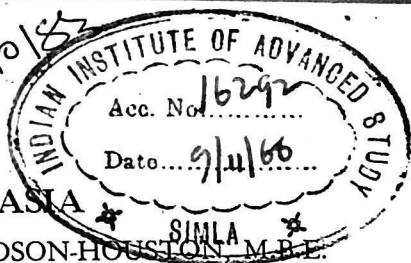
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RUSSIA IN ASIA

By LIEUT.-COLONEL J. V. DAVIDSON-HOUSTON, M.B.E.

Lecture given on May 8, 1946, General Sir John Shea, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing the lecturer, said: We welcome as our lecturer to-day Colonel Davidson-Houston, who has had much military experience not only as a regimental officer in the Royal Engineers but also as a staff officer in the Middle East and with the Special Force, Chindits, in the Burma campaign of 1944. He is an interpreter in Russian and Chinese and has had much Asiatic and Russian experience. In 1927-28 he was with the British troops in China, and toured Manchuria and North Korea as guest of the Japanese General Staff. In 1930-33 he was Military Observer during the operations in Manchuria, was attached to the Chinese forces, and travelled in North and Central China. He also paid two visits to Mongolia and three to Japan; and studied the battlefields of the Russo-Japanese war in Manchuria. In 1939-40 he was Assistant Military Attaché in Rumania, and visited the Russian frontier along the Dniester. In 1940 he visited Turkey, and then was with the Tenth Army in Iraq and commanded a liaison column in Kurdistan. He was liaison officer with the Russian Forces in Persia, visiting Azerbaijan and the Caspian shore. In 1942 he was Colonel on the General Staff of the Military Mission to Chungking; In 1943-44 he was attached to the Special Force in India and Burma, and in 1944 he again visited Chungking. As a result of all that experience you will agree that Colonel Davidson-Houston has sufficient authority to tell us a great deal about the subject on which he is going to speak.

I MUST preface my remarks by saying that my description of the history, geography and expansion of Russia will be somewhat sketchy, because time will not allow me to go into all the details, and the country to be covered is most extensive. In most instances the character and policy of a nation is determined by its physical environment, and nowhere is that more obvious than in the case of the Russians. On studying a map of the Soviet Union you will find that the country is hedged about by geographical circumstances. On the European frontier in the early days the Russians were constantly subjected to attacks by Finns, Scandinavians and other enemies from the north and west, and they were cut off from intercourse with Europe and from the influence of Rome. They therefore grew up quite differently from the rest of Europe, which probably partly accounts for their difference in outlook. Later in history the density of population in Europe and the strength of the armies of Central and Western European Powers made it impossible for the Russians to achieve any sort of expansion in those directions. In the north there was the extensive Arctic front covered by the frozen desert known as the *Tundra* and the sea itself, frozen for a great part of the year. Eastwards, on the Pacific seaboard, the Russians during their expansion have from time to time come up against, first, the Chinese Empire; secondly, the Japanese; and now American sea-power. Along the extended southern frontier, from the Pacific to the Black Sea, there is an expanse of desert, semi-desert and mountains.

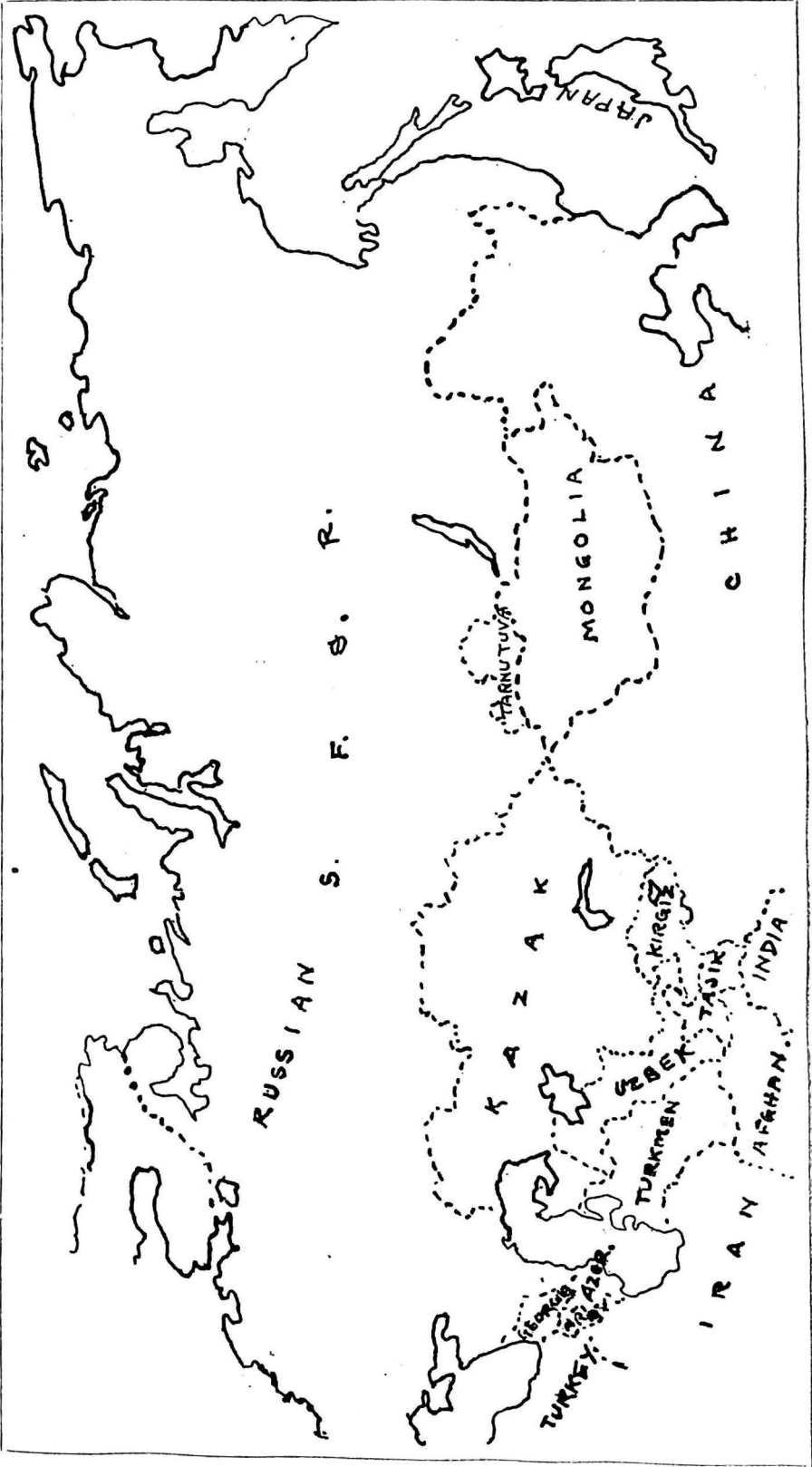
In addition to this geographical enclosure the Russians have always felt themselves to be hedged about psychologically. In the early period of their development they were subject to constant attack by enemies—in

fact, any foreign nation came to be regarded by the Russians as hostile. Even in the time of Ivan the Terrible (a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth), who tried to open foreign trade, merchants who arrived at Moscow were kept outside the city walls in the same way as the Chinese treated European merchants. The obvious reaction to that physical and psychological feeling of being hedged about is, as we saw to some extent in the case of Germany, an attempt to expand to the circumference of the ring and, having done that, to try to break out somewhere.

EXPANSION

The history of Russian expansion is often regarded as something recent because it is so much in the news at the moment, but it has, in fact, proceeded ever since the Russians became a nation. It was a case of the flag following trade, and to a great extent it was directed by geography. The map of Russia, both in Europe and Asia, shows a number of great rivers mostly flowing from north to south, or the other way, and connected by the valleys of their tributaries, themselves in many cases navigable rivers. The Russians tended to follow those tributaries of the great rivers, and that gave direction to their expansion. Every now and then they used to come up against a check, and whenever that happened they stopped and began to look somewhere else. Throughout Russian history there has been expansion followed by a check somewhere, and then a change of direction.

I believe the first event in Russian expansion was in 1482, when Ivan III was proclaimed Tsar of all the Russias and for the first time united the various small principalities. He was the Prince of Muscovy, with Moscow as his capital. From that time until Peter the Great, Moscow remained the capital of Russia. As soon as the Russians consolidated themselves into a nation they began to push out the Tartars and to occupy the Tartar kingdom of Kazan to the east, and in 1558 they entered Siberia. Expansion into Siberia was very natural. The Ural Mountains are no physical barrier and Siberia is similar to Russia, a country of vast forests and steppe, through which flow great rivers with tributaries affording means of movement. The Russians also knew that there were furs, gold and spare land to be had in Siberia. The population was primitive and sparse, so the Russians expanded quite naturally eastward across Siberia. They expanded so quickly that less than one hundred years later, 1638, they reached the Pacific. Here for the first time they came up against a Power, the Chinese Empire (then ruled by the Manchus and at its heyday). They objected strongly to the presence of the Russians. There was a good deal of sporadic fighting, and eventually an agreement was concluded in 1689, the Treaty of Nerchinsk, by which the Russians agreed to halt on the line of the Argun River, which flows north and south some hundreds of miles west of the Pacific. The Manchus claimed all the country to the east of that, and the Russians had to be content with the territory to the west. This merely caused a change of direction: the Russians moved north-eastwards into the country of the Samoyeds and occupied Kamchatka; they also reached the Behring Sea and crossed into Alaska, which remained a Russian colony until



1867, when the Americans induced the Russians to sell it for a modest sum just before the discovery of gold there.

During this time, although their military expansion into Chinese territory stopped, Russia's political expansion continued, and by means of embassies, peaceful penetration and exchange of merchandise, the Russians during the next century established themselves very well in China, and there was actually a Russian Mission in Peking long before any of the other European Powers were admitted.

The next direction in which the Russians began to expand was in the Caucasus. In the time of Peter the Great certain explorations and movements were made into the country between the Black Sea and the Caspian, which at that time contained territory belonging to the Persian and Turkish Empires. There was a certain amount to attract the Russians there: the valleys were fertile and there were minerals to be mined. This expansion continued slowly for a long time and was accompanied by campaigns against both the Turks and Persians, which were not consummated until after the Crimean War. The expansion into the Caucasus was a reaction to the failure of the Russians to reach Constantinople by the Black Sea. The British and the French had checked Russian ambitions in the Straits and as a kind of offset they began to get at Turkey by the back door, for there we could not interfere.

Another direction in which expansion began in the nineteenth century on a big scale was into Turkestan, east of the Caspian. The territories there were under Persian and Chinese suzerainties. The economic attractions were cotton, minerals, and the fact that through that area east of the Caspian ran the old trade routes between China, the Far East generally, Central Asia and the West. At this time there were two Khanates, Khiva and Bukhara, where the Russians found it necessary to assert themselves owing to the fact that their communications and caravans were being constantly raided by warlike tribes. In that part of Asia the Russians have been compelled at various times to subdue lawless peoples which raided their caravans and their peaceful settlers, and having subdued those tribes and made them law-abiding they had to protect them against other tribes which raided them. Thus one thing led to another, resulting in considerable expansion in and eventual Russification of the whole of Turkestan.

Later in the nineteenth century, having overrun Turkestan, the Russians found themselves up against the borders of Afghanistan and began to experience a check from that direction. Their appearance on the Afghan frontier naturally attracted the attention of the Indian Government. That is recent history. The Russians did, in fact, pause on the Afghan border at the end of the nineteenth century. In the meantime the Chinese Government had grown very weak, and the Russians took advantage of that to push on again in Eastern Siberia; they reached the Pacific coast and thus brought their eastern area to the sea.

In 1898 they leased from China Port Arthur and the territory where they built the entrepot of Dalny, the first ice-free ports the Russians had managed to acquire. Between 1891 and 1903 they completed the Trans-Siberian railway, joining Vladivostok to European Russia. That railway

had two branches in the Far East, one of which went round the Manchurian border entirely in Russian territory; the other took a short cut straight through Chinese territory. That afforded the Russians a stake in Manchuria itself; it gave them communications to protect and country to exploit by means of the railway. They then began to take an interest in Manchuria itself. They developed a branch of the railway south to Port Arthur, where they had established a naval base. After the completion of this railway the Russians experienced another setback because they came up against the Japanese, and the Russo-Japanese War checked their ambitions in Manchuria. The Revolution followed shortly afterwards, which made it difficult for the Russians to achieve any further expansion. There was thus a period of stalemate, but to compensate for this lack of external expansion in the Far East and Europe the Russians began to busy themselves about the central part of their frontier, particularly in Mongolia and Sinkiang, where they were not up against any strong opposition. As they extended their sphere of influence there they also began to develop communications along the long land frontier: they completed the Turkestan-Siberian railway, joining the Trans-Siberian to the frontier of Turkestan; they established a line of air bases parallel to the frontier and air communication along the whole of the southern border. It is interesting to note that up to the present time, in spite of all this expansion, the total population of Soviet Asia is reckoned to be only 30,000,000 out of a total population for the whole empire of 190,000,000, so that there is no pressure of population to account for this phenomenon.

MOTIVE FORCES

With the foregoing in mind, we must ask what were the motive forces behind this expansion, and history shows that they can be, broadly, divided into three: desire for protection or security, economics and out-and-out imperialism. The security aspect can be further sub-divided: the first and most important sub-division being the strategic one. From the defensive point of view the Russians wished to deprive any potential enemy of bases from which to launch an attack on their territory, and themselves to occupy bases convenient for attacking an enemy's territory. At the present time many of the resources of Soviet Russia—such as oil, coal, iron and the newly developed industrial areas—are near the frontier, and it is therefore desirable for them to control the territory beyond the frontier so as to make it difficult for an enemy to threaten these resources. In addition, the Trans-Siberian railway and the Turkestan railway run near the border practically the whole of their way. In modern times the development of air attack and long-range weapons, such as rockets, make it desirable to control territory further and further away from the centres of industry and population. In fact, there is no end to the range which one can claim to bring under one's control in these circumstances.

A second method of protection is to induce one's neighbours to be friendly or to be puppets, and the Russians have adopted those principles. Where they have not actually occupied a country with their armies they have encouraged the setting up of Communist Party governments or frightened the existing government into being friendly.

The third method of protection has been ethnic. Practically the whole way along the Russian land frontier the population on each side are of the same stock, and the Russian is a good assimilator. Since he first started to expand he has never had any racial prejudices or colour bar; he has always mixed with the people—Turkoman, Tartar or whatever they might be—and he has been very successful in Russification, so that the population of the Soviet Union is far more homogeneous than that of the British Empire. This assimilation has a certain value offensively and defensively; if people on the other side of the frontier can be brought to think in the same way as those on the Soviet side it affords a zone of influence—as, for instance, in Persian Azerbaijan; it also encourages attempts to control the territories beyond the frontier, so that the Soviet peoples will not be influenced by their kinsmen on the far side.

Then there is the system of economic zones. When the Russians trade with a neighbouring country they usually try so to dominate that trade that it is conducted to their advantage. There is also the question of protection of trade routes. As I have said, the Russians in their earlier days often had to subdue tribes who raided their trade routes or nations who threatened them, and, having pacified these, they had to protect them by dominating somebody else. That is not so important at the present time. The chief economic interest the Russians now have is to dominate or control the trade between their country and neighbouring countries.

Another economic desire is to obtain ice-free ports. Geography has given Russia ports which are closed part of the year by ice, and she is always trying to find outlets to warm seas which will be open all the year round without the use of ice-breakers.

Lastly, there is simple imperialism, the idea of expanding wherever the soil is propitious. That went on under the Tsars, and it appears to be going on to-day. It is partly a question of prestige. The Soviet Union does not want to occupy an area smaller than the Tsar's Empire, and in late years has turned its attention to territories lost during the Revolution.

THE ASIAN MARCH

Let us look along the Asiatic frontier and see what is going on there, what expansion is taking place at the moment, and what is the likelihood of attempts at future expansion.

Manchuria.—The present frontier is the Amur River—an ethnic frontier, not an economic one. Rivers are nearly always bad frontiers, because the economy of the country builds up on both sides of the river. But this is an ethnic frontier in that the population to the north is overwhelmingly Russian owing to colonization; while that to the south is overwhelmingly Chinese, also owing to the colonization which took place during the nineteenth century. In this case the Russians cannot claim to have fellow-countrymen on the other side. On the other hand, the Amur River is a great trade route, navigable by steamers, and is not a good frontier from that point of view; both banks really belong to the same unit. Russian interests in Manchuria are both economic and

strategic. There are coal-mines and unexploited minerals; there is a tremendous soya-bean output; and there are hides to be had from the considerable stock of cattle there. Manchuria also offers a number of ice-free ports—Port Arthur, Newchwang and Dairen in the south; Vladivostok, although on the same latitude as Madrid, is only kept open by ice-breakers in the winter. The Russians have also communications to defend; there is a railway running through Manchuria which they wish to be sure is free from threat by any other Pacific Power. We have seen, during the last few months, that the Russian troops which entered Manchuria at the end of the Japanese war have been induced to withdraw, but as the Central Chinese Government forces come into Manchuria to take over they find themselves opposed by Chinese Communist armies who seem to be taking the place of the Russians.

Korea.—To the south of Manchuria is Korea. The frontier between Korea and the Soviet Union is a short one, the estuary of the Tumen River. The Russians are obviously interested in Korea because it would round off their eastern seaboard and make it difficult for any other Pacific Power directly to threaten Vladivostok or Manchuria from that side, and it forms a right flank to their Far Eastern possessions. Again, Korea has some well-developed warm-water ports, particularly Seishin and Rashin, which the Japanese were completing just before the war. Again, Korea has never in modern times governed herself; she was first under Chinese and next under Jap suzerainty, and has not since set up any satisfactory government of her own. The country is occupied by Russian forces in the north and American forces in the south. The Russians in their zone have been encouraging the Korean Communist Party, which I should say is much better organized than any party in the American zone and may eventually, when the Russians and the Americans remove their troops, achieve considerable influence in the polity of Korea.

Outer Mongolia.—West of Manchuria we come to Mongolia, a neighbour with a hilly but not difficult frontier, including the Gobi, which is desert in parts but elsewhere supports considerable herds of cattle, sheep and ponies. There the Russians possess the advantage of having the Buryat Soviet Republic just north of the frontier, where the population is of similar stock to that in Mongolia itself. Communications are well developed; there is a railway running from the Trans-Siberian line to Urga, now called Ulan Bator Khoto, the capital of Outer Mongolia. Russian interests in Outer Mongolia are partly economic; there is a well-developed trade route which is motorable right across Outer Mongolia into North China; there is also considerable pasture in Mongolia, and hides can be obtained from sheep and cattle; there are many unexploited minerals. Another attraction is the fact that Outer Mongolia affords a kind of cushion to Siberia; it is a protective zone to the Trans-Siberian railway in case any hostile Power tried to operate from North China. Mongolia has always been technically under Chinese suzerainty, but the Russians had considerable interests there long before this present century began, and during the Revolution they were afforded an opportunity to intervene in the country because a White Russian force had entered Outer Mongolia and occupied Urga. The Red Army came in, destroyed the

White Army, set up the "Mongolian People's Republic" in 1921, and the country was organized on Soviet lines with Russian troops to see that it remained so. It is now an independent state, with strong pro-Russian leanings. It is not possible, however, to get into Outer Mongolia from any direction except through Moscow's sponsorship. I have tried, and have been told, "You can only do it by applying to Moscow," well knowing that such an application would be met by the argument that Mongolia is an independent country and that reference must be made to Ulan Bator, where Great Britain is not represented. Russian influence over Outer Mongolia is going to have repercussions on Inner Mongolia, which has hitherto been much more under Chinese influence than Outer Mongolia. Now that Chinese Communist troops in North China have set themselves up in Inner Mongolia there may be a pro-Russian sphere of influence right down to the Great Wall on the borders of China proper.

Tannu Tuva.—At the north-west corner of Outer Mongolia there is an interesting little country called Tannu Tuva, of which most of us had not heard until recently; it is very mountainous and about one-third of the size of Germany, with a small population. Its only link with the outer world—that is, the U.S.S.R.—is either by air or along the valley of the Yenisei, a river running towards the Arctic. The population is Urian-Khai Mongol, akin to the Buryats of the Soviet Union. The chief Russian interests in the country are the considerable livestock grazed there and the fact that it stands in a central position between Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Soviet Asia. It was set up as an independent "republic" under similar conditions to Outer Mongolia, and even issued its own stamps. But quite recently it has become a province of the Soviet Union, apparently at its own request.

Sinkiang.—Further west we come to Sinkiang (or Chinese Turkestan). The frontier is mountainous and the country in the north of Sinkiang is quasi-desert, but communications with Russian territory have been improved considerably by means of the Turk-Sib railway and the road across the frontier to Urumchi the capital. The distance from Sinkiang to the trade centres of China is so much greater than to Siberia or to Russian Turkestan that trade naturally tends to flow to and from the U.S.S.R. rather than China. Sinkiang has therefore long been subject to considerable Russian influence. The population of the country is mainly Turkoman, similar in race to the people of Russian Turkestan; there are also inhabitants of partly Chinese origin called Tungans. Periodically there have been Moslem risings against Chinese rule, of which the Russians have been able to take advantage by sending in troops and occupying parts of the country. During these operations they succeeded in detaching a piece of Chinese Turkestan in the neighbourhood of Lakes Balkhash and Issik Kul, which during the last century was made part of the Russian Empire; but there is no ethnic frontier and the Turkoman-Moslem population flows over both sides of the political boundary. The chief interests, besides trade, are considerable resources of minerals not yet fully exploited but which may possibly yield results if the Russians are able to develop them. Russian influence in Sinkiang has an inevitable effect on India because there is a trade route over the passes into Chitral,

where recently it has been reported that Russian piece-goods are to be found in the bazaars. Indian merchants in Sinkiang have been suffering as a result of the increase of Russian predominance over the last twenty years or so, so that we cannot be indifferent in India to Russian ascendancy in Sinkiang.

Afghanistan.—Further west again we come to Afghanistan, the frontier of which is partly the River Oxus (again not a very good boundary) and partly a line of mountains. It is not the ethnic frontier, because in Northern Afghanistan there are Tajiks and Uzbeks, who are kin to the inhabitants of Soviet Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The ethnic line is the Hindu Kush, a range of mountains running north-east to south-west, south of which the people are Pathans with no ethnic connection with the Soviet Union. Russian interests in Afghanistan until recently have been entirely strategic, because occupation of Afghanistan puts them on the frontier of India, and, on the other hand, they affected to believe that the British had ideas of threatening their territory through that country. There are now signs that the minerals of Afghanistan, particularly oil, are interesting the Russians. They have developed communications into Afghanistan by two main routes: one is from the region of Tashkent on the Turk-Sib railway to Termez on the Afghan border, from where there is a road through Balkh to Kabul and so into India; the other route is from Merv, also on the Turk-Sib railway, to Herat. Herat is a centre of communications with Persia, Baluchistan and India. One can thus see that if we ever withdraw our forces from India and cease to direct Indian policy we should not be able to help Afghanistan, and Afghanistan by herself is unable to offer effective opposition to pressure from Russia. It is thus most important that under present conditions in India the Foreign Office should take over from Delhi control of our relations with Afghanistan.

Persia.—Perhaps the most interesting country at the present time is Persia, the frontier of which has been moved back and back for a number of generations. Much of the territory in the Soviet Union was part of the Persian Empire. The frontier at the moment follows the Araxes River (west of the Caspian), the southern shore of that sea, and roughly the line of the Atrek River to the east of the Caspian. The population in the north of Persia is similar to the Soviet inhabitants in the south of the Union. On the west the Armenians lie opposite the Armenian Soviet Republic, the Azerbaijani are neighbours to the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic, and the Turkomans live next to the Turkmenistan Republic, which makes it easier for the Russians to assert their influence in North Persia. The Persian proper does not come up to the frontier; his home is in Middle and Southern Persia. The chief Russian interests in the country, besides its races, are oil and grain. Moscow has recently succeeded in achieving an agreement regarding North Persian oil by putting pressure on the Persians. The oilfields of the Caucasus are believed not to be yielding as much as they did, and the Russians therefore want new sources of oil in the same part of the world. Most of the grain of Persia is grown in the north; if, therefore, they were able to assert themselves in North Persia the Russians could put pressure on the whole country.

They would like to control the southern Caspian shore to give them east-west communications and avoid sea journeys across the Caspian. Again there is the ever-present lure of warm-water harbours. In South Persia there is the newly developed port of Bandarshahpur, joined with the Caspian by the Trans-Persian railway, both of which were completed shortly before the late war. If therefore the Russians were able to secure special rights in ports on the Persian Gulf they would find the Trans-Persian railway available for their use. Among the methods they are adopting at the moment is that of seeking the sympathy of the border races, and I note that they have been encouraging the establishment of a Kurdish autonomous government, although there are no Kurds in the Soviet Union itself. The significance of this is that there are Kurds in Asia Minor and in Iraq. Therefore the establishment of any sort of Kurdish government in Persia would have an effect in Northern Iraq and in Eastern Turkey. Again, there is a political party in Persia called *Tudeh*, which appears to be organized rather like the Communist Party. Its point of view has openly been expressed as anti-British and pro-Russian. It is not a racial organization; it is a general political party which has a certain amount of influence in all parts of Persia. The withdrawal of our forces has left Russia with relatively greater influence, and the Anglo-Iranian oil interests in the south are without any protection other than international goodwill. It is significant that the company is having labour troubles fomented by the Tudeh Party.

Turkey.—The last country on our tour is Turkey, whose frontier with Russia is the Caucasus, always unstable because the people in the area are neither Turks nor Russians. The Russians have been advancing in that area for generations; in 1878 they occupied Kars and Erzerum and in 1886 they occupied Batum on the Black Sea. Recently the Russians have been putting considerable pressure on Turkey; an article in a Russian newspaper even argued that certain areas should be given to Russia because they are ethnically Georgian, and, although the Georgians are not Russians, there is a considerable Georgian population in the Soviet Union. The object all the while has been to obtain a warm-water port. Constantinople and the Straits lead to the Mediterranean and the sea lanes of the world. We have heard of the demands for influence in Tripoli and the argument over the port of Trieste. If the Jugoslavs controlled Trieste, their friendship with Moscow would give the Russians considerable facilities in the Mediterranean. Pressure has also been exerted in Bulgaria, where the concentration of Russian troops is considerable and is causing a certain amount of alarm to the Turks in Thrace; again, any Kurdish national movement is bound to have repercussions on Turkey's eastern territory.

CONCLUSIONS

I suggest that the Russian land frontier in Asia has consistently shown itself to be unstable and that the expansion of Russia can be attributed to three motive forces: first, an exaggerated desire for security against a possible enemy; secondly, the tendency to assimilate neighbouring peoples and, having assimilated them, to take an interest in any other cognate

peoples across the frontier; thirdly, economic and political imperialism, one of the strongest factors in which is the desire for ports on the open sea lanes of the world. There is another factor which I think needs further investigation, and that is the possible desire to keep considerable parts of the Russian armies abroad for a few years rather than bring them home and make recovery more difficult.

I think we can conclude that the expansion does not arise from any need of living space; the Russians have plenty of that. Their economic needs appear to be somewhat exaggerated. Perhaps we can yield that in Persia the desire for oil is natural because the Persian oilfields are in the same area as the ageing fields worked by the Russians and would be most convenient to the Soviet Union, as would the resources of other minerals not yet thoroughly exploited.

These factors have led to continuous encroachment, which will continue so long as the motive forces remain and there is no effective opposition. It must be remembered that all these countries from the Pacific to the Black Sea are weak, and have depended in recent years on the backing of Great Powers to prevent any encroachment on their territory. Unless the Great Powers take an interest not only in what happens near home but also in the whole of Asia, the Russian expansion is likely to continue. One of the main difficulties arises from *faits accomplis*. Once an area is occupied, or a sphere of influence is established, it is much more difficult to take steps than if something had been done to prevent or foresee the event. Who is going to do anything about Tannu Tuva now, even if he wished to?

Mr. GERALD SAMSON (Chinese Ministry of Information): There is little I can usefully add to the most interesting interpretive review of Russian expansion in Asia to which Colonel Davidson-Houston has treated us. Perhaps, however, he would agree with me that the term "Manchuria" has become a misnomer and that, in fact, since 1644 this territory, but for the brief life of the Japanese puppet state of "Manchukuo," has been an integral part of Chinese territory, known in China as the three eastern provinces, which last year was subdivided into the nine north-eastern provinces. Chinese Communists at present in the area to which the lecturer referred have never operated there previously; it is only since the Russians occupied this territory as a result of entering the war against Japan a few days before her surrender that the Chinese Communists have infiltrated into the north-eastern provinces. It is well to recall that Russian re-entry into China's north-eastern provinces is based on the secret Yalta agreement reached by Generalissimo Stalin and the late President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill in February, 1945. I think that the agreement has been most unfortunate in every way, and certainly the prestige of the Western Powers has deteriorated in a grave manner in consequence of this obvious betrayal of a weaker ally to a stronger one.

Finally, I would like to ask the lecturer whether he would agree with me that the present situation north of Changchun can be attributed to the Russians having seemingly created a Chinese Azerbaijan?

Colonel DAVIDSON-HOUSTON: I thoroughly agree with Mr. Samson

that Manchuria, in spite of its name, has for a long time been a purely Chinese country. I do not entirely agree that it has been politically a Chinese country; it is ethnically one, but Manchuria has for long been governed separately from the rest of China. Before the 1911 Revolution it was governed by the Manchu Viceroy; after the Revolution it was governed by independent War Lords and was, in fact, in that condition until the Japanese went in. Although it is a Chinese country it has not for a long period been so much a part of China proper as, say, the provinces of Hopei or Honan. There is a sort of political divide between the two.

The observation as to the betrayal of China by giving Russia special rights in Manchuria is somewhat difficult to debate here. I believe it arose from the desire of the Allies to yield to the almost overwhelming insistence of Russia that she had special rights in Manchuria. Ever since she entered Manchuria at the end of last century Russia has had a strong desire for communications, for ports and trade, and she does not trust the stability of whatever Chinese authority may be set up, nor does she trust her other Pacific rivals who, she feels, might at some other time seek economic advantages in the area.

Mr. PHILIPS PRICE: I also would like to say how greatly interested I was in all Color. Davidson-Houston said. There are one or two points on which I should like elucidation and perhaps I can add a little. As to Tannu Tuva, probably I am the only person here who has been in Tannu Tuva. In 1910, together with the late John Miller and with Douglas Carruthers, a member of this Society, I crossed Tannu Tuva from Western Siberia into Outer Mongolia. We crossed the Sayansk Mountains, and did not go by the river but right through forests on the Amil River. In those days the Russians were a small colony of fur traders who actually lived in the country for part of the year, some altogether and some just going backwards and forwards fur trading. When in Moscow last winter, I got the Russian figures for the Russian population in Tannu Tuva, and, if I remember rightly, the Russian is now slightly in excess of the native population. In other words, in the meantime there has been a steady infiltration proceeding. I do not think it in the least degree political: we did not form that impression when in the country; we attributed it to the natural flow of the Slavs to the East which has been going on for over one thousand years. From the time they spread from the Pripet Marshes right away across to the Pacific there has been this slow infiltration into the eastern territories, partly for reasons of trade, partly to escape from serfdom in European Russia before that was abolished, so as to get freer conditions of living.

As to the Caucasian oil, the lecturer said there might be some reason in Russia's demand for oil beyond her frontiers; that it was thought that Caucasian oil was giving out. I was in the Caucasus again last December and had a conversation with Russian geologists in Baku, during which they informed me that there is a considerable amount of oil still in the Caucasian oilfields. From all I could gather, what had happened was that the present oil production has run down owing to the exigencies of the war; lack of material and damage to some of the oilfields has generally

caused a large fall in output. The oligocene deposits of the Central Caucasus are believed to be full of oil still. Hence Russia's demand for oil deposits outside Russia does not seem to have any economic basis. There is undoubtedly a political basis. It is fear of having other countries exploiting oil just beyond her frontiers which brings about political repercussions. That seems to me to be the basis of the whole demand. If one views the matter from that point of view it is easily understandable; it is not so unjustifiable as would appear at first sight.

Mr. OSWALD WHITE: I would like to revert to the question of Manchuria. It is true that Marshal Chang Tso-lin was a War Lord and would not submit to the orders he received from Peking, but he did not intend to set up a separate kingdom. It was his hope that he would in time become the Emperor of China. I would also point out that his son, Chang Hsueh-liang, did submit to Nanking.

With regard to the question of Russian rights, I think it will be found in the original treaties that the Russians were allowed to build and operate a railway. They, and the Japanese after them, evolved a scheme by which they also took over the entire administration of the railway zone, but I doubt whether those can be called rights secured by treaty.

The statement that Korea had no independent government is likely to be misunderstood. It is true that China was the suzerain Power, and Korea admitted that and paid tribute, but Korea had its own kings and it was not until 1910 that Korea lost its independence.

The LECTURER: There is little I have to add to the very interesting observations contributed by Mr. Philips Price and Mr. White. The question of Tannu Tuva brings to my mind a point I have not sufficiently stressed, and that is that some of this expansion can be termed true colonization. As Mr. Philips Price observed, the Russian domination of Tannu Tuva is largely due to Russian colonization, in the same way that Siberia is Russian. Azerbaijan will never be anything else but Azerbaijani, but Siberia and Tannu Tuva appear to be true Russian colonies.

I have no details of the output of the Caucasian oilfields, but Mr. Philips Price observed that the Russians told him that there were considerable resources of oil still there. It seems rather a question of degree. If Russian industrial expansion requires a much greater output of oil it may be that those Caucasian oilfields will not stand the demand on them, but I am not qualified to judge. In any case, we know that the Russians are, rightly or wrongly, interested in Persian oil.

As to Mr. White's observation on the position of Manchuria, I agree that Chang Tso-lin did not only wish to rule Manchuria but to govern the whole of China, in the same way that the Manchus were originally rulers of Manchuria but achieved an ambition of ruling all China; I do not, however, think it right to say the reverse has ever been the case. The Mings and the other purely native Chinese dynasties have never achieved domination of Manchuria. The amount of Chinese colonization in Manchuria was such that it became definitely Chinese. As many of the people came from within the Wall, from Shantung and even further south, a situation was developing where Manchuria was becoming less a foreign country and more and more assimilated to the rest of China. I have no

doubt that if China is left to herself she will eventually achieve the incorporation of Manchuria in the same sense as any other Chinese province is incorporated.

I think Mr. White will agree that although the Koreans had their own kings they were very much a Chinese appanage, and in fact the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 was primarily due to the Chinese trying to drive the Japanese out of Korea; they did regard it as part of their territory. Again, I remember that in 1923, when the heir-apparent to the Korean throne, Prince Ri, came on a visit to Chatham, he was so surrounded by Japanese officers that he was not able to speak to anybody except through a Japanese officer. Anyhow, under Japanese occupation it has been evident that the Koreans have not been able to fit themselves for self-government, and they are now awaiting American and Russian guidance.

Mr. NURI EREN: When Colonel Davidson-Houston referred to the boundaries between Turkey and Russia he mentioned that they had been continually fluctuating during the last century owing to the fact that the populations on the borders of the two countries could be considered neither Russian nor Turkish. I could not quite get the implication. I am not sure whether he was referring to the present boundaries between the two countries or to the boundaries between Tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire, because there is the fact that in 1921, when the two provinces came back to Turkey, there was a plebiscite held, and out of the 89,000 people who voted only 1,000 voted against incorporation in Turkey; and these provinces, when they went to Russia for the first time in 1878, were given to her because the Russians had demanded an indemnity from the Ottoman Empire which it was not within the power of that Empire to pay, and this fact was specified in the Treaty of Berlin. Those two facts show that those living on the eastern boundaries were predominantly Turkish. Even if we take the Russian statistics of the Tsarist States they show that only about 10 per cent. of the population could be regarded as non-Moslem; in other words, non-Turkish.

The LECTURER: I have no statistics of population with me, but the point I wish to make is that throughout the rather troubled history of Russia and Turkey the frontier has been unstable owing to the fact that the people on either side of that frontier are racially neither 100 per cent. Turkish nor 100 per cent. Russian, and that the great proportion are Georgians, Armenians and other races which are neither one nor the other. That means that the frontier can never be stable so long as these races are partly under the government of one country and partly under the other. There can always be arguments advanced for incorporating a little piece of Russia or a little piece of Turkey.

Mr. EREN: Do you mean the boundaries of to-day or the boundaries of the past?

The LECTURER: Any boundary. I am suggesting that no boundary ever achieved between Russia or Turkey can be entirely satisfactory. Compromise is the only solution.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has come to close the meeting, and I am sure you all wish me, on your behalf, to thank the lecturer for his most instructive and lucid talk.

