

# The War in Russia and Siberia

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## CHAPTER X

### JAPANESE INTERVENTION IN SIBERIA

#### I. – Semenov – Staggered Interventions

At the end of January 1918, all resistance by Russians to the Soviet regime seemed to be completely extinguished. In Russia the Volunteer Army had lost the Don. Fellow Russian officers in Siberia, dazed by a succession of merciless misfortunes, were leaderless. When they tried to get assistance from the United States and Europe, their access was forbidden by the Allied consuls.

It was at this point that an unknown figure emerged from the chaos and the hopes of the foreign offices were pinned on a single person. Captain Semenov, a Cossack from the Transbaikal, had just organised a detachment of volunteers in Manchuria [town]<sup>1</sup> who fought with intermittent success against the Reds.

General Horvath, manager of the Eastern Railway, from whom that young leader asked for help with arms and money, approached the French, English and American governments through their representatives in Harbin. The American government, which hoped for agreements with the Soviets, on the advice of its legation in Peking, and perhaps also of Consul Moser and Engineer Stevens, twice refused any aid. The British immediately granted a sum of 100,000 roubles, and then 300,000 roubles per month (£10,000), of which the French government paid half. Horvath did not consult the Japanese.

Getting weapons and technical assistance was a more difficult question. The French and British were focussed on the Western Front. In February the British War Office asked General Tanaka, the military attaché in London, to ask the Japanese government to take an interest in Captain Semenov, who deserved immediate support. The Imperial Government agreed. Minister Terauchi sent his agent Kawakami and then General Nakajima to Horvath to offer arms. The latter asked for official assurances that the Japanese government did not want territorial advantages.<sup>2</sup> General Nakajima replied that Japan hoped only for commercial concessions, a statement confirmed by dispatches from Generals Tanaka and Terauchi, and from Baron Goto: "Japan desires friendly relations with Russia."

In March 1918, Trotski was playing a tight game with the Allies. The advance on Paris had not yet begun. The Allied foreign missions, duped by straw men, hoped to rebuild a front in Russia against Germany, and Trotski had this hope carefully cultivated. Diplomatic agents, Lockhart in Moscow and Major Fitz-Williams in Kiev, brought about a change of policy in the Foreign Office. Russian diplomats in the Far East were no longer consulted by their British colleagues, and were denied the use of the cipher in their despatches. In early April 1918, the British urged the Japanese to stop supporting Semenov. The Japanese refused, and they were right: a month later the disillusioned French and British resumed their monthly subsidy, which they continued to pay until October of the same year.

Until June 1918 the French government's subsidy had been paid to Prince Kudachev, minister in Peking, to pass on to Horvath (and Kolchak). Semenov was considered a junior officer, serving the political centre in Harbin. It was soon realised that most of the subsidy was used to organise detachments which showed no desire to fight. The French government therefore sent its financial aid directly to Semenov, which gave him the position of an almost independent leader.

Against Semenov – a brave and patriotic officer, but without status – the English went with Admiral Kolchak – whose honourable, if violent, character and his skilful attitude as commander of the Black Sea fleet had

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<sup>1</sup> This is Manchuria town, now Manzhouli.

<sup>2</sup> Horvath later told me that he had "set this condition to help the Japanese".



secured universal esteem. Kolchak did not succeed in co-operating either with the smaller atamans, Semenov, Kalmykov, Gamov, etc., each of whom had distinguished himself in his own way, or with the Japanese, whom he shocked by acts and words of extreme violence. General Nakajima in particular does not seem to have forgiven him. When Kolchak later realised that it would be impossible for the Russians to get out of trouble on their own and approached the Minister of War in Tokyo, he could not reach any agreement.

In May 1918, the Allies had not yet been able to decide on a definitive policy towards Russia. Masaryk had advised the Allies (in April) to recognise the Soviets. The Czech trains, betrayed by Trotsky, roamed Siberia making their own policy – unsympathetic to the Reds but also opposing that of Kolchak, Semenov and the rest.

In Irkutsk an Allied representative forced the Czechs<sup>3</sup> to surrender their arms to the Bolshevik troops, whom they had treacherously attacked and managed to disarm. While protesting against this action, the Czechs continued to "protect the revolution". Some merchants in Vladivostok were set up as consuls, and prevented Horvath's actions against the Socialist-Revolutionary Gerber, who had established a government there. The Russian officers were disarmed by order of the Allied consuls, and also had their rank insignia taken from them. In short, the various Allied authorities advocated a policy of non-intervention which forced them to make further interventions, which satisfied no one and from which only the Bolsheviks benefited.

In July 1918, Vladivostok had been cleared by the first Czech trains but was threatened by large Red forces, joined by Austro-German prisoners. The Czechs asked for military assistance. General Paris, head of the French military mission, proposed the urgent introduction of at least two Japanese divisions. The Japanese General Staff made a proposal on 25 July to immediately send two divisions, a proposal which the Allied governments agreed to, with the exception of the United States.

The Allied intervention in Siberia was motivated by the need to prevent the formation of an enemy front in Siberia. President Wilson, who was by his very isolation, the arbiter of the situation, allowed himself to be swayed by an argument that was later maintained to explain the Allied presence in Siberia. It was a sentimental argument: it was deemed impossible to abandon the brave Czech troops, who were fighting the Reds.

President Wilson, who was simultaneously won over by the opposing ideas of collective relief for the Czechs and non-intervention in Russian affairs, thus initiated a proposal that a single Japanese division of 17,000 bayonets, aided by the Siberian population, would go to rescue the Czechs, and that armed intervention would not extend beyond the Ussuri [River].

A Japanese declaration of 2 August decreed the mobilisation of the 12th Infantry Division and explained it as a measure taken by the Imperial Government to come to the aid of the Czechs, on the proposal of America, and after other governments had taken similar measures.

The 17,000 Japanese landed in Vladivostok on 12 August at about the same time as 7,700 Americans (from Honolulu), 500 French from Peking and 800 Canadians. Subsequent events proved General Paris right, with this shipment being declared insufficient.

## **2. – The Kraevski affair**

At the time the Allied troops landed, there about 35,000 armed Bolsheviks (among them thousands of prisoners, commanded by German officers) between Irkutsk and Vladivostok. Horvath could only oppose them with Semenov's 1,500 men and Horvath's 3,400 (moreover operating in independent groups of 900, 600, 200 men) with 22 cannons and 50 machine-guns.

On 19 August Vladivostok was threatened by 5,000 Reds in the front line and 3,000 in reserve. A strong "international" detachment advanced along the railway in five armoured trains, flanked by scattered groups, including a detachment of Czechoslovak deserters. The Allies opposed them, near Kraevski village, and astride the railway. There were 4,000 men, made up of a French battalion, an English battalion, four Czech battalions

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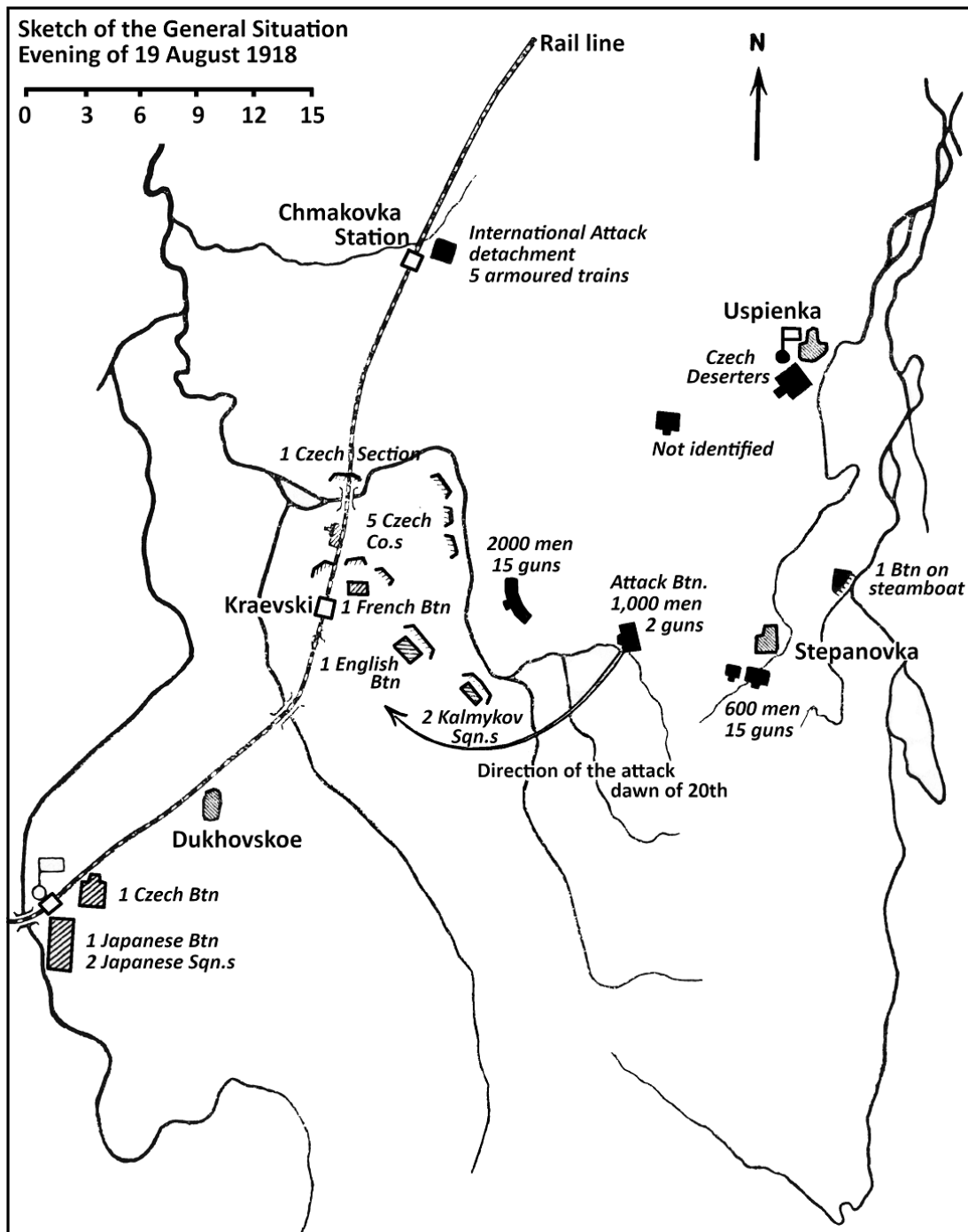
<sup>3</sup> With the threat that they would not be transported to France.



and five of Kalmykov's squadrons, all under the command of Colonel Pichon. General Ooi, with 4,000 Japanese, stood in reserve.

The battle, small in itself, reflected the complications of international politics quite remarkably. The Czech command seems to have intentionally committed a very small force, in order to provoke the foreign intervention which the American government considered almost superfluous, but which would free the Czech troops, unwilling to remain locked in the Russian civil war. The Japanese, whose time had not yet come, carefully kept out of the way, some fifteen kilometres behind.

The attack came before sunrise on 20 August and was well conducted. The quick advance of 1,000 Reds, on the right flank of the Allies, tried to outflank them in order to put them in crossfire. The British immediately took off, and dragged the others with them. General Ooi, summoned to the aid of the threatened front, replied that the right moment had not arrived.



When there was no chance the retreat of the Russian-English-Czech-French troops would stop, General Ooi released his troops from the reserve, at the exact spot from which he had hitherto observed the battle, and stopped the Red offensive. From 21 to 23 August the Japanese maintained a passive front. On the 24th, at about dawn, General Ooi attacked with his men and pushed the enemy back as far as Medoveya, with the customary vigour of their race.

During the engagements I have mentioned, a striking scene occurred: Japanese howitzer fire had destroyed the track behind a Red armoured train, armed with cannons and machine guns. The train, stopped on a high embankment, was full of soldiers – among them several women – who were waiting for the attack to come. General Ooi, perhaps wishing to offer his allies watching the scene a unique spectacle, ordered an assault on the train by two half-companies, posted to the right and left of the track. The Reds fired from the windows, from the steps, and from the locomotive, on which about thirty men had amassed. The Japanese soldiers advanced at a run, bayonets fixed, against heavy fire. They lost about thirty dead, but climbed the embankment and killed the surviving Reds: those who escaped through the windows were finished off by the bayonets of the comrades below.

The Czech Major Zikha, commanding a Czech battalion, watched the spectacle next to General Ooi and pointed out that it would have been better to destroy the immobilised train with cannon fire. General Ooi replied that the most important thing was to be quick and not let any of the crew escape. The enemy, completely defeated, withdrew to Khabarovsk, leaving it necessary to go there to destroy the rest of their forces.

The French had lost about twenty men, the Japanese three hundred.

### **3. – The Manchurian incident of 28 August 1918**

On 18 June 1918 an agreement was reached between Japan and China that Manchuria [province] would be guarded against Bolshevik invasion by Chinese and Japanese troops, whose task would be to protect the many foreigners living on the frontier. The Bolsheviks had no desire to displease the Chinese by an escapade into China, but it was feared that they would continue to regard the Eastern Railway as Russian soil. The Japanese 7th Division, under General Fuji, whose headquarters were at Jau-Jan<sup>4</sup>, advanced along the Trans-Siberian Railway to the Siberian frontier, which President Wilson's orders were that they should not cross.

Semenov was at that time in Manchuria [town], with his 1,500 men, sheltering behind Japanese bayonets. The military party in Japan was as eager as the Russians, the French, the Czechs and the British for action, but the Japanese Government carefully avoided any grounds for conflict with the United States, and the Minister of War dared not accept the responsibility for an operation contrary to the agreement with America.

Minds were thus wavering between futile diplomatic considerations and very urgent military necessities when, on 28 August, Semenov asked General Fuji to assist him against a new Bolshevik advance. Large forces, ably commanded by General von Taube, a Baltic Russian, approached Dauriya<sup>5</sup>, where there were a number of favourably situated large buildings. This would have enabled them to organise a strong position in front of Manchuria. They had to be dislodged at once.

General Fuji was caught off guard by this. He did not report to General Otani, commander of the Siberian expeditionary forces, but to General Nakamura, military commander of Korea, based in Port Arthur.<sup>6</sup> Cooperation with the Japanese troops in Vladivostok could only have been achieved via an order of his commander and the Minister of War, which meant the waste of valuable time. He preferred not to interpose less far-sighted responsibilities into the problem which the moment presented, and took the direct route as a soldier. He made the following speech to his staff:

"I am sent here to guard Chinese territory against the Bolsheviks. I have been ordered not to cross the border, but I do not think I should obey this time. I cannot, at this decisive moment, abandon the only Russian who is

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps Kwan-tung, the area around Port Arthur/ Lüshunkpu / Darien.

<sup>5</sup> This is another name for the Transbaikal area, but in this context means Dauriya town.

<sup>6</sup> Lüshun.



willing and able to fight against our common enemy. If the Emperor disapproves of me, I will know what a samurai has to do."<sup>7</sup>

On the same day, a Japanese infantry battalion and an artillery company crossed the Sino-Russian border, behind Semenov's detachment. The Bolsheviks, not knowing the exact number of Japanese, withdrew without a fight, first from Dauriya, then from Olovianaya.

The political incident thus created by General Fuji worried Japanese diplomats, but was soon settled by the good sense of the Allied representatives in Tokyo. Only the American government remained disapprovingly silent, 'a contemptuous silence', one of its representatives in Tokyo told me.

#### 4. – The occupation of the Trans-Siberian Railway

The pursuit of the Bolsheviks was tedious, but easy. The Japanese 12th division went up the Vladivostok road to Blagoveshchensk, where it was to meet with a brigade of the 7th, coming from Karimskaya,<sup>8</sup> while the other brigade of that division went to the same city via Qiqihar, in order to cut off the Reds' retreat to China. The Russian-Japanese troops seized several hundred Reds, whom the Japanese treated as prisoners of war, the *Semenovtsi* as brigands. A few Bolsheviks escaped to the tundra in the north, then returned to Vladivostok, where they were interned by the Americans.

Soon the Japanese 3rd Division relieved the 7th and returned to China, to take over the guard on the Eastern Railway. In October 1918, the Czechs, wanting to form a new front in the Urals, asked Semenov to relieve them. This was in fact an appeal to the Japanese. The question of Russian garrisons in the Transbaikal would never have arisen otherwise. From that time on the 3,500 kilometres of railway between Chita and Vladivostok, through the Amur and Chinese branches, were guarded by three Japanese divisions.

The military task given to the Japanese throughout the Allied operation was guarding the Trans-Siberian Railway between Verkhneudinsk<sup>9</sup> and the sea. Later on American troops guarded a particularly quiet stretch of the line: between Verkhneudinsk and Lake Baikal.

In the rugged areas of the Amur River, teeming with Red bands, the route was guarded in the valley against attacks from the hills. The Japanese had to station small garrisons at railway stations and near the main bridges, while flying detachments were constantly reconnoitring in armoured trains.

The war was difficult. While the Japanese were better armed and more strongly disciplined, the Reds, reinforced by Cossack detachments unhappy with Semenov's regime, employed methods of warfare in which they excelled. Their tactics invariably consisted in destroying the (single-track) railway. After isolating some garrison, often consisting of only one section, the Reds tied their horses to trees in the nearby forests behind the hills and began a full-scale siege of the station in the valley. Sometimes they overcame the handful of Japanese, whose desperate resistance always ended in horrific scenes of suicide and torture of the surviving wounded. If reinforcements arrived, the Reds jumped into the saddle and disappeared into the "*taiga*".

The Japanese troops were neither loved nor hated, as the sold-out press claims. They kept themselves apart from the population. But wherever I went with them, to villages in the interior of the country, I witnessed scenes of joy: their arrival always put an end to some unbearable regime of anarchy, either that of the Bolsheviks or of the *Semenovtsi*. To find out the true opinion of the country of their presence, I made a point of consulting the priests, who generally retained their influence over the populace. I never found any Orthodox priests opposed to them being there. All admired in them the military virtues for which they are justly famous, and the absence of hypocritical pretexts, to explain their presence in Siberia. Their officers kept themselves locked up in a coldly correct attitude and showed no intention of interfering in Russian domestic matters.

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<sup>7</sup> General Fuji was aware of the disagreement between the views of the General Staff and the Foreign Office, a disagreement which so curiously broke out in the Prinkipo Island affair, where the attitude of the Japanese representative was inspired by the desire not to deviate too much from American policy. He had sworn to his ancestors to commit harakiri if his government disagreed.

<sup>8</sup> This would appear to be the railway station in modern Karymyskoe, near Chita.

<sup>9</sup> Now called Ulan-Ude.



The newspapers of Harbin, Vladivostok, etc., were generally hostile to them. This press, always Jewish, defended commercial interests, which were threatened by Japan's Siberian policy.

##### 5. – Japanese Policy in Siberia – Cooperation with the *Semenovtsi*.

The Japanese policy, constantly thwarted by the British and Americans, consisted of the creation of spheres of influence around the Japanese garrisons, where Japanese industry and commerce could infiltrate.

It thus conflicted with American intentions, which were crystallised in the Stevens mission. This mission, consisting of 200 American engineers, had been authorised by Kerenski to completely reorganise the Trans-Siberian Railway. This reorganisation would have included the entire transport network, i.e. control of the main Siberian artery. The Japanese proposed the internationalisation of technical assistance, under Russian leadership. Stevens refused to share his mission with citizens of other countries – and least of all with the Japanese, whom he considered unqualified in railway matters. Everyone then tried to win over the Trans-Siberian Railway staff for themselves. The most serious of the American *captationes benevolentiae* consisted of a special train, covered with huge posters: "Fraternal Relief to Railway Officials", which distributed to Trans-Siberian employees warm clothes and blankets of excellent quality free of charge, almost all of which later made their way to the markets in the cities. The Japanese, for their part, organised hospitals and such near the stations.

British policy was less simplistic. It did not distribute Bibles, cheap sugar or underwear to railway workers. It did not build hospitals. But it had got hold of a leader. It had a limited but definite aim, and sought to achieve it by its influence on Kolchak, who the Knox mission had brought to Omsk without first consulting the Allies.

The Admiral's arrival in power did not ease difficulties. For some months there were two leaders in the room, who did not want to agree and who represented two opposing conceptions. On the initiative of General Janin, the Japanese worked through Horvath to reconcile the adversaries.

The foreign policy of the Omsk government was directed in a direction hostile to Japan and favourable to the United States, whose *de facto* intervention was hoped for right up until the end, but did not happen.

A *rapprochement* with Japan did not take place until the last months of 1919. The imperial government had only sent a high commissioner in September of that year (Mr Kato). He had proposed to the Allies a full recognition of the Admiral, without result. Serious steps towards an agreement between the Siberian and Japanese governments were only taken during the retreat, after the ministries had been transferred to Irkutsk. Tretiakov had replaced Sukin as Foreign Minister. He told me on 13 December:

"We, and the entire Russian population, have no hope except in close cooperation with the Japanese. We shall only ask the. We will only ask Japan to occupy a front, passing 100 versts west of Irkutsk, through the Cheremkhovo mines, which must not fall into the hands of the Reds. Their mere presence and the certainty of their assistance will suffice to revive the morale of our troops, whom we will be obliged to reorganise completely, before launching them back into the fight. But we wish to remain faithful to our principle and wage war against the Bolsheviks only with our own troops.

"The Japanese intervention, while presented as selfish, was by no means more self-serving than that of the other powers. I cannot say what benefits Japan has gained so far for her efforts, for her enormous expenses and the blood her soldiers have shed. If Japan wanted to organise our mines and provide us with the coal that no longer arrives, we would accept such help with alacrity. The Siberian population has nothing against them, and neither do we. The Russians feel more and more that an alliance between Japanese and Russians, embracing not only the Far East, but the whole of Russia, would be a simple and natural thing."

"The Siberian Government would have been glad to receive help from the Americans, but the sympathy they have shown us has been fruitless. They gave us the help of their Red Cross – as did the Japanese – but not where we would have appreciated it more: at the front, to our poor soldiers. The American government made the mistake from the beginning of hoping that Bolshevism contained a good and useful core of reformist ideas. It does not. The President's



views changed during his stay in Europe, but the policy of a country could not change from one day to the next."

"The government assumes that Japan's conditions for the intervention we are asking for will not be harsh. We are just waiting for the admiral to arrive to propose to the Japanese government a full plan of action."

I have faithfully reproduced this part of my conversation with Mr. Tretiakov, because his opinions were exactly in line with those of the other "intellectuals" in Irkutsk.

An agreement with Japan was not reached. Profiting by the absence of the Supreme Leader, whom the Czechs had stopped on the way, the Irkutsk Socialist-Revolutionaries founded a government, which served – like all the Socialist-Revolutionary governments that had preceded it – to prepare for a later Bolshevik regime. Perhaps the Japanese General Staff had hoped for a moment to organise a front against the Soviet armies (this was the opinion of the Japanese military in Siberia). But two divisions would not have been enough, and the American government still wanted to keep to the commitments of August 1918. It is certain that a large Japanese detachment (including more than a brigade of infantry, cavalry, etc.) was shipped in December 1919 to a Japanese port, bound for Siberia. But an American note stopped the already loaded ships.

From then on there was no support in Siberia for a Russian-Japanese policy. Kolchak, arrested and almost imprisoned between Novonikolaievsk and Irkutsk, had put Semenov in charge of the Siberian armies. But the fall and end of Kolchak gave Semenov back regional power, with no hope of continuity. Captain Semenov had been a popular leader in January 1918, with the promise of a national revival. Ataman Semenov was a fallen general at the beginning of 1920, abandoned by the Cossacks who had elected him, struggling in a situation with no way out. Was the Japanese government going to engage in a new policy with a Russian general whom its allies could disavow?

And then the Japanese press began to take stock of the Siberian expedition. It is not clear that the Japanese press always represents the opinion of the nation. Like the big industrial and financial enterprises, it has a remarkable and not always commendable freedom and independence. It had long waged a muted campaign against intervention in Siberia. The brilliant actions of its soldiers, their sufferings, their attitude so in keeping with the ancient national virtues had been deliberately ignored. The press had often shown tendencies that might have been inspired by high finance, repugnant to divergence from American policy. As elsewhere, in Japan newspapers are a means of influencing the public, even if it means lending them their opinions afterwards.

So the newspapers asked whether the commercial advantages and future guarantees in Siberia were worth the 707 men killed at the front and the 470 killed by disease.<sup>10</sup> It was:

"No gold or iron mine is worth the blood of a single Japanese soldier," General Hosono told me, "but we are here to defend Bolshevism's access to China and Japan. And we would succeed easily, if we were not hampered by the jealousy of two of our allies."

In the meantime, the American government had withdrawn its expeditionary force, not including its Red Cross services. The Japanese had worked with successive leaders, each of whom had been encouraged in turn by an Allied mission, and in turn had gone under, for want of sufficient support. Thus Gaida, Rozanov, later Medvediev, Boldyriev, etc. For some time General Ooi's<sup>11</sup> troops even cooperated with Socialist-Revolutionaries, who allowed daily attacks on isolated Japanese soldiers. Every morning the terrible samurai figure of the Japanese commander could be seen walking through the streets to his headquarters, accompanied by a few armed officers, looking down on the hostile inhabitants and commanding their respect.

After that Japanese policy in Siberia was guided by the principle of non-intervention, which was obviously impossible to implement to the satisfaction of all parties. In the occupied areas (Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, etc.),

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<sup>10</sup> From a statement by Minister Tanaka in the Chamber of Deputies, 22 January 1920. These losses include the period from August 1918 to January 1920.

<sup>11</sup> Who succeeded General Otani as commander of the expeditionary force.



the military party was favoured and operated with a minimum of political programmes. In the other regions, the Japanese sought agreements with small local governments.<sup>12</sup>

The fall of the Kolchak government and the resistance against the infiltration of Bolshevism, i.e. the absence of the two centralising principles of the Russian revolution, put Siberia in a very curious situation. Russian democracy was manifested here in its purest form: the fragmentation into small communes and republics, unrestrained by any central power, which will be eternally regarded as an aristocratic encroachment by small groups of citizens on the liberties of the majority. Whether this unbearable patronage is exercised by representatives of an emperor, by officials of a republic, or by Bolshevik commissars, it will be equally abhorred by the primitives. Only in these small communes, where each citizen knows his neighbour and can appreciate the interests of his community, could he retain the illusion of being more or less master of his destiny. Next to this advantage, the form of government which would make him lose it would not matter much. In Siberia, under the impassive and indifferent guard of the Japanese patrols, we saw the Russian democratic revolution leading quite naturally to the application of the ideas which ensured its success.

The Bolshevik danger was therefore denied. "It is not with machine guns that one can fight ideas!", etc. Moreover, the merchants were not happy. The exchange rate of the rouble made traffic difficult and only allowed the entry of junk. The climate, bearable for the Siberians of the North, who are stocky and solid, is difficult for the Japanese: sentries were sometimes found dead of cold. The Japanese troops, who had been so well received by the population at the beginning, met with a less and less favour among the inhabitants, and in some towns Socialist-Revolutionary and Bolshevik committees, openly encouraged, went so far as to recommend the boycotting of Japanese goods and the murder of the sentries.

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<sup>12</sup> Among the several thousand small republics, five somewhat larger ones were formed: Verkhneudinsk, Chita, Blagoveshchensk, Khabarovsk, Vladivostok. These five "democratised" cities tried to subdue the surrounding villages. The Jewish commissar Tabelson (Krasnochokov), with full powers conferred by Trotski, made efforts to form a "buffer state", subject to central Soviet power in Moscow, i.e. under foreigners, living 4,000 kilometres away. Talks were initiated by Tabelson with the Japanese, leading to the formation and recognition of this buffer state by the Imperial Government. Here is a short historical summary:

30 April 1920 – General Ooi proposed to the government of Verkhneudinsk the creation of a neutral zone, into which neither Japanese nor Soviet troops would penetrate.

Beginning of May – The Soviets withdrew the bulk of their forces from Siberia, except for three divisions east of Irkutsk, one at Minusinsk, one at Yenisei, one at Barnaul, and one at Semipalatinsk.

6 May. – The Verkhneudinsk (i.e. Tabelson) government issued a proclamation: it accepted the Japanese proposal, on condition that the Japanese government ceased all relations with Semenov.

General Ooi refused to confuse the two issues. He sent a commission to Verkhneudinsk under General Takayanagi.

25 May – Talks began in Verkhneudinsk, but came to nothing, as the Japanese refused to discuss the Semenov question. The latter returned to Chita.

31 May – The Vladivostok government issued a proclamation: since General Semenov was preventing an agreement between Japan and the Verkhneudinsk government, Semenov's power must be overthrown.

Beginning of June – Semenov engaged in serious fighting near Chita. The government of Verkhneudinsk having agreed to the creation of the neutral zone that the Japanese had proposed, the 5th Division withdrew from Chita. Although Semenov retained his friendship with the Japanese command, would it be possible to continue to give him effective aid?

3 June – The Japanese government sent General Tsuno with six battalions to Nikolaievsk, where the garrison, the staff of the consulate and the Japanese inhabitants – men, women and children – had been massacred in the most atrocious circumstances. The Japanese consul, surrounded by the Reds, set fire to his house, killed his wife and children, and then threw himself into the flames.

14 August – Semenov left Chita and settled in Dauriya. The only Japanese with him were Captain Suzuki, with a small military mission, and a number of Japanese volunteers who were not part of any Japanese military organisation.

10 September 1920 – Repatriation of the last Czechs. From this point the Japanese presence was no longer motivated by the duty to help the Czechs return home, but by the necessity to protect the Japanese Empire against Bolshevik actions.

