

A Fresh Look at the Sino-Russian Conflict of 1900 in Manchuria

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At the end of the 19th century, during the "division of the melon" period of great power rivalry in China, Tsarist Russia began building the major Chinese Eastern Railway across the still wild country of Northern Manchuria, and in 1898 started to extend it to the more populous South of Manchuria, acquiring the lease of Port Arthur and Dalny in the Liaotung peninsula. The construction of the main line in the North was broadly in agreement with the wishes of the Chinese government and local officials, but the Russian advance into Southern Manchuria was very unpopular with them. In 1900 the resentment of the Chinese at the various encroachments of the Imperialist powers on their territory boiled over in the Boxer rising, which led amongst other things to a minor war between Chinese and Russians in Manchuria, and the Russian military occupation of most of Manchuria until the Russo-Japanese War.

Named by George A. Lensen the Russo-Chinese War, the Sino-Russian clashes of 1900 in Manchuria seem best classified as a conflict, at most a minor war, since they occupied less than three months in all and hostilities were never formally declared by the Tsarist government. No definitive account of these events exists.

Foreign witnesses were few and isolated, and all accounts published hitherto have been based on Russian or Chinese sources alone, thus giving a nationally inclined view. All versions to date concur that Boxers and their sympathisers in the Chinese army began the fighting with the Russians in Southern Manchuria, but there is considerable disparity between the Russian and the Chinese sources as to the course of events in the North leading to the Russian invasion.

V. W. Purcell's *Boxer Uprising*² hardly touches on Manchuria, and C. C. Tan's short chapter on Manchuria in his valuable book *The Boxer Catastrophe*³ does not fully explain the evacuation of the Russian railway personnel, does not mention the Chinese bombardment of Blagoveshchensk and states that the Heilungkiang General Shou-shan started the war by firing on a Russian invasion fleet in the Amur. The *I-ho-t'uan (IHT)*, ed. by the Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh-hui,⁴ has very little information on Manchuria. The fullest account to appear in the Chinese People's Republic, *Chin-tai tung-pei ren-min ke-ming yün-tung-shih* (ed. by Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh-yüan chilin-sheng fen-yüan li shih yen-chiu-suo (CTTP hereafter), deals with the attitudes of the Kirin and Feng-tien generals, but

¹ Mr. Tsuji of The Chinese University of Hong Kong has read the Japanese sources used; Dr. Chiu Ling-yeong of the University of Hong Kong has kindly checked the use made of Chinese published sources for linguistic correctness; in all other respects responsibility for the article rests with R. Quested. The article was presented as a seminar in the Research School of Pacific Studies, A.N.U. on 14 September 1976, and the author wishes to thank Professor Wang Gungwu and others then present for their helpful comments.

² Cambridge, 1963.

³ New York, 1955.

⁴ Shanghai, 1951; Taipei reprint, 1973.

gives an incomplete outline of events before the Russian armies marched into Manchuria, though it indicates the safe withdrawal of all the railway personnel.⁵ There are many brief accounts in Chinese secondary sources and many documents in the Chinese archival publications, but the Chinese bombardment of Blagoveshchensk appears to be mentioned in only one published Chinese document.

On the Russian side, B. B. Glinskii's *Prolog russko-iaponskoi voiny*⁶ omits the massacre of Chinese at Blagoveshchensk and the evacuation of the railway personnel, and B. A. Romanov's *Rossia v Man'chzhurii*⁷ gives no detailed account of events in Manchuria either, moreover, there are occasional mistakes in his conversion of Julian dates into Gregorian. A. Malozemoff's *Russian Policy in the Far East 1881-1904*⁸ mentions the Chinese bombardment of Blagoveshchensk, and the interchange of firing on the Amur from 16 July, but has nothing to say about the evacuation of the railway personnel from the Northern provinces. He suggests that Harbin was besieged by the Chinese from early in July, which is questionable, and a number of his dates are at variance with those given by G. A. Lensen in *The Russo-Chinese War*.⁹ Lensen's book is without footnotes and based on contemporary Russian eyewitness accounts, but its dating, and the

picture it conveys are for many events the most accurate obtainable from the Russian side, and it is extremely vivid in communicating the feelings of the Russians. Lensen indicates no close siege of Harbin before 26 July, mentions casualties amongst the Russian railway guards and employees (thus being directly at variance with the *CTTP*), and also deals with the Blagoveshchensk massacre in detail.

The present article attempts to construct as far as possible a chronologically sound outline of the main events in Manchuria leading to the outbreak of hostilities, sketching in the background of government policy on each side, and utilizing material from most available national sources. A fresh appraisal of the causes of the outbreak of war is undertaken, and in conclusion, the course of the campaign is briefly considered. All the studies already mentioned have been used, and material not yet employed in any previous accounts has also been found in the *Ch'ing-chi wai-chiao shih-liao* (*CCWCSL*),¹⁰ Yang Ju's collection of telegrams in *Chung-O hui-shang chiao-shou Tung-San-Sheng tien-pao hui-ch'ao* (*TSSTP*),¹¹ Li Hung-chang's telegrams,¹² Ch'eng Te-ch'uan's collected works,¹³ the *Tung-hua lu*,¹⁴ *Ch'ing-shih*,¹⁵ and the *I-ho-t'uan tang-an shih-liao* (*IHTTASL*).¹⁶ Information

⁵ It was used by M. H. Hunt (*Frontier Defense and the Open Door*, New Haven, 1973), who in a brief account of the Manchurian events states that "the Russians employed by the Chinese Eastern Railway escaped with their lives" from Manchuria (p. 18).

⁶ Petrograd, 1916.

⁷ Moscow, 1928. Translated into English by Susan W. Jones, as *Russia in Manchuria*, Ann Arbor, 1951. All references here are to the English edition.

⁸ Berkeley, 1958.

⁹ Tallahassee, 1967.

¹⁰ Taipei reprint, 1963.

¹¹ Taipei reprint, 1969.

¹² *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'uan-chi, tien-kao*, Taipei reprint 1962.

¹³ *Ch'eng Chiang-chün shou-chiang tsou-kao*, Taipei reprint, 1968.

¹⁴ Taipei reprint, 1963.

¹⁵ *Kuo-fang-yen-chiu-yüan*, Taipei, 1961.

¹⁶ *Kuo-chia tang-an-chü*, (Ed.), *Ming-Ch'ing tang-an-kuan*, Peking 1958.

from Manchurian local gazetteers has been found in the Peking-published studies *I-ho-t'uan yün-tung liu-shih-chou-nien chi-nien lun-wen chi*, ed. by the Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh-yüan Shantung fen-yüan li-shih yen-chiu-suo,¹⁷ and the *I-ho-t'uan yün-tung* by Chin Chia-rui.¹⁸ The unpublished British Consular and military intelligence reports¹⁹ have also been used, for the first time, and the reports of the Japanese trade commissioner in Vladivostok published in the *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*.²⁰ This man was apparently more immediately informed of events in Northern Manchuria, through his Russian contacts, than were the Japanese naval authorities whose reports from their squadron in Chinese waters feature in the Japanese military archives.²¹ Small pieces of information which also appear reliable have been found in some older secondary works, notably Yumba Seiichi, *Tōshi Tetsudō O Chūshin Tosuru Roshi Seiryoko No Shōchō*,²² and Avarin, V. Ia. *Imperializm v Man'chzhurii*.²³ Missionary accounts, notably Christie D., *Thirty Years in Mukden*,²⁴ are another useful source, though Christie has been quoted already by Malozemoff and Hunt. Lastly, some useful new facts have been discovered in a Russian periodical

of the time, *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, and in the 1923 official history of the C.E.R. compiled by E. Nilus, and in various other minor sources.²⁵ All dates given in the article are Gregorian.²⁶

All sources attest to the gradual spread of Boxer activity into Southern Manchuria from early June, inflaming already deep discontent of the local population and Chinese troops in the area. By this time the European powers faced a serious threat in North China, and opinion in the Russian government was divided as to how to deal with the whole situation. The military party, headed by the Minister of War, General Kuropatkin, aimed for maximum Russian military involvement, a Russian commander for the European expeditionary force in North China, and if possible the occupation of Manchuria. Muraviev, the Foreign Minister until 21 June, appears to have sided with Kuropatkin or been under his influence. Witte, the Minister of Finance, opposed Russian participation in the relief of Peking, and in Manchuria, too, desired to avoid a Russian military occupation, presumably wishing to retain the area as a preserve of his own Ministry. He pinned his hopes on achieving a settle-

¹⁷ Peking, 1961.

¹⁸ Shanghai, 1962.

¹⁹ F. O. 17/1551, pp. 385-398 (pp. 1-30) for the *British Intelligence Report*.

²⁰ Compiled by Nihon Kokusai Rengo Kyokai, Tokyo, 1956. Miss S. Hirose checked the files in the Japanese Foreign Ministry archives, and found nothing of substance which had not been published in the *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*. These archives are in any case very incomplete (see Lensen, G.A., *The Strange Neutrality*, Tallahassee, 1972, p. 307).

²¹ The Japanese military archives on 1900, (as listed in the catalogue by J. Young *Checklist of Microfilm Reproductions of Selected Archives of the Japanese Army, Navy, and Other Government Agencies 1868-1945*, Georgetown, 1959) are in the form of contemporary reports to and by the naval authorities.

²² Tokyo, 1929.

²³ Moscow, 1934.

²⁴ New York, 1913.

²⁵ Harbin, 1923.

²⁶ The Russian (Julian) Calendar was 13 days behind the Gregorian in 1900. Chinese dates have been converted with the aid of Hsieh Chung-san's *Sino-Western Calendar for Two Thousand Years*, Peking, 1956, or Jung Meng-yüan's *Chung-kuo Chin-tai-shih li-piao*, Commercial Press, Hong Kong, 1962.

ment with China through Li Hung-chang, a settlement separate from the other European powers.

Kuropatkin and Muraviev, however, despatched 4,000 men from Port Arthur to Tientsin without Witte's knowledge, or so he claimed. The Tsar gave the order for this on 5 June, and the movement began on the 10th.²⁷ But then, as Romanov shows, Witte "obtained control over the official" Russian "diplomatic machinery" when Lamsdorf became Foreign Minister after Muraviev's sudden death on 21 (8) June,²⁸ and Witte himself states that he extracted promises from Admiral Alekseev (Commander-in-Chief of the Russian leased territory in the Kwantung peninsula of Fengtien province) on 27 June, from Kuropatkin on 29 June, and from the Tsar himself on 1 July that Russian forces would not be sent into Manchuria without his consent.²⁹ On the matter of the Russian participation in the Peking field force the Tsar at first over-ruled Witte, but later consented to a German rather than a Russian commander-in-chief, in compliance with Witte and Lamsdorf's wishes.³⁰

The policy Witte advocated had an historical precedent of which it is likely that he was aware: for it was somewhat suggestive of that which Russia had followed so successfully during the Second Opium Wars of 1857-60. At that time, Russia had avoided open military commitment with the Allies, but had taken advantage of their invasion of China to win China's recognition

of the Russian occupation of the Amur and Maritime Province.

As far as concerned the despatch of troops into Manchuria the high Russian naval and military men abode by Witte's wishes, since these were supported by the Tsar, although General Grodekov wanted to send an army force to Harbin already on 29 June³¹ and Kuropatkin was delighted later when the full Chinese attack on the South Manchurian branch of the railway began on 5 July. (In Witte's often-quoted account, "He was beaming with joy. . . . 'For my part', he said, 'I am very pleased, this will give us an excuse to sieze Manchuria'." He went on to explain to Witte that he intended to turn Manchuria into another Bukhara).³²

For several weeks, Witte relied mainly on the Manchurian generals to keep order, and did not allow the lower railway employees and guards to withdraw from the Southern line, despite mounting uneasiness and increasing acts of violence towards them, in which the Russian railway guards began to reciprocate.³³ Iugovich, doubtless on Witte's orders, requested the Manchurian generals to protect the railway on 22 June.³⁴ Evacuation of Russian women and children was however recommended about 23 June, and the engineers withdrew from Tieh-ling and Liaoyang between the 25 and 27 June, towards Newchwang or Port Arthur.³⁵ On 27 June Witte finally entered into telegraphic communication with Li Hung-chang, making him an offer that Russia would not declare

²⁷ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy in the Far East 1881-1904*, pp. 125-131.

²⁸ Romanov, *Russia*, note 16, p. 423.

²⁹ Glinskii, *Prolog, russko-iaponskoi voiny*, pp. 104-112.

³⁰ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, pp. 126-131.

³¹ Glinskii, *Prolog*, pp. 111-112.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

³³ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 7-17. See also Tseng-ch'i memorial, *IHTTASL*, 1/306.

³⁴ Yumba Seüchi, *Toshin Tetsudo*, p. 59. A. I. Iugovich was the Chief Engineer in charge of construction of the Manchurian railways.

³⁵ Lensen *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 7-17; B. Demchinskii, *Rossia v Man'chzhurii*, St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 135; Yang Ju-Tseng-ch'i wire of 27 June, *TSSTP*, p. 99, Cf. p. 14.

war on China and would support him with the Russian army if Li could maintain the status quo in Manchuria. Plans were set on foot for a meeting between Li and Russian representatives.³⁶

Again on 27 June Witte also warned the Chinese Minister in St. Petersburg, Yang Ju, that he knew of Chinese mobilization in Fengtien and that Russian troops would be sent into Manchuria if the railway was attacked.³⁷ The next day Witte ordered Iugovich to open a credit of 100,000 taels for each Manchurian general, making a sort of deposit to each.³⁸ According to Lensen, the engineer Girschman, in charge in the construction of the Southern branch of the railway, asserted on 5 July at Liaoyang that he had given Tseng-ch'i 5,000 taels of silver.³⁹ Lamsdorf moreover told the Chinese ambassador, presumably with Witte's approval, that Russian troops were being sent to North China only to protect the envoys and restore order.⁴⁰

Yet it was Witte who first increased the railway guards in the C.E.R. zone. Desiring this from mid-May, he finally asked permission on 15 June to increase them from their current figure of 4½ thousand to six thousand, and on 27 June wired Alekseev in Kwantung to send a small detachment to Yingko'u (the treaty port of Newchwang) and other places in South Manchuria, as indicated by the railway authorities. He also ordered the Commander of the Amur

Military District, General Grodekov, to prepare a detachment to go to Harbin if needed. Later, on 29 June, Witte asked that the railway guards should be increased to 7,000, and on 5 July to 11,000. The extra guards were to be raised from reservists of the Amur Military District, Scouts of the Amur forces, and a detachment of Frontier Guards.⁴¹

Although they were thus really Russian regular troops, they entered Manchuria only through the railway zone, so that their arrival was not tantamount to a Russian military invasion of Manchuria. Nevertheless, a regular Russian army corps under Gen. Chichagov did move into the railway zone in Kirin province early in July (see below pp. 494-495). The distinction between Russian railway guards and Russian invading armies was rather thin. When the first extra men were sent into the C.E.R. zone is not known, but Kuropatkin told the German military agent in St. Petersburg on 4 July that there were already 6,000 Russian troops in Manchuria as of that date.⁴² Shou-shan, the General of Heilungkiang, estimated 5,000 were in his province by 28 June.⁴³

Meanwhile the Ch'ing court, under the influence of the war party, issued the edict declaring war on foreigners on 20 June,⁴⁴ and a state of war was declared in Kwantung by Alekseev on the same day, and in the Amur military district by General Grodekov

³⁶ Romanov, *Russia*, p. 179.

³⁷ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 99.

³⁸ Romanov, *Russia*, p. 180.

³⁹ Lensen, p. 128.

⁴⁰ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, wire to Li Hung-chang, of 1 July, (26/6/5), *Li Wen-chung Kung Ch'üan-chi, tien-kao*, 23/8.

⁴¹ Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 110.

⁴² Romanov, *Russia*, note 28 on p. 424, quoting *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinetten*, vol. 16, no. 45-48.

⁴³ *IHTASL*, 1/201.

⁴⁴ Tan, *Boxer Catastrophe*, p. 157 gives 21 June; this was the date of publication in the Peking Gazette, but the orders were issued to the viceroys and Governors-General on 20 June; a discussion of the literature on this in Clubb, O. E., *China and Russia: the Great Game*, N.Y. 1971, note 13, p. 528.

on 22 June,⁴⁵ according to Glinskii. The following day the Ch'ing court ordered the three Manchurian generals to re-inforce their troops, give the Boxers military training, and fight with them and destroy the railway if Russian forces moved into Manchuria. This was equivalent to mobilization, although the order was defensive rather than offensive in tone,⁴⁶ in keeping with the phase of conciliation, noted by Purcell, which ensured on 21 June after receipt of memorials from the southern viceroys urging suppression of the Boxers.⁴⁷ On 24 June the Amur and Ussuri Cossacks were ordered to mobilize, according to Malozemoff, though it is more probable that such an order would have been made two days earlier on the date given by Glinskii. Robbing and killing of Chinese in out-of-the-way places in these regions became "rather frequent"; reservists poured into Blagoveshchensk, getting drunk and beating up Chinese who fell in their path.⁴⁸ The drift to war was thus extraordinarily simultaneous on both sides, although the Kwantung declaration of a state of hostilities must have been made without knowledge of the Empress Dowager's declaration. At this stage the impetus to war was coming mainly from the Ch'ing court, the Chinese official war party, the Boxers and the Russian military, fed by popular fear and xenophobia on both sides; but important influences on both sides remained committed to a peaceful solution.

Amongst the Chinese and Manchus differences of opinion were greater than amongst the Russians, and it is well-known that the Court was subject to conflicting influences, which were no less strong in regard to policy towards Russia than on other matters. The prominent leader of the anti-foreign party, Li Ping-heng, had inspected the Chinese armies in Manchuria in 1899 to improve their battle-readiness, after which several new army commanders had been appointed to take a stiffer stand against any foreign intrusion.⁴⁹ Li Hung-chang remained basically committed to reliance on Russia against the other powers,⁵⁰ and had in the past received huge bribes from the Russians, according to Romanov.⁵¹ Yang Ju, the Chinese Minister in St. Petersburg, was in close relations with Li Hung-chang, with whom he interchanged many wires.⁵² On the other hand, counsels of moderation and reliance on the other powers against Russia came from Chang Chih-tung, Liu Kun-i and Sheng Hsüan-huai.⁵³

In Manchuria the real issues dividing the Chinese-Manchu side in the next month were whether to encourage the Boxers, whether to attack the railway and the Russians there before the main forces of the Russian army had a chance to move in, and whether to resist these armies if they did appear. The three generals had been appointed in 1899-1900 in the series of military reforms and promotions aimed at

⁴⁵ Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 104; Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 127.

⁴⁶ *IHTTASL*, 1/200; there were two edicts.

⁴⁷ Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising*, Cambridge, 1963, p. 256; Tan, *Boxer Catastrophe*, p. 97.

⁴⁸ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 139 and note 137, to same.

⁴⁹ See article by R. Quedsted, "Local Sino-Russian Political Relations in Manchuria 1895-1900", *Journal of Oriental Studies*, July 1972, pp. 128, 133.

⁵⁰ Li Kuo-ch'i, *Chang Chih-tung chih wai-chiao cheng-t'se*, Taipei, 1970, p. 132.

⁵¹ Romanov's account *Russia*, p. 177, has been accepted by the more recent Soviet writer Efimov, G., *Vneshnaia politika Kitaia 1894-9*, Moscow, 1958, p. 256.

⁵² See the telegrams exchanged between them in 1900, *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'üan-chi, tien-kao*, Taipei 1957, and *TSSTP*.

⁵³ Li Kuo-ch'i, *Chang Chih-tung*... p. 132.

strengthening China's position in the area.⁵⁴ Shou-shan, the acting general of Heilungkiang, was on good personal terms with Li Hung-chang,⁵⁵ who had taken an interest in the province and the important Mo-ho goldmine there since the period when he was Commissioner of the Northern Ports from 1887.⁵⁶ Shou-shan himself was probably about forty years old, and had only received his first promotion to the rank of general in 1899, after fighting bravely in the war with Japan. Although he was an active and conscientious officer,⁵⁷ he was not considered by the Russians to be very ill-disposed towards them.⁵⁸ He seems to have shown no interest in the I-ho-t'uan, who hardly penetrated to his province, but he inclined to resistance to the Russians, though only as a last resort, as he was acutely aware of his military weakness.⁵⁹

Tseng-ch'i, the general of Fengtien, was more senior than Shou-shan but not very forceful.⁶⁰ Born into the Bordered White Manchu Banner, he was Futut'ung in Tsitsihar and acting general there in Kuanghsü 20; in Kuanghsü 24 general of Fuchou, then commissioner in charge of shipping and

acting Viceroy of Fukien and Chekiang. In July 1899 he became general of Fengtien,⁶¹ after Russian diplomatic representations for the removal of his predecessor, Wen-yü, whom the Russians regarded as very hostile.⁶² Tseng-ch'i seems to have been against the Boxers and disinclined to any strong action, but he was better placed for military strength than the other two generals and was under pressure from a vigorous anti-Russian party, led by the Futut'ung, Chin-ch'ang. Chin-ch'ang had been apparently longing to attack the Russians ever since they first occupied the Kwantung peninsula in March 1898, when he had submitted a memorial hinting at the possibility.⁶³ He commanded the Yü-tzu army, and was especially strongly supported by an officer of the Jen-tzu army Shou-ch'ang. The Assistant Secretaries of the Board of Revenue in the Mukden government, Ch'ing-jui and Pu-t'ing, and the city commander in Mukden, Yü-heng, were also regarded by the Russians as full of enmity, but Ch'ing-jui's attitude seems to have been more cautious than Chin-ch'ang's.⁶⁴ This group may have had close ties with Li

⁵⁴ See Note 49 p. 64 above.

⁵⁵ See wires interchanged between them in March 1900, *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'üan-chi*, Taipei, 1957, *tien-kao*, 22/4. Li Hung-Chang had known Shou-shan's father, Fe-ming-a, a former general of Fengtien. (See also *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan*, Taipei reprint 1962, 61/27A).

⁵⁶ *Kuang-wu-tang*, Heilungkiang, section 3, Taipei, 1959, many documents.

⁵⁷ *Tung-hua-lu*, Taipei reprint 1963, p. 4603, memorial from Shou-shan's son of 21 February 1901 (Kuanghsü 27/1/3). His biography in *Ch'ing-shih-kao* (*lieh-chuan chih-pu*) 254/4A, and a more detailed one in *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan*, Taipei reprint 1962, 61/27A. He was a native of Heilungkiang.

⁵⁸ E. Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia Zheleznaia Doroga: istoricheskii obzor*, Harbin, 1923, pp. 188, 191-2.

⁵⁹ *IHTASL*, 1/201, memorial from Shou-shan.

⁶⁰ Hunt, M.C., *Frontier Defense and the Open Door*, New Haven, 1973, pp. 18-19, quoting Christie D. *Thirty Years in Mukden*, London 1914 and other sources. Tseng-ch'i was also described by the missionary John Ross as "a very gentle man and a devout believer in laissez-faire". (*North China Herald* 28 August 1901, bound volume July-December 1901 pp. 415).

⁶¹ His biography in *Ch'ing-shih-kao* (*lieh-chuan chih-pu*) 240/9A.

⁶² Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 188.

⁶³ Quersted, "Local Sino-Russian Political Relations," p. 128. His memorial in *CCWCSL*, 134/7A.

⁶⁴ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, pp. 191-2. See further Chinese material quoted below as well. These three men were put in charge of the I-ho-tcan in Fengtien by Court edict on 14 July (*IHTASL*, 1/321, memorial from Ch'ing-jui).

Ping-heng, whose inspection in Manchuria had led to the promotion of Chin-ch'ang and Shou-ch'ang.⁶⁵

Of very superior calibre was the general of Kirin, Ch'ang-shun, who belonged to the Plain White Capital Banner, and had a long career behind him beginning in the Hsien-feng reign. He started out in life as a palace attendant of low rank, who accompanied the Hsien-feng Emperor on hunting trips. From 1872-1888 he served mostly in Sinkiang, Mongolia and Kansu, being at various times governor of Kobdo (T'ung-chih 8), acting governor of Uliasutai (Kuang-hsü 8), diplomatic agent in Hami, general of Turfan and general of Urumchi. He was twice involved in frontier demarcations with the Russians (in 1877 and 1883), and before he was forty years old had won a reputation for brave military leadership in the field against bandits and rebels. Although cashiered in 1887, he soon returned to favour and became general of Kirin in Kuang-hsü 14. In the war with Japan he played an outstanding part in the defence of Liaoyang, but retired owing to disagreements with the Fengtien general I-k'e-t'ang-a after the war. In 1896 Ch'ang-shun became Inspector-General of Troops,

and in 1897 took command of the Peking Field Force, returning to Kirin again as general in the anti-Russian reshuffle of posts in 1899.⁶⁶ There is a slight hint in his biography in the *Hsü pei-chuan-chi* that Ch'ang-shun might have enjoyed some special favour with the Empress Dowager, whose co-eval he appears to have been.⁶⁷ No other Manchurian general had had such a distinguished career or was so highly connected. He was opposed to involvement with the Boxers and any resistance to the Russians,⁶⁸ being like Shou-shan only too well aware of his lack of military power.⁶⁹

According to Western missionary sources Ch'ang-shun was friendly with both the Russians and the European missionaries in Kirin.⁷⁰ He has been indicted by Chinese communist writers for hostility to the I-ho-t'uan and lack of patriotism,⁷¹ and was alleged by the Soviet writer Avarin to have been long tied to the Russians by bribes.⁷² Whatever the truth of this last, Ch'ang-shun was obviously a strong character of age and experience, and he contrived much more successfully than the other two generals to hold his own and please everyone, in the trying crisis in which they were plunged.

⁶⁵ Quedsted, "Local Sino-Russian Political Relations", p. 133.

⁶⁶ *Ch'ing-shih, Kuo-fang yen-chiu-yüan* (ed.), Taipei, 1961, 462 p. 5044, also pp. 321, 353, 1093, 1731, 1873, 3267, 3284, 4993, 5663 and 5685. Slightly different dates are given in the shorter biography in the *Ch'ing-shih-kao* (lieh-chuan chih pu) 248/5A. There is also a brief mention of his career in Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia Zheleznaiia Dorogo*, p. 196.

⁶⁷ *Hsü pei-chuan-chi* 53/6B, where it is stated that at a time when he was very unpopular in Kirin because of his refusal to take sides in a land dispute between immigrants and existing owners, the Empress Dowager stood by him and expressed a favourable opinion of his disinterest in money. This is at variance with the other evidence about Ch'ang-shun, but Tzu-hsi herself was certainly very interested in money. There are also some private letters from Ch'ang-shun to Tzu-hsi in the archives of the Institute of Modern History of the Academia Sinica, Taipei and memorials with a personal flavour originally written in Manchu which he submitted during the Russian occupation of Manchuria.

⁶⁸ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 143, quoting Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 117.

⁶⁹ *IHTTASL*, 1/248, 1/250.

⁷⁰ Letter from the missionary Thomas H. Fulton to the British consul in Newchwang, H. Fulford, of 23 Feb. 1901. Corroborated by Dr. Greig, another missionary who lived many years in Kirin and spoke Chinese fluently, in a letter to Fulford of 1 March 1901. Both letters in F.O. 228/1407.

⁷¹ *CTTP*, pp. 125-130.

⁷² Avarin I. Ia., *Imperialism v Man'chzhurii*, Moscow, 1934, p. 50.

Li Hung-chang, Yang Ju and the three Manchurian generals seem all to have been anxious enough to prevent a Russian invasion of Manchuria, although Tseng-ch'i almost from the start was being harassed by the pro-Boxer party, never having proper control over the situation in his province. As will be shown, Li and Yang advised a policy of keeping Russian troops out by avoiding any occasion for them to be sent in, which fell in with Witte's ideas. Li and Yang's consistent line of policy seemed largely independent of the Ch'ing court, although a study of the relations between them and the Court at this time is entirely beyond the scope of this article.

After a delay of about eight days the three generals responded to Witte's appeal to them on 22 June to protect the railway; it may only be a coincidence that they did not do so until Witte had presented each of them with the credit of 100,000 taels. In response to Witte's requests, Yang Ju wired Tseng-ch'i on 27 and 28 June, imploring him to protect the railway, and on 28th wired Li to telegraph the three generals to the same effect.⁷³ On 1 July Yang wired Li that Witte had told him that he had received a telegram from a railway guard N.C.O. in Southern Manchuria reporting that the Fengtien general was moving troops to occupy the railway. Yang went on to say he had despatched wires to all parts of the railway and to Tseng-ch'i again to refrain from any rash acts, as the Russians had heavy re-inforcements at Port Arthur and Vladivostok, and once in Manchuria

would not soon withdraw.⁷⁴ Li Hung-chang had meanwhile wired twice to the Manchurian generals, by 30 June,⁷⁵ and all three of them had in turn sent telegrams to Iugovich, the Chief Engineer of the C.E.R. at Harbin, undertaking to protect the line and maintain order provided no Russian troops were sent in.⁷⁶ On 2 July, according to a Russian source, Iugovich issued a circular to railway personnel announcing this,⁷⁷ although according to other sources he did not inform Witte about it till 4 July.⁷⁸

The known direct instructions of the Court to the Manchurian generals were much less positive, in fact the attitude of the Ch'ing court was extremely vacillating, just as the policy of the Hsien-feng emperor had been when Western armies marched into China in 1857-1860. Between 20 June and the Russian invasion of Manchuria the Court policy swung abruptly several times from conciliatory to aggressive and back again, contributing much to the uncertainty of the situation and final outbreak of war. As noted by Purcell, a conciliatory phase set in on the heels of the declaration of war, after the receipt of memorials from the Southern viceroys on 20 and 21 June urging the suppression of the Boxers.⁷⁹ This was plainly expressed in regard to Manchuria too. The keynote of the edict of 23 June to the Manchurian generals (see p. 11 above) had been defensive — to unite with the Boxers, at once, and fight with them if the Russians attacked. A Grand Council communication to Yang Ju of 28 June indicated that he should explain to the

⁷³ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, pp. 99, 100, wires Yang Ju-Tseng-ch'i, Li-Yang Ju.

⁷⁴ *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'üan-chi, tien-kaio*, 23/8. According to Witte's words, this did not mean that Tseng-ch'i intended to destroy the line, but only place troops along it to guard it.

⁷⁵ *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'üan-chi, tien-kaio*, 23/7B.

⁷⁶ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 100, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju of 5 July refers.

⁷⁷ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Malozemoff, p. 138, quoting D. Christie, *Thirty Years in Mukden*, N.Y. 1914, p. 143, also article in *Vestnik Evropy*, XXXV/8 pp. 826-827.

⁷⁹ Purcell, *Boxer Uprising*, p. 256. Also Tan, *Boxer Catastrophe*, p. 97.

Russians that the Court was in a quandary: whilst not wishing to patronize the Boxers it feared that the envoys would not be saved and that a great disaster would ensue from the foreign invasion (in other words the partition and occupation of China).⁸⁰ On 2 July a memorial was received from Ch'ing-jui reporting the early Boxer attacks on the railway station at Liaoyang on 30 June, and expressing great concern that the Russians would use this as a pretext to start war.⁸¹ Probably under the influence of this, the Court issued two more edicts on 3 July: one commanded the generals in Manchuria to implement the edict of 23 June and summoned them to defend their territory against the Russians to the utmost,⁸² the other ordered that a Note be sent to Russia asking for her mediation between China and the foreign powers in the name of the long period of good relations in the past and the treaty concluded by Li Hung-chang in 1896.⁸³

But as we have seen the situation in Fengtien was never really within Tseng-ch'i's control. Despite his telegraphed undertaking of 30 June to Iugovich to protect the railway, he had already on 24 June, after initial hesitation, and after receiving the second edict of 23 June, promulgated the Empress Dowager's declaration of war of 20 June, although he warned the Western

missionaries about this.⁸⁴ By that time, as noted earlier, there was a tense atmosphere between the ordinary Chinese and rank and file Russian employees and railway guards, with both sides initiating violence. The engineers withdrew from Tieh-ling and Liaoyang, and Russian women and children were being evacuated. Isolated attacks on the railway itself began by the end of the month, when the Russian coalmines at Yentai were ablaze, attacks on railway property and the Russians themselves were multiplying, and those from the outlying stations had begun to fight their way out.⁸⁵ Ch'ing-jui's memorial reporting the attack on Liaoyang station, which should by rights have been written by the General, showed that Tseng-ch'i was probably already under duress from the anti-Russian party.⁸⁶ On 4 July — if not before — Tseng-ch'i was made a prisoner in his own yamen by Chin-ch'ang,⁸⁷ and the latter next day, 5 July, attacked the railway in force with his own troops and many Boxers. Liaoyang, Mukden and many smaller stations were burned down, the barracks at Mukden were bombarded, the line and its bridges destroyed in many places, and a state of de facto war broke out between Russians and Chinese in Fengtien province.⁸⁸

There is no clear, comprehensive account in any available source of the cir-

⁸⁰ *IHTASL*, 1/202.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1/220.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1/221.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1/227. Another text of the Note in *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'üan-chi, tien-kaio*, 23/33, when Yang Ju wired it to Li Hung-chang on 10 July. Notes were also sent to Britain and Japan.

⁸⁴ M.C., Hunt, *Frontier Defense and the Open Door*, Yale, 1973, p. 18, quoting D. Christie, *Thirty Years in Mukden*, pp. 131-161.

⁸⁵ See pp. 8-9 above; Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 7-17.

⁸⁶ See preceding paragraph.

⁸⁷ Christie, *Thirty Years in Mukden*, p. 149-161; Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 114; both quoted by Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 143.

⁸⁸ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 7-17, 48, 129 etc.; Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 114; *CCWCSL*, 144/21B, memorial from Tseng-ch'i of 11 December 1900. Malozemoff, p. 138, quotes Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 114 wrongly as saying that the main onslaught began on 4 July. It is clear that Chin-ch'ang's attack was not ordered by the Court.

cumstances in which the Russian railway personnel and guards escaped from Fengtien, but there are most convincing stories of the tribulations of individual groups and companies in the eye-witness material compiled by Lensen. It is plain that although no actual railway engineers may have died, there were substantial casualties amongst the railway guards and lower grade railway employees and their families — in the groups mentioned by Lensen between 60 and 100 would seem to have perished, some by torture. They in their turn inflicted no light casualties on the Chinese.⁸⁹

After the full-scale attacks on the railway in Fengtien, however, the Ch'ing court remained on its generally conciliatory tack until 9th July, and the Manchu armies in Fengtien took up, it seems, generally defensive positions without attempting to invade the Russian leased territory in the Kwantung peninsula, nor did they attack the regular Russian invasion units which, before 13 July, began to move into Fengtien from Kwantung, as will be discussed at a later stage in this article. Within a few days Tseng-ch'i had come to terms with the war party, and was presenting memorials again,⁹⁰ though not before the Court had declared its displeasure at his failure to memorialize personally about the events of 5 July.⁹¹

Meanwhile in the two Northern Manchurian provinces there was still no collapse of the authority of the Generals, and the Chinese population was calm though tense. Boxer influence penetrated to Kirin only at the beginning of July and was much less than in the South, although many of the minor officials there were anti-Russian. In Heilungkiang there was little sign of the I-ho-t'uan at any time.⁹² Russian military sources quoted by Malozemoff speak of edicts ordering the Chinese army to unite with the Boxers and kill all foreigners being seen by the Russians in Kirin and Tsitsihar on 6 July,⁹³ but a reliable British missionary source reported that on 2 July Ch'ang-shun had advised all Russians and other Europeans to leave, and personally escorted away all those in Kirin city, sending them to Harbin under guard.⁹⁴ He arranged for the railway and its property to be guarded by his own troops and offered his help to Iugovich,⁹⁵ even suggesting that he send a regiment of Kirin troops to aid in the defence of Harbin (an offer which was declined by the Russians). He also despatched a memorial, received by the Court on 5 July, in which he stressed the impossibility of joining forces with the Boxers and destroying the railway, through lack both of soldiers and Boxers,⁹⁶ though on 6 July he wired again stating he was taking steps to give

⁸⁹ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 7-17; Tseng-ch'i memorial of 14 July, *IHTTASL*, 1/306; Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 104, wire Li Hung-chang-Yang Ju of 9 July.

⁹⁰ A memorial from him on the fighting on the railway was received by the Court on 12 July (*IHTTASL*, 1/295).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1/253.

⁹² *CTTP*, pp. 119-125 shows it concentrated mainly in the Ch'angchun area, with lesser foci in Kirin City, and Tsitsihar. Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 194, mentions the anti-Russian minor officials in Kirin.

⁹³ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 138, quoting *Russian War Department Reports*, XXXIII/581.

⁹⁴ Letter of 23 February 1901 from the Kirin missionary Thomas C. Fulton to H. Fulford, British consul in Newchwang; corroborated by another missionary, Dr. Greig, who had lived many years in Kirin and spoke Chinese fluently. Both in F.O., 228/1407, (already quoted p. 479 above).

⁹⁵ B.N., Demchinskii, *Rossia v Man'chzhurii*, St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 137 (this work is based on documentary sources); Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, pp. 193-195; *Li Wen-chung Kung ch'üan-chi, tien-kao*, 23/15, 23/19, wires from Ch'ang-shun to Li of 4 and 6 July.

⁹⁶ *IHTTASL*, 1/248.

some training to 2,500 irregular levies and all the few Boxers he could find, and planned to disband the Russians' railway coolies, enlisting the fittest whilst sending the rest to colonize wastelands.⁹⁷ The situation in Kirin will be discussed in detail at a later point in this article.

In Heilungkiang, Shou-shan, as well as undertaking to safeguard the railway, also telegraphed to Iugovich and Grodekov on 28 June that he had received word that Russian troops were gathering to invade Manchuria, and asked that they should not be sent, lest their coming cause serious unrest. According to a Russian source, he only started to mobilize at this late hour.⁹⁸ On 5 July he wired to Yang Ju that the Chinese had learnt from the Russians at Hei-ho (the river Zeia near Blagoveshchensk) that they intended to move troops through Aigun to protect the railway "on the Western 13th day". He further reported that "all still seems to be quiet here, and the people have not decided to act, but I strongly feel that if Russian troops come they are sure not to like it and will destroy the railway."⁹⁹ Witte, being informed of this by Yang Ju, denied that any Russian forces would be sent to the railway if the Chinese officials protected it.¹⁰⁰ He also wired this message to Li Hung-chang, asked Iugovich to give similar assurances to all Chinese officials he met, and arranged for Admiral Alekseev at Port Arthur to do the same.¹⁰¹

However, rumours continued to circulate in Northern Manchuria that the Russian army was coming. Menacing reports reached Shou-shan from the Chinese Trade Commissioner in Vladivostok of the approach of heavy re-inforcements from European Russia (36 brigades). Several thousand Russians were also reported to have slipped into Harbin by ship, and Tseng-ch'i wired that the railway was being destroyed by the Chinese in Fengtien. Chin-ch'ang is also said to have been bombarding Shou-shan with wires urging him to fight, by this time.¹⁰² Thus Shou-shan determined that war was coming, and that Harbin ought to be captured on grounds of strategic necessity. On 7 July he may have moved troops into positions commanding the town, and certainly sent a telegram to Ch'ang-shun suggesting a joint attack on it on 8 July, "as it contains large stores of foodstuffs and ought to be taken as quickly as possible." Ch'ang-shun dissuaded him, whereon he postponed the date to 10 July, but was again stalled by Ch'ang-shun.¹⁰³ Failing thus to obtain any support from Ch'ang-shun, Shou-shan seems to have reverted to a more cautious policy. He might have been mainly sounding Ch'ang-shun out, and it is even dubious whether he actually moved troops to Harbin at this time: for it is not clear from the Chinese sources what military

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1/250. The aim was defensive — to prevent these men turning wild.

⁹⁸ Glinskii, *Prolog* . . . , p. 113.

⁹⁹ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 100, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju. More circumstantial evidence about the Russian force gathering at Blagoveshchensk was forwarded by Shou-shan in a memorial received on 8 July—2,000 cavalry, 5,000 infantry and 200 carts (*IHTTASL*, 1/264).

¹⁰⁰ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 102, Yang Ju-Shou-shan 5 July 1900.

¹⁰¹ Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 113.

¹⁰² *IHTTASL*, 1/579, Ch'ang-shun memorial received 9 Dec. 1900. Yang Ju wire to Li Hung-chang, *TSSTP*, p. 103, reporting wire from Shou. There was no truth in the Harbin reinforcement report, though the general drift of the rumours of Russian troop build-up were of course correct.

¹⁰³ *IHTTASL*, 1/271, Shou-shan memorial of 9 July; also *CCWCSL*, 143/18, memorial from Ch'ang-shun of 18 July (Kuang-hsü 26/6/22).

measures he took and the evidence from Russian sources is not at all convincing.¹⁰⁴

A radically new move was now undertaken by Li Hung-chang and Yang Ju, namely that in order to avert further bloodshed all Russians should be evacuated from Manchuria and the railway taken over by the Chinese. Li wired Iugovich on 8 July requesting this, and similar wires were sent by Tseng-ch'i, Shou-shan and Ch'ang-shun to Generals Grodekov and Gribskii at Khabarovsk and Blagoveschensk respectively, as well as to Iugovich. Shou-shan also wired Yang Ju to explain to the Russian Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs that he undertook to escort the railway engineers to safety, to guard the railway property, and "to carry on as usual when they return". But the Russian reaction to this was negative. Shou-shan claimed only to have received a telegram from Grodekov assuring him that if more Russian troops were sent in they would be very strictly controlled.¹⁰⁵ Tseng-ch'i stated in a memorial written on 14 July that he had never received any reply at all to his wire.¹⁰⁶ According to a Russian source, Iugovich wired to both Shou-shan and Ch'ang-shun

in reply on 8 July that he was not empowered to hand over the railway to Chinese officials.¹⁰⁷ Although the Russian lack of enthusiasm for Tseng-ch'i's offer is hardly surprising, to say the least, the proposal on the part of Shou-shan and Ch'ang-shun was a valid one still capable of execution, as conditions remained calm on the C.E.R. main line, although there were alarming rumours flying about.

Despite these efforts to prevent war in Northern Manchuria, news of allied reverses near Tientsin at this time caused a new stiffening of attitude in the Ch'ing court, which on 9, 10 and 12 July again issued strong edicts "demanding control and mobilization of Boxers and resistance to any advance of foreign troops".¹⁰⁸ An edict to Tseng-ch'i on the 9th called for the deployment of his forces in areas where the Russians were increasing their troops, and a memorial from him received on the 12th foretold with certainty a Russian invasion.¹⁰⁹ No edicts of these dates specifically to Shou-shan could be found, but there is some evidence from a Chinese source that he may have issued secret orders for the secret killing of Russians¹¹⁰ in obedience to edicts

¹⁰⁴ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 139, says he moved men into positions around the town, but quotes Glinskii, p. 113, for this, and Glinskii does not in fact mention it. However, it is suggested by A. Sokolova in an article in *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, Dec. 1906, pp. 810-828, an article in a series misleadingly entitled "Pogrom 1898 g. na K.V. Zh. D." The first part of this article dealing with the later retreat of railway personnel from the Western sector of the C.E.R. is based on first-hand information or the report of a close friend, and appears very authentic in tone. Yet the latter parts of the article, about the events in Harbin and Blagoveshchensk, are admittedly based only on "What people told me," and seem vague. The *I-ho-t'uan yün-tung liu-shih-chou-nien*, p. 199, says the Russians themselves destroyed some buildings and telegraph lines on the outskirts of Harbin to impede the Chinese expected advance, and attributed this destruction to the Chinese, as pretext for the summoning of the Russian invasion forces.

¹⁰⁵ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, pp. 104, 105, wires Li-Yang Ju and Shou-shan-Yang Ju of 9 July.

¹⁰⁶ *IHTTASL*, 1/306, Tseng-ch'i memorial of 14 July.

¹⁰⁷ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 201.

¹⁰⁸ Tan, *Boxer Catastrophe*, p. 158, quoting *Ch'ing-Kuang-hsü-ch'ao Chung-Jih chiao-sheh shih-liao*, 53/42, 44, 54/12.

¹⁰⁹ *Ch'ing Kuang-hsü-ch'ao Chung-Jih chiao-sheh shih-liao*, 53/42, 54/12.

¹¹⁰ The *I-ho-t'uan yün-tung liu-shih-chou-nien*, p. 196, quotes from a work by Liu Wen-feng entitled *Tung-ch'ui chi-hsing*, p. 46 to this effect, but gives no details about the work. *CTTP*, p. 117, also makes the same reference again without any details.

which have not been published. However, his outward demeanour towards the railway personnel was correct right up to the end, as stressed by a reliable Russian source.¹¹¹ Yet he gave orders for increased vigilance to his men at Aigun, as we shall show, in a manner suggestive that he had received an edict similar to that issued to Tseng-ch'i.

Moreover, the Russians now took the decisive step of deciding on a full-scale invasion of Manchuria. Although it was probably some time before they learnt of the new edicts, the reverses at Tientsin must have been quickly known to the Russian military in Kwantung, who on 9 July "advised" Iugovich to call in the army.¹¹² Iugovich — a Serbian civilian engineer trained at King's College, London, and with no specialist knowledge of China¹¹³ — was still under Witte's orders not to withdraw the railway personnel from the northern provinces, and, in face no doubt of the telegrams from the Manchu generals as well as of the advice of the military, he wired Witte on 9 July to send in the Russian army. Kuropatkin at Witte's request gave the order for this on the same day,¹¹⁴ and that very same day too General Sakharov's column of the expeditionary force left Khabarovsk for the Ussuri mouth, there to await the forces from Blagoveshchensk and proceed with them to the relief of Harbin.¹¹⁵ It was not until the following day, 10 July, however, that Witte and Lamsdorf together told Yang Ju that the railway personnel

could not be withdrawn, and broke the news to him of the invasion decision. Interestingly enough, they did so on the grounds that the Boxers had spread everywhere, and of the five-day old war on the railway in Fengtien, but not because of any specific charges about the situation in the North. Although Yang repeatedly besought Witte not to send any more Russian troops, it made no difference at all,¹¹⁶ but next day, 11 July, Witte saw him again and stressed that the Russian army would be withdrawn later when order was restored.¹¹⁷ As noted by Clubb, the pattern was similar to that of the occupation of the Ili region in 1878.¹¹⁸ Yang Ju then telegraphed to Shou-shan asking him not to start any trouble and on 12 July wired the Shanghai prefect to urge all the Manchurian generals to the same effect.¹¹⁹

Little is known about Witte's reactions at this time, and the bare available evidence just cited about the circumstances of the Russian decision to invade lends itself to various speculations. One could hypothesize that the military finally jumped the gun on Witte by putting pressure on Iugovich. On the other hand it could also be surmised that Witte and Iugovich were as much or even more afraid of the Chinese gaining control of the railway than of their destroying it, since the break-up of the Southern branch had taken place without any decision on Witte's part to send in the army and since Witte refused to withdraw the engineers

¹¹¹ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, pp. 191-192.

¹¹² Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 112.

¹¹³ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, pp. 26-27.

¹¹⁴ Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 115.

¹¹⁵ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 142, quoting *Russian War Department reports*, XXXIII/579-600, and A. Myshlaevskii, *Voennye deistvia v Kitae 1900-1901 gg*, St. Petersburg, 1904.

¹¹⁶ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 107, two wires Yang Ju-Li Hung-chang and Shou-shan of 10 July.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108, wire Yang Ju-Li Hung-chang and Shou-shan.

¹¹⁸ O. E. Clubb, *China and Russia: the Great Game*, N.Y. 1971, p. 128. Clubb inaccurately says that Yang Ju was told on 11 July.

¹¹⁹ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, pp. 110-111, wires Yang Ju-Shou-shan and Shanghai prefect. Li Hung-chang also wired to the Manchurian generals to this effect. Tan, *Boxer Catastrophe*, p. 159.

from the north. But it must not be overlooked that the main line of the C.E.R. was far more vital to Russian interests than the southern branch, and it is more probable that Iugovich at least was in fear of a massive Chinese onslaught. Whatever the reason, Witte now apparently began to hope for a bloodless Russian occupation, without resistance from the Chinese in the North of Manchuria, as we shall see shortly.

Iugovich might also have been influenced in his appeal for the army to come by the severe Boxer attack on a posse of Russian railway guards in Kirin province on 9 July, but he probably did not learn of it till later and it is the only well-authenticated attack on Russians in the North at this time.¹²⁰ For during all these tense days peace had been maintained in Kirin and Heilungkiang. It was cracking only gradually, as much in the face of Russian moves as of Chinese, and did not irrevocably break down until 15th July at Blagoveshchensk. There is no satisfactory proof of any attack on Harbin before 26 July. Malozemoff writes on the basis of the Russian War Department Reports that Harbin was "defended from 10 July by the energetic efforts of General Gerngross,"¹²¹ but Lensen's account only shows a defence against rumour and panic within the Russian community there.¹²² There is vague reference to encirclement by Chinese troops

and mention of desultory attacks from 11 July onwards in Sokolova's article, but this part of it is based on hearsay.¹²³ An official report from the Japanese trade commissioner at Vladivostok on 19th July also stated that Russian telegraphs reported all quiet at Harbin, although "a large body of Chinese troops was thought to be nearing" the town.¹²⁴ The Russians in Harbin were naturally in a very panic prone situation, as they lacked any reliable news from the country around them, and small groups of their compatriots who had battled their way out of the cauldron of race hatred in the South kept arriving. In the general fear it seems to have been overlooked that these groups had not been attacked north of Ch'angch'un. The Harbin garrison was not large, and some of the many Chinese living in the town were employed at digging trenches, although many others fled.¹²⁵

Despite Witte's insistence to Yang Ju that the railway personnel could not be withdrawn, Iugovich and Gerngross jointly ordered them all on 11 July to make for the nearest Russian settlement, either Harbin, Nikol'sk-Ussuriiskii or Tsurukhaitui, and the families of senior railway employees and railway guards' officers were sent down the Sungari by ship to Khabarovsk, arriving without hindrance.¹²⁶ The order might have been prompted by the attack in Kirin province. Yet an eye-witness quoted by Nilus

¹²⁰ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 145, see also p. 494 below.

¹²¹ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 142. The original German version of the name is Querngross, (Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 142).

¹²² *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 140-146. Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 126 says definitely that the first attack came on 26 July.

¹²³ *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, Dec. 1906. See note I, p. 484 above.

¹²⁴ *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*, Vol. Meiji 33, Supplement I, document 727, p. 736.

¹²⁵ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 142-145. Estimates of the original size of the garrison range from 5-600 (Lensen, p. 144) to 1,000 (Sokolova), reinforced by 250 Cossacks from the South on 18 July (Lensen, *ibid.*). The total active European male population of troops, railwaymen, labourers and civilian volunteers was estimated at 3,500 by Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 216 and at 3,400 by Yumba, *Tōshi Tetsudō* p. 64, who also gives 26 July as the date of the first attack.

¹²⁶ Lensen, *ibid.*, p. 142. Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 202 says 10 July. Nilus, p. 214, says the evacuation continued till 23 July.

(Engineer Kuznetsov) recalls general surprise on the part of both Russians and Chinese in his sector at the evacuation order.¹²⁷

About this time in Hulun Buir, Northwest Heilungkiang, the Russian railway guards commander Aleshov fired at some Chinese workers, killing five of them. Shou-shan, apparently now trying desperately to avoid an invasion, wired urgently to Iugovich to investigate the Aleshov case, and inform Grodekov, but Iugovich replied that Russian troops were on their way as Shou-shan could not keep order. Shou-shan then sent officials to Harbin and to Grodekov to negotiate for the withdrawal of the Russian guards. It is unlikely that these men ever reached their destination, but negotiations were also undertaken by telegraph that day by Shou-shan with Grodekov and Iugovich for both sides to withdraw their soldiers from the railway area. What resulted from this we do not know, but Shou-shan reported that he had sent an official to Galov, the engineer in charge of the Western sector of the Chinese Eastern Railway, to arrange for his safe withdrawal from his post 70 li West of Tsitsihar to the town itself.¹²⁸

Then, according to Shou-shan's account, Galov started a panic retreat in the middle of the night of the 11th, opening fire on supposed Boxers near the railway (although Shou-shan did not believe there was any real danger), setting alight to his own house, and fleeing by train to Harbin, leaving "about 100,000" coolies stranded on the

Western section without pay and supervision. Galov was later said to be destroying the telegraph station buildings; and grain supplies along the line as he went. There were 600—700 Russian men, women and children in his party, with 30 soldiers (railway guards), 3 carriages and 80 baggage carts. Galov reached Harbin safely on 15 July, but a number more engineers and some Russian business-men remained in various parts of Heilungkiang; these Shou-shan ordered to be protected and escorted over the frontier.¹²⁹

Lensen and Sokolova describe similar headlong retreats from other points on the line, but do not refer to any Russians in Heilungkiang being killed or injured, except at Sanhsing, of which more will be said later in the article. However, one group of 30 Russian workers and a young woman with a child vanished without trace, according to Sokolova — were these victims of Shou-shan's alleged secret extermination order? In what may be a different version of the same story, Nilus describes how a party of 25 broke away from the rest after shots were fired at them at Yal station near Hailar, tried to make their way to the Amur and were heard of no more. Some of those on the railway were also robbed or held up to ransom, according to Sokolova, and near Hailar, in both Sokolova's and Nilus' accounts, there was a nerve-racking passage between rows of sulky Chinese troops with fingers on their triggers.¹³⁰ Yet both Sokolova and Nilus especially recall the friendliness towards the Russians of

¹²⁷ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 207.

¹²⁸ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, pp. 110, 111, wires Shou-shan-Yang Ju 13 July.

¹²⁹ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, pp. 110, 111; wires Shou-shan-Yang Ju 13 July; also pp. 115-117, two wires Shou-shan-Yang Ju of July, and p. 119, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju 16 July. Tan, *Boxer Catastrophe*, p. 160, says there were 6,000-7,000 Russians in Heilungkiang, but quotes *TSSTP*, p. 116 for this, where it only says 600-700 in Galov's party. But Sokolova also speaks of one body of 5,000 in which her friend Mrs. Roganova retreated to Tsurukhaitui.

¹³⁰ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 212; Sokolova, p. 813. Some of the diamonds and property robbed from the wife of engineer Simanovskii were returned before they crossed the frontier (Sokolova, p. 813).

"General Pao", who can firmly be identified with Brigadier Pao-ch'üan, later killed in the battle with Orlov's corps before Hailar.¹³¹ When the relative numbers are compared, the safe evacuation of most of the Russians from Heilungkiang is a strong tribute to Shou-shan, and also to the good relations which the Russians had always had with the Chinese on the main line of the C.E.R. No doubt, the main fear of the Russians there arose from the huge numbers of coolies, mainly from Shantung, whom they had brought to work on the track. Yet in Heilungkiang these men seem to have been more angry at being abandoned by their employers than influenced by the I-ho-t'uan. A Japanese source also speaks of an "easy retreat" by the Russians from both the Eastern and Western sections of the C.E.R. main line.¹³²

At this stage, on 13 July, the allied forces took Tientsin,¹³³ and as already noted and to be further discussed below, Russian forces began to move into Fengtien from the Russian leased territory on a small scale. On 14 July the Ch'ing government received a cabled Note from Russia offering help to China if she would protect foreigners and suppress the Boxers, and if the status quo in Manchuria could be preserved.¹³⁴ Under the impact of these events the Ch'ing court entered into a new conciliatory phase.¹³⁵ On 15 July Shou-shan in a wire to Yang

Ju reported having received an urgent edict ordering him to protect the Russian engineers,¹³⁶ and Ch'ang-shun wired to Yang Ju that he had received a letter cancelling the war edict.¹³⁷ Yang Ju wired back to Ch'ang-shun about the Russian Note, together with an account of explanations from the Russians that they had no quarrel with the Chinese populace and that their army coming to protect the railway would not fire unless attacked. He desperately urged that the situation in Manchuria should be kept in hand,¹³⁸ but events on the Amur were even then passing the point of no return. It was on that day, 15 July, that the Chinese garrison at Aigun began the artillery bombardment of Blagoveshchensk.

The focus of tension had for some days past been centred on the Amur between Blagoveshchensk and Aigun. Here the Russians had been busy assembling their expeditionary force for Manchuria, sending troops and artillery downstream by ship and barge, the river being the best route available,¹³⁹ and here Shou-shan had apparently ordered greater vigilance in accordance with the Court line of 9-12 July. On his own testimony Shou-shan repeatedly warned Grodekov that if Russian armed forces were sent past the fort at Aigun they would be fired on, but Grodekov ignored these warnings.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, according to a memorial later submitted by Tseng-ch'i, the anti-

¹³¹ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, pp. 211-213; *Tung-hua-lu*, p. 4603, memorial from Shou-shan's son, for a detailed account of his heroic death; Sokolova, p. 813. Pao-chüan tried to display extra valour because he feared criticism for his friendship with the Russians, according to Nilus.

¹³² Yumba Seiichi, *Tōshi Tetsudō*, p. 63.

¹³³ Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising*, p. 256.

¹³⁴ *IHTTASL*, 1/310.

¹³⁵ Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising*, p. 256, but he does not mention the Russian Note.

¹³⁶ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, pp. 116-117, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju 15 July refers (though no date is given for the receipt of the wired edict).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117, wire Ch'ang-shun-Yang Ju. The telegram does not reveal who sent him the letter, which seems to have been private and not to have had the status of an edict.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹³⁹ There were no paved roads along the river. Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁰ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 120, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju 16 July.

Russian Chin-ch'ang was then still incessantly urging Shou-shan to attack the Russians.¹⁴¹ Whether this is true or not, Shou-shan was plainly in a difficult position, for he could not have received any word of cancellation of the war edict before 15 July, (if indeed he did then), animosity amongst his troops against the Russians was plainly increasing, and he was expecting a Russian invasion.

There is broad agreement between the Russian and Chinese-based accounts as to the incidents on the Amur, but considerable disparity in details. Glinskii and Malozemoff relate that the first Chinese fire on a Russian steamer took place on 12 July, when six ships and nine barges went downstream with the bulk of the Blagoveshchensk garrison to join the Khabarovsk forces for the relief of Harbin.¹⁴² Glinskii states that Grodekov received a wire from Shou-shan that day saying that as Russian forces were invading Manchuria he had ordered them to be fired upon.¹⁴³ Shou-shan himself claimed in a wire to Yang Ju that on 13 July a convoy of seven Russian ships and eleven barges was challenged for the first time at Aigun but let pass, after which he wired Grodekov that further convoys would be fired on, but the latter took no notice.¹⁴⁴ Lensen describes the first incident as taking

place on 14 July when the Chinese fired at the steamers *Mikhail* and *Selenga*, killing or wounding seven Russians, including Colonel V. B. Kol'shmit, Commander of the Amur Border Region, who was gravely injured. A Russian officer and his orderly were taken captive off the *Mikhail*: the former was returned to the Russian shore later with a warning from the Aigun Futu-t'ung that he had orders from Shou-shan not to let a single ship pass, but the orderly was apparently killed. The affair took place, according to Lensen, because the Russian vessels, having halted at Aigun on Chinese orders, started to steam off without permission to leave.¹⁴⁵ Shou-shan did not mention this to Yang Ju but later, in his last memorial before killing himself on 8 September, he did refer to this date as that of the outbreak of the fighting in Aigun, though he blamed the Russian "commissar" (Col. Kol'shmit), who had given the order to move off.¹⁴⁶ So it seems that both Russian and Chinese sources concur about this incident.

Finally, the next day, 15 July, the Chinese artillery bombardment of Blagoveshchensk began. Malozemoff, relying on Leo Deutsch, states that it started on 13 July,¹⁴⁷ but both Lensen¹⁴⁸ and the Japanese Trade Commissioner in Vladivostok¹⁴⁹ agree

¹⁴¹ *CCWCSL*, 144/21B, Tseng-ch'i memorial of 11 December 1900 (Kuang-hsü 26/10/20).

¹⁴² Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 115; Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 139, quoting Deutsch, L., *Sixteen Years in Siberia*, p. 330.

¹⁴³ *Prolog*, p. 115.

¹⁴⁴ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 120, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju 16 July. Clubb, *Russia and China* p. 129, says that the Chinese suddenly opened fire without any warning.

¹⁴⁵ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁴⁶ Shou-shan's eve-of-death memorial in *Tung-hua-lu*, Kuang-hsü 26, p. 4603. Shou-shan also reported the incident to the Throne at the time—it is mentioned, without date, in an edict to the three Manchurian generals of 24 July, *IHTASL*, 1/362.

¹⁴⁷ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 139, quoting Leo Deutsch, *Sixteen Years in Siberia*, pp. 330-331. Malozemoff also misrepresents Glinskii, *Prolog*, p. 115, as saying that Shou-shan sent a wire to Gribkii "at that time" stating that he had ordered the bombardment of Blagoveshchensk. For Glinskii's true statement, see above note 143.

¹⁴⁸ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 80, probably quoting Iu.L. Elets *Amurskaia geroinia: pri osade Blagoveshchensk Kitaitssami*, Moscow, 1901.

¹⁴⁹ *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*, 33/1, document 727, p. 736.

in giving the date as 15 July. The barrage was initially aimed at Russian soldiers bathing in the river, according to both Lensen and the later memorial from Ch'ang-shun.¹⁵⁰ Shou-shan never mentioned this bombardment at all in his memorials nor in his wires to Yang Ju, and it is possible that it was not done on his direct orders, for he was at least several days journey away in Tsitsihar. However, a Heilungkiang gazetteer states that on 14 July Shou-shan divided his troops into three commands in order to attack the Russians.¹⁵¹ Ch'ang-shun in his later memorial attributed the bombardment to Feng-hsiang, the Aigun Futut'ung, but indicted Shou-shan for the real responsibility, because he had foolishly ordered the Futut'ung not to allow any more Russian ships to pass.¹⁵²

Lensen also gives the date of 15 July as that when the first shots were exchanged on the Amur,¹⁵³ but there is some doubt about this as Shou-shan himself and the Japanese Trade Commissioner provide the date for this as the 16th.¹⁵⁴ In Lensen's cited account, Colonel Gribskii, the Commander at Blagoveshchensk and Ataman of the Amur Cossacks, led a detachment of troops along the Amur bank, flanked by the steamers Mikhail and Selenga, with the intention of attacking Aigun and silencing its guns. Firing between the two steamers and the Aigun batteries commenced, but

when the bombardment of Blagoveshchensk began he hurried back to the town with his forces. In Shou-shan's account, the Russian steamers approached, shots were interchanged, and the Russians then fled. Whatever the merits of these two versions, Shou-shan on receiving the news wired to Yang Ju on 16 July in an apparent eleventh hour bid to avert invasion, by asking the Russians to refrain from any more military movements, or they would be fired at again.¹⁵⁵ Yang Ju informed Witte and Lamsdorf, but they brushed the request aside and again insisted that their invasion must take place. However, they once more intimated that they did not want any fighting, and called for an end to attacks on Blagoveshchensk.¹⁵⁶ Yang Ju informed all the Manchurian generals of the Note sent to Russia and the reply, and apparently asked them not to resist the Russian armies if they came, but Shou-shan wired back that he would order his men to fire on them.¹⁵⁷ This was in accordance with the wishes of the Court, which in an edict to Ch'ang-shun on 20 July expressed the hope of avoiding large-scale war on the frontiers, but insisted on a brave show of defence of the national territory if the enemy invaded, and in another edict of 22 July to all three generals re-iterated this, advocating the use of the I-ho-t'uan as the advance guard of the defence if the Russian army came, so as to

¹⁵⁰ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 180; *IHTTASL*, 1/579, Ch'ang-shun memorial of 9 December 1900.

¹⁵¹ Chang Po-ying, *Hei-lung-chiang ta-shih chih*, Taipei reprint, 1970, 4/13A. There is also mention of this, without dates, in Shou-shan's biographies in *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chüan*, 61/28A, and *Ch'ing-shih-kao*, (lieh-chuan chih pu) 254/4A, but these sources indicate the purpose was defensive, not to attack the Russians. Moreover, Aigun was linked by telegraph with Tsitsihar—the line was made in 1886. [*Chinese Maritime Customs Decennial Report 1912-21* Vol. 1, p. 8, (Harbin Report), Shanghai, 1924].

¹⁵² *IHTTASL*, 1/579.

¹⁵³ *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁴ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 120, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju 16 July. *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*, 33/I, document 726, p. 735.

¹⁵⁵ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 120, wire Shou-shan-Yang Ju 16 July.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121, wire Yang Ju-Shou-shan 16 July. Witte also wired Li Hung-chang to this effect (*ibid.*, p. 119, wire Li-Yang Ju).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121, and wire Yang Ju-Li Hung-chang 18 July, p. 121.

put the chief blame on the Boxers, with a view to facilitating subsequent negotiations with the foreigners.¹⁵⁸

In any case a ragged shelling of Blagoveshchensk continued, presumably under Feng-hsiang's orders, from 15 July until 3 August,¹⁵⁹ and on the night of 17th July and again on 19 July he organized raids onto the Russian shore of the Amur, inflicting casualties on the Russians.¹⁶⁰ Fear and uncertainty gripped the isolated Russian community in Blagoveshchensk, helping to prompt the notorious massacre, when the Russian local military drove the 3,000—4,000 Chinese of the town and surrounding area across the Amur at bayonet point in four parties between 17 and 21 July. Some managed to board hastily made rafts, a few were strong enough to swim, but some were killed and very many drowned, or, in some versions, were hit by the Chinese gunners of Aigun, who opened fire thinking there was a Russian invasion.¹⁶¹ Yet a few Chinese were saved by individual Russians,¹⁶² and the whole affair was later the subject of Russian official investigations and courts-martial—though the sentences these passed were light. Various other isolated acts of violence were committed against the Chinese in the Russian Far East, but General Grodekov issued stern proclamations against

such unlawful deeds, and for the most part the Chinese population in this area were not harmed.¹⁶³

The evidence thus suggests that the war in the North was triggered firstly by the Russian decision to send in an army of occupation, by the rapid changes of Ch'ing court policy and the Russians' disregard of repeated warnings from Shou-shan to cease military movement on the Amur, and only secondly by the Chinese firing at the Russian vessels and the bombarding of Blagoveshchensk. Moreover, it is on record that the bombardment of Blagoveshchensk worried even Witte not at all by this time, as in his view it gave Russia an excuse to destroy Aigun, and he only regretted not having sent 150,000 men into Manchuria, instead of the 100,000 strong force actually despatched.¹⁶⁴ There was a total lack of response from the Russian government to the Chinese Notes wired on 24 July and 5 August, seeking to end or minimize the conflict.¹⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the meetings between Li Hung-chang and Russian representatives took place at the end of July, and the Russian government did champion the Chinese cause against the other powers to some extent, announcing its intention to withdraw its troops unilaterally from Peking

¹⁵⁸ *IHTTASL*, 1/347, 1/360. Not apparently till the 25 July did the Ch'ing Court issue a clear uncoded edict calling on all provincial authorities to protect foreigners and put down the Boxers. (*TSSTP*, p. 122, Yang Ju-Shou-shan).

¹⁵⁹ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 111; Glinskii, *Prolog*, pp. 107-108; Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 139 says 2 weeks.

¹⁶⁰ *IHTTASL*, 1/371, Shou-shan memorial of 25 July 1900; Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 104, 107; *IHTTASL*, 1/579, Ch'ang-shun memorial of 9 December 1900.

¹⁶¹ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 89-103, for the fullest account, basically confirmed by *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*, vol. 33/I, document 733.

¹⁶² Lensen, *ibid.*, pp. 95, 98.

¹⁶³ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, p. 142, for a good account of all this. See also *North China Herald* of 14 November 1900.

¹⁶⁴ *Krasny Arkhiv*, vol. 18 (1926), pp. 41, 42; quoted by Romanov, *Russia*, p. 180 and note 23 p. 483 (Witte's letter to Sipiagin).

¹⁶⁵ *IHTTASL*, 1/370, 432.

on 28 August, and conducting their evacuation between 13 and 29 September.¹⁶⁶ This however took place against the backdrop of the Russian conquest of Manchuria.

Russian army corps under Generals Sakharov, Rennenkampf, Orlov, Chichagov, Aigustov and others, marched into Manchuria from seven points, laying all opposition to fire and sword, but making no reprisals against those who surrendered. Evacuation of the remaining railwaymen continued until long after 16 July,¹⁶⁷ and the advance of the Russian army may have been delayed till it was nearly completed. According to Nilus, the last sections of the line in Kirin were not abandoned till 24-26 July, and parties of Russians were still making their way out of Heilungkiang as late as 25 July according to Shou-shan.¹⁶⁸ At Sanhsing on the Sungari the Russian dock workers and engineers had met with apparent Boxer attack on 11 July according to one source,¹⁶⁹ but according to Lensen they were not attacked until 19 July and escaped the same day.¹⁷⁰ The first of the seven wings of the Russian invasion force, Sakharov's column, went down the Sungari,

attacking and taking Lahasusu (Vanlehoutan) on 22 July, Pa-yen-t'ung (Bayantu) on 24th and capturing Sanhsing between 24 and 26 July in a two day operation. Earlier, one Russian steamer with some reinforcements had reached Harbin on 21 July, forcing its way past Chinese fire at Sanhsing on 19th,¹⁷¹ but apparently meeting with no opposition elsewhere. Shou-shan gave the Russians in Harbin gentlemanly warning on 22 July that he considered a state of war existed because of the Blagoveshchensk slaughter of Chinese, and he offered safe-conduct out for women, children and old men before he attacked the town. 3,000 people were evacuated from Harbin without mishap by two steamers pulling barges, and the Chinese attack began, rather half-heartedly it seems, on 26 July.¹⁷² Orlov's mainly Cossack force entered Manchuria from the West, at Manchouli, also on 26 July.¹⁷³ By this date, however, according to a wire from Shou-shan to Yang Ju the railway West of Harbin had been destroyed "like a thunder-bolt," but Shou-shan still had control, as in response to wires from the Grand Council ordering the utmost caution he

¹⁶⁶ Malozemoff, *Russian Policy*, pp. 133-134.

¹⁶⁷ Shou-shan mentioned he was still rounding them up and looking after them in his wire to Yang Ju of 16 July (Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 120); Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 217. For the seven invasion routes, see *British Intelligence Report*, pp. 16-18.

¹⁶⁸ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 209. Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 122, wire Shou-shan—Yang Ju 25 July.

¹⁶⁹ Sokolova, *op. cit.*, but this is in the part of her article based only on hearsay.

¹⁷⁰ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 153-4, quoting apparently from Murzhak, "Napadenie kitaiskago otriada na pristan' San'sin...", *Priamurskiiia Vedemosti*, 1900, no. 350, pp. 14-16. This is an eye-witness account and appears very convincing. The Lahasusu Futut'ung Ngo-ying was banished with others for Boxer activities at the request of the foreign diplomatic corps on 26 February 1901 (*IHT*, 1/38).

¹⁷¹ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 153; *British Intelligence Report*, pp. 19, 20 gives 21st for Lahasusu. Shou-shan memorial noted in Edict of 24 July also refers (*IHTASL*, 1/362). It appears from this that the Russians fired the first shots at Lahasusu.

¹⁷² Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 146-147. The Chinese cut the Harbin telegraph lines only on 10 July (Avarin, *Imperialism*, p. 50; Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 207). The *I-ho-fuan yün-tung liu-shih-chou-nien* says the attack started on 22 July, but Yumba Seiichi, *Toshi Tetsudo*, pp. 64-65, gives the date as 26 July too. According to Shou-shan's biography in the *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan*, 61/26B, he wired Iugovich offering to go to Harbin himself if the Russians would make a cease-fire, and he wired to the Court offering to hand his whole family over to the Board of Punishments if this would placate the Russians.

¹⁷³ *British Intelligence Report*, p. 18.

forbade further expeditions to the Russian bank of the Amur, an order which was respected.¹⁷⁴ The Chinese assault on Harbin was pursued only intermittently till the town was relieved by Sakharov's column on August 2-3. Rennenkampf's force landed against Aigun and Sakhalien on the same day, August 2. The Chinese resisted, and after some bitter fighting Aigun was completely razed, by deliberate Russian policy, except for the tall old arsenal building.¹⁷⁵ Orlov's force won a victory before Hailar, and then, after another fierce battle in the Hsingan mountains,¹⁷⁶ in which Feng-hsiang and Pao-ch'üan killed,¹⁷⁷ the Heilungkiang army was completely defeated. Shou-shan, ever anxious to do the right thing, committed suicide, and on 28 August the Russian army entered Tsitsihar. Operations in Heilungkiang ended with the fall of Peituna on 19 September.¹⁷⁸

Several Russian forces entered Fengtien province from the Russian leased territory at different times. As early as on July 13 and 19 some units under Col. Khorunzhenkov left Port Arthur by train and reached a place called Hsiung-yüeh-ch'eng,¹⁷⁹ and a force under Colonel Dombrovskii arrived at Mukden on 14 July after repeated engage-

ments on the way. However, they had orders to encamp and do nothing until the Chinese attacked, which they did not do until 25 July.¹⁸⁰ General operations against the Chinese seem to have commenced at the same time in the area bordering the leased territory.¹⁸¹ About this time, the Chinchou prefect (from the town in the leased territory which was left under Chinese administration in 1898) and two other officials were taken prisoner to Port Arthur. The Russian armies defeated the Chinese but could not crush them completely, and they retreated to the mountains and the Mongolian border. The General, Tseng-ch'i, finally rounded on the war party, on 11 August, although he was turned out of office again by Chin-ch'ang on 29 September,¹⁸² and Mukden fell to the Russians on 1 October.¹⁸³ But Chin-ch'ang and his supporter Shou-ch'ang continued to resist for some months in outlying regions, on the borders of Mongolia. Shou-ch'ang held out until March 1901, when he surrendered to the Russians and was taken a prisoner to Port Arthur, Vladivostok and then to Irkutsk,¹⁸⁴ where he was kept until he committed suicide by shooting himself at an uncertain date, probably several years later.¹⁸⁵ Shou-

¹⁷⁴ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 122, wire Shou-shan — Yang Ju, 25 July. No further landings were mentioned by Lensen or Malozemoff either. The railway was destroyed by the Chinese labourers (See Shou-shan's biography in *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan*, 61/26B).

¹⁷⁵ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 148-199.

¹⁷⁶ Lensen, *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁷⁷ *IHT*, 1/29.

¹⁷⁸ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, pp. 190-199, *British Intelligence Report*, pp. 16-29. Shou-shan's eve-of-death memorials in *Tung-hua-lu*, p. 4603.

¹⁷⁹ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 39.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁸¹ *British Intelligence Report*, p. 23.

¹⁸² Christie, *Thirty Years in Mukden*, pp. 149-150, 152-155, quoted by Malozemoff, p. 143.

¹⁸³ *British Intelligence Report*, pp. 25, 26. Lensen, pp. 225-231.

¹⁸⁴ F.O. 228/1407, Fulford — Satow 6 April 1901; *Ch'ing-shih-lu* 483/6B, edict of 30 June 1901 (Kuang-hsü 27/5/15).

¹⁸⁵ Ch'eng Te-ch'üan, *Ch'eng Chiang-chün shou-chiang tsou-kao*, 16/1777, memorial of 11 March 1907 (Kuang-hsü 33/1/27). Lensen, p. 248. (probably quoting from I. E. Ivanov, *Vpechatleniia iz voenno-pokhodnoi zhizni za vremia okkupatsii Man'chzhurii 1900-1903 gg.* St. Petersburg, 1903), refers to a 'General Hsü' who was taken prisoner to Irkutsk and became an alcoholic before killing himself probably the same man.

ch'ang's fate at the hands of the Russians was thus rather similar to Yeh Ming-chen's at the hands of the British after 1842. Even after the surrender of these two generals guerilla armies continued to operate in Manchuria against the Russians for years, according to studies published in Peking,¹⁸⁶ but this late resistance has never been mentioned in any of the English or Russian language or better-known older Chinese accounts. For the most part, however, the war in Fengtien was over with the fall of Mukden on 1 October.

And in the meantime, what had been happening in Kirin, the third Manchurian province? Ch'ang-shun's important role in restraining Shou-shan on 7 July has been noted. The railwaymen started to evacuate on 11 July, as in Heilungkiang, and there were no casualties amongst them. Ch'ang-shun had the line guarded by his troops, and its destruction did not begin till 21 July,¹⁸⁷ when it was started at the order of the Futut'ung, Ch'eng-hsün, whom the Empress Dowager had appointed as the special commander of the I-ho-t'uan in the province.¹⁸⁸ Ch'ang-shun, however, managed to control and check Boxer activities in Kirin itself until 2 August,¹⁸⁹ although in actual fact in spite of his good reputation with the foreigners there seem to have been

more attacks on the retreating Russian railwaymen and guards within Kirin province than in Heilungkiang, probably because of greater I-ho-t'uan influence there. The missionary Thomas Fulton referred to a sudden attack 70 *li* (over 20 miles) from Kirin on 9 July (mentioned above),¹⁹⁰ and Lensen describes an attack on Russians retreating from the South on 14 July in which nobody was killed.¹⁹¹ There was also a similar one without fatalities at Han-tao-ho-tz on the 14th reported by the Japanese Trade Commissioner at Vladivostok,¹⁹² whilst on 17 July there was an onslaught somewhere near Ch'angch'un on a group of 67 guards, of whom 31 were killed.¹⁹³

With great boldness, Ch'ang-shun advised a temporary alliance with Russia to save Manchuria, in a memorial received on 18 July,¹⁹⁴ but the Ch'ing court had already been trying to implement an understanding with Russia by this time, as has been seen, and the only response found in the published archives to Ch'ang-shun's suggestion was an edict of 20 July counselling caution and abstention from any aggressive acts towards the Russians.¹⁹⁵ Ch'ang-shun may have been in touch with the Russians throughout the whole summer privately, for a Russian army force under General Chichagov crossed into Kirin

¹⁸⁶ See *CTTP*, pp. 128-132; *I-ho-t'uan yün-tung liu-shih-chou-nien*, pp. 205-208, etc.

¹⁸⁷ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, pp. 193-194, 210. There was probably less damage than in the other provinces, though it is impossible to speak with certainty about this. The line from Harbin to Liaoning was re-opened in November, 1900, and the 120 versts which had been constructed from Pogranchanaia to Muren were not damaged at all. See *Kitaiskaia vostochnaia zheleznaia doroga*, St. Petersburg, 1913, p. 107 (an official history of the railway). We could find no Chinese or Japanese account of the destruction of the railway in Kirin.

¹⁸⁸ *IHTTASL*, 1/409 refers to his appointment.

¹⁸⁹ Fulton — Fulford, 23 February 1901, F.O. 228/1407 (see note 94 p. 69 above).

¹⁹⁰ F.O., 228/1407, Fulton — Fulford 23 Feb. 1901.

¹⁹¹ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 137.

¹⁹² *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho*, 33/1, document 727, p. 736.

¹⁹³ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 145, Ch'ang-shun memorial in *IHTTASL*, 1/377.

¹⁹⁴ *CCWCSL*, 143/18, dated Kuang-hsü 26/2/22. A translation in Quedstedt, "Local Sino-Russian Political Relations in Manchuria 1895 — 1900," *Journal of Oriental Studies*, July 1972, pp. 139-140.

¹⁹⁵ *IHTTASL*, 1/347.

from Nikol'sk-Ussuriiskii already in the early days of July, according to the British Intelligence Report, although it appears to have remained within the railway zone, and did not approach any place garrisoned by the Chinese army until 18 July.¹⁹⁶ Nothing of its approach was reported by Ch'ang-shun to the throne in any document that has been found, nor did he mention it to Yang Ju, though it is possible that it was regarded as merely a reinforcement of the railway guards. Once war had started in Heilungkiang, however, he was careful to keep in the Empress's favour by memorials making the most of the fighting and the attacks on the retreating railway guards, whilst skilfully trying to poison her mind against the I-ho-t'uan commander Ch'eng-hsün.¹⁹⁷ He seems to have ordered his troops not to resist the Russian army, although they did put up a fight initially. On 18 July Chichagov's force was attacked by the garrison in the fortress of Eho, but soon routed it. General Aigustov's army corps attacked the fortress of Hunch'un on the frontier with the Maritime province on 30 July, where it had been drawn up waiting since 10 July

at least, and the Chinese garrison is said to have offered strenuous resistance before fleeing.¹⁹⁸ Then Ninguta resisted, according to a Chinese source, for 40 days, but after it fell to Aigustov Boduna yielded to Rennenkampf's column almost without a fight on 12 September.¹⁹⁹ Ch'ang-shun negotiated terms of general surrender with Iugovich, sending his official Lien-wa to Harbin for this purpose. He undertook "to be very yielding toward the Russians in local affairs," asking no questions and having no contacts with Heilungkiang and Kirin.²⁰⁰ He also wired to Yang Ju to try to avert a Russian occupation of Kirin,²⁰¹ but failing in this, handed over the city to Rennenkampf on 23 September on advantageous terms, personally welcoming the Russians into the city.²⁰² According to memorials from Ch'ang-shun himself and from Tseng-ch'i, the Russian troops entering Kirin "were made to treat the people extraordinarily well," but the telegraph offices were seized by the Russians and the treasury and C.E.R. office robbed of several 100,000 taels, and Chinese troops disarmed.²⁰³ The Russians themselves claimed to have

¹⁹⁶ *British Intelligence Report*, p. 20. (See above, p. 475).

¹⁹⁷ *IHTTASL*, 1/377, 1/401. He accused him of financial extravagance with small results, and attempts to conceal this.

¹⁹⁸ *British Intelligence Report*, pp. 21, 22. For evidence that this column was waiting since 10 July, see Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 106, also *IHTTASL*, 1,250, Ch'ang-shun memorial of 6 July.

¹⁹⁹ According to the *CTTP*, p. 124, the I-ho-t'uan and the peasant (bandit) leader Liu Tan-tsu were the core of all the resistance. Ch'ang-shun exaggerated the resistance in his memorial, no doubt in order to please the Empress Dowager, but according to Wang Yün-sheng, *Liu-Shih-Nien-lai Chung-kuo yü Jih-pen*, p. 51, Ninguta was besieged for 40 days. Mentioned by Yang Shao-chen, "Kengtzu-nien Chung-O tsai tung-san-sheng chih Ch'ung-t'u chi ch'i Chiao-Sheh", *Ch'ing-hca hsüeh-pao*, 1933, vol. 9, no. 1.

²⁰⁰ *CCWCSL*, 144/9B, Tseng-ch'i memorial of 20 December 1900 (Kuang-hsü 26/10/29). Also Ch'ang-shun memorial in the *Hsi-hsün ta-shih chi*, quoted by Wang Yün-sheng, *Liu-shih nien-lai Chung-kuo yü Jih-pen*, pp. 51-53. For the understanding to be yielding to the Russians, see Academia Sinica, Taipei, Wai-chiao-tang-an Box B-9-2, file 4, memorial from Ch'ang-shun.

²⁰¹ Yang Ju, *TSSTP*, p. 126, wire Hsü Huang-shih-Yang Ju transmitting a wire from Ch'ang-shun.

²⁰² *British Intelligence Report*, p. 22; Tseng-ch'i memorial, note 200; Ch'ang-shun memorial of 9 December 1900, *IHTTASL*, 1/811. The heroic dimensions given to Rennenkampf's taking of Kirin by Lensen's source (*Russo-Chinese War*, p. 197) are rather doubtful, as he himself suggests in a footnote on the same page.

²⁰³ See footnote 200.

thrown 1,500 rifles and 1 million cartridges into the river.²⁰⁴ According to the *Ch'ing-shih*, Ch'ang-shun's discouragement of Boxer activities and attacks on the Russians spared the province the fierce retribution of the Russian army experienced in Heilungkiang and Fengtien and eventually won the approbation of the Manchu Court. His officials were all allowed to stay at their posts and carry on as usual when the Russian army marched in.²⁰⁵ For this he was rewarded with high posthumous honours — if not sooner — by the Empress Dowager on his death in 1904, whilst enjoying much more favour with the Russians than the other generals of Manchuria during the occupation, as later researches by the present writer have shown, which may be published in due course.

Alone amongst the three Manchurian generals Ch'ang-shun thus succeeded in executing with a high measure of success the policy advised by Li Hung-chang and originally chosen but later abandoned by Witte. Yet it did not spare his province invasion and occupation, and little mention of his feat has been made in the Russian literature and Russian-based Western literature on 1900. It passed unnoticed in the flood of accounts of spectacular atrocities and battles, and it looks as if the Russians may have deliberately avoided drawing attention to it lest it serve to undermine the justification for their occupation of Manchuria.

And thus, by October, the war was over in the main. In the whole campaign total

officially announced Russian casualties were 242 killed and 1,823 wounded.²⁰⁶ The Chinese could never estimate theirs, which were almost certainly greater, in view of the much superior firepower and manpower of the Russian armies. Perhaps significantly, the Russian authorities never published any breakdown of their casualties into invading military, railway guards, C.E.R. employees and civilians, which suggests that there can have been rather few of the last two categories.

The conflict was, on the whole, a racial one, in which fear, nationalism and xenophobia played a large role. But this was not absolutely and universally true, for evidence has been found of instances when Chinese helped Russians and Russians helped Chinese. In the early phase in Fengtien, some Russians in the Yalu region were sheltered by a Chinese family who helped them escape to Korea.²⁰⁷ Some Chinese were very helpful to the Russians during the evacuation in the North.²⁰⁸ A few Chinese were saved in Blagoveshchensk by Russian protection.²⁰⁹ Two Russian railway workers taken prisoner by the Chinese were well-treated and probably aided the Chinese forces.²¹⁰

So to conclude, would the shelling of Blagoveshchensk and the clashes on the Amur of 14–16 July not have taken place if the Russians had evacuated calmly when Li Hung-chang suggested, if they had not insisted that they must send their army into Manchuria, and if they had heeded Shou-shan's warnings to cease all military move-

²⁰⁴ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 197; *British Intelligence Report*, p. 22.

²⁰⁵ *Ch'ing-shih* — Kuo-fang-yen-chiu-yüan (ed.), Taipei, 1961, 462/5044.

²⁰⁶ *British Intelligence Report*, p. 30; Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 253, footnote 94.

²⁰⁷ Lensen, *Russo-Chinese War*, p. 53.

²⁰⁸ Nilus, *Kitaiskaia Vostochnaia*, p. 73, as well as the evidence cited in this article.

²⁰⁹ Sokolova, op. cit., p. 827.

²¹⁰ N. Orlov, *Zabaikal'tsy v Man'chzhurii v 1900 g. Ocherki iz pokhoda Khailarskogo otriada generala Orlova N.A. v Kitae v 1900 g.*, St. Petersburg, 1901, 160-162.

ment on the Amur? Would the railway in Heilungkiang and Kirin have been left intact if the hostilities had not broken out on the Amur and the Russian army had not marched into Manchuria? It is impossible to say for certain with the evidence available here, but given the key restraining role of Ch'ang-shun it does look as if it might well have been so. Whether the Chinese would have restored the railway to Russia is entirely another question, again beyond the limitations of this article to discuss. Yet it is quite likely that the 1900 troubles would never have occurred in

Manchuria at all if the Russian encroachment into Southern Manchuria had never taken place, or had taken a more limited and purely commercial form. Without the Russian military occupation of Manchuria the advent of the Russo-Japanese war too would have been less likely. In the light of their long-term relations with both China and Japan, the whole Russian policy in the Far East from 1898 was a chain of errors, as many Russians themselves realized after 1905, and as Lenin and other critics of Tsarism did not hesitate to state at the time.²¹¹

Postscript.

Since this article first went to print, I have discovered further evidence confirming the dates given on p. 76 for the first Chinese fire on the Russian ships on the Amur and the start of the bombardment of Blagoveschensk. Like Lensen, Shou-shan and the Japanese Trade Commissioner, the *Amurskii Kalendar' za 1902*, Blagoveshchensk, 1902, Section III, p. 100, states that the former took place on 14 July and the latter on 15 July, 1900.

R. Quested

²¹¹ Lenin, *Sobrannye Sochinenia*, third edition, vol. IV, pp. 60, 62, 63. See also Allen S. Whiting, *Soviet Policies in China 1917-24*, ch. 1, Lenin on China. After 1905 the pre-1905 policy was also criticized by the writer B.N. Demchinskii (*Rossia v Man'chzhurii*, St. Petersburg, 1908), and by the Left in the press and in the Duma, especially the third Duma, (*Stenograficheskie otchety Gusndarstvennoi Dumy*, tretri Sozvy, Sessia I, zasedania 61-72, pp. 798-822 notably).

**Glossary of some leading persons
involved in Sino-Russian affairs in 1900.**

- General Aigustov
Admiral Alekseev, Viceroy of the Russian Far East
Chang Chih-tung 張之洞
Ch'ang-shun, General in command of Kirin province 長順
Ch'eng-hsün, Futut'ung of Kirin and Commander of the Boxers in Kirin 成勳
General Chichagov
Chin-ch'ang, Shenyang Futut'ung and Commander of Yü-tz army 晉昌
Ch'ing-ju, Assistant Secretary of Board of Revenue in Shenyang (Mukden) 清銳
Feng-hsiang, Futut'ung of Aigun, Heilungkiang province 鳳翔
Futut'ung, (Lieut.-General) 副都統
Count M.N. de Giers, Russian Minister in Peking
Hirschmann (Girshman), Engineer in charge of South Manchurian Railway construction
General Grodekov, Commander of the Amur Military District
Lieut.-General Gribskii, Ataman of the Amur Cossacks and Commander of Blagoveshchensk military sub-district
A.I. Iugovich, Chief Engineer of the Chinese Eastern Railway
General A. N. Kuropatkin, Russian Minister of War
Count V. N. Lamsdorff, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs
Li Hung-chang 李鴻章
Li Ping-heng 李秉衡
Liu Kun-i 劉坤一
General Orlov
Brigadier Pao-ch'üan 保全
P'u-t'ing, Assistant Secretary of Board of Revenue in Mukden 溥頤
General Rennenkampf
General Sakharov
Sa-pao, Tsitsihar Futut'ung 薩保
Sheng Hsüan-huai 盛宣懷
Shou-ch'ang, Commander of the Jen-tz army 壽長
Shou-shan, General in command of Heilungkiang province 壽山
Tseng-ch'i, General in command of Fengtien province 增祺
Count S. Iu. Witte, Russian Minister of Finance
Yang Ju, Chinese Minister to Russia 楊儒
Yü-heng, City Commander of Mukden 玉恆

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Academia Sinica, Taipei, Wai-chiao tang-an, some references in Box B-9-2, file 4.

The French, German, U.S. and Japanese Foreign Ministry archives were examined but nothing of special significance was found in them relevant to this topic.

Miss Hirose Shizuko of Tokyo University kindly undertook the task of looking at the Japanese Foreign Ministry archives, and reported that very little of relevance remained in them. (See above p. 5).

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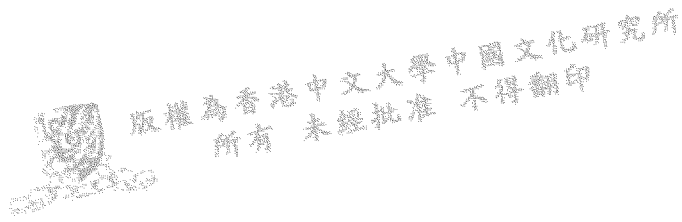
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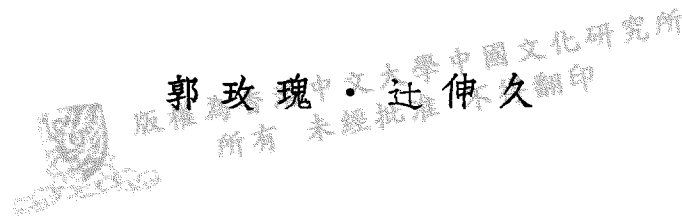
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一九〇〇年中俄東三省衝突事件新探

(中文摘要)



郭玫瑰·迂伸久

有關一九〇〇年中俄在東三省之糾紛所導致俄國入侵事件，從未有詳盡之論文發表。本文乃追溯一九〇〇年六月至十月間俄人在東三省製造事端之經過。作者旁徵博引，採用資料包括中文、俄文、英文及日文等文獻，引申清政府對此問題之態度與俄人對華覬覦之野心。

