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TO RUSSIAN AND SIBERIAN RAILROADS,  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

JOHN F. STEVENS: AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN  
AND SIBERIAN RAILROADS, 1917-1922

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JOHN F. STEVENS: AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN  
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**ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL**

**MAP      TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM (1917-1922)      Back Cover**

JOHN F. STEVENS: AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN  
AND SIBERIAN RAILROADS, 1917-1922

CHAPTER I

JOHN F. STEVENS: ENGINEER AND DIPLOMAT

Many historians are unaware of the extent to which railway politics have influenced diplomacy. This is surprising when American history describes in some detail Far Eastern railway schemes as an instrument of Open Door diplomacy. In fact, twentieth century Far Eastern diplomacy directly concerns railway politics involving complex exchanges with foreign governments. Far Eastern railway politics is diplomacy and a close examination of its evolution and uses can offer significant insights into foreign policy goals. The success or failure of various American railway programs do measure the validity of the United States' diplomacy in the Far East.

In other areas of the world, specifically, Latin America, historians write of "canal politics." Due perhaps to geographical proximity, such an appellation remains unquestioned because it is obviously in the United States' national interest to secure the protection of the Panama Canal. The same historians, however, who so uncritically accept the above designation reveal skepticism in relating railway politics to American diplomacy. Indeed, more

historians would understand railway diplomacy if the Chinese Eastern or the Trans-Siberian Railroads were canals in banana republics. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that future historians may discuss airline politics, namely airline contracts in the emerging nations of Africa with the two world power blocs.

In a review of Far Eastern diplomacy, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 serves as a useful starting point in the discussion of railway politics. By the terms of the peace treaty concluding the war, Japan secured control of the southern portion of the Chinese Eastern Railway which she promptly renamed the South Manchurian Railway. Disappointed that she had not secured a victor's indemnity, Japan proceeded to consolidate her financial and commercial position in South Manchuria. The State Department protested in vain Japan's discrimination against American manufacturers and commercial interest.

Thus, the balance of power enshrined by Theodore Roosevelt in the Portsmouth Treaty was in the process of change before the ink had dried. E. H. Harriman, the American railroad financier, authored in 1905 a plan for a world-wide railroad-steamship network. Harriman believed that such a transportation network would not only unite the most populous continents, but would ensure the United States commercial supremacy in European and Asian markets.

The proposed route would include Japan, Manchuria and European Russia. Before the Japanese negotiators returned from the United States, Harriman concluded an agreement with Premier Katsura that transferred the South Manchurian Railroad from Japanese to American management, and proceeded to organize a syndicate in accordance with Japanese law to provide the requisite capital. There was an "escape clause" granting Japan the right, in the event of war with China or Russia, to utilize the South Manchurian Railroad with compensatory payments for its services.

Baron Komura, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, diplomatically "disallowed" the agreement. The South Manchurian Railway was one of the concrete assets of two years of war and its transfer to American control would have increased the general unpopularity of the treaty. Under Article VI of the peace treaty, China's consent was necessary in order to transfer the railroad from Russia to Japan. In January 1906, the new Japanese-Chinese treaty nullified Harriman's plan by requiring joint, Japanese-Chinese management of the railroad. Although Lloyd C. Griscom, the American Minister in Tokyo attempted to persuade the Japanese officials into reconsidering Harriman's proposal, the government politely but adamantly refused to reopen negotiations.

Harriman, undaunted by Japanese repudiation of his agreement, proceeded to plan an alternative route for a

new Manchurian Railroad, extending about 450 miles from the Gulf of Pechili to the Trans-Siberian Railroad at Tsitshihar. Russia's Chinese Eastern Railway offered the best opportunity of completing an Asiatic-European transportation system. A proposal to purchase the railroad appeared propitious. Losses on the Chinese Eastern, mounting at an alarming rate, forced Russia to take the initiative. Gregory Wilenkin, an agent of the Russian Finance Minister Vladimir Kokovtsov, arrived in Washington, to investigate American offers for the railroad's purchase. Simultaneously, Harriman with a European base of operations, arranged for a French financier to act as intermediary with Kokovtsov. There were definite indications that the Finance Minister favored the sale of Russia's "white elephant" in Manchuria to American capitalists.

More than a year later, in 1908, Harriman's plan became more complicated with the activities of Willard D. Straight, Consul-General at Mukden, and Jacob S. Schiff, President of the banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company. Straight drew up a memorandum outlining the manner in which the Chinese Eastern Railroad could be acquired. According to the original 1896 agreement with Russia, China could repurchase the railroad before the expiration of the agreed period. Schiff, in turn, continued his attempts to reopen negotiations with Japan for the purchase of the South Manchurian Railroad. All three men were working on

the same plan; Harriman with Russia, Straight with China and Schiff with Japan.

Kokovtsov persuaded the Russian Foreign Minister, Alexander Iswolski to approve the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Harriman's international syndicate in 1908. The American firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Co. was to conduct Russia's financial operations. There was one major drawback to Russia's "approval" - Russia would only act concurrently with Japan since the syndicate would be nominally under American control. Iswolski was undoubtedly responsible for such a condition. Schiff, whose firm had floated large American loans for the Japanese war effort, was probably the best selection as railway negotiator, but his pro-Japanese attitude did not allay Russian suspicion.

Harriman and Schiff were willing to proceed without Japan, but their hands were tied by the Russian condition of joint approval. Then, in December, Russia made a startling proposal for a triple alliance between Russia, the United States and China. Apparently, Russia was seeking to determine the "real" meaning of the Root-Takahira Notes exchanged between the United States and Japan in November.

With a State Department ill-advised as to the nature of Harriman's railway plan and a change of administration, the proposal received little consideration. When Russia did not receive a satisfactory reply to its proposal, the government halted all negotiations for the sale of the Chinese

Eastern Railway. Kokovtsov and Iswolski adopted a "watchful waiting" policy in regard to further Far Eastern developments.

Harriman's death in September 1909 severed the only tangible link, though unofficial, between Washington and St. Petersburg on the Manchurian railway situation. His death also deprived the United States of an important financier who was actively promoting American-Russian cooperation in the Far East. Since no one knew all of his plans, Harriman's railway schemes were momentarily forgotten just at a time when the State Department became seriously interested in Manchurian affairs.

Even Straight did not realize the significance of Harriman's Russian negotiations. In October, he concluded an agreement with the British firm, the Pauling Company, and the Manchurian government for the construction of a railroad from Chinchow to Aigun on the Amur River. At the same time, New York financial interests not only failed to realize the significance of Harriman's Russian negotiations, but refused to send an authorized representative as a replacement for the railroad magnate. To compound their folly, they advised the State Department of the Harriman "arrangement" in Russia without mentioning that a definite bill of sale had not been signed.

Only these circumstances explain the ill-fated formulation of the "neutralization proposals"; a State

Department plan for the internationalization of the Manchurian railroads. Thus, in November 1909, the United States made two proposals to Great Britain. The first proposed the formation of an international banking syndicate designed to assist China in the repurchase of its Manchurian railroads from Russia and Japan. Philander C. Knox, President William H. Taft's Secretary of State, pointed out that both nations would thereby shift the responsibilities and expenses of their railroad enterprises to the combined powers. It also included the statement that Russia generally approved the proposal. In the second proposal, the Secretary of State requested British cooperation in the Chinchow-Aigun contract involving Anglo-American capital. Interested nations, favorable to commercial neutralization, could participate in the proposed railroad construction.

Britain replied to the American proposal on November 25; while commending the first proposal, the Foreign Office suggested that it would be wiser to postpone its consideration until other railway negotiations then in process were completed. Referring to the second proposal, the British Government recommended the admission of Japan to the Chinchow-Aigun contract, thus nullifying the State Department's concept of Anglo-American cooperation in Manchuria.

Subsequently, Knox directed the American Ambassador



in Tokyo to communicate the neutralization proposals to the Japanese Government with the directive repeated in Peking, Paris, Berlin and St. Petersburg. There was one significant omission; Russia was not informed of the second proposal including the Chinchow-Aigun contract. Such a contract was more vital to Russia than to any other power. Discovery of this deliberate exclusion through Paris or Tokyo would defeat any possibility of Russian cooperation. Later, Knox admitted that Ambassador William Rockhill supposedly "misunderstood" his instructions in withholding the alternative proposal.

The Secretary of State did not misunderstand the Japanese and Russian response to the American railroad proposal. Both nations were suspicious of American aims in China and Manchuria and viewed the neutralization proposal as an ill-concealed attempt to push them out of their position of pre-eminence in Manchuria. Britain and France, Japan and Russia's allies respectively, did not accept the railway proposals unconditionally; both nations added reservations conditional upon their allies approval. Only Germany accepted the Knox proposals without reservations.

The result of these inept proposals was: (1) the "neutralization" of Britain and France rather than the Manchurian railroads and (2) a new Russo-Japanese agreement

updating the older one of 1907 on July 4, 1910, a date selected deliberately for American attention. The public convention pledged joint cooperation in Manchurian railroad development, maintenance of the "status quo" and consultation on all matters of joint interest. Their secret convention defined Russia's and Japan's "special interests" in Manchuria. At the same time, both nations signed a non-interference pledge designed to promote full consolidation within their respective Manchurian "spheres of influence." Another clause provided for common action against any third power threatening their "special interests" in Manchuria. Japan also assimilated Korea and Russia received a "free hand" in Mongolia. American diplomacy had converted the former enemies from overt hostility directed against each other to "accommodation" of one another in areas where each had a predominant influence.

It was only natural that Japan had more to offer Russia than the United States. The three agreements of 1907, 1910, and 1912 were mutually satisfactory to both powers. America's amateur diplomacy, utilizing railway contracts as an instrument failed to preserve the Open Door and led directly to temporary American disengagement in Far Eastern politics during the early years of the Wilson Administration.

World War I, however, offered the United States the opportunity to reenter Far Eastern diplomacy and, more

significantly, the instrument again was railway politics. Too frequently, historians neglect to emphasize the importance of railroads in the first world war. Germany's military leaders did not overlook their importance; as early as 1876, the elder Von Moltke remarked, "Railways have become in our time one of the most essential instruments for the conduct of the war."<sup>1</sup> Continuing this theme, an American periodical commented effusively that the most important general in the world war was "General Locomotive."<sup>2</sup> Effective railway mileage played a potent part in the winning of military battles.

During the first world war, Russia not only had to fight the well-equipped, and well-trained German army in the eastern war theater but also contend with the strategically invaluable German network of railways. Russia and Finland, with a total area of 2,095,616 square miles, nearly ten times the area of Germany, had a total railway mileage slightly less than that of Germany.<sup>3</sup> The Russian railway system was largely one of far-flung trunklines, and the Muscovite land possessed nothing comparable to the integrated railway systems of either Germany or France. This

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<sup>1</sup>New York Sun, July 10, 1917, 10.

<sup>2</sup>"General Locomotive," Scientific American, CXII (March 6, 1915), 212.

<sup>3</sup>"Railways in Modern Battles," Bulletin, National Geographic Society, July 1, 1915, 37.

deficiency was a severe handicap that the Russian Government could not remedy during the war and the superior German railway system was instrumental in every Russian defeat.

Since new railway construction could not be accomplished at short notice, Russia's inadequate transportation network determined to a great extent her military preparedness and potential efficiency in the conduct of the first world war. In an exaggerated headline, "Railroads Ruined Russia," a contemporary periodical noted that "the republic of Russia was overthrown by the Bolsheviki because of a broken-down, ramshackle railroad." Continuing further, the author accused Russian railway officials of accepting bribes from German agents to destroy engines and cars, cause wrecks and thereby prevent the transit of food supplies to the starving cities.<sup>4</sup>

Russia's deteriorating railway system caused considerable anxiety to her allies during the years prior to 1917. After the United States' entry into the war, the allies urged President Wilson to rehabilitate the Russian railroads. Supposedly the railroad situation in both the United States and Russia were similar; specifically the problem of long-haul continental transportation and in the case of America's northern railroads, the climatic conditions.

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<sup>4</sup>Newell D. Hillis, "Railroads Ruined Russia," Philadelphia Bulletin December 6, 1918, 16.

For these and other reasons, President Wilson appointed John F. Stevens in May 1917 as Chairman of the Advisory Commission of American Railway Experts to Russia. From May of 1917 until 1923, Stevens served the United States Government. The President instructed Stevens to study Russia's railway situation, offer advice, and aid the Provisional Government in every manner possible by requesting credits, railway supplies and experienced railway men from the United States. Shortly before the Bolshevik revolution, the government appointed Stevens as official adviser and director-general to the Ministry of Ways of Communication.

Stevens' first railway mission merges into America's second railway mission, the Russian Railway Service Corps, also organized in 1917.<sup>5</sup> Again, Stevens was the chairman, and the corps an instrument of American diplomacy. The method of payment is perhaps unique in railroad history. First, the United States loaned Russia money; then Russia out of the available credits paid the American railwaymen. Organized into semi-military units, under State Department direction, the Russian Railway Service Corps hoped to reorganize the Trans-Siberian and Chinese Eastern Railways. The Bolshevik revolution intervened and after prolonged

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<sup>5</sup>The Russian Railway Service Corps was a semi-military unit of American railwaymen organized to install operational changes on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. John F. Stevens Memoranda, January 28, 1931, John F. Stevens Papers, Hoover Library, Stanford University. Hereinafter cited as Stevens MSS.

negotiation with the director of the Chinese Eastern Railway, Stevens employed members of the corps as supervisors from March 1918 until late 1920 when the majority of them returned to the United States.

Utilizing the fact that Stevens was the official railway adviser to the last recognized Russian government, the United States proposed in 1918 that he manage the Chinese Eastern and Trans-Siberian Railways. The Allies with military commands in Siberia needed effective transportation facilities, but the circumstances of civil war and intervention complicated the problem. After bilateral American-Japanese negotiations, Stevens became chairman of his third railway mission. This time, however, it assumed an international character, because he became President of the Technical Board of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee established in Vladivostok, March 1919. The agreement vested control in the Technical Board and also specified that its president should be John F. Stevens, the American engineer and the American representative.<sup>6</sup>

Stevens therefore undertook the formidable task of operating the Russian and Siberian railways. Faced by

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<sup>6</sup>Advisory Commission of Railway Experts, The Russian Railway Service Corps, and the Interallied Railway Committee, 1917-1922. United States, National Archives, United States Participation in International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions. Record Group 43, E 327-E 354. Hereinafter cited as RG 43.

bitter civil war, the menace of undisciplined Cossack bands, the jealousies of factions and conflicting nationalities, he struggled for a year to bring organization out of chaos. When President Wilson withdrew American troops in 1920, Stevens remained at Russia's request in Harbin. For almost two years with only one or two assistants he continued to superintend the operation of a portion of the great Trans-Siberian system, thus occupying a position unique in the history of American engineering. Until the termination of the Technical Board on November 1, 1922, America's foremost engineer received a polyglot throng in his Manchurian office. Day by day, Chinese generals, Manchurian leaders, Japanese diplomats, civilians and bureaucrats, Cossacks, Frenchmen, Englishmen and Americans came to consult with him.<sup>7</sup>

John F. Stevens was a remarkable man who successfully combined the two careers of engineer and diplomat. Until recently, little has been written of his engineering career and nothing of his diplomatic career. While his professional achievements are of interest to economic historians, it is surprising that diplomatic historians have neglected Stevens' Russian and Siberian activities during World War I and subsequent four year period.

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<sup>7</sup>/Rolland S. Morris/ "American Engineers in Siberia," The Far Eastern Review (Shanghai), XVII, No. 4 (April, 1921), 247.

Altogether, he served the United States in the Far East nearly six years and directed three railway missions to Russia during the years 1917 to 1923.

Stevens' three railway missions concerned the Chinese Eastern, Trans-Siberian and Siberian railways. All have been important strategic, commercial and military transportation systems. Until mid-century the four nations most vitally interested in railway politics were Russia, China, Japan and the United States. Such interest continued after Stevens relinquished the administration of these railways. In 1929 the United States reprimanded the Soviet Union for her seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Although Soviet troops withdrew from the railway zone, Japan followed the Russian example two years later by seizing the Chinese Eastern thus ensuring her dominant position in Manchuria and China.

President Wilson selected Stevens to head these missions because of his extensive railway experience prior to 1917. Born in 1853, Stevens lived the early part of his life in West Gardiner, Maine. After a brief attempt at teaching, he decided on engineering as a career. At the age of 21, lacking formal technical training, he moved to Minneapolis, where his uncle, an established engineer assisted him in becoming the city's assistant engineer. Soon afterward, Stevens, lured by a spirit of adventure,



moved to Texas where he became chief engineer of the Sabine Pass & Northwestern Railroad. Titles and social position meant little to this Yankee; he once whipped the son of a railroad president because the son needed punishment. Stevens' zest for adventure sometimes placed him in extremely hazardous situations; once, in Colorado, he spent twenty hours in water up to his neck, holding his breath to keep "unfriendly" Indians from discovering him.

His success in railroading brought him to the attention of James J. Hill and from 1887 onward, Stevens was an engineer or official of almost every great railroad system in the Northwest. Seeking the shortest and lowest pass through the Rocky Mountains, he discovered on November 11, 1889, the legendary Lost Marias Pass. Stevens walked on snow-shoes into Marias Pass; with the temperature 40 degrees below, he spent that night tramping back and forth through a runway in the snow to avoid freezing to death. Then he returned and revived his Indian guide nearly dead from cold. His discovery shortened the Great Northern line to the Pacific by more than 100 miles.<sup>8</sup> The railroad honored this intrepid engineer-explorer by erecting a bronze statue at Summit, Montana depicting him as he appeared at the time of discovery. According to a well known railroad

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<sup>8</sup>Tom Inkster, "John Frank Stevens, American Engineer," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LVI, No. 2 (April, 1965), 83.

journal, his discovery was "an achievement which constitutes one of the most important as well as dramatic incidents in American railway engineering."<sup>9</sup> The following year, he located a suitable crossing in the Cascade Range near the Wenatchee River. Stevens Pass and Stevens Pass Highway in the state of Washington mark this achievement.

Stevens was not just a courageous explorer; he was an outstanding engineer. His construction of the Cascade Tunnel, a curved tunnel inside the Cascade Mountains almost 14,000 feet in length, was one of Stevens' more spectacular engineering feats for the Great Northern Railroad.

In 1904, he became Second Vice-President of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway. At 52 years of age, with success assured, Stevens was beginning to reap the financial harvest for his engineering skill. His career, however, was interrupted in 1905 when he accepted an appointment on the Phillipine Commission to head its railroad building program. Stevens, though, never reached the Phillipines. John F. Wallace, first chief engineer of the Panama Canal, resigned in the wake of a yellow fever epidemic. Theodore Roosevelt, after consultation with Hill, appointed Stevens as chief engineer effective July 1, 1905.

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<sup>9</sup>Railway and Marine News, LVI, pt 2, January 1929, 56.

To avoid any possibility of later misunderstanding, the engineer visited the President at Oyster Bay and outlined his conditions of acceptance. First, Stevens insisted on having a "free hand in all matters;" second, that no authority was to hamper his activity and last, he would remain with the project until, in his judgment, its "success or failure" was assured. Roosevelt accepted these terms and directed Stevens to communicate with him directly on canal matters. When the engineer pointed out that this procedure might result in conflict with the War Department, the President waved his point aside, stating that everyone there knew his views.<sup>10</sup>

These instructions were to cause confusion and disillusionment for Stevens. Before he left the project, he double-tracked the Panama Railroad, used his influence to secure adoption of the lock type canal and became an ardent supporter of Colonel William Gorgas in health and sanitation matters. Often speaking to the employees in his capacity as "psychological commander-in-chief," he reminded them that there were only three diseases on the Isthmus: "yellow fever, malaria, and cold feet; and the greatest of these was cold feet." His successor, Major

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<sup>10</sup>U.S. Congress, House, Eulogy: John F. Stevens; Basic Architect of the Panama Canal, Congressman Flood, Eighty-fourth Congress, second session, May 29, 1956, Congressional Record, CII, pt 7, 9287. Hereinafter cited as U. S. Congress, Eulogy: Congressional Record.

George W. Goethals, an outstanding Army engineer, referred to John F. Stevens as his "great predecessor" and stated:

Do you know that there is nothing so annoying to me as the statement so generally made in my presence that I am the "Genius of the Panama Canal" - I do not like it. Frankly, it is a fact, that Mr. Stevens devised, designed and made provisions for practically every contingency connected with the construction and subsequent operation of that stupendous project, and, when he turned over the office of Chief Engineer to me, everything was in the very best working order or ready for the successful prosecution of the work - my effort was to see that the projects, as conceived, designed, laid out and duly recorded, was carried out accordingly; submit required reports, approve expenditures, fill vacancies. It is therefore to him much more than to me, that justly belongs the honor of being the actual "Genius of the Panama Canal" - no, not me.<sup>11</sup>

Stevens' resignation soon after his appointment to the Isthmian Canal Commission is shrouded in some mystery. The precipitating cause seems to be his letter of January 30, 1907 to Roosevelt reflecting his disillusionment with government red tape and frustration. Actually, there is the suggestion that the Government's decision to award the construction contract to a firm whose reliability he questioned and without previous consultation with him revealed the "futility" of his efforts to protect the Canal's interests.<sup>12</sup> He stated that he thought the Canal work would be a purely "business proposition," but instead he had found

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<sup>11</sup>William H. Galvani, "Recollections of J. F. Stevens and Senator Mitchell," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLIV, (1943), 314.

<sup>12</sup>Rolt Hammond and C. J. Lewin, The Panama Canal (London: 1966), 144.

it necessary to engage in a "continuous battle with enemies in the rear."

Expressing what may be considered undue sensitivity to criticism, Stevens claimed that the honor of building the canal did not appeal to him and he was forfeiting \$100,000 yearly while in Panama. Pursued by a demon of blunt honesty, Stevens angered Roosevelt by stating that he could return to positions that were more attractive to him than "President of the United States." Never at a loss for words, Roosevelt declared, "Stevens must get out at once." Forwarding this letter to Secretary of War Taft, the President indicated that should Stevens change his mind, he would not reconsider the matter in view of the "tone of the letter."<sup>13</sup>

While the President fumed over Stevens undiplomatic language, he determined to secure continuity in management by appointing "men who will stay on the job till I get tired of having them there, or till I say they may abandon it."<sup>14</sup> Stevens, therefore, was the last civilian chief engineer. His resignation only two months after he had been appointed Chairman of the Canal Commission brought accusation and innuendo. Stevens was reticent concerning his reasons for

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 145-146.

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Congress, Eulogy: Congressional Record, 9288.

leaving the project, but had the loyalty to remain on the job until March 31, 1907 when he terminated his service with Panama Canal and Major Goethals took over.

Although Stevens left with his reputation untarnished and appeared to some "as a sacrifice on the altar of political expediency," he did bear ill-will toward the Administration and the Republican Party in particular. While a member of Canal Commission Stevens learned of the corruption involved in securing the French concession. In 1908, he informed Josephus Daniels that it "would blow up the Republican Party" and that it was his "duty" to expose an Administration which allowed "crooked men" to collect the "loot." Stevens was disappointed that the Democratic Party did not give him full support in his expose of a "national scandal."<sup>15</sup>

The former chief engineer happily "escaped" government and probably vowed privately never to interrupt his career again for government service. But, only ten years later, Stevens was in public service in more difficult circumstances than he had experienced previously in the canal zone. His trials and tribulations as supervisor of the Trans-Siberian and Chinese Eastern Railways are a "forgotten chapter" in American diplomacy and merit him

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<sup>15</sup>Hammond and Lewin, The Panama Canal, 149; Stevens does not mention this incident in either his autobiography, John F. Stevens, An Engineer's Recollections (New York: 1936) or the cooperative work, William L. Sibert and John F. Stevens,

the title of "diplomat-at-large" or at the least, "Engineer  
Extraordinaire and Diplomat Plenipotentary."

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The Construction of the Panama Canal (New York and London:  
1915). Brief information on this subject is mentioned in  
Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace, 1910-  
1917 (Chapel Hill: 1944), 214.

## CHAPTER II

### RUSSIAN RAILROADS AND THE WORLD WAR: 1914-1917

In 1917 the French General Joseph Joffre remarked, "this is a railway war." At the same time, it was the first conflict involving large naval guns usually reserved for coastal defense in army field operations. Transportation of such heavy artillery presented difficulties requiring greater assistance from the railwayman than from the military expert. Generals needed railways to mobilize, transport and support their armies. If railways were not available, new construction assumed critical importance. Inadequate transportation not only imperiled military effectiveness but created hardship for the nation's population with its inability to meet civilian needs.<sup>1</sup>

Russia entered the war with a backward transportation system. Her population was two and a half times greater than Germany's but European Russia had only one-twelfth of Germany's railway mileage. Only 36,000 miles of railways served the vast Muscovite Empire as compared with 19,000 miles in Great Britain. Moreover, with a land area nearly three times as large as the United States, Russia possessed one-sixth of America's railway mileage. Less than one-third of the Russian

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<sup>1</sup>The Railway Gazette (London), XXV, No. 9 (September 1, 1916), 221; New York Sun, July 10, 1917, 10.



railways were double-tracked. Nearly a quarter of the locomotives were between 45 and 50 years old; tracks unstable, the water system inadequate; and bridges old and weak.<sup>2</sup>

This railway deficiency hampered Russia's military efforts; her two earliest defeats occurred in East Prussia, the direct result of Germany's superior railway organization. General Paul Von Hindenburg defeated his adversaries by concentrating an overwhelming military force rushed to their positions by German railroads. Germany had about twenty railways running to the Russian frontier while her opponent possessed a total of six. Neither Russia's numerical troop superiority nor the bravery of her soldiers could overcome Germany's strategic railway advantage.<sup>3</sup>

In order to secure greater immunity from attack, Russia adopted the unusual plan of having a wider railway gauge than neighboring European countries. Altogether, seven different gauges were in use.<sup>4</sup> In wartime, however, when the Russian army crossed the frontier this defense-oriented strategy nullified offensive operations; Russian rolling stock was virtually useless.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>General Basil Gurko, Memories and Impressions of War and Revolution (London: 1918), 4; Peter Kingsford, Railways and Railwaymen (London: 1942), 5; Philip H. Middleton, Railways of Thirty Nations (New York: 1937), 222-223.

<sup>3</sup>"General Locomotive," Scientific American, CXII (March 6, 1915), 212.

<sup>4</sup>V. A. Nagrodski, General Presentation of the Present Conditions of the Railway System in Russia, Paper No. 76, Vol. IV Railway Engineering of Transactions of the International Engineering Congress, 1915. 12 vols. (San Francisco: 1916), 170.

<sup>5</sup>The Railway Gazette (London), XXX (February 7, 1919).

Military transportation over vast distances dislocated passenger and freight traffic. Army mobilization of 14,000,000 to 20,000,000 men imposed a tremendous strain upon the railways. As a result, railway traffic in November 1914 was 23 per cent lower than the previous November. To further complicate the situation, the Chief of Army Communications (rather than the civilian Minister of Transport,) commanded railways in the war zone. When military authorities neglected to return the rolling stock, the "hoarding" of locomotives and cars undermined the successful operation of interior railways.<sup>6</sup>

Military authorities interfered in other areas of railway operations as well. Skilled railway workers received no special consideration in the draft.<sup>7</sup> Conversion of railway work shops from the production and repair of rolling stock to the manufacture of military supplies created additional difficulty. The army required military vehicles, guns, munitions, electrical machinery, motors, pumps, telephones and stretchers. Thus, diversion of human and material resources impaired the railways' capacity to deliver these items.<sup>8</sup>

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220; M. Edward Thery, "The Railways of Russia," The Railway Library, No. 21826 (1914), 226.

<sup>6</sup>Nicholas Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War (New Haven: 1931), 194.

<sup>7</sup>"Chemins de fer Russes," Le journal des transports, XXVII (Paris) (March 21, 1914), 136.

<sup>8</sup>Thery, The Railway Library, 226.

Domestic production of rolling stock declined greatly during the war years. In 1914 Russia manufactured railway cars at seventeen factories and produced 32,000 cars. Although the Germans seized several of these factories the following year, car production totalled over 31,000. From 1915 onward, railway construction declined for a number of reasons: first, from a shortage of axles and other parts, then from the general shortage in metals and then from labor complications. If the production of 1914 is taken as 100, in 1916 the production of goods cars was 60, of special cars 64 and of passenger cars 41. This precipitate decline continued through the first eight months of 1917 so that the respective ratios were 41, 100 and 43.<sup>9</sup>

Freight was another problem. By 1914, total freight traffic within the Russian Empire equalled that of the United States in 1885.<sup>10</sup> Canada, with a population of eight millions, had only slightly less freight carrying capacity than Russia with its 180 millions. The rolling stock of Canada, was newer and therefore required less repair than Russia's so that the freight carrying capacity of the nations' railroads was about equal.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>"Russian Construction of Railway Cars" (trans.), Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazette, December 1/26, 1917 cited in United States National Archives, Records of the War Trade Board, Records of the Bureau of Research and Statistics, Record Group 182, E 192, Box 929. Hereinafter cited as RG 182.

<sup>10</sup>Ernst W. Willians Jr., "Soviet Transportation Development: A Comparison With the United States, 1889-1955," American Economic Review, XLVIII, No. 2 (May, 1958), 418.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Goldstein, Russia, Her Economic Past and Future (New York: 1919), 52. Hereinafter cited as Russia.

Traffic density on Russian railways was 1,200,000 ton-miles per mile of line. With over two-thirds of the lines single-tracked, the density on each track was greater than that of any other large country in the world. On some Russian main lines, traffic became so heavy that it necessitated decreasing the speed of freight trains below the point of economical operation. Costs increased progressively with each reduction of speed.<sup>12</sup>

Due to this heavy density of traffic, Russian railways were inefficient. There were twice as many employees compared with tonnage hauled as on the lines in the United States. American railroads employed five persons for every million ton-miles of traffic, while in Russia needed ten.<sup>13</sup>

War conditions caused a great reduction of Russian railway traffic. Before the war, the railways carried grain from central European Russia to the Baltic and Black Sea ports and Southern Russia. Manufactured goods moved from western, central and northern Russia to Central Russia, Siberia and Maritime Russia. Siberia had very little traffic as compared with European Russia. With the beginning of the war, traffic to and from the Baltic

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Notwithstanding heavy density of traffic, Russian railways were inefficient. There were twice as many employees compared with tonnage hauled as on the lines in the United States. American railroads, employed five persons for every million ton-miles of freight handled, while Russia needed ten.<sup>13</sup>

War conditions also changed the direction of Russian railway traffic. Before the war, the railways carried grain from central European and the south eastern Russia to the Baltic and Black Sea ports. Coal moved from the Baltic ports and Southern Russia to Central Russia. Manufactured goods moved from western, northern and southern Russia to Central Russia, Siberia and middle Asiatic Russia. Siberia had very little traffic as compared with European Russia. With the beginning of the war, traffic to and from the Baltic

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<sup>12</sup>Railway Review (Chicago), LXXIV, May 10, 1924, 840.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

and Black Sea ports ceased. Coal had to be carried from southern Russia all over the country. Huge quantities of ammunitions and foodstuffs had to be moved from all portions of the country to the extreme West - the battle lines. The Trans-Siberian Railroad from Vladivostok and railroads running from the northern ports - Archangel and Murmansk became more and more important as the war continued.

Railways strained to meet the additional wartime burdens with an ever-declining capacity. Locomotive miles and car miles increased by 22 per cent, as compared with the pre-war times. Locomotives increased by 1.5 per cent, and the number of cars three per cent. The number of cars and locomotives in good order in 1916 was from three to eight percent less because of the shortage of material and skilled help in the factories and shops.<sup>14</sup>

With military needs taking precedence, the railways reduced ordinary traffic to a minimum. This ordinary traffic was the distribution of food and fuel to Russia's civilian population. The amount of rolling stock available for the transport of corn, coal, sugar, flour, meat and other supplies was so inadequate by 1916 that the cities of European Russia were experiencing serious shortages. Wood fuel rose in price by as much as 400 per cent in Petrograd. Both Petrograd and Moscow suffered from a salt shortage. Sugar was prohibitive and corn sold at exorbitant prices, while in

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<sup>14</sup>Alphonse I. Lipetz, "General Railway Situation in Russia," New York Railroad Club, Proceedings, XXIX (May 16, 1919), 5669. Hereinafter cited as Lipetz, "General Railway Situation in Russia," N. Y. Railroad Club.

other places, it was literally rotting.<sup>15</sup>

Railway demands for fuel competed directly with civilian needs and the former raised its consumption to twice its pre-war level. Before the war, coal consumption ranked first, but the railways gradually increased their consumption of anthracite, oil and wood. The greatest fuel consumption took place on the seven railways directly attached to the war zone. On the basis of 1916 statistics, the Government lines consumed 70.5 per cent of all the fuel, leaving less than one-third to supply the rest of the nation.

The importance of fuel to the railways can not be over-estimated. In the extreme southern portion of Russia, south of Kharkov and north of the Crimea lay the Donetz Basin, the most extensive and important area of coal deposits. Heat values of these coals ranged higher than those of any other Russian coals except those from the Tiaga (Siberian) mines which were the best quality found anywhere in the country. Another sizable deposit used extensively by the Government railways was the Cheliabinsk district. Tomsk or Tiaga coal was in two groups of mines, the Angerskaia (government) mines and the Soudergenskia (private) mines. They supplied the Perm, Omsk and Samara-Flatoust Railways.

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<sup>15</sup>E. J. Dillon, "Some of Russia's Difficulties," Contemporary Review, CIX (January, 1916), 176.

Cheremkova coal was inferior to the Taiga coal, but was used extensively by the Omsk, Tomsk and Trans-Baikal Railways.<sup>16</sup>

To handicap her even more, Britain and France found the Russian port facilities inadequate. Out of some fifty ports normally serving her import and export trade, the war practically sealed forty-eight, leaving only two - Vladivostok and Archangel - as channels for Allied assistance in war and industrial supplies. With these two ports, Russia had to guard a frontier of approximately 25,000 miles, with 6500 miles in the actual war zone. Vladivostok was 8000 miles from the Russian front while Archangel was 2400 miles distant. The latter port was open six months a year, and possessed only a single narrow-gauge railway. As a result, traffic increased at the Pacific ports, almost doubling in the two year period 1914-1915.<sup>17</sup>

New railway construction was imperative. One area of vital importance was Murmansk, situated on the Kola peninsula, and Russia's only ice free port after the German seizure of Libau. Ice closed Russia's largest northern port, Archangel, on the White Sea, from October to May. Surveys for the Murman Railway began in 1914, but progress was slow with only 620 miles of track laid by November 1916. Pessimists predicted that when the ice melted in the spring of 1917 the

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<sup>16</sup>"General Qualities of Russian - Siberian Coals," undated RG 43, E 327, Box 2.

<sup>17</sup>Commerce de la Exterieur de la Russie cited in RG 182, E 192, Box 929.



track would disappear into the <sup>31</sup>swamps. During the entire winter of 1916-17, only 100,000 tons were transported and its carrying capacity in 1917 was 1,500 tons daily. With increased rolling stock the railway could supposedly carry 3500 tons daily.<sup>18</sup>

During 1915 and 1916, the greater share of allied shipments arrived at Archangel. The equipment of the port was unequal to its task; overseas goods accumulated rapidly. American, British and French supplies piled mountain high because the railway system could not transport the materiel to European Russia as rapidly as these nations could deliver it to the port. Toward the end of 1916, to clear Archangel the United States sent its goods directly to the Pacific port of Vladivostok. It was only a temporary solution; in 1917 Vladivostok, too, accumulated mountains of freight.<sup>19</sup>

On February 10, 1916 the British consul at Vladivostok reported that cargo was proceeding to European Russia without any serious delay. Two hundred cars left Vladivostok daily for Siberia, each car carrying about eighteen tons; twenty per cent of cars were for private use. The consul, however, did not report current congestion.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Robert Crozier Long, "The Murman Railway Question," The Nation, CVII (August 31, 1918), 224.

<sup>19</sup>Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War, 199-200.

<sup>20</sup>"Railway and Shipping Facilities at Vladivostok," Bureau of Railway Economics, Daily Trade and Consular Reports, April 7, 1916, 92. Hereinafter cited as BRE, Commerce Reports.

The following month, the situation changed drastically and congestion became endemic. Beginning in March, cargo accumulated on the ground. Government freight left for the West, but delays of private cargo developed. In the autumn of 1916, the government reduced private shipments from 40 freight cars to 25. Finally in late October, Russia closed the port of Vladivostok to private cargo unless it was shipped under special permits. Vladivostok was not at fault. Each of the five to seven different railways comprising the Trans-Siberian Railway system had its own independent administration and its own headquarters in Petrograd. This division of control had never been properly coordinated, and overlapping was continuous. Each section was interested in itself and had nothing to do with the other section; the Tomsk railway section was especially inefficient.<sup>21</sup>

French authorities were also concerned with Russia's railway difficulties. The Chief of the French Military Mission at Archangel in a report dated January 1, 1917 stated that it was "absolutely impossible" to determine when normal traffic would be introduced either on a part or on the whole of the Murman Railway. Somewhat gloomily he added, "we ask ourselves at the present hour if the railway itself knows."

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<sup>21</sup>"Trans-Siberian Railway-Congestion in Vladivostok," August 29, 1919, RG 182, E 192, Box 929.

He also warned that the Murman's<sup>33</sup> traffic capacity would be inferior to that of Archangel.<sup>22</sup>

Another report was more explicit. Allied tonnage arriving at the White Sea ports of Archangel and Kem could not be evacuated by the Russian railways due to their deficiency of rolling stock. "We ask ourselves with anxiety if a great part of the material which the Allies will send to Russia in 1917 will ever have a useful role and if it will only be destroyed by fires and explosions far from the front!" The report concluded that "any material susceptible for use by one of the other Allies must only be sent Russia if the Allies possess sufficient guarantees that this material can be put to use in spite of the interior transportation crisis of Russia."<sup>23</sup>

United States' Military Attache, Lieutenant Sherman Miles, reached the same conclusion in regard to Russia's great Pacific port of Vladivostok. He attached the "greatest importance" to Vladivostok and the Siberian Railroad because Russia received almost all her essential foreign munitions by the latter route. Looking ahead, Miles commented, "it

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<sup>22</sup>"Maximum Program of Importation by the Northern Ports of Russia During the Winter 1916-1917," French Military Mission (Archangel), January 1, 1917 (Communicated by French Military Attache, Petrograd, April 1917), National Archives, United States War Department, General Staff, War College Division, Record Group 165, Box 114, 6497-19. Hereinafter cited as RG 165.

<sup>23</sup>"Note on Importations Through the White Sea During the Period of Free Navigation, 1917," January 31, 1917 (Translation of Document Communicated by Office of French Military Attache, Petrograd, April 1917), ibid.

is also conceivable that this route may some day be a factor of importance to us, in case of a war with Japan." Japanese, Chinese and Korean coolie labor predominated at Vladivostok. Significantly, the Russians opposed this type of labor. Miles repeated that Japanese of all classes were "pouring in" and "the Russians seem to be a little bit afraid that the Japanese have their eye on Vladivostok."<sup>24</sup>

On the Siberian Railroad, the existing blocks were west of Omsk where the line was double tracked. Miles explained this anomaly ascribing it to "Russian inefficiency in handling railroads." Russia's great difficulty according to this critic-observer was the lack of rolling stock. He spoke of "enormous" Russian orders in America and Russia's specially built assembling stations at First River and Harbin. Altogether the amount of rolling stock ordered totalled over 13,000 freight cars and 450 locomotives with the last consignments expected in June 1916.<sup>25</sup>

The Lieutenant was not generally optimistic concerning Russian use of American rolling stock. Although American locomotives were on the tracks by Christmas Day 1915, he believed that some of the rolling stock would be ruined by

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<sup>24</sup>Lt. Sherman Miles "The Port of Vladivostok and the Siberian Railroad," February 26, 1916, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-10.

<sup>25</sup>The Siberian Railroad consisted of three separate lines, all under Russian management; the Ussuri from Vladivostok to Nikol'sk, the Chinese Eastern from Nikol'sk to Manchuria Station, and the Siberian Road from Manchuria Station to Western Russia at Cheliabinsk, ibid.

the Russian method of handling. At the time, the Russians were using box cars as flat cars "in spite of the protest of the American engineers." He further speculated that, "some of the locomotive material will be ruined by being dumped out into open fields, and left there, exposed to inclement weather." American rolling stock could not, however, be utilized on the entire Siberian railway network. Sections of the Chinese Eastern Railroad and the Trans-Baikal railway were incapable of bearing trains of fully loaded American cars. The road bed was defective and when one rail sagged they often drew the spikes, wedged it up and spiked it down again, instead of reballasting the bed. Siberian railway capacity could be increased and transportation simplified by the introduction of heavier capacity cars and greater motive power. This increase, however, would be limited by the existing deficiencies of construction.

His summary, though, was cautiously optimistic about the port and definitely pessimistic about the Siberian railways. Miles noted the great improvement in Vladivostok's facilities and thought that it was "capable of handling cargoes about as fast as it is possible for the Russians to do it," a back handed compliment at the most. The railways averaged 3200 tons of west-bound freight per day. With the completion of the Amur Railroad, freight capacity would be further increased. Realizing the importance of this line of military communication, the Russians were "devoting their

best railroad talent (such as it is) to it." Miles concluded, though, that the Russians did not know how to run railroads.<sup>26</sup>

The Trans-Siberian Railway, then, served Vladivostok and was "the key to every situation in Russia - economic, military and political."<sup>27</sup> During the First World War, this railway network transported Japanese and American war material westward from the Pacific to the Russian forces fighting in Europe. As early as 1914, the Russian Minister of War warned that the railway could carry only one-seventh of the supplies needed for the conduct of the war.<sup>28</sup>

The term, "Trans-Siberian Railway" is however, a misnomer. It was one railway divided for construction purposes into six sections: The Western Siberian Railway, Central Siberian Railway, Circum-Baikal Railway, Trans-Baikal Railway, Amur Railway and Ussuri Railway - controlled by the Minister of Communications at Petrograd. Less than one-half of its 5500 miles was double-tracked. The Trans-Siberian crossed the southern Urals from European Russia at Cheliabinsk, passed through Omsk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, skirted Lake Baikal and terminated at Chita. From that city two branches continued to the sea at Vladivostok. The Chinese Eastern Railway, a short branch line from China struck the Chinese frontier at Manchuria Station, traversed

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Olive Gilbreath, "The Sick-man of Siberia," Asia XIX, No. 6 (June, 1919), 549.

<sup>28</sup>Long, "The Murman Railway Question," 224; P. E. Garbutt, "The Trans-Siberian Railway," The Journal of Transport History, I, No. 4 (November, 1954), 238, 243.

Northern Manchuria through Harbin and reached the Russian frontier again at Podgranitza, a few hours from Vladivostok. This was the short route followed by the expresses. Another circuitous branch made a great loop from Chita along the Siberian side of the Amur River, through Blagovojisk (Blagoveshchensk) to Habarovsk (Khabarovsk) and then due south to Valdivostok.<sup>29</sup>

Neither the Trans-Siberian nor other railways could supply the military and civilian segments of the Russian economy. Freight, fuel and food were vital, though their transportation was more problematical than certain. Inadequate railways - the Murmansk and Trans-Siberian - served the nation's two major ports, Archangel and Vladivostok. These two ports were Russia's supply life line, but she still needed additional railways.

Railway construction is not often undertaken in wartime unless the emergency is great. According to a noted Professor of Political Economy at the University of Moscow, "one of the greatest shortcomings of the old regime. . .was its inefficient policy in the realm of railway construction."<sup>30</sup> Railway construction required planning and implementation for maximum effectiveness.

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<sup>29</sup>Arthur Bullard, The Russian Pendulum: Autocracy-Democracy-Bolshevism (New York: 1919), 143-144.

<sup>30</sup>Goldstein, Russia, 49.

Planning, however, was more effective than implementation. From 1909 onward, frequent appointments of new consultative bodies on railway construction merely repeated or slightly modified the plans of the preceding commissions. Altogether, five railway commissions met during the seven year period 1909-1916.<sup>31</sup> Since the greater part of the railroads was owned and operated by the government, the endless friction between the various governmental departments, particularly the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Ways of Communication, frustrated the successful realization of even modest railway plans.

The last commission, an inter-departmental conference, met in 1916 and completed its work in 1917. It concluded that Russia needed new and powerful arterial railways to maintain and accelerate economic development. A comprehensive five year plan, covering the years 1917-1921, called for the annual construction of 4150 miles; for the next five year span, construction of 1400 miles annually excluding strategic railway lines. The increase of projected Russian railway mileage for the ten years from 1917 to 1926

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<sup>31</sup>They met in 1909, 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1916. Actually railway construction is more difficult to determine. The yardstick used was a complicated ratio between aggregated construction mileage "over the years of construction" "in proportion to expended capital during the same years. Railway construction in 1914 and 1915 was about 2500 and 3000 miles. G. I. Ouspensky, Future Russian Railroad Construction: Its Scope and Manner of Realization /A Report Read Before the Society of Engineers of Ways of Communication on May 1-5, 1915/ (New York: 1918), 41-42.



totalled 30,000 miles. Estimated construction costs were four billion dollars and required an additional three and one half billion dollars for the purchase of rolling stock and repair material. With the investigation completed, the Minister of Ways of Communication requested an annual appropriation of \$308,700,000 from the State.<sup>32</sup>

Governmental action in the two years previous to 1915 was erratic. New railway construction lagged. The appropriation of \$58,000,000 in 1914 was \$235,000 less than the previous year. In September 1915, the government approved construction contracts amounting to \$554,000,000. Private companies and capitalists secured concessions for 5000 miles of new railways at a construction cost of \$340,000,000. The total mileage for the governmental and privately sponsored railways amounted to over 10,000 miles.<sup>33</sup>

While the phrase, "utter disorganization" occurs frequently in descriptions of Russia's railways, the overall view was not altogether bleak. Between January 1915 and January 1917 the government constructed over 4,000 miles

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<sup>32</sup>A. A. Boublikoff, The Status of The Private Railroad Business in Russia (New York: 1918), 5-6; A. Trepoff (Minister of Ways of Communication), Department on Railroad Construction, The Russian Government's Plan of Future Railroad Construction: Proposal of the Ministry of Ways of Communication to the State Duma on the Subject of the Appropriation of Definite Credits in the Budget of Extraordinary Expenditures of the Ministry of Ways of Communication for the Five-Year Period of 1917-1921, For the Construction of New Railroads At the Expense of the State, in Connection With the Plan For Railroad Construction During the Indicated Five Year Period, No. 10838 (New York: June 10, 1916), 24-26.

<sup>33</sup>Railway News (London), CII, No. 2637 (July 18, 1914), 166; "Russian Railway Construction," BRE, Commerce Reports, May 19, 1916, 667.

of railways.<sup>A</sup> Railway battalions also reconstructed ruined railways and destroyed those which might have fallen into the enemy hands. Wartime deterioration, however, proceeded geometrically; repair facilities increased arithmetically. The conclusion was inescapable; Russia needed foreign railway assistance.<sup>34</sup>

Great Britain and the United States attempted to meet Russia's railway needs. During the three year period from 1914 through 1916, Britain's railway exports declined from a high of \$470,000 to \$245,000 and in 1916 to \$39,000.<sup>35</sup> Britain attempted to offset this decline by purchasing railway equipment for Russia in the United States.

The situation is confusing because in January 1915, the British Government appointed J. P. Morgan and Company as its Commercial Agent in the United States. Four months later the French Government took the same action. Sometime in 1915 the British Government undertook to purchase materials required for the Russian Government in the United States and thereby avoid competition between herself, Russia, and France for American supplies. At the same time, Britain could also more effectively control the expenditures of monies advanced to the Russian Government. These arrangements, however, extended only to purchases of materials for Russia which were financed by the British Government. Actually, the Russian

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<sup>34</sup>Gurko, Memories and Impressions, 212-213.

<sup>35</sup>Figures rounded off. Railway Gazette (London), XXVI, No. 2 (January 12, 1917), 62.

Purchasing Commission in the United States continued to deal and purchase independently to such extent as the American credits provided by the Russian Government permitted. According to Secretary of the Treasury, William G. McAdoo, the "extravagance and confusion" in allied finances, particularly those of Russia, continued.<sup>36</sup>

Although Britain was hard pressed to meet the demands of her Russian ally and that of the Empire too, the United States had a surplus of cars in 1914. This surplus of idle railway cars extended throughout the year 1915, with a maximum on April 1 of 327,000 cars. During the next year the situation changed drastically. On March 1, 1916, the railways needed twenty thousand cars. Beginning with September 1, 1916 the American car shortage increased until it attained 115,000 cars on November 1, with almost an equal number on December 1. On January 1, 1917 the car shortage declined to about 62,000 but during that month it increased to over 100,000 and the shortage continued throughout the year.<sup>37</sup>

Until the United States began to feel the effects of the war in early 1916 vis-a-vis her own railways, Russian

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<sup>36</sup> Later an "International Commission" composed of representatives of the Allied Governments began to meet in London. When the United States entered the war, this question of allied purchases became more urgent. William G. McAdoo to Woodrow Wilson, May 16, 1917, William G. McAdoo Papers, Library of Congress, Box 522. Hereinafter cited as McAdoo MSS.

<sup>37</sup> John J. Esch, "Regulation of Car Service Under Government Control of Operation," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LXXVI (March, 1918), 34.

railway purchases spurred the American economy. Due to the American car surplus in 1914, the Eddystone plant of the Baldwin Locomotive Company closed because of lack of orders and thousands of people were without work. A contemporary headline from an American journal reported in November 1914 that, "Russian Railroad Buying May Help the American Rail Mills and Car Builders - - Domestic Demand Light." The American market for cars and locomotives was so sluggish that reports concerning Russian purchases of several hundred locomotives and 2,000 to 20,000 cars appeared as a real bonanza. Russian-American railway negotiations were also continuing relative to Russian purchases of 67-pound rails, in addition to 10,000 tons of 20-pound sections with expectations of orders amounting to as much as 100,000 tons.<sup>38</sup>

Russian railway orders in the United States accelerated in 1915. On April 1, the New York Times reported that Russia planned to place an order in the United States for rolling stock amounting to about \$7,000,000. Only a few months later, Baldwin Locomotive Company announced a Russian order of 250 locomotives totalling \$6,000,000, one of the company's largest contracts. Both Baldwin plants at Philadelphia and Eddystone were working at capacity on allied railway orders totalling more than \$20,000,000.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>New York Times, September 15, 1914, 9; "Russian Railroad Buying", Iron Trade Review, LV (November 12, 1914), 898.

<sup>39</sup>New York Times, June 13, 1915, II, 3.

The Pullman Company, however, rejected a Russian contract involving 50,000 cars and totalling \$25,000,000. Russia offered payment in government notes but the company insisted on a cash payment. More important, the Tsarist Government required Pullman to build assembling plants in Russia for 40,000 cars.<sup>40</sup>

Another American railway company was more fortunate with Russian orders. The American Locomotive Works supplied the locomotive parts, flat cars, and steel rails used in double-tracking the Trans-Siberian Railway from Vladivostok to Moscow.<sup>41</sup>

Russia needed not only American railway equipment but American workers as well. On October 2, 1915, from early morning to late afternoon, an army of unemployed railway workers besieged a New York City office building in response to a newspaper advertisement offering lucrative employment on a "war emergency railroad 500 miles from the fighting zone." Free transportation both ways to Russia with board, lodging, and medical attention were added inducements. Skilled American railway men were needed to double-tract the southern arterial branch of Archangel-Moscow railway.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid, July 3, 1915, 3.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid, September 24, 1915, 3.

<sup>42</sup>The number of men hired is inconclusive, but there was some complaint later of the "uncomfortable" experiences of the men who went. Due to "some lack of foresight and efficiency" they frequently went "hundry," ibid, October 5, 1915, 3; ibid, Editorial, March 15, 1916, 10.

American railway equipment and skilled workers seemingly did not ameliorate Russia's deteriorating transportation facilities. The Military Attache at Petrograd, Miles, wrote a pessimistic memorandum in mid October 1915, regarding Russian railway service. Traveling continuously with the Russian army, he began "to feel a little discouraged as to the prospects of final success." It was not military demoralization causing concern but the "gross incompetency of the railroad service." Miles returned from a trip on the 467 mile Moscow-Minsk Railway, on a double-tracked line and supposedly one of Russia's best railroads. Passenger trains made the trip in the pre-war period in 13-1/2 hours, but it took him 6-1/2 days to make the trip. He saw no trains going in his direction. To add to Miles' dismay, a Russian officer told him that he made the distance Minsk-Smolensk, 207 miles, in as fast time as possible by jumping off at each station and catching the train ahead with only eight such changes.

Minsk was the advanced base for at least two and probably three Russian armies. On leaving Minsk, Miles had to wait 10 hours for the first train going to the front in spite of the fact that the yards were full of trains apparently ready to move. Returning to Moscow, he made the trip in 4-1/2 days, but in a train composed of thirty-five coaches and one locomotive, whose fastest speed, according to his stop watch, was twelve miles per hour.

The Military Attache brushed aside the usual explanation that in war trains do not run so well with the comment

that this was "ridiculously inadequate, but not more so than the other excuses". He pointed out that there were enormous quantities of wood piled at frequent intervals along the track, cut and marked with the government mark. Miles believed that incompetence was not the answer, but "something worse." This "something worse" according to a British source was the "corruption within the Empire" demonstrated by Russian rejection of British assistance in the "management of their affairs." An English company offered to lay light railroads for them, but the Russians "absolutely refused" the offer.<sup>43</sup>

More up-to-date information indicated that Britain's offer received new consideration in late 1915 and the early months of 1916. The Council of Ministers discussed a recommendation to build 25,000 miles of strategical railways in 1917. Great Britain and France were to finance the construction of these lines in return for the right of control over them.<sup>44</sup>

Russia's railway plans not only attracted great attention in England and France but the United States as well. American capital was particularly interested in the scheme of railway expansion leading to the construction of about 50,000

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<sup>43</sup>Lt. Sherman Miles, "Russian Railroad Service", October 19, 1915, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-6.

<sup>44</sup>The project itself and method of financing was seemingly not discussed after the March Revolution of 1917. "Recent Railway Construction in Russia," Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv, April 1, 1918 cited in RG 182, E 192, Box 929.

miles of new railroads. The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce emphasized the extensive opportunities for American financiers and construction companies to share in Russia's post-war railway development.<sup>45</sup>

With this in mind, it was perhaps inevitable that Russia should attract enterprising American railway promoters. Charles E. Smith, a former valuation engineer for the Missouri Pacific Railway and member of the National Valuation Board, was one of these men. In May 1916, he and his wife left for Petrograd where he reported on certain industrial matters and represented American transportation interests. The Tsarist Empire's sudden attraction for Yankee railway experts was related to the government's Special Railway Commission of 1916 that was then assessing the nation's present and future railway needs.<sup>46</sup>

A substantial segment of American business, especially railway, steel and tool companies was, therefore, heavily involved in Russia's crash program to construct, repair and rehabilitate her railways and rolling stock. Such companies as Baldwin Locomotive Works, Allied Contracting Company,

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<sup>45</sup>New York Times, March 18, 1917, I, 2; Railway Gazette (London), XXVI, No. 4, January 26, 1917; 120; Railway Gazette (London), XXVI, No. 15, April 13, 1917, 447; New York Sun, June 21, 1916, 3.

<sup>46</sup>Railway Review (Chicago), LXI, December 22, 1917, 768; U. S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, 1919 (Washington: 1937), 250. Hereinafter cited as Foreign Relations.



American Steel Export Company, United States Steel Products Company, American Locomotive Works and American Car & Foundry Company among others filled Russian orders. Many of these orders were placed by the Russian Railway Mission in the United States, in Petrograd and through inter-allied agencies. A balance sheet of American purchases drawn up on November 1, 1918 indicated that the Russian Railway Department had placed orders for railway supplies in the amount of \$31,126,380. This is only part of an undetermined total greatly exceeding the latter figure.<sup>47</sup>

By 1916, Russia's railway difficulties were already numerous. Troop transportation caused chaotic internal distributive problems. Division of authority, between civilian and military leadership caused more difficulty. Unnecessary and hasty mobilization of troops caused labor shortages which could not be met by the unskilled efforts of women and children. German occupation of the Baltic with the evacuation of the Riga factories seriously hampered the construction of new rolling stock. From 1915 onward, the railways experienced great difficulty in securing metal, particularly iron, for axles and repairs. Two large factories involved in the construction of axles were also taken by the Germans.

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<sup>47</sup>"State of Contracts on Which Payments Have Not Been Completed and the Balance of Payments On Which Cannot Be Covered by Special Credit Allocated by the United States Government," November 1, 1918, RG 182, Russian Bureau, E 251-247, Box 2.

Available metal was diverted into the manufacture of artillery and munitions.<sup>48</sup> All of these factors hampered efficient transportation and accelerated the deterioration of the overburdened railway network.

Russia's value to her allies can not be overestimated. Winston Churchill commented, "the endurance of Russia is a prime factor, until the United States had entered the war, ranked second only to the defeat of the German submarines as a final turning point of the struggle." Anything that made it more difficult for Russia to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion retarded the entire allied war effort. The more difficulties the Tsarist Government experienced, the greater her war weariness, the more alarmed her allies became. Unspoken but not heeded was the concern that she might negotiate a separate peace.<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately, British and French communications with their "silent ally" were uncertain and hazardous at best. Her special problems were not recognized by the allies; Englishmen and Frenchmen knew very little of Russia's struggles on their behalf. Correspondents were more readily attracted to the glamour sites in France than to Russia. A situation of journalistic ignorance developed whereby

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<sup>48</sup>Raoul Labry, L'industrie russe et la revolution (Paris: 1919), 47-49.

<sup>49</sup>Winston S. Churchill, The Aftermath (New York: 1929), 61; "Our Russian Allies," The Spectator, (London) CXXVI (January 8, 1916), 38-39.

Russia's sacrifices of manpower and territory went unrecognized, unrewarded and unpraised.<sup>50</sup>

The same year, 1916, the transportation situation became a matter of serious discussion in the Duma, which did not hesitate to point out the government's shortcomings. Trepov, the new Minister of Ways of Communication reported progress but was sharply criticized for needless delay. A Russian journal commented that transportation disorganization had become so crucial that it required action rather than verbalization. In November 1915 during a ten day period on the Moscow line the number of railway cars needing repairs increased from 9,000 to over 14,000. It took 2600 soldiers from the Moscow garrison three days to clear the lines. At the same time over 5,000 cars needed repairs in the district of Petrograd alone.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Stanley Washburn, The Times correspondent, was one exception. Washburn, an American, developed extensive diplomatic and military contacts in Russia. He knew the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, the British Ambassador, George Buchanan, and the United States Ambassador, David Francis. He secured almost unlimited access to the Russian front in March 1915. Within three months he wrote his editor, Lord Northcliffe, that his "credentials from the Government were such that I can return to Russia and go right to the front without stopping a day in Petrograd for any red tape." Washburn traveled extensively with the Russian Eighth army and corresponded with its commander, General A. Brusilov. He was known as the "Russian-American" and "Ambassador of the Russian truth" among his Russian friends. Stanley Washburn, Washburn Papers, Correspondence, 1912-1923, Library of Congress. Hereinafter cited as Washburn MSS.

<sup>51</sup>"La crise des transports a l'etranger-Russie", Le journal des transports, XXIX (January 29, 1916), 19.

Two other operational difficulties developed in 1916; the first, a fuel shortage and second, transport disorganization. The fuel crisis became even more acute the following year, but there was a direct relation between the deterioration of railway locomotives and the need for an ever increasing share of the fuel available for industrial purposes. By 1917, the railways and the navy required over 50% of the available fuel. In order to clear the chain of military-civilian command over transport, the Russian Government late in 1916 placed all railways, in the war zone and the interior, under one man control. It was not successful although it did eliminate some of the friction between the Ministry of Transport and the military authorities. By the beginning of 1917 available rolling stock was entirely insufficient for the army's needs. Refugees contributed to the general chaos by pre-empting 115,000 cars for living accommodations.<sup>52</sup>

To aggravate matters further, a food crisis threatened the nation. As one observer said, "the supply organization was becoming worse and worse." Towns were short of food, the peasants could not buy boots, but all felt there was plenty of everything in Russia and that the shortage was due to the chaos prevailing throughout the country. While Petrograd and Moscow had no meat, the papers wrote of

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<sup>52</sup>Railway Review (Chicago, LXI (September 1, 1917), 252; "Les Chemins de fer Houillers en Russie", Le journal des transports, XXXIX (October 7, 1916) 262-263; Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War, 195.

great consignments of frozen meat accumulated at Siberian railway stations which were bound to be ruined by milder weather. Each minister or senior official disclaimed responsibility and cited someone else as guilty, an old game of "buck passing." In order to improve food transport to the cities, the Government temporarily suspended passenger traffic. This failed. After one of these stoppages the locomotives were incapacitated: pipes burst during a freeze because the water had not been run off. Instead of improving, the transport problem increased.<sup>53</sup>

The United States, however, continued to profit from Russia's transport crisis. In February 1916, the Baldwin Locomotive Company announced a contract for 350 gasoline engine locomotives - almost automobiles on rails - for use on Russia's eastern battle front. Her narrow track requirements permitted their passage back and forth through almost any part of the earthworks on the firing line for the transportation of munitions and supplies. Baldwin's financial position was so improved that the President had to deny a rumor that the company was negotiating to take over the American Locomotive plants.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War, 194-195.

<sup>54</sup>New York Times, February 27, 1916, 2.

American business thrived on Russian orders not only for railway equipment but for rifles and munitions.<sup>55</sup> In at least one case there was an intimate connection between railway supplies and munitions. The Eddystone Ammunition Company, formed with a nominal capital of \$50,000 leased factory buildings from the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Eddystone, Pennsylvania. S. M. Vauclain, Vice-President of Baldwin, headed the new corporation. Under the agreement with the munitions works, Baldwin received payments on each shell manufactured. Similar arrangements were written with Remington Arms of Delaware leasing buildings for the manufacture of 3,000,000 Russian rifles. Bankers holding the bulk of the Eddystone Corporation stock then executed a composite bond for \$10,000,000 divided in proportion to their stock holding and obligated themselves to furnish sufficient funds to complete the contract. The order was placed through J. P. Morgan and Company.

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<sup>55</sup>Russian orders in the United States are difficult to unravel. During the years 1916 and 1917 Nicholas N. Khrabov, a Major General in the Russian Army, with offices in New York City was President of the Artillery Commission of the Russian Supply Committee in the United States. During the latter part of 1917 he became President of the entire Russian Supply Committee in the United States. Another committee served in Washington and little is known of their work. Different Russian Departments also had their own representatives in the United States and were not apparently coordinated or integrated. "Statement of General Nicholas N. Khrabov at the offices of Peaslee, Brignam, and Ginnert, 501 Fifth Avenue, New York City, Thursday, October 17, 1929", Nikolai M. Khrabov Papers, New York Public Library. Hereinafter cited as Khrabov MSS.

In mid September 1916, Eddystone Ammunition Corporation turned over their \$40,000,000 Russian order for shells to the Baldwin Locomotive Works. Eddystone ran into trouble when the Russian Government ordered numerous changes in the shell specifications. Inspections were so rigid that deliveries of finished shells were held back day after day, running into more than a year's delay in delivery. Baldwin took over the contract on a cost percentage basis. The original contract carried a twelve per cent profit on gross business.<sup>56</sup>

With nearly 4,000 miles of railways under construction in the Fall of 1916, it was, therefore, only natural for the Russian Government to turn to America in meeting its railway needs. In November, they were in the American market for 1,000 locomotives. Arrangements were completed for the purchase of 100 with the order divided between three manufacturers. However, the offer to purchase equipment was withdrawn because of "difficulties in the way of financing the transaction." These "difficulties" grew out of an Imperial Russian Government loan of \$50,000,000. Proceeds were not used for the payment of railway supplies but devoted

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<sup>56</sup>More significantly, J. P. Morgan acted as Allied financier in American money markets and had floated numerous loans earmarked for the Russian Government prior to America's entry into the war. Superficially, it would appear that very little of funds, if any, left the United States. The New York Times for the period reports many of these financial dealings. For this particular episode with Baldwin see New York Times, September 21, 1916, 19.

practically entirely to the purchase of munitions.<sup>57</sup>

Late in December, J. P. Morgan acting as agent for the Russian Imperial Railways, placed orders for 3,000 cars divided equally between American Car & Foundry Company and the Standard Steel Car Company. The Russian Government also made arrangements for the purchase of 50 additional locomotives from the Canadian Locomotive Company making the total for the month of 380. Previous orders were placed with the Baldwin and American Locomotive Companies.<sup>58</sup>

This chronic Russian car shortage affected the Trans-Siberian Railway and especially Vladivostok. Russia's railway men at Vladivostok expected that the arrival of American rolling stock ordered in 1915 would be followed immediately by further consignments of cars and locomotives. They did not foresee that so few freight cars would be returned from Russia. In all, 1,840,000 cars of cargo arrived in Vladivostok during 1916. Since all the Russian railways were deficient of rolling stock the Trans-Siberian had to suffer the consequences of the government's short-sighted pre-war and current railway planning.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>"New Railways in Russia", BRF, Commerce Reports, April 6, 1916, 76-77; New York Times, November 17, 1916, 12.

<sup>58</sup>New York Times, December 20, 1916, 18.

<sup>59</sup>"Trans-Siberian Railway - Congestion in Vladivostok," August 29, 1919, RG 182, E 192, Box 929.



Deterioration of the rolling stock was a most critical problem. In January 1916 there were over 72,000 freight cars in operation; one year later, only 70,000 cars remained in daily operation. Up to 1916 the balance sheet of the railways showed a profit; in 1916 they began operating at a loss.<sup>60</sup> As the war continued into its third year, Russian locomotive and car works were progressively unable to meet the nation's railway needs. The number of unfilled orders for engines on January 1, of the years 1915, 1916 and 1917 were 125, 347, and 538 respectively. The number of unfilled car orders for the same years were 1,997, 10,946 and 9,543. Since twenty-five percent of the engines on the Russian lines were more than 35 years old, the railway situation was already critical by 1917.<sup>61</sup>

In fact, 1916 was probably the last year in which either the Russian Government in cooperation with its allies and with neutral America could remedy the situation. Statistics indicate that in March 1916, 3.7 percent of the railway cars and 15.7 percent of the locomotives were out of service. Only one year later, six percent of the cars and 19.5 percent of the locomotives needed service.<sup>62</sup> In June,

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<sup>60</sup>Railway Age (Philadelphia), LXVII No. 6, (August 8, 1919), 872.

<sup>61</sup>G. Mitinsky, "Data on the Locomotive and Car Works of Russia and Their Inability to Supply Russian Railways", Undated (1917?), RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

<sup>62</sup>"L'usure du Material roulant en Russie", Le journal des transports, XLI (November-December, 1918), 169.

when the number of cars needing repairs reached 3,000, an American banking group announced a \$50,000,000 American credit for the Russian Government; her next loan was specifically earmarked for railway building and industrial purposes.<sup>63</sup>

As the year 1917 approached, even the United States railway industry could not meet American railway requirements. In 1916, America manufactured 160,000 freight cars and 5,000 locomotives at a cost of \$575,000,000 for domestic and foreign markets. The following year American manufacturers constructed 58,000 freight cars and 5,600 locomotives, 3,400 of which were for America's allies costing \$520,000,000.<sup>64</sup>

Not unexpectedly, Russian railway orders began to affect the American market. The interaction between the two markets became more and more obvious during 1917. Late in January 1917, the United States experienced a freight tie-up, so that domestic railroad congestion complicated conditions at furnaces, rolling mills, mines and coke plants. Russia, however, needed 800,000 tons of rails and American steel men sought to distribute the \$30,000,000 contract among the rail mills for rolling. As the mills could charge \$20 more per ton for crude steel than for rails they naturally preferred the more profitable orders. Although American

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<sup>63</sup>New York Times, June 14, 1916, 19.

<sup>64</sup>Figures rounded off, ibid, January 5, 1918, 15.

companies who had taken previous contracts had difficulty in obtaining steel, the Russian Government attempted to place additional orders for freight cars and track material.

Generally, American railroads withdrew from the market, having given up hope of securing cars in time for use, due to the high cost and long term deliveries.<sup>65</sup> If American railroads were in such a predicament, the position of buyers for the Russian State Railways was desperate.

By 1917, then, Russia should not have depended so greatly upon the United States to supply her railway needs. Where the expectation is great, so too is the disappointment. Regrettably, neither Russian nor American railway promoters understood this. As late as January of 1917, a knowledgeable newspaper commented, "the Russian Government is spending several hundred million dollars on railroad construction, most of which will have to be turned out to the United States."<sup>66</sup>

While the United States railway situation changed rapidly, Russia's remained static. M. Krieger-Voynovski, Minister of Railways, held a press conference on the railway situation the first week in February. He emphatically disclaimed any intention of reforming railway administration.

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid, VII, January 28, 1917, 4.

<sup>66</sup>The Railway Gazette (London), XXV, No. 10 (September 15, 1916), 249; ibid, XXVI, No. 5 (February 2, 1917), 141.

Admitting the serious situation with the army and munitions absorbing 50 percent of the railways' carrying capacity, Voynovski saw no way in which the situation could be remedied due to prevailing war conditions.<sup>67</sup> Russia, thus confessed her inability to remedy her own transport problems.

Paradoxically, Russia's ambitious railway schemes depended upon continued American assistance. Under the headline, "Russia Wants Union Pacific", the New York Times reported that the Petrograd office of the American International Corporation had secured an option for the construction of a Russian transcontinental railroad. The contract called for \$250,000,000 in American capital as part of the construction cost of the new railway system with headquarters in Moscow.<sup>68</sup>

Another post war scheme involving American capitalists in a projected Moscow-Donetz Railway met with strong opposition from several Russian economists. They wished to continue the existing system of Government railways and were reluctant to involve the whole Russian railway policy in the international capital market. Government ownership was preferable with its low profits and steady economic development.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Novoe Vremya, January 25, 1917 (Old Style) cited in The Railway Gazette (London), XXVI, No. 14 (April 6, 1917), 415.

<sup>68</sup>New York Times, VII, February 11, 1917, 6.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, February 22, 1917, 4.

America's railway capitalists were interested in future Russian contracts, but other foreign transportation officials were concerned with the more immediate problem of Russia's railroads. George Bury, Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, toured Russia at the request of the British and Russian Governments in the early months of 1917. Traveling from Lapland to the Caucasus, Bury made transportation recommendations which were accepted by the Imperial Government and later by the new regime. Bury concluded that Russia made a "mistake" by patterning her railways after that of Europe "rather than America". If Russia, according to Bury, had been equipped with railways similar to those of Canada she would "have played a much greater part in this war."<sup>70</sup> Bury overlooked American efforts to keep Russian railways operating.

American exports of freight cars, locomotives, and railway track material during the critical three year period of 1915 through 1917 totalled \$61,000,000. In 1915, the United States exported over \$22,000,000 in railway supplies, two-thirds of which were destined for Asiatic Russia. The following year, over \$20,000,000 of exports were almost evenly divided between European and Asiatic Russia. During the latter year, 1917, exports amounted to little more than

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid, April 26, 1917, 19.

\$19,000,000 with more than half sent to European Russia.<sup>71</sup>

Not only is the quantity small when compared to the grandiose schemes of American capitalists for post-war profit in Russian railway enterprises, but the destination is significant.

European Russia was accessible only through Russia's northern ports; because the German and Austrian armies closed her western land frontiers. Asiatic Russia meant primarily the port of Vladivostok, the nation's only ice-free port, and it meant the long-haul over the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The war seriously impaired Russia's economic mechanisms of exchange, production and distribution; it became impossible to export any goods whatever. Allied loans met her foreign exchange problem but they were devoted almost exclusively to military requirements. Imports destined for civilian consumption were also impossible; tonnage was scarce and the slogan, "everything for the war" meant that the war effort had the first and only claim upon imports. With Russian industry diverted to war production, civilian needs increased while the means of meeting those needs decreased. By the beginning of 1917 the country lacked everything from nails, boots, agricultural implements and manufactured goods. Nothing could be obtained "even for money". The peasant who could not get anything for money

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<sup>71</sup>"Table: Principal Exports from the United States to European and Asiatic Russia in the Calendar Years 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918", RG 182, E 192, Box 928.

and who did not know what to do with it abandoned agriculture and produced only what he needed.<sup>72</sup>

Russia's railway disorganization became irreversible sometime between the Fall of 1916 and the March Revolution of 1917. The number of locomotives increased 1.5 percent and the number of cars three percent over comparable prewar figures. However, the number of cars and locomotives in operation in 1916 was from three to eight percent less because of the shortage of material and skilled help in the works and shops. Locomotive-car miles increased 22 percent. The strain upon the entire transportation became evident in 1916 and rapidly reached a crisis situation. Alphonse I. Lipetz, Chief of the Russian Mission of Ways of Communication in the United States, characterized the stages as "disturbance" and then "disorganization". According to his evaluation, the latter stage ensued just before the March 1917 revolution. Railway disorganization led to the demoralization of Russia's entire economic life and ultimately to revolution.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Roger Wells (U. S. Navy Intelligence), "Trade Conditions in Russia", January 6, 1918, RG 182, E 192, Box 928.

<sup>73</sup>Lipetz, "General Railway Situation in Russia," N. Y. Railroad Club, 5669.

## CHAPTER III

### THE AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMISSION OF RAILWAY EXPERTS TO RUSSIA: PHASE ONE- MOTIVATION AND ORGANIZATION, MARCH-MAY 1917

The March Revolution<sup>1</sup> toppled the centuries old Tsarist Government. When the old regime fell, everything went down with it, including the railway system. During the days preceding the formation of the Provisional Government, two men, A. Bublikov and George V. Lomonossov, seized control of the Ministry of Ways of Communication, the nerve center of railway administration in Petrograd.

Bublikov was the more decisive of the two men. The day the revolution began, he sent telegram "114" calling for the formation of railroad committees staffed by the railwaymen. He then sent a second order which was almost as important forbidding any movement of military trains in

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<sup>1</sup>The Russians continued until 1918 to use the Julian calendar although the West changed to the Gregorian calendar in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the eighteenth century the Julian (Old Style) calendar was eleven days behind the Gregorian (New Style) calendar; twelve days behind it in the nineteenth century and thirteen days behind it in the twentieth century. In Old Style dating this is the February Revolution. All dates are in New Style.



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#### EXPERTS TO RUSSIA: PHASE ONE-

#### MOTIVATION AND ORGANIZATION,

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the region of 166 miles around Petrograd. All Russia learned of the revolution and understood the Duma had made it. It took months for the average Russian to realize this falsification. Bublikov's audacity in notifying all Russia of the creation of new power at a time when there was in fact none, averted in many places, even a shadow of counter-revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Simultaneously, left-wing elements formed the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. In the ensuing struggle for control between the Provisional Government and the Soviet, the former possessed the legality of power, but the latter the reality of power. During the months between the March and November Revolutions, contemporaries sometimes spoke of Dual Government or Dual Power. This is misleading. From the outset of the March Revolution, the Soviet had the power, but did not choose to exercise it.

Governmental instability encouraged disorders on the railways. Soldiers increasingly ignored the restraints of discipline. On March 15, the Chief of the Railway station at Oredezh begged the Ministry to "safeguard the line and especially the station of Oredezh from pillage by drunken and hungry soldiers . . ." Continuing, "all the

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Browder and Alexander Kerensky, The Russian Provisional Government, Documents, II (Stanford: 1961), 755-764 (Hereinafter cited as Documents); George V. Lomonosoff, translators D. H. Dubrowsky and Robert T. Williams, Memoirs of the Russian Revolution, (New York: 1919), 13, 17, 20-21.

employees are terrorized and their last piece of bread is taken away from them." The peasants looted the cooperatives and the freight station seizing the flour destined for shipment. Soldiers beat railway personnel and threatened passengers. Lomonossov suggested to Bublikov that "all these hooligans should immediately be discharged; they had no place on the railroads." Bublikov agreed, but the new Minister of Ways of Communication, N. V. Nekrasov, a Constitutional Democrat, hesitated. Nekrasov, a Professor of Statistical Construction, was a Kadet and "an idealist" who became acquainted with railroads in the Duma.

Disruption of the railways continued. A ministerial telegram abolished the railroad gendarmerie. Rank and file railwaymen, instead of working, attended meetings. The Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies appointed a Commissar for each railroad and where the former appointed a Bolshevik the most disorganization occurred. On March 18, Alexander Kerensky and Nekrasov sent a telegram to all railwaymen informing them of the establishment of a special committee in the Ministry of Ways of Communication to discuss the question of employee representation in railway administration. Employees were to await the committee's decision on the matter "and not to undertake immediately any steps of their own which may break up the

the regular work of the railroads so necessary during the present war and during the establishment of the new power."<sup>3</sup>

The situation, however, did not improve. When the first All-Russian Congress of Railroadmen met, the majority of the delegates were Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries and Internationalists. The delegates elected an Executive Committee known as VIKZhel which competed directly with the Transport Ministry. VIKZhel wished all authority over the railroads to be transferred to the committees while the Ministry insisted upon the greater efficiency of a single authority. The Bolsheviks, at first, had little or no influence among the railroadmen, but they soon organized a special District Committee in Petersburg (on Ligonka) for the purposes of propaganda and agitation among the Petersburg railroad workers. There was some division within the Bolsheviks on the question of a single or a democratic railroad authority. At the Second All-Russian Congress of Railroadmen, less than two months before their seizure of power, the Bolsheviks failed to have their statute or any of their candidates approved. What VIKZhel accepted was a compromise between centralization and democracy. Nekrasov's order of early June permitting the railroad committees and the Union of Railroadmen to exercise

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<sup>3</sup>Lomonossoff, Memoirs of the Russian Revolution, 60, 62, 73-75, 76-77.

supervisory rights and control on the railroads accelerated the movement toward decentralization.<sup>4</sup>

Statistics indicate the full extent of railway disorganization. Locomotive repairs halted because half the boilermakers stopped work to enlist on railway committees. By July of 1917, the total of railway employees on committees reached 6,000.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of 1917, there were 3400 disabled locomotives. On July 28, 5200 or 25.3% were not in operation. On some lines the percentage increased to 40%. Locomotive runs declined in mileage and the number of locomotives in need of repair steadily increased. Heavy repairs took 180 days rather than 100 days.

The condition of the freight cars was no better. On January 1, 1917, 25,000 cars needed repairs, 4.8% of the entire number. Seven months later there were 51,076 out of repair or 9%. In June, the daily rate of cars needing repairs varied from 4800 to 6000 while in June of 1916 the number amounted to about 3000 daily. During the first half of 1917, the railways carried 700,000 car loads less than in the half-year for 1916.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Browder and Kerensky, Documents, II, 7550764.

<sup>5</sup>Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War, 196.

<sup>6</sup>Den, October 11, 1917 from "Transport Difficulties," Daily Review of the Foreign Press, November 5, 1917 cited in RG 182, E 192, Box 929.

To add to this disorganization, rolling stock could not be replaced. Before the war Russia had seventeen car factories with an annual working capacity of 63,000 freight cars and 4150 passenger cars; actually the production was much lower. There was a dramatic decline in production during the war years from 27,674 cars in 1914; 31,000 in 1915; 21,600 in 1916 and 8300 in the first nine months of 1917. The daily total of freight cars loaded was 19,500 during the months April-October 1917 while during the previous period in 1916 the total was 25,000. During October and November the decline in loading was especially noticeable - 16,627 and 14,224. The total of freight cars loaded during January to November inclusive was less in 1917 than in 1916 by 2,400,000, the decrease in November being nearly 500,000. Total decrease for the year 1917 was 36,000 short tons less than in 1916.<sup>7</sup>

According to the inventory of November 1, 1917, there were 21,870 locomotives on all Russian railways and in the summer of 1917, 568,000 freight cars. While the railways of European Russia suffered more heavily than the Trans-Siberian, the latter's disorganization significantly affected its traffic capacity. Average daily loadings at the port of Vladivostok in October, 1917 were 104 cars; in November, 61 cars.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>The Delo / Delo Naroda February 21, 1918 cited in "Transport", May 24, 1918, RG 182, E 192, Box 929.

<sup>8</sup>"Russia-Transportation and Communications," undated, RG 182, E 192, Box 929.

There were always predictions the trains would stop running altogether; in one case the date was July 9, later the date was November 15. Russia's entire economic life depended upon her railways, and from July onward more and more locomotives and cars needed repairs. There was less and less material (metal) to repair them with and repairs took longer because labor was unreliable. Circulars flowed unceasingly from the Ministry of Ways and Communication without improving the situation.<sup>9</sup>

When the Provisional Government fell in November 1917, the length of railways in operation had been reduced by 19%. Out of a pre-war total of 30,000 locomotives and 570,000 cars only 15,000 locomotives and 520,000 cars remained in operation by October 1917. In 1916, Russia repaired 559 locomotives and the following year but 396. The main causes of the deterioration of the Russian railways were the lack of fuel and iron, labor difficulties and administrative changes.<sup>10</sup>

Administrative changes developed from dismissals and new appointments. During the first four months of the revolution the new government dismissed about 900 railway administrators because of their arbitrary actions under the old regime and the feeling against them by the workers. Many

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<sup>9</sup>"La revolution russe et les chemins de fer," Le journal des transports, XLI (January 12, 1918), 6-7; Arthur Raffalovich, "Les chemins de fer en Russie," ibid, XLIII (September 20, 1919), 472-473.

<sup>10</sup>"New Railways in Foreign Countries," Guaranty Trust Company of New York, October 28, 1919.

of their replacements had little or no railway experience. In the latter part of June, Nekrasov appointed public leaders as commissars for the state and private railroads, and for the boards of railroad companies.<sup>11</sup>

Russia's railway position was, therefore, difficult but not hopeless. The revolution affected the railways as they did the entire economic life of the country. Questions of equipment repair were ignored under the pressure of more stirring political events. Disabled cars and engines increased rapidly until questions of ordinary maintenance were only secondary to the pressing problem of saving the railways from total disintegration.<sup>12</sup>

None of these difficulties escaped the attention of Russia's allies, particularly Great Britain. George Bury, Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific and Britain's expert on the Murmansk Railroad, met Nekrasov on March 19. Lomonossov, resentful of Nekrasov's dismissal of Bublikov, commented "the Minister was tangled and blundered in answering." Since Lomonossov refers to Bury as Carey in his Memoirs, he was as confused as the Minister. But the confusion may have been the fault of the interpreter.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Browder and Kerensky, Documents, II, 704.

<sup>12</sup>"The Russian Railway Situation," Railway Review (Chicago), LXXIV (May 10, 1924), 840.

<sup>13</sup>Lomonossov, Memoirs of the Russian Revolution, 84-85. Bublikov was a member of the Duma, but Lomonossov was a distinguished engineer who, in 1917, became President of the Russian Railway Mission to the United States. For additional details of the latter's career: The Railway Gazette (London), LXXX, No. 22 (June 2, 1944), 576.



Britain's Ambassador in Petrograd, George Buchanan, was extremely worried. He admitted frankly that his "only thought was how to keep Russia in the war, maintain discipline in the army and keep the Russians fighting instead of fraternizing with the Germans." Another Briton, Lord Alfred Milner, member of the British War Cabinet, was also alarmed. Visiting Russia in late January and February, he recommended new orders for rails and locomotives with a delivery date in the last quarter of 1917. Milner was also pessimistic, believing that Bury's view of the Murman Railway was too optimistic.<sup>14</sup>

This difference of opinion regarding Russia's transportation crisis centered upon Bury's recommendations to the Prime Minister; Bury recommended governmental financial arrangements enabling Russia to place American orders for 600 large locomotives and 9000 larger capacity flat cars. The Foreign Office, however, took no action as the railway material would not reach Russia until Autumn. Cautious British diplomats also did not believe Bury understood the situation.<sup>15</sup>

On March 28, Lord Milner requested General Frederick Poole, supplies liaison officer for all Russian governmental

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<sup>14</sup>Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories, II (Boston: 1925), 99; Lord Alfred Milner to Prime Minister (Lloyd George), February 22, 1917, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office, Political, Russia (War Files), 1917, Foreign Office 371/3005, W38/40885, Hereinafter cited as F.O. 371.

<sup>15</sup>George Bury to Prime Minister, March 13, 1917, F.O. 371/3005, W38/53567.

departments, to present the Allied agreement with the former government to the new Russian leaders. Under Clause 6 of the agreement, 2500 additional cars were ordered, totalling 8500 in all. Tonnage was the problem and railway orders exceeded the allotted 700,000 tons. The Russian Commission in the United States continued to place independent orders that could not be shipped in 1917. As to the British proposal requesting the Japanese Government to provide Russia with supplies of propellant, steel rails, copper and completed munitions; Milner instructed Poole to learn whether any Russian negotiations on this subject were in progress with Japan.<sup>16</sup>

Less than a week later, the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice reported that Stanley Washburn had called on him and made certain suggestions regarding the Russian situation. Washburn made four suggestions, the third, concerned Russia's railway situation. The war correspondent suggested sending prominent and competent American railwaymen at once to report fully on the railway situation. If so required, supplies and operators would be sent from the east. With the approval

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<sup>16</sup>Lord Milner to General Frederick Poole, March 28, 1917, F.O. 371/3005, W38/66017.

of the Russian Government, these men would exercise control over the workmen.<sup>17</sup>

Washburn also sought to promote Anglo-American railway cooperation in Russia by transmitting these suggestions to his employer, Lord Northcliffe, editor of The Times. He returned to the United States due to poor health and entered a sanitarium. After his discharge and arrival in Washington, the war correspondent contacted Daniel Willard, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and Chairman of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense. Through him, Washburn contacted Cabinet members and addressed the Council in Secretary of War Newton D. Baker's office. Six members of the Cabinet, the Chief of Staff and head of the Army War College heard him. Washburn thought the Russian commission should be composed of eight or ten of the best railwaymen in America. They would offer their assistance in regard to "all" of Russia's transportation problems and "if necessary suggest taking over the actual operations from the Pacific to Moscow and arrange to supply them immediately with cars, locomotive, steel rails or anything else that they may require."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Washburn suggested: (1) changing the capital from Petrograd to Moscow; (2) placing the British machinery for propaganda in Russia at the disposal of the United States Government when America entered the war; (3) American railway assistance and (4) offering Russia competent United States' agents to supervise and accelerate production of munitions. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice to Foreign Office, April 2, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/69808.

<sup>18</sup>Washburn to Lord Northcliffe, April 6, 1917, Washburn Correspondence, 1912-23, Washburn MSS.

Coincidentally, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur J. Balfour, demonstrated interest in American assistance to Russia's railway system. In a lengthy memorandum to American Ambassador Walter Page he discussed Russia's transportation difficulties.<sup>19</sup> Washburn's suggestions, therefore, may have been too much of a coincidence. Although the war correspondent may not have initiated the proposal, he did serve as the catalyst and activist in presenting the railway proposals to the American Government.

The development of this startling proposal from a private citizen, Washburn, is complicated. David Francis, the American Ambassador in Petrograd, did not have the best relations with the British Ambassador, Buchanan. As early as February 11, Francis reported his displeasure with "our English Cousins." He believed they dominated the situation in Russia and "the French and the Italian Ambassadors almost hesitate to give the time of day without consulting the British Ambassador." While admitting that Britain was financing Russia and controlling Russian expenditures, "England should not forget however that she is only able to finance Russia and the other Allies by the assistance she gets from the United States." The Ambassador was particularly concerned about British interference with American-Russian commerce.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Page to Lansing, April 6, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1917, Supplement 2, 1, 13.

<sup>20</sup>Francis to the Secretary of State (Robert Lansing), February 11, 1917, U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations,

Fortunately, collaboration was not necessary during the initial stages of the Russian Revolution. The United States acted promptly and recognized the Provisional Government of Russia on March 22. Only nine days later, the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense discussed some of the problems which could arise in the event of a war between the United States and Germany. Its chairman, Willard, reported to Secretary of War Baker that "war at the present time is quite as much a matter of transportation and production in the workshops as of strategy upon the battlefield." Willard's conclusion was more specific: "The efficiency of operation of the Trans-Siberian Railway in Russia may become a determining factor in the war, and we can not evade, if we would, such responsibility as may rest upon us in that connection."<sup>21</sup>

Later, Willard thought the proposed railroad commission might be decisive in keeping Russia in the war and relieving "this country from the necessity of sending two million more of its young men to the battle front in France . . ." Washburn received credit for stimulating interest in Russia's railway situation. Without his intervention, Willard felt it "doubtful, if such a Commission would have

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The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, II, 322-323. Hereinafter cited as Lansing Papers.

<sup>21</sup>Newton D. Baker was also Chairman of the Council of National Defense. Willard to Baker, March 31, 1917, Newton D. Baker, Papers, Library of Congress, Box 5. Hereinafter cited as Baker MSS.

gone at all, and. . .it would not have started at this time." To Willard's knowledge, "the first recommendation which was made to the Council of National Defence concerning such action by our Government, was based wholly upon your personal appeal to me." Willard said, "I know, because I presented the matter to the Council."<sup>22</sup>

Two other members of the Cabinet, Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, also heard Washburn's address to the Council of National Defense. In a letter to his son, Lane commented that he would not be surprised if the United States operated the Russian railroads. He believed that the United States would send a commission to Russia, possibly headed by William G. McAdoo, Secretary of Treasury, or Elihu Root and there would be a railroad man included. Hundreds of locomotives and tens of thousands of cars ordered by the Russian and French governments were ready for shipment, but could not be shipped due to the lack of shipping facilities.<sup>23</sup>

According to Daniels' report of the meeting, Washburn urged American control of the Siberian Railway "as the greatest help to enemies of Germany." With German submarines preventing

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<sup>22</sup>Willard to Washburn, May 6, 1917, Washburn Correspondence 1912-1923, Washburn MSS.

<sup>23</sup>Franklin Lane to George Lane, April 1, 1917, Anne W. Lane and Louise H. Wall (eds.), The Letters of Franklin K. Lane: Personal and Political (Boston: 1922), 243, 247-48.

the shipment of arms through the Baltic and the prospect that road from Archangel may be closed, Russia's "only chance of help will come from Americans over Siberian Railway." Washburn believed that Russia would welcome United States' assistance. Daniels noted in his diary that the railway was in "bad condition and poorly managed;" the railway's condition was due "as much to treachery as to incompetence." With Russia disabled, only the replacement of Russian troops by Americans could result in an Allied victory.<sup>24</sup>

Baker, in turn, reported to Secretary of State Robert Lansing on Washburn's address before the Council of National Defense. Washburn emphasized the importance of the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Russia and the importance of Russia in the European war. The war correspondent suggested sending "some expert railroad operators from America to Russia" as an "effective aid to that country's transportation system." Washburn stated that the offer "would be accepted by the Government and people of Russia as an evidence of our sympathetic desire to cooperate with them." Willard "warmly supported the idea" and offered to send the Provisional Government a small group of experienced and competent railroad men to analyze the needs of the Trans-Siberian Railway. They then would return to America with a report "showing just what, in material and men, is needed to increase the efficiency

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<sup>24</sup>David Cronon (ed.) The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-21 (Lincoln: 1963), 125-126.

of its operation." Baker conferred with President Wilson and the latter requested sending the following dispatch to the American Ambassador at Petrograd:

Would the Russian Government welcome an inspection of the Trans-Siberian Railroad by six American railway experts, with a view to making a report for the use of the Russian Government as to how the efficiency of the railroad can be increased, with possible suggestions as to equipment and expert assistance from America if agreeable to Russian Government.<sup>25</sup>

On the same day, March 31, the United States' Ambassador in Great Britain, Walter H. Page, learned from a "private" and "trustworthy" source that one of the critical problems of the Russian Government was the management of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Repeating the suggestion of his source, Page noted that American management would "greatly help" the Russian military situation. At the same time, it would be an invaluable asset in Russia's postwar industrial development and encourage future American-Russian trade.<sup>26</sup>

Of the Britons and Americans involved in the proposal of American assistance for the Trans-Siberian, only Washburn visualized the real importance of Russia to the Allies. He believed that the United States "must by every means humanly possible keep Russia with us in the war." According to his evaluation, "Russia standing firm means the difference between one year more of war and three; it means

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<sup>25</sup>Baker to Lansing, March 31, 1917, Baker MSS, Box 2.

<sup>26</sup>Page to Lansing, March 31, 1917, Foreign Relations, Russia, 1918, III, 184.



billions in money, millions in casualties and decades in the period after the war which must elapse before the world returns to the normal in economic and social conditions." To help Russia, meant to understand Russia. Washburn's goal was clear, but his means, propaganda, fell far short of his goal.<sup>27</sup>

The energetic correspondent continued to advise the American Government. In a one page letter to Lansing on April 2, Washburn suggested that the proposed commission discuss means of assisting Russia in "the operation of their railroad system, especially the Trans-Siberian." As "contact man", Washburn helpfully added that he could arrange for a "high-grade man in the confidence of both Russian and British authorities" to meet the American commission at Vladivostok and act as secretary-interpreter for the group.<sup>28</sup>

Lansing wired Francis the same day to inquire whether or not the Russian Government would welcome an inspection of the Trans-Siberian Railroad by six American railway experts. The commission would write a government report recommending methods of increasing its efficiency by offering American equipment and expert assistance. Secretary Lansing was careful to limit the American commission to the Trans-Siberian

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<sup>27</sup> "Memorandum," undated, Washburn Correspondence, 1924-45, Washburn MSS.

<sup>28</sup> Washburn to Lansing, April 2, 1917, Washburn Correspondence, 1912-23, Washburn MSS.

and he "sweetened" the offer by implying American credits and equipment could be thus secured.<sup>29</sup>

Britain was also moving in the same direction. On April 5, the British Foreign Office requested Buchanan's opinion on the likelihood of Russia handing over traffic control on the Siberian Railway to the Americans. Such a procedure could solve many of Russia's supply problems. With American responsibility for "the temporary administration" of the Siberian railway there would be no possibility of a shortage of rolling stock or of other railway equipment to meet "all necessary requirements." Significantly, the telegram concluded that, "we do not know what view the American Government would take of such a scheme, and in any case the proposal must come from them and not from us."<sup>30</sup>

In rapid succession, the Russian Charge d'Affaires in Washington, Constantin Onou, transmitted his report of a confidential interview with McAdoo. The latter called attention to the urgency of reorganizing Russian transportation and emphasized the Siberian Railroad as the most reliable means of transportation between America and Russia. To assure delivery of supplies and to prevent delay in transit, either in America or Vladivostok, railway reorganization was necessary. McAdoo also informed Onou that the United

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<sup>29</sup>Lansing to Francis, April 2, 1917, Foreign Relations, Russia, 1918, III, 184.

<sup>30</sup>Foreign Office to Buchanan (Petrograd), April 5, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/72287.

States was considering sending a technical mission to provide such assistance to his Government.<sup>31</sup>

Contrary to Washburn's assurances, the Russian Government was unenthusiastic about the proposed American railway commission. Buchanan reported a private conversation with two Ministers concerning American handling of Siberian Railway traffic: "There is no chance of Russian Government consenting to had over to them what virtually amounts to control of railway." Buchanan also reported the American suggestion of a railway mission to advise on the traffic question. Buchanan felt the proposal would be accepted.<sup>32</sup> Apparently, the British Government did not learn of the American proposal until Buchanan's communique of April 8.

About the same time Willard was writing Washburn that no reply had been received from the Russian Government, the Foreign Minister, P. N. Milyukov, telephoned Francis and officially accepted the American proposal for a railway commission. Milyukov promised to send a written confirmation the following day, but it failed to arrive. Francis subsequently learned that the consent of the Provisional Government had been granted most "reluctantly." Russia believed such a commission would not provide immediate results due to

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<sup>31</sup>Browder and Kerensky, Documents, II, 502-503.

<sup>32</sup>Buchanan to Foreign Office, April 8, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/72887.

the factors of time and distance involved; government officials were more desirous that the United States expedite railway contracts then in process. This latter request was met a week later, on April 16, when American locomotive and car manufacturers agreed to give precedence to Russian orders rather than those of domestic origin.<sup>33</sup>

Francis takes too much credit for recommending the American railway commission to Russia: "The Allied Missions of England, France and Italy by agreement. . . assigned the transportation systems of the Provisional Government to the American Ambassador."<sup>34</sup> If true, Francis was referring to Lord Milner's group. The United States, however, apparently heard of Russia's critical railway situation from an unofficial source, Washburn, and from an official source Page in Britain on March 31. There is no evidence of such an agreement and if there was the United States was not informed of the Allied decision.

From the middle of April onward, plans proceeded in the United States for the organization of a Russian Commission. On April 19, Wilson wrote the secretary that he had decided on a seven man commission headed by Elihu Root and including

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<sup>33</sup> Willard to Washburn, April 9, 1917, Washburn Correspondence, 1912-23, Washburn MSS; Francis to Lansing, April 11, 1917, Foreign Relations, Russia, 1918, III, 185; Lansing to Francis, April 16, 1917, ibid.

<sup>34</sup> David R. Francis, Russia From the American Embassy: April, 1916-November, 1918, (New York: 1921), 130.

John F. Stevens, the distinguished railway engineer.<sup>35</sup>

Other Cabinet members were also actively involved in the appointment. McAdoo, recommended A. H. Smith, President of the New York Central Railroad, a personal friend of fifteen years and a Republican as the railroad expert. Lane, recommended the appointment of Washburn to the commission as a "special collector of information" and requested a military title for him. Baker said that he would take up the matter with General Hugh Scott, Chief of Staff. The Secretary of War was much impressed with Washburn's "quick intelligence" and his position as "counsellor of Kings" and the "associate of Ministers of State in ancient monarchies." At this time, Wilson and the Cabinet were thinking in terms of one commission with the inclusion of a railway expert although the offer to the Russian Government and Washburn's proposal spoke of a technical mission of six to eight members.<sup>36</sup>

This confusion in the appointment of one or two commissions found expression in unofficial press reports to the American public. The New York Times reflected this "credibility gap" by stating, "several" of Russia's "ablest engineers" had appealed to the President for aid in reha-

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<sup>35</sup>Wilson to Lansing, April 12, 1917, Lansing Papers, II, 326; Wilson to Lansing, April 19, 1917, ibid, 327.

<sup>36</sup>McAdoo to Wilson, April 17, 1917, McAdoo MSS, Box 522; Lane to Baker, April 18, 1917, Washburn Correspondence, 1912-23, Washburn MSS.

bilitating the "crippled" Russian railway system. Russia would receive two billion dollars of the prospective five billion dollar war loan, but American aid would "go further". While money was the greatest need, "one of the greatest causes of Russian disaster and inactivity has been the demoralized condition of the transport system, which appears to have broken down at every emergency." According to the newspaper report, plans were in progress to send "more than 500 men to Russia", a "large corps of trained American railroad men" who were expected "to bring order out of all this chaos." The rationale for such American extensive assistance was to strengthen the new Russian Government in resisting the temptations of making a separate peace.<sup>37</sup>

Almost without exception, public reaction was favorable. However, Charles M. Muchnic, Vice-President of the American Locomotive Company, deprecated the possible beneficial effects of 500 technical experts. In a letter to William Redfield, Secretary of Commerce, the railway executive voiced his skepticism. In Muchnic's opinion, Russia's railway engineers were neither individually nor collectively responsible for the "alleged chaotic" conditions. The blame lay with the central government which had deprived them of the "necessary freedom of action" to operate the railroads successfully. American engineers, without a knowledge of the language or of the ability of those whom they would have

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<sup>37</sup>New York Times, April 19, 1917, 1-2.

to direct, could not acquire the requisite background in less than three years. What Muchnic envisaged was a "commission of a few big railway men" of the type of Daniel Willard. Such a commission would have broad advisory powers and act in consultation with the Ministry of Railways.<sup>38</sup>

No criticism, though, halted the organization of the commission. In joint consultation with the Russian Government, the American Military Attache in Petrograd secured the approval of the Russian War Department to a bilateral plan of railway cooperation. The plan was then sent to the War College. It delineated the obligations of the two nations: (1) the United States committed itself to supply Russia with a large quantity of rolling stock, rails and other materials; (2) Russia was to reserve adequate space for the construction of warehouses at Vladivostok; (3) American railway experts were to embark at once to examine the wharves and storehouses at Vladivostok and Harbin; (4) American engineering experts were to study and assess the operational efficiency of the Trans-Siberian Railway, especially the Ussuri, Chinese Eastern and Siberian railways, and to suggest improvements in the Russian military supply service and, (5) the American technical staff was to determine the needs of these railroads.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., April 22, 1917, 4.

and have the requisite orders placed in the United States.<sup>39</sup>

The same day, Francis reported Buchanan's recommendation that the Russian Government grant the United States exclusive control at Vladivostok and of entire Siberian Railway. Since Britain's major shipments to Russia entered through Archangel, the British controlled the port and sought to dominate the Murman Railway. Buchanan's tactics alarmed the Russians. Reporting this incident a few days later, Francis noted that his two visitors, both Russian Ministers "resented" Buchanan's suggestion because Russia did not need "nurses". Unexpectedly though they did agree to American control of Vladivostok.<sup>40</sup> Russia's revolutionary government accepted the British precedent but balked at granting any more than was absolutely necessary in regard to the railways supplying the two ports.

During the last five days of April, the inclusion of railway personnel in the special Root commission seemed assured. Baker wrote Lane concerning a conversation with Root in which he recommended Washburn. Root agreed that Washburn might be "very useful" attached to the Russian commission. The Secretary of War then requested Lane's seconding of this suggestion to the State Department. William Phillips, Assistant Secretary of State, wrote a

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<sup>39</sup>The Russian Embassy to the Department of State, undated, received April 21, 1917, Foreign Relations, Russia, 1918, III, 186-187.

<sup>40</sup>Francis to Lansing, April 21, 1917, ibid, 187; Francis to Lansing, April 29, 1917, ibid, 188-189.



letter of introduction for Washburn to Root in which he commented, "Mr. Washburn has the complete confidence of the British and Russian Governments, and is a man in whom I have every confidence myself."<sup>41</sup> The two secretaries were thus greatly involved in State Department matters thereby blurring the chain-of-command and complicating the over-all organization of the commission.

The decision to separate the railway commission from the Root Mission occurred on April 30. Following joint consultation, Willard and Lane agreed that Stevens should be withdrawn from the Root Commission and sent at the head of a separate railroad mission. Daniels also knew Stevens and the President, according to Stevens was "an old friend." Stevens' engineering achievements were legendary and he was "non-political" though a staunch Democrat. The engineer's experiences with the Isthmian Commission and the earlier Roosevelt Administration, however, disillusioned him with governmental assignments. Stevens had a reputation as a capable, hard working and independent engineer.<sup>42</sup>

In view of governmental activity during April 1917, decision-making regarding the prospective commission or commissions should have been clarified. Actually, policy-

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<sup>41</sup>Baker to Lane, April 26, 1917, Baker MSS, Box 2; William Phillips to Elihu Root, April 30, 1917, Root Papers, Library of Congress, Box 136. Hereinafter cited as Root MSS.

<sup>42</sup>Daniels, The Wilson Era, 214; Cunningham Greene (Tokyo) to Foreign Office, May 28, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/133329.

making became more confused. The President, McAdoo of the Treasury, Baker of the War Department, Lansing of the State Department, Daniels of the Navy, Lane of Interior, Willard of the Council of National Defense, General Hugh F. Scott (Chief of Staff), the War College, as well as Francis and the Military Attache in Petrograd were all involved in the so-called "Russian Commission". Washburn, Buchanan and to a lesser extent Page in London served as catalysts in the decision-making process.

Wilson decided as early as April 12 that there would be one commission headed by Root and including Stevens as the railway expert. Inexplicably, the President allowed his executive departments to proceed as though there would be two commissions, since Root's diplomatic commission could not obviously accomplish all that the United States promised to Russia in the agreement of April 21. The three executive departments vitally interested in the proposed railway commission (State, War and Treasury) did not agree on their respective authority of control and Wilson allowed all of them a free hand. As a result, the proposed railway commission would be virtually independent of all the executive departments and the chairman could only be controlled effectively by the President.

Control may have been diffuse, but the strings attached to the American proposal were plain to see. Both the United States and Russia understood that there were certain

qualifications attached to American assistance. Maurice Eagan, United States' Minister to Denmark, was particularly concerned about the growing influence of the "workingmen's associations." Anxious that rumors of German-Russian peace proposals might be true, he wrote Lansing: "If the United States could give Russia some tangible evidence that it is really in the war such as a technical corps. . .or the announcement of some special assistance the separate peace proposals might be nullified."<sup>43</sup>

Lansing emphasized American motivation in his directive to Francis warning the Provisional Government that a separate peace would be "fatal to American cooperations." To this admonition, Francis replied that Russia asked for no soldiers because she had an "army unequalled in numbers, unexcelled in courage, and led by commanders of ability and patriotism." Russia's resources were "inestimable and unapproachable." What Russia really needed was "munitions, and railroad equipment, and credit."<sup>44</sup>

While the functions of the proposed railway commission were being discussed, the Russian Government began to increase the tempo of its purchases in the United States. Francis reported that the Ministry of Ways of Communication had cabled

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<sup>43</sup>Eagan to Lansing, April 17, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1917, Supplement 2, I, 26-27.

<sup>44</sup>Lansing to Francis, April 19, 1917, ibid, 30;  
Francis to Lansing, April 21, 1917, ibid, 37.

its purchasing agent, Count Shulenberg, in New York to order 500 locomotives and 10,000 twenty-ton cars for immediate delivery. Lansing, in turn, replied that the prospective orders would not be considered until approved by the Treasury Department. Future efficiency dictated that McAdoo supervise all purchases through an Inter-Allied Commission.<sup>45</sup>

The question of Russian finances in the United States is extremely complicated. According to a communique from the British Treasury, Russian finances were not entirely regularized in May 1917. At the Paris Conference of 1915, France and Great Britain agreed to share equally financial assistance to Russia. This arrangement broke down almost at once. In practice, France financed only the expenditure of the Russian Government in France itself and Britain furnished funds for Russian Government expenditure in all

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<sup>45</sup>The organizations representing Russia in the United States were combined in a commission. The members were often independent of each other. The Anglo-Russian Sub-Committee supervised purchases requiring British funds. All purchases were financed through J. P. Morgan and Company by special arrangement with the approval of the British or with the Anglo-Russian Sub-Committee. Members of the Russian Commission in America were: General Zalubovski, President of the Commission and representing the Minister of War; Mr. Menzikhoffski Commercial Attache represented the Minister of Commerce; Count Shulenberg (railway supplies), represented the Minister of Communications; Sergei Ughet, representative of the Minister of Finance and P.A. Moroosov, head of the Anglo-Russian Commission, known as the War Industrial Committee. Professor Boris A. Bakhmetiev, who headed a special Russian commission to the United States in May 1917 was Assistant Minister of Trade and Industry and one of the first men to serve on the Anglo-Russian Sub-Committee. Bakhmetiev became the Russian Ambassador at Washington on July 5, 1917. George Booth to Root, May 10, 1917, Root MSS, Box 136; Francis to Lansing, April 25, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, III, 5.

parts of the world. Russia's "reckless action" resulted in a considerable waste of money, and fruitless competition between the Allied Governments. Britain then undertook to supervise and criticize Russian purchases. An increasing number of orders were placed through British Government Departments. On practically every article of importance, the appropriate British Government Department bought jointly for the British and Russian Governments. To moderate the harshness of the system, Britain granted a monthly credit to the Russian Government of about \$20,000,000 free of supervision with the understanding that this amount would be devoted to the support of exchange and partly to the purchase of commercial articles which were not necessarily required for military purposes.

The governing factor in the Russian position, however, was the freight problem; the Russian Government wished to place orders for much larger quantities of material than could be carried to Russia by the available routes. When Lord Milner's mission visited Petrograd in February 1917, it learned that the demands of the Russian Government amounted, with existing orders, to some 13,000,000 tons of materials. The experts decided, however, that the maximum port capacity for 1917 was 4,431,000 tons. British and French officers even considered this figure excessive. Milner's mission agreed, though to 4,250,000 tons for the calendar year 1917. The British Government "earnestly wished" that the American

Government would not permit the Russian Government to act independently of freight considerations. Britain also welcomed American representation on Lord Milner's Committee.

Existing orders for the Russian Government in the United States fell into four classes: (1) orders placed by the Russian Government in their own name prior to October 1915; (2) orders placed by British Government Department on Russian Government account in the name of the British Government through Morgan's Company; (3) contracts placed by the Russian Committee in America but signed by Morgan for the British Government in order to secure the advantage of British credit; and (4) orders placed by British Government Departments as British Government orders out of which allocations had been approved to the Russian Government.

Britain cautioned the United States on Russian orders and emphasized that future Russian purchases should be dependent upon freight capacity. British officials felt that "nothing" was "more certain than that the Russian Government would like to return to the happy old days when they had credit amounting to large sums at their absolute disposal and could send buying agents, buying everywhere a Department in Petrograd had a mind to regardless of wider considerations." Although it was "entirely" a matter for the American Government as to how much restriction they wished to place on Russian purchases, Britain warned that her experience indicated the "absolute necessity of a rigorous system of cooperation

and control." If the United States adopted the latter system, Britain felt it was "clearly desirable" that the American system be integrated with hers. In May 1917, the State and Treasury Departments reached an informal agreement that American members should be added to the International Commission in London.<sup>46</sup>

McAdoo, in a letter to President Wilson, recommended creating a United States' Purchasing Commission and the appointment of American representatives to the London International Commission. According to the secretary's information, there was "considerable dissatisfaction" on the part of Russia, France and Italy because Britain had a greater control of the commission than her allies thought necessary. McAdoo believed that even with American representation, Russia might remain dissatisfied. If Russia remained in the war, McAdoo suggested the organization of a separate commission for Russia, with headquarters in Petrograd, and composed exclusively of Russian and American representatives. The secretary discussed this possibility "very fully" with Root and the latter was to advise McAdoo accordingly.<sup>47</sup>

Confusion, however, continued to exist. On June 18,

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<sup>46</sup>Extract of Communique from Sir Hardman Lever (Financial Secretary to the British Treasury) cited in Letter of Oscar T. Crosby (Assistant Secretary, Treasury Department) to Root, May 14, 1917, Root MSS, Box 136.

<sup>47</sup>McAdoo to Wilson, May 16, 1917, Wilson Correspondence, McAdoo MSS, Box 522.

1917, Major General Scott, Army Chief of Staff, held an interview with General Manikovski, Assistant Minister of War. The Russian told his American colleague that to his knowledge the orders placed in the United States amounted to \$971,000,000, through English credit. Of that amount \$365,000,000 had been paid and \$615,000,000 remained unpaid. Manikovski requested that the English credit be released and the credit arranged in America directly. Russian governmental institutions had placed orders totalling \$143,000,000 and since the entry of America into the war orders were placed amounting to \$123,000,000.<sup>48</sup>

Other complications in Russian purchases in the United States also developed. For example, her purchases of railway supplies, were entirely dependent upon the American market. From April onward, American railways faced a shortage of 143,000 cars. American shippers ordered more cars than they needed knowing the railroads would not fill their entire order. Shippers increasingly filed multiple requests for cars with several railroads. By May 1, 1917 the shortage grew to over 148,000 cars and then declined to 105,000 by June. During the next two months, the car shortage declined to 77,700; reached 33,800 on August 1 and 31,600 the

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<sup>48</sup>"Transcript of Proceedings of Conferences Between General Manikovsky, Assistant to the Minister of War, and Officers, and General Scott, Chief of Staff, and Officers," June 18, 1917, Root MSS, Box 192.



following month.<sup>49</sup>

The question, then, of Russian railway supplies was a serious one. Of a \$100,000,000 American loan to Russia, almost half (\$46,000,000) was allocated for the purchase of 10,000 freight cars and 500 locomotives. Bakhmetiev suggested that Russia's needs for rolling stock and tonnage be removed from the "purely commercial" sphere so that a portion of the rolling stock earmarked for a June 1918 delivery date could be immediately processed for Russia. His superior, Foreign Minister Milyukov, was even more emphatic. He outlined "money, ammunition and rolling stock" as Russia's most urgent requirements from America.<sup>50</sup>

The need may have been urgent, but organizational details never troubled Russian officialdom. In mid-May Alexander Battari, a naturalized American of Russian birth and an agent of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in Russia, returned with large orders for steel rails and other materials signed by representatives of the Provisional Government.<sup>51</sup> This was a private transaction but demonstrates the tendency of the new

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<sup>49</sup>Figures rounded off. New York Times, April 22, 1917, I, 18; The Commercial and Financial Chronicle, CIV, pt 2 (June 9, 1917), 2304, Hereinafter cited as CFC; CFC, CV (August 18, 1917), 671-672; CFC, CV (September 15, 1917), 1062.

<sup>50</sup>New York Times, April 22, 1917, I, 4.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, May 14, 1917, 2.

Russian government to ignore the mundane requirements of American tonnage capacity and their own freight and port facilities.

Russia however possessed ample funds for her purchases in America. In late May Russian agents were negotiating for 10,000 freight cars and 140 locomotives costing \$19,000,000. The Iron Age and Iron Trade Review reported the Russians contracting two orders of 5,000 cars each through Washington with the Standard and American Car and Foundry Shops. Rolled steel requirements were 45,000 to 50,000 tons with 4,000 tons of railway ties destined for Russia. Russian demands for railway equipment, in turn, raised iron and steel prices to American manufacturers.<sup>52</sup>

All this purchasing did not escape the sharp eyes of journalists and Congressmen. On May 29, Senators Hoke Smith of Georgia, James A. Reed of Missouri, Philander C. Knox of Pennsylvania, and Knute Nelson of Minnesota discussed American assistance to Russian railroads. The \$100,000,000 loan to Russia for the purchase of 10,000 freight cars and 500 locomotives engendered lengthy debate. Nelson began by asking whether or not Smith considered Russia a wartime ally. Smith replied, "I hope so." Nelson then countered with the question,

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid, May 30, 1917, 11.

"Is it not material that Russia shall be in a position to maintain herself on the eastern front in order that we may be successful on the western front?" Smith stated that it was "very desirable, though I can not conceive that it is absolutely necessary." Nelson then reminded the Georgia Senator that Russia was holding sixty or seventy German divisions on her eastern front and that she was handicapped by deficient transportation, lack of foodstuffs and an ammunition shortage. Senator Nelson believed that, "if we are interested in the prosecution of this war that is one way to help it along, and it is just as material for our success as it is to send troops over to Europe." The Georgia Senator, though, did not oppose American assistance to Russian railroads, as such. Rather, he concluded the debate with the comment, "if we were engaged in reconstructing the railroads of Russia our own railroads might also come in for some consideration which would insure the public necessary transportation." Smith's contention demonstrated the illogic of American assistance on a grand scale for the Russian railroads and the existing inattention to American railway difficulties.<sup>53</sup>

Newspapers continued to draw attention to the Administration's position regarding Russian railroads and

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<sup>53</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Smith speaking on Rebuilding Russian Railroads, Sixty-fifth Congress, first session, May 29, 1917, Congressional Record, LV, 3032.

American railroads. One newspaper in July captioned, "We'll Aid Russian Railways; Will We Sustain Our Own?" The contention again was that unless the United States assisted the nation's railroads, she might lose the war. Specifically, Washington was considering a \$375,000,000 Russian loan in order to rehabilitate her railroads. At the same time, the newspaper pointed out that American railways had been denied substantial relief except of "a trifling and aggravating character." Throughout 1917, the Administration's policies of Russian railway assistance were under periodic attack because of alleged inattention to American railway needs.<sup>54</sup>

Actually, the entire question of railway orders for Russia and their amounts needs re-examination. In June, the Russians were still bemoaning the fact of their "locomotive hunger" and the fact that the United States could ensure an allied military victory by shipping her large amounts of locomotives and freight cars. Even though over 700,000 tons of supplies were awaiting shipment at Vladivostok and 350,000 tons awaiting transportation to Russia from American ports, primarily on the Pacific Coast; the Russians could see no illogic in stockpiling more equipment at Vladivostok. The estimated

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<sup>54</sup>New York Sun, July 10, 1917, 10.

value of materials stored at Vladivostok was over a billion dollars.<sup>55</sup>

One fact is clear: the amount of tentative and actual railway purchases was immense. The Root Mission learned this fact in June. On a priority list, numbered according to importance of Russian orders from America, four of the twenty-two requests originated with Ministry of Ways of Communication. These requests included 500 locomotives, 10,000 cars, boiler tubes, shop machinery for roads at the front and material for the Murman railway. Altogether the Root Commission reported Russian orders of American railway supplies deliverable in Russia before January 1, 1918 in the amount of \$202,653,000. Another order list included \$52,044,000 in additional supplies, but it is not clear whether or not the United States approved these orders. Orders planned for delivery in Russia in 1918, amounted to \$22,572,000. The Ministry of Communications ordered \$225,225,000 in railway supplies. Apparently separate from these two delivery dates and credits was another order list of Russian supplies earmarked in the American credit of \$100,000,000 to Russia;

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<sup>55</sup>New York Times, June 26, 1917, 3; ibid., July 2, 1917, 8; Report of Prof. Lomonosoff, head of the Russian Railroad Commission in America to Mr. Daniel Willard, Chairman of Transportation and Communication Committee, Advisory Commission, Council of National Defense, undated, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-18.

of this amount, the Ministry had first priority with orders totalling \$56,847,000.<sup>56</sup>

Later, on December 27, 1917, the State Department reported to the War College on the status of cars and locomotives for Russia. According to Basil Miles' information, of the August order of 500 locomotives and 10,000 cars, designated as "first order" no locomotives were shipped. Although 200 were then ready for shipment, 200 were incomplete requiring only erecting and the other 100 were in the early stages of construction. Of the cars, none were shipped although 400 were ready for shipment, and the balance was in the process of construction. Regarding Stevens' second order, the contracts had not been signed and no cars nor locomotives constructed. The negotiations were complete when broken off by the Bolshevik coup in November.<sup>57</sup>

In 1918, the United States attempted unsuccessfully to straighten out their Russian accounts relating to railway orders. The War Trade Board drew up a "Summary of Contracts Confirmed by the War Industries and Council of National Defense placed in America by the Russian Government Supply Committee," as of November 1, 1918. The compilation indicated that the Supply Committee placed

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<sup>56</sup>This is a synthesis of six different order lists. For further details see Special Report of the American Diplomatic Commission, June, July 1917, Appendix V, Root MSS, Box 192, File 2.

<sup>57</sup>Memorandum-Cars and Locomotives for Russia, December 27, 1917, RG 165, WCD 6494-24.

railway orders totalling \$52,043,297 - which could have been the amount the Root Commission was also including but not totalling in their amounts-on which \$12,695,693 was paid, \$24,318,252 delayed, \$14,035,208 cancelled and \$994,142 still unpaid as of November 1, 1918. The Russian Supply Committee admitted that they themselves did not know of a "very important" balance, including railway supplies, that required payment; the Petrograd officials had incurred it directly without them acting as intermediary. Another group of contracts is entitled, "Summary of Contracts on Which Payments Have Not Been Completed and the Balance of payments on Which Cannot be Covered by Special Credits Allocated by the United States Government;" what is so interesting is its admission that certain special funds were not included in the ordinary accounting procedures of credits and loans.<sup>58</sup> This latter group of contracts included \$31,126,300 for railway supplies, of which \$29,182,340 had been paid and \$1,861,733 cancelled, leaving an unpaid balance of \$82,298.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>The writer believes that the figure quoted of a little more than \$187,000,000 in American credits to Russia needs more investigation. There were two Russian Supply Committees, one in New York and one in Washington. Neither kept one another informed of the other's activities and both need to be researched. Statements concerning credits to Russia, and more especially railway supplies, may be no more than guesses.

<sup>59</sup>The above data are extracts from detailed financial statements, as of November 1, 1918. For details see RG 182, E 251-247, Box II, Folder 1577.

American business-railway interests in Russia added to the confusion regarding purchases. Lipetz, head of the Russian Railway Mission in New York, informed the Allied Purchasing Committee of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee in 1919 that the Westinghouse plant at Petrograd had contracted for brake equipment on seventy-five engines ordered in 1917. The equipment was to be delivered at Harbin, but no one seemed to know whether or not the material had been delivered.<sup>60</sup>

An undetermined amount of railway material was enroute when the Bolsheviki seized control of Petrograd in early November, but the evidence is incomplete. British authorities detached part of the shipment already enroute to Vladivostok and discharged it at Yokohama, Negaski and Hongkong. British authorities in Tokyo said the locomotives had been shipped to Vladivostok but the rails and other railway equipment, property of the United States Government, were disposed of by the American Consul-General at Yokohama acting under the instruction of his Government to "certain Japanese parties." Of the deliveries made in Hongkong, there was no record.<sup>61</sup>

American motivation in sending a railway mission to

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<sup>60</sup>The Inter-Allied Railway Committee operated the Siberian Railways during the period of allied intervention. Telegram of May 27, 1919, RG 43, E 332, Box 13.

<sup>61</sup>Minutes of the Inter-Allied Committee, No. 39, November 25, 1921, RG 43, R 328, Box 8.



Russia is, therefore, clear. It was a combination of military necessity and commercial possibility - liberally spiced with Washburn's persuasion.

The organization and jurisdiction of the mission is more muddled. On May 2, Ambassador Francis informed the State Department he had reached a definite understanding with N. W. Nekrasov, Minister of Ways of Communication. Stevens was to exercise "absolute control of the terminals at Vladivostok," but Francis admitted that it had been "impossible" for him to secure such a written statement from Nekrasov. Two interpreters were to aid the commission; Professor F. A. Golder and Eugene Price. Again returning to the subject of jurisdiction, the Ambassador added that his "definite understanding" with the Minister was that in order to assure effective control at Vladivostok Stevens "must exercise authority over all trains" entering the Vladivostok yards. Hopefully, "in a very short time" that control would extend over "a considerable portion if not over all the Siberian Railway."<sup>62</sup>

Two days later, President Wilson announced that at the request of the Provisional Government the United States

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<sup>62</sup>The Minister was an engineer, member of the Constitutional-Democratic Party and had a reputation for idleness, incapacity, unreliability and wire-pulling. Robert Crozier Long, Russian Revolution Aspects (New York: 1919), 288; Francis to Lansing, April 24, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1917, Supplement 2, I, 38; Francis to Lansing, May 2, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 189-191.

would send an Advisory Railway Commission to Russia. The commission was a distinguished group of America's first rank engineers; its chairman, John F. Stevens, former Chief Engineer of the Panama Canal; William L. Darling, Chief Engineer of the Northern Pacific Railway; Henry Miller, former Vice-President of the Wabash Railway; George Gibbs, former Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Pennsylvania Railway; and J. E. Greiner, Chief Consulting Bridge Engineer of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Stevens was not only chairman of "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia" but also Minister Plenipotentiary to the Russian Government on special mission.<sup>63</sup>

From the record, it appears that Washburn was more active than the two Chairmen of the Russian Missions, Stevens and Root. He had extensive talks with Lansing and Spring-Rice in Washington, He also sent a letter of introduction to Root and four of his own books on Russia. The War Department commissioned Washburn as a Major in the Cavalry and ordered him to proceed to Russia with the Railroad Commission and thereafter to act on Baker's oral instructions. Baker directed Washburn to report to him directly. Washburn had a number of irons "in the fire;" he retained his position with The Times; made

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<sup>63</sup>Harold Henry Fisher (corrections and addenda by John F. Stevens), "The American Railway Mission to Russia," Fisher Papers, Hoover Library, Stanford University. Hereinafter cited as Fisher MSS.

preparations for setting up an American publicity bureau in Russia; and planned to report on Russian military conditions to the War Department.

The Railroad Commission as he wrote his editor, Lord Northcliffe, "is my idea and will, I hope, be of immediate, concrete value in speeding up transportation." Washburn directed Sir Ernest Shackleton to meet with Northcliffe and explain what he was "trying to do." By his own admission, he commented that he was leaving for Russia with the railroad commission, was in charge of it until it reached Petrograd and was then to be transferred to the Root Mission.<sup>64</sup>

An inveterate letter writer, Washburn also wrote to Lord Robert Cecil, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, requesting the services of Shackleton for the railroad commission. According to Washburn's communication with the Foreign Office, Stevens wished Shackleton to meet him in Russia where the latter's "extraordinary experience and knowledge of winter conditions" would be of the "greatest value" to the commission. Shackleton was in Washington at the time and on May 9, Ian Malcolm of the British Embassy wrote him a letter of introduction to Cecil.

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<sup>64</sup>Washburn to Root, May 5, 1917, Root MSS, Box 136; Washburn to Lord Northcliffe, May 6, 1917, Washburn Correspondence 1912-23, Washburn MSS.

The same day, Stevens wrote Arthur Balfour, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, emphasizing Shackleton's "great value" to the commission. Stevens, though, added that the Briton would have "no official" connection with the commission. This was the major stumbling block from the British point of view. Finally on June 1, Buchanan informed the Foreign Office that it was "inadvisable" to send Shackleton to Russia "without some definite status". Later, on the 20th, Buchanan reported to Balfour that Stevens balked at telegraphing the British Government with a definite request for Shackleton. Stevens was convinced that the commission could not undertake to deal with the economic side of the Russian railway situation. Shackleton was anxious to go. Four days later Buchanan replied that he had asked Stevens "frankly" whether or not he wanted Shackleton, received a negative answer and concluded that the "Americans do not want him."

The British Foreign Office was left the nasty job of informing Shackleton diplomatically that, "the Commission have found conditions in Russia so different to what they expected that they would not wish you to waste your valuable time in going out there." Washburn's initiative, in this instance, did nothing to improve Anglo-American

cooperation in Russia's railway problems.<sup>65</sup>

There were also complications concerning the Stevens' mission in the United States. Root, designated as head of the diplomatic mission to Russia, protested against the disassociation of the Stevens' group from his own personnel and control. His argument was that the Russian Government would be unnecessarily confused by having to deal with three distinct entities; the American Embassy, the President's Commission (Root Mission) and the Railroad Commission. Root suggested that the latter commission be attached to his delegation and that all communications with the Russian Government be transmitted by himself. Root felt that his mission "must discuss the transportation subject with the Russian Government for that is the most important of all and if we cannot talk about that we will be discredited and of no account."

Lansing forwarded Root's letter to the President and enclosed two drafts of instructions to Stevens. The first, placed the railway commission under Root's supervision and mentioned America's desire to supply Russia with men and material "for constructing and operating certain railway lines of great importance to Russia in carrying on the present war." In the second, the object remained the same, "furnishing of men to manage and operate the

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<sup>65</sup>The correspondence on this matter is extensive. Refer to F.O. 371/3009; W38/110259, W38/121269, W38/124999.

lines", but Root had the rank of Ambassador and Stevens was to "confer freely with him and his commission." In both drafts, Root's authority was predominant.

The President, however, felt differently. Wilson had conferred with Samuel R. Bertron, a New York banker and member of the Root commission, on that very subject and instructed him to repeat the conversation to Root. Wilson felt that the railway mission bore "no resemblance" to Root's commission. Stevens' group was not going to ask what the United States could do for Russia, "but only to say we have been sent here to put ourselves at your disposal to do anything we can to assist in the working out of your transportation problem." The President concluded that the railway commission was to report "nothing back to us" but they were delegated to "serve Russia on the ground, if she wishes to use them, as I understand she does."<sup>66</sup> Wilson, therefore, made the final decision to separate the two commissions and somewhat naively believed that Stevens should not keep the American Government informed of his plans or actions while in Russia. Such was the President's confidence in Stevens' ability and judgment that he did in fact inform the Secretary of State to "leave him alone".

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<sup>66</sup>Root to Lansing, May 6, 1917; Lansing to Wilson, May 7, 1917; Wilson to Lansing, May 7, 1917; Lansing Papers, II, 329-331.

This did not entirely differentiate the respective functions of the two commissions. A constant overlapping of the Stevens and Root Commissions began before either left the United States. On May 2, Bury, recently returned from Russia, met with the Council of National Defense. Root secured Bury's Washington address in order to discuss the current Russian situation.<sup>67</sup>

Altogether, the aims of the Root Mission were as diverse as its personalities which the Russian Naval Attache, D. Fedotoff White, described as "motley." Root was Ambassador Extradordinary and his colleagues were: John R. Mott, representing the Y.M.C.A.; Charles R. Crane, a well known Russophile who maintained at his own expense the Cathedral Choir of the Russian Church in New York; Cyrus H. McCormick, represented business; Samuel R. Bertron, a banker; James Duncan, A.F. of L.; Charles Edward Russell, a prominent Socialist of rather moderate views; Major General Hugh L. Scott, Chief of Staff, United States Army; and Rear Admiral James H. Glennon.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>State Department to Root, May 2, 1917, United States, National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910-29, Record Group 59, 861.00/341a. Hereinafter cited as RG 59.

<sup>68</sup>D. Fedotoff White, Survival Through War and Revolution in Russia, (Philadelphia: 1939), 138-140; Wilson to the Provisional Government of Russia, May 14, 1917, Root MSS, Box 192; Lansing to Francis, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, I, 110-111.

On May 8, the day prior to their departure for Russia via Vancouver, Wilson received Stevens and the other members of the railroad commission. Later, Stevens repeated his "instructions" from the President to Cunningham Greene, British Ambassador in Tokyo. According to Stevens, he accepted his position at "three days notice", received "no instructions except to offer his services to the Russian Government and People and to render them every possible assistance in the war against the Common Enemy." Wilson had told him that "money was to be no object in the work of the Commission but that everything which seemed necessary was to be ordered by cable." Apart from these "general orders" Stevens said that he had "nothing to go on." He did not know what sort of reception he was likely to receive when he arrived nor "how far the local Railway and Port Authorities would allow him to have a free hand." Stevens added, "my business will be to do the work in Russia myself, and to make the Russians think that they are doing it."

Darling, another member of the commission, disputes Stevens on this point. He says the Commission did receive instructions. Wilson told them the Commission was neither political nor diplomatic and their duties

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<sup>69</sup>Ray Standard Baker (ed.), Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters, 8 vols., Vol. VI: War Leader (New York: 1939), 29; Greene to Foreign Office, May 28, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/133329.



would be confined to "advising and assisting" the Russians in transportation problems. The Commission was to advise on such railway matters as the Russians might "suggest" and they were separate and distinct from any other commission. President Wilson also told them Russian railways were "badly congested" and there were "large stores" piled at Vladivostok. There was congestion at Moscow, coal could not be forwarded from the Don region, and shops and equipment were in "bad condition". The new Murmansk line was not completed and when Archangel was ice-bound there was no communication with the outside world except via Kola and Vladivostok. England and France were "very insistent" that the railroad be put in shape by November 1 for a traffic of 2500 tons daily. There were rumors the Kola line had washed out that Spring and the Russians were finding construction difficulties in the frozen swamps.<sup>70</sup> Wilson, therefore, did not present an encouraging picture of current Russian railway problems.

America's Advisory Commission of Railway Experts to Russia numbered ten: Stevens, Greiner, Gibbs, Darling, and Miller as Commissioners; Franklin Reading, secretary and disbursing officer; Edward P. Shannon, secretary; C. A. Decker, stenographer; Eugene C. Stevens, clerk; and

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<sup>70</sup>William L. Darling, May 8, 1917, Diary of W. L. Darling, Member Advisory Commission of Railway Experts to Russia: May to December 1917, Hoover Library, Stanford University. Hereinafter cited as Diary.

Leslie R. Fellows, stenographer. They sailed on May 14 from Vancouver to Vladivostok on the Express of Asia.<sup>71</sup>

While the commission was enroute to Vladivostok, A. N. Mitinski, Chief of the Russian Railways' Supply Department, left on May 15 to meet the Stevens' Commission in Vladivostok. According to the American Ambassador in Petrograd, Mitinski was empowered to accord the United States the "same rights the English enjoy from France at Bordeaux", but could not ascertain what the rights were.<sup>72</sup>

The commission arrived in Yokohama on the 25th and during their four day visit to Japan met with the Russian Ambassador, British Ambassador, Russian consul and many Japanese officials. Darling reported meeting some American businessmen returning from Russia including a Mr. Jackson from the American Car and Foundry Company. Without exception, these businessmen were "all sore and can't say a good word for conditions there."<sup>73</sup>

Although the commissioners wined and dined extravagantly during their brief stay in Japan, they found time for serious

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<sup>71</sup>Apparently, the State Department believed that the Commission had sailed on the Empress of India. Willard to G. M. Bosworth, May 4, 1917, Washburn Correspondence 1912-23, Washburn MSS; Lansing to Francis, May 15, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 191; Darling, May 14, 1917. Diary.

<sup>72</sup>Francis to Lansing, May 15, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 191.

<sup>73</sup>Darling, May 29, 1917, Diary.

discussions with Japanese officials. According to the press report in The Japan Advertiser, the entire commission met with two of the leading officials of the Imperial Railway Board of Japan and held "a long and very satisfactory conference" with them. What was discussed is another matter.<sup>74</sup> The fact that Stevens' party was permitted to visit Japan is also another indication of Wilson's trust because he refused to permit Root, a Republican and a former Secretary of State, to stop in Japan.

Washburn, acting as Military Attache, and a one man public relations organization, issued a statement to the press outlining American motives and aims in sending the commission to Russia. He emphasized: United States desire to aid Allies; American excellence in railroading and transportation; France's request for American labor and experience in the development and operation of her railway systems; and, Russia's "most difficult transportation problems." The war correspondent continually repeated that the commission had "one idea only" to serve in any and every

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<sup>74</sup>No official or unofficial governmental records, nor private papers mention this conference with Japanese Railway officials. Japan, was historically "concerned" about American interest in Manchuria and Siberia. Japan had also wrested control and sovereignty over the southern half of Russian operated Chinese Eastern Railway during the Russo-Japanese War and promptly renamed it the South Manchurian Railway. In view of previous American policy in regard to railways in Manchuria, Japan was probably alarmed about the imminent detente between Russia and the United States. The Japan Advertiser (Tokyo), May 26, 1917, unpagged, cited in Greene to Foreign Office, May 28, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/13329.

way possible in assisting the people of Russia. It did not come to discuss "any political or diplomatic problem" which existed in Russia. Washburn also emphasized that no person connected with the mission had any commercial or financial aims whatsoever. The commission had no connection, either in personnel or objectives with any other American Commission to Russia; it was strictly a group of technical men, railway specialists, who intended to offer their knowledge and experience to the Provisional Government.<sup>75</sup>

In view of Washburn's assurances to the Japanese Government, press and public, that the mission was strictly an advisory commission it reflected Wilson's intention regarding its aims. Since the President did not believe that the commission needed to report to the Administration, it did not possess any political, diplomatic, commercial or financial powers. Stevens and his group was to advise, but nothing more. Nearly everyone excepting the President including the chairman, Francis, Buchanan and obviously the Russian Government believed otherwise. The latter were preparing to make Vladivostok an American base if they could only discover how it was done. Stevens' rank of Minister Plenipotentiary might have been honorary from Wilson's viewpoint, but neither the chairman nor anyone else would believe it. The Commission, then, certainly had diplomatic power

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

simply by precedence; it would reach Petrograd before the Root Commission; it was the first special mission from the United States (the first nation to recognize the revolutionary government); it was a new wartime ally; and, the Commission represented the power of an old democracy assisting a new democracy.

Politically, the Commission possessed power; Stevens was an old friend of the President; Washburn's connections made him a legendary "man-about-the world"; in order to qualify for assistance the United States required that Russia remain in the war; and, should any Russian political group or groups advocate a separate peace, they automatically became enemies of the Commission. Financially, it had power because Wilson told Stevens that money was "no object;" almost half of the \$100,000,000 Russian loan was earmarked for railway supplies and equipment; and, American business had been profiting greatly from Russia's transportation crisis for almost three years.

Finally, it did possess commercial power, though more indirectly; the "American Committee of Engineers in London" proposed to assist the American Government in rehabilitating Russian Railways and received the "unofficial approval" of Ambassador Page; S. M. Vauclain, Vice-President of the Baldwin Locomotive Company, headed four committees of the Council of National Defense - the Committee on Mobile Artillery, the Cooperative Committee on Cars, the Cooperative Committee on Locomotives and the Committee on

Production - involving contracts, munitions, railway equipment and finally the arranging of an expert mechanical and railroad force for Russia. Increased American-Russian trade was a great but indefinable lure; Edward Ewing Pratt, Chief of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, suggested a type of educational "lend-lease" whereby Russians would come to the United States for their technical education. In return, American technicians would assist Russia in building up a system of technical schools.

Another involved in the commercial buildup was R. Poliakov, former Assistant Professor of Mechanical Technology at the Technical Institute of Moscow and a member of the Russian Government Purchasing Commission in the United States. He delivered an address, entitled "Trade With Russia After War", before the Foreign Trade Association of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce on April 17, 1917. Poliakov pointed out that the United States would "undoubtedly be the only country after the war" able to supply capital "not only for pushing their foreign trade with Russia but also to develop her natural resources and means of transportation."

In May, the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce commissioned William A. Russell, a former native of Petrograd and a consulting engineer with experience in Russia, Siberia and China, as Special Agent to investigate investment opportunities in Russia.

The so-called "Paltchinski Plan", also attempted to stimulate a closer American-Russian economic approachment.

A former Siberian engineer and Assistant Minister of Trade, M. Paltchinski helped organize a Special Commission designed to develop Russian resources. Early in July the commission recommended that the United States be given full rights of exploitation for: the minerals of Siberia, the Altai Mountains (gold, silver and platinum), the Dirgiz steppe (copper), the Ural Mountains (railways), and the northern half of Sakhalin Island.

In August, Stevens' interpreter, Alexander Gumberg, reported that many Russian businessmen desired connections with American entrepreneurs because American organization and capacity were "welcome here."

The following month, British censors intercepted a telegram to the New York firm of A. V. Leech and Company ("Investment Securities") originating in Moscow regarding railway material for Russia. It may have been shady because the informant was "wheeling-and-dealing" with Russian railway firms negotiating \$50,000,000 loans for them; thus enabling them to place greater railway orders with Baldwin "and others who gladly pool bonds giving us option." According to the analysis; the bonds were guaranteed; the Russian companies representing leading textile and steel industries requiring capital. The unknown informant felt that American industry had the "greatest opportunity" to seize the initiative in the Russian situation by "buying interests through taking over bonds or shares". This was the time, before the

war ended, to forestall German economic resurgence in Russia.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to the poor differentiation between the Stevens' and Root Commissions, differences of opinion relating to Wilson's instructions to Stevens and the lack of a firm chain-of-command; the Administration was also considering other requests for railway assistance. In a communique to Wilson, Baker wrote that the British and French were requesting trained American railroadmen to operate the French railroads. Britain was aiding France in maintaining their railroad operation so that any assistance the United States could offer would aid and relieve the British of the responsibility. The proposition involved the assembling of regiments of special troops already authorized by law. Baker thought that as many as 10,000 men might be needed. According to the secretary's suggestion these troops "if assembled and sent would be American troops under the American flag; and paid by us and subsisted by the French and English

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<sup>76</sup>New York Times, May 12, 1917, 9; U. S. Council of National Defense, First-Fourth Annual Report of the U. S. Council of National Defense, 1916/17-1919-20, 4 vols., II (Washington: 1917-20), 186-187, 230-231; CFC, CIV, pt. 2, April 7, 1917, 1351-1352; R. Poliakoff, Trade With Russia After The War, Address delivered before The Foreign Trade Association of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce on April 17, 1917, 15; CFC, CIV, pt. 2, May 26, 1917, 2084; J. Vichniak, "Possibilities of American Trade With Russia," Industrial Management, VIII (April, 1917), 100; Crozier, Russian Revolution Aspects, 289-291; Alexander Gumberg to Pullstrons (Perlstrous) & Storms, August 10, 1917, Gumberg Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Hereinafter cited as Gumberg MSS; Openheim's Co. to A. V. Leech & Co., September 7, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/135175/45.



respectively at our charge." Wilson agreed to the plan the following day, May 22, and the United States committed herself to aid the French railways supporting the troops at the western front.<sup>77</sup>

As early as May 22, therefore, the United States committed itself to providing railway assistance to both France and Russia. True, Stevens' group did not know the extent of their powers and the Russians were definitely reluctant to turn over the Trans-Siberian to American control. The fact remains, however, that the United States had offered assistance and the Russians had accepted our "advice" if not control.

Generally, the American bureaucracy proved ill-equipped to meet these additional responsibilities. Not unexpectedly, the creation of the new post, Director-General Military Railroads, (Samuel M. Felton) as well as the division of authority between the U. S. Engineers, the Adjutant General and the State Department created delays. William Black, Chief of Engineers, reported two delays. On May 31, Francis sent a cablegram to the Department of State requesting the formation of railroad troops for use in Russia. It was translated on June 4 and referred to the Adjutant-General the same day. Under the date of June 13, the latter referred it to the Chief of Engineers, but it did not reach

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<sup>77</sup> Baker to Wilson, May 21, 1917, Baker MSS, Box 4; Wilson to Baker, May 22, 1917, Baker MSS, Box 4.

Black until June 21 - a delay of three weeks in governmental red tape. A similar cablegram from the American Ambassador in Paris to the State Department regarding railroad matters in France met with a ten day delay in reaching Black. Perhaps unintentionally, matters relating to France received priority in the Adjutant General's office because American troops would, after all, be soon fighting in France while none were to fight in Russia. Black, though, was incensed over the delays relating to both matters.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>William Black to Ralph Hayes (Baker's Private Secretary), Undated Memo, Baker MSS, Box 1.

CHAPTER IV  
THE AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMISSION OF RAILWAY  
EXPERTS TO RUSSIA: PHASE TWO-  
OPERATION AND FRUSTRATION,  
JUNE--AUGUST 1917

Although the American railway commissioners enjoyed their all too brief visit in Japan, they were eager to reach their destination, Vladivostok. Had they known of the port's condition, their enthusiasm would have been considerably dimmed. Chaos was endemic at Vladivostok. From March 12 onward, the Russian speaking British Officer, Major S. Dunlop, used this term frequently in his monthly evaluations of the port. Conditions assumed an almost comic opera atmosphere. Munitions had accumulated so rapidly on the artillery wharves that on the evening of March 12, the date of the Russian Revolution, some nitrate "celebrated" the occasion by catching fire and exploding the fuses and live shells. To halt the fires and explosions, the Russians threw a considerable quantity of shells into the sea.

Nearly a month later the British Consul at Vladivostok reported no visible improvement at the port or on the Siberian Railway during the period ended March 31.

Only fifty-one cars left Vladivostok daily. Travelers reported the accumulation of empty cars throughout Siberia; proof of "general mismanagement". Labor problems became more serious as Russian workmen began harassing the Chinese to prevent their employment at the port.

When the ranking British commander in Russia, Frederick Poole, saw these reports from Dunlop and the Consul, he wrote his own recommendations. He suggested that Lieutenant-General J. Hanbury-Williams discuss the current conditions at Vladivostok with General M. V. Alexeev, Commander in Chief of the Russian Army, and Alexander Guchkov, Minister of War and Navy. Poole welcomed America's entry into the war and felt that she should immediately ship locomotives and cars to Russia. More significantly, the General suggested the organization of an American engineering mission at Vladivostok to assume control of the port and the Siberian Railway. With an American in charge of each train dispatched to European Russia existing delays at stations and sidings would not occur. The army could bring considerable pressure on the government for the approval of this plan.

According to Poole's report, Captain E. Francis Riggs, American Military Attache at Russian Army Headquarters, had cabled the United States Government regarding this proposal and Hanbury-Williams was to permit Riggs to read Dunlop's report. Poole believed that Riggs should also discuss this question with Nekrasov, the Minister of

Ways of Communication; and if possible, travel at once to Vladivostok to make "the preliminary preparations for his Mission." The American Mission should also establish and reorganize the existing repair shops at Vladivostok and other points on the railway. Dunlop's report disturbed the general because its "tone" revealed the great lack of organization and "drive" on the part of the Russian officials at Vladivostok and on the Trans-Siberian Railway.<sup>1</sup>

Stevens' railway commission arrived in Vladivostok on May 31, paid their social amenities and then inspected the port, noticing that it was "very congested" with about 700,000 tons of freight piled up everywhere. From 100 to 120 cars were loaded and shipped daily; this was about all that the Chinese Eastern could handle. There was, however, no congestion on the rails of the Chinese Eastern, nor, for that matter, on the Trans-Baikal, but the capacity of the Tomsk Railway limited the traffic on both these lines. This line could take only five or six trains per day from the Trans-Baikal, because it had to handle daily, the shipment of fifteen trains of coal to Petrograd and Moscow from the Cheremkova mines.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>On March 13, 1917, General Poole detailed three Russian speaking officers to Russia's major ports. Poole was attached to the British Technical Mission and in charge of Russian supplies. "Railway reorganization in Russia-Vladivostok," Communique of the British Technical Mission in Petrograd, April 12, 1917, RG 165, Box 114, 6497-19.

<sup>2</sup>Fisher, "The American Railway Mission to Russia," Fisher MSS; Darling, May 31-June 3, 1917, Diary.

It did not take the commissioners long to note in their visits to the town, car-erecting shops, and yards, that a labor committee representative was present at all the conferences. According to Stevens, the commission's first contacts with Russian railway workers were not encouraging. The economic and political situation was "tense and ominous" and "the prospect of cooperation of the workers of all classes" discouraging; men stopped work to participate "in talking and speech making." Of the immense tonnage of supplies at Vladivostok, largely military supplies for the Galician front, some had laid there more than two years and all were paid for with funds borrowed from Great Britain and the United States. This accumulation could have been prevented because the Trans-Siberian had the capacity to handle the traffic. Stevens felt the Government neither possessed the "executive ability" nor "the loyalty and cooperation of its workers."<sup>3</sup>

The prospect of Russo-American cooperation was almost as dim. Stevens met Metinski and Riggs at Vladivostok. Riggs handed Stevens a letter from Francis in which the American Ambassador confidently asserted that Stevens would have "absolute" control at Vladivostok and that such supervision would extend" throughout the entire length of

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<sup>3</sup>Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia", Stevens MSS.

the Siberian Railway." However, the Russian Government gave no written guarantee. In a masterly display of buck-passing, the Ambassador disingenuously remarked he had not asked for a written statement because "at this time it is impolitic to do . ." As an implied warning, Francis commented that Russian engineers were "jealous" of reflections upon their ability and qualifications; therefore Stevens must handle them "diplomatically".<sup>4</sup>

On June 3, the railway commission left Vladivostok just as the cruiser U.S.S. Buffalo entered the harbor with the Root Mission. Chief of Staff Scott was appalled by the port's condition. When the Buffalo signalled for a pilot and received no acknowledgement the Captain sailed the ship into the inner harbor and selected his own berth. The American military chief could not believe that their ship, a war ship of a foreign country, during a war, was "wandering in without anyone paying any attention to it."

Later, upon his return to the United States, Scott submitted a report entitled "Taking Over Vladivostok As An American Base." The British were active in formulating the proposal because they gave him a copy of a secret agreement with the French Government for ports used by the British armies in France. Scott desired American control of Vladivostok as a military base in order to expedite the arrival and disbursement of Russian supplies. Scott believed this arrangement

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<sup>4</sup>Francis, Russia From the American Embassy, 130.

would have evident advantages and might be considered one of the necessary conditions for the furnishing of these supplies.

Specifically, the Chief of Staff ascribed existing conditions at Vladivostok to Russian "confusion, delay and mismanagement." The first steps toward American control, would be taken "quietly and tactfully" - and covertly. Realistically, the old soldier pointed out that "under guise of furnishing mechanics for the assembly shops for railway material, four regiments of engineers could be established in and near the town." Additions would be made as required and the engineers would be employed to as "large an extent as possible" in the shops and yards, chiefly as supervisors of Chinese and Russian laborers.

All orders concerning the police and government of the town would be given by the Russian officer named as commandant, but it would be "distinctly agreed in writing with the Russian government" that these orders would first have to be approved by the American officer designated as commandant. A small number of "disciplined American troops" garrisoned in commanding points about the city could "repress disorder", "overawe all disaffection" and gradually increase the efficiency of Vladivostok as a port.

Scott also advised that the "worst agitators in the town", the "most vicious troublemakers" had been the Russian anarchists returning from America. He advised halting this undesirable "migration" by instituting "suitable measures at



home" and at Vladivostok.

America's assumption of control at the port, though, should be "gradual" with "as little publicity attaching to it as possible." The Chief of Staff believed that if the first steps were taken "carefully" in a few months all Vladivostok's activities would be under American management with distrust and resistance "tactfully allayed." Scott so admired British efficiency he wished to model Vladivostok as an American base on the British models in France and he hoped to organize an American Technical Mission of fourteen officers similar to that of the already existing British Technical Mission.<sup>5</sup>

Contemporaneous to the Root and Stevens Missions, but with a combined diplomatic-economic function, a Russian mission arrived in the United States. Headed by Boris A. Bakhmetiev, who on July 5 became the Russian Ambassador to the United States; the mission included forty-seven members. The Russian Government empowered Bakhmetiev's delegation "to confer and to negotiate with the Government of the United States on military, naval, financial and railway matters, pertaining to the world war." Bakhmetiev's speeches often alluded to Russia's intentions to be a worthy partner in the "league of honor." In New York, the Russian-American

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<sup>5</sup>Scott to Baker, Report of the Special Diplomatic Mission to Russia June-July 1917, (Appendix III, "Composition of a Commission of U. S. Officers For Work in Russia;" Appendix IV, "Taking Over Vladivostok As An American Base"), Undated, Root MSS, Box 136.

Chamber of Commerce honored him at a luncheon where 600 American businessmen interested in Russian trade were present.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier, Bakhmetiev voiced his concern about Stevens' intentions to Post Wheeler, the American Charge d' Affaires in Japan. Wheeler reported the exchange to the secretary of state and quoted his comments extensively:

Members. . .inform me that in Petrograd and on the line anxiety exists as to the attitude of Stevens commission, reports that it was to "run" Trans-Siberian Railway having caused resentment against (foreign) intrusion. Bakhmetiev shared this anxiety. I assured him the commission came representing the President and the people of the United States with idea only of placing its railway knowledge and experience in transportation problems at the disposal of the Russian people to use or reject as their judgment may dictate. He expressed satisfaction and sent telegrams to subvert any unfavorable impression for local publicity along the route in advance.<sup>7</sup>

The Russian mission distrusted Stevens' intentions but was more than eager to acquire railway supplies from the United States. Professor Lomonossov of the Petrograd Polytechnic Institute, representative of the Ministry of Ways of Communication and member of the Council of Engineers, headed Russia's railway mission to the United States. Lomonossov's job was to acquire American railway supplies, locomotives, and rolling stock. His constant refrain was, "locomotives, locomotives and still more locomotives" and

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<sup>6</sup>U.S. Senate, Documents: Visiting War Missions, Sixty-fifth Congress, first session, 1917, 74; CFC, CV, July 14, 1917, 150.

<sup>7</sup>Post Wheeler to Lansing, June 1, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, I, 156-157.

his memorable quote was: "Quite frankly, I say to you, our American friends, give us locomotives and we shall give you military success."<sup>8</sup> It was a simple quid pro quo; American locomotives equal victory on the Eastern front - and it was also misleading.

The three greatest difficulties confronting the railway system were in connection with the rolling stock, assembling and operation. Both American and Russian engineers agreed that the railways needed more rolling stock, so American manufacturers speeded up Russian orders beginning in the summer of 1917. If a locomotive-erecting plant could be constructed at Vladivostok it would avoid the 500 mile return trip from Harbin for assembling. Repair shops could be operated on a twenty-four per day basis. All the railways required greater motive power. Another deficiency related to the Russian practice of "turn-arounds"; locomotives covered only short distances, then returned to the point of departure. There was no operating department on the Russian railways, no timetables, and the telephone and telegraph facilities were inadequate.

Although by no means an unbiased observer, Leon Trotsky reported in June that the Russian transport system was steadily breaking down. The percentage of disabled

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<sup>8</sup>New York Times, June 26, 1917, 3.

locomotives was increasing rapidly and on certain lines, 50% of the locomotives were out of operation. Engineers read reports to the effect that no later than in six months, the railways would be in a state of complete paralysis. Trotsky admitted though, that there was a "certain amount of conscious spreading of panic" but the breakdown had already reached threatening dimension.<sup>9</sup>

Steven's railway commission discovered this fact during their inspection tour from Vladivostok to Petrograd. As the Americans traveled on the Imperial train in the Tsar's former accommodations, Mitinski and the other government officials enroute to Petrograd expressed optimism. According to Mitinski, the commission was also optimistic because the track was "not so bad as expected" and the condition of the rolling stock "relatively favorable." Supposedly the big bridges over the South Sungari and Yenisei Rivers impressed the Americans. Enroute the commission met the chiefs of the technical and traffic departments who were "inclined to cooperate cordially with the Americans," as proof the train made better time than under peacetime conditions. Mitiniski emphasized that the Russians would have no secrets from the commission and believed "the Americans will stay as long as we want them," and "that means a very long time."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Leon Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I: The Overthrow of Tzarism (New York: 1932), 411.

<sup>10</sup>New York Times, June 21, 1917, 1.

Stevens, though, reported that the commission gained "a very fair knowledge of the situation, which was discouraging." Everywhere, the chairman felt, "discontent, idleness and insubordination dominated." The railway chairman personally felt that a crisis was coming in "the not far distant future."<sup>11</sup>

On June 4, the Root Commission caught up with the railway commission at Harbin and there was a conference between the two commissions. Washburn transferred to Root's group as Assistant Secretary. General Dmitri Horvat, General Manager of the Chinese Eastern Railway and chief administrator of the railway zone, entertained the Stevens group at dinner that evening. Before leaving Manchuria, the commission saw 800 loads the railways were unable to transport westward. The Chita round house for repair of rolling stock was "very old and very poor." They passed the Root Commission at Lake Baikal and then the latter caught up with the railway commission at Irkutsk. Darling commented on the murders committed at Irkutsk and saw the "roughest looking men and women I ever saw" - in Russia's "convict country". Two members of the group were ill; Gibbs one day, Stevens two days.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS.

<sup>12</sup>Darling, June 3-12, 1917, Diary.

Both commissions arrived on June 12 at Nicholas Station, Petrograd and were met by Francis, the staffs of the American Embassy, the American Consulate, and Nekrasov. Francis had secured quarters for the Stevens' commission in the Department of Ways and Communications. In Stevens' first public statement, he stressed that the primary object of the mission was to "help the Allies in the war against Germany." When the commission had determined the needs of the Russian railroads, the United States would supply the necessary materials. Diplomatically, he extolled the Russian railroads and its railroad personnel. With improved technical equipment Stevens concluded that Russia's railway system would be one of the chief systems in the world.<sup>13</sup>

An unexpected development, however, deprived the commission of its chairman during the initial stages of contact with Russian railway officials. Stevens became ill and entered the hospital. There is some disagreement as to the duration of Stevens' illness. Francis indicates he was hospitalized for about "two months". Stevens says he was ill about "two weeks". If the Ambassador is correct, this incapacitates the engineer for the greater part of June and July. It is, therefore, necessary to reconstruct the nature and probable duration of Stevens' illness in order to determine his effectiveness during this two month period.

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<sup>13</sup>Francis, Russia From The American Embassy, 131; New York Times, June 14, 1917, 1.

Darling reported Stevens' hospitalization on June 3 with erysipelas, an acute infectious disease due to bacteria and marked by fever, intense local redness, swelling of the skin and underlying tissues and severe itching and burning. Erysipelas is a severe non-contagious form of cellulitis occasioned by infection from a cut and streptococcus bacteria usually occurring in the face, hands, and legs of the victim.

On June 15, when the railway commission met with Nekrasov and the other railway administrators at the Department of Ways and Communications, Stevens was not present and Miller was Acting Chairman of the American delegation. Stevens must have been discharged from the hospital sometime in the interim because he reentered the hospital two days later with tonsillitis. So, he was in and out of the hospital twice within a two week period. Almost a week later, Stevens was still in the hospital. The chairman was absent from an important American-Russian conference on June 29, but did draw up the controversial July 4 proclamation to the Russian people. He was an active correspondent during July and his illness is not mentioned again until July 11 when Stevens was "convalescing". There is, however, no definite record of his attendance at the joint railway sessions before July 23. He was not hospitalized during the entire period, but since antibiotics were not in use, it is possible Stevens was ill for two months as Francis alleges.

The Russians demonstrated their sympathy by urging Stevens to "recommend large equipment purchases and leave." Their concern about the American's health, though, met little response. Stevens and his associates immediately discounted this "suggestion." They were more interested in Russia's railway problems than in a return trip to the United States.<sup>14</sup>

They did, however, seem cooperative. On June 15 Nekrasov took the commissioners to the second floor of the Communications building, and assigned Russians to the American railway experts in their area of speciality. Two days later, during a dinner with the Root Commission, the latter members questioned Stevens' group because the Russians could only talk of their railway problems and the assistance they expected from the railway mission.

Unfortunately, the Russian engineers and administrators were unduly sensitive to criticism. When the Americans pointed out their operational deficiencies to them, hurt feelings and resentment resulted. Their railway difficulties arose in part, from the following: (1) operation

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<sup>14</sup> Darling, June 3-21, July 3, 1917, Diary; Archbishop Bergan Mercy Hospital, Omaha, Nebraska; Francis to Lansing, June 13, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 192; Francis, Russia From the American Embassy, 131; Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS; "Minutes of the Council on Reinforcement of the line Vladivostok-Petrograd held on the 16/29th of June 1917," June 29, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1; "Minutes of Meeting Held At The Ministry of Ways of Communication, 10 A. M. Monday, July 10/23, 1917," ibid.



of 60 mile turn-arounds by agreement with the engineers so that the latter could be home every night; (2) sacrifices of train mileage to ensure safety by not allowing more than one train in the same direction on the same track between stations; (3) inadequate train dispatching so that trains only ran by agreement between the agents of the various stations; (4) an inadequate water delivery system utilizing a four or six inch pipe instead of the usual twelve or fourteen inch pipe; (5) coaling done by hand; (6) poor shops with obsolete machinery and (7) track labor composed largely of prisoners and women.

The Chinese Eastern railway officials, for example, thought the construction and maintenance of their line in the best of shape. Actually, the commission's inspection revealed they could not improve it in time to be of any service in the war.

To alleviate these difficulties, Miller submitted his plan of operation on the Trans-Siberian. He divided the entire length into 300 or 400 mile superintendent's districts; thereby eliminating the 60 mile turn-arounds and increasing freight capacity by 30 to 40 percent. The Director of traffic thought the scheme impractical due to the deteriorated condition of the engines. Darling felt the director's conclusion was "only another way" of not accepting the scheme.

Darling, in particular, was discouraged about the railway situation. Once, when making a suggestion to a railway engineer, he saw the latter wink at one of his workmen. Darling also reported rumors involving the Commission with commercial interests and implying the Americans desired Russian jobs. All during the trip they heard such rumors.<sup>15</sup>

During Stevens' illness, the commission made a trip by special train to Moscow, and south through the Donetz coal mining district. Everywhere they found the railway situation the same as on the Siberian lines, "apathy and apparent indifference." There was no ambition or fighting spirit left, and the Russians were simply waiting for "they knew not what."<sup>16</sup>

A railroad connected the Donetz coal fields with the industrial centers near Moscow and Petrograd. Due to the shortage of rolling stock, Russia had to import large quantities of coal, placing a serious strain on Allied shipping facilities; nearly one-half of Russia's tonnage requests in 1917 was coal. Two American engineers who investigated the Donetz Railroad said that, with certain improvements in its facilities, the railway could handle

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<sup>15</sup>Darling, June 15-19, 1917, Diary.

<sup>16</sup>Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS.

41% more coal. This increase in operational efficiency could supply Russia with its normal requirements of coal supplies for the entire year and eliminate imports of coal.<sup>17</sup> Coal, of course, was essential to the operation of the railways.

The inefficiency of the entire Trans-Siberian network and the reason why goods accumulated in great quantities at Vladivostok was due to the existing coal situation on the Tomsk Railway. There was no congestion on the Tomsk Railway; it was working to capacity and was handling in addition to the trains received from the Trans-Baikal Railway about 300 loads of coal daily.

Two coal producing regions existed on the Tomsk Railway; one at Cheremkova at the eastern end of the line and the farthest from Petrograd, and one at Taiga, at the western end of the line, 950 miles nearer the capital.

Specifically, west bound traffic predominated; in fact there was no east bound commercial business. The Trans-Baikal delivered about 90 loads to the Tomsk; the Tomsk in turn hauled from 250 to 300 loads west - primarily coal and mostly for company use. Coal used in the Chinese Eastern (the most eastern railway) was fair and came from its own railway; coal used on the Trans-Baikal (the next railway

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<sup>17</sup>"Transportation and Public Finance in Russia As Seen by the American Diplomatic Commission," The Economic World, n.s. XV, No. 10 (September 8, 1917), 334-335.

west) was poor; coal for the Tomsk Railway (the next west) was very good and came from the Cheremkova mines about 70 miles from its east end. The Tomsk Railway hauled coal from these mines westward to the extent of about 150 to 200 loads per day - in the direction of the heaviest traffic. This was the reason the railway could take only 90 loads from the Trans-Baikal.

When the Stevens Commission inspected the Trans-Siberian, the Taiga Mines had not been in operation for several months; the miners were on strike. By working the Taiga mines instead of the Cheremkova mines all the lines of the Trans-Siberian Railway would have been in a position to operate twenty trains of freight westward daily instead of five or six trains which appeared to be the limit.

The Russian officials understood the situation, but the government would not, or dared not, take drastic measures to break the strike and reopen the mines. Naturally, the American Commission suggested reopening the Taiga mines but Nekrasov said that it was the policy of free Russia to obtain results by moral suasion. Moral suasion, however, was inadequate to reopen the Taiga mines. Stevens felt that the Provisional Government was afraid of the miners. At the last meeting Greiner attended, the government decided to abandon the Cheremkova mines, replace it with coal from the Taiga mines, and open new mines in the western terminus of the Tomsk Railway. Unrealistically, the railway officials

believed the miners would return to work.<sup>18</sup>

The coal situation handicapped the Tomsk Railway, the Siberian network, and vitally affected Vladivostok. On June 21, the railway commission recommended the reopening of the Taiga mines, noted that only 124 cars were loaded daily at the port and pointed out that the entire system was operating at about 30% of normal capacity. The Chinese Eastern and Trans-Baikal Railways were in comparative idleness although ample motive power and facilities were available for traffic. Since the coal traffic absorbed 300 cars daily, 10,800 cars were required for this service when an acute car shortage existed all over Russia. As a result of the port's increasing congestion, the American Government was "alarmed" and "doubtful" about continuing shipments through Vladivostok. Pointedly the American railway experts hoped "some measure of relief" might "be found quickly." The implied threat of the United States discontinuing shipments through Vladivostok underscored the seriousness of the situation.<sup>19</sup>

Nekrasov, however, replied with a counter-suggestion. He might request the United States to transfer their shipments

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<sup>18</sup>Darling, June 18, 1917, Diary; Fisher, "The American Railway Mission to Russia," Fisher MSS; Joseph E. Grenier /Greiner/ "The American Railway Commission in Russia," Railway Review (Chicago), LXIII, No. 5 (August 3, 1918), 171.

<sup>19</sup>Railway Commission to Nekrasoff, June 21, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

to Archangel because there was "more delay" of American shipments through Vladivostok. This plan had two major drawbacks, it would be more dangerous for American shipping and also thwart any plans of American control at Vladivostok. It also counteracted General Poole who was urging the American Commission to inspect and assume control of the Murman Railway.<sup>20</sup>

Implementation was painfully slow. The commission reviewed its progress in a letter to Root. Eight hundred seventy-five locomotives and 18,500 freight cars were on order in the United States with a tentative maximum monthly delivery of 100 locomotives and 5000 cars. Root's American colleagues negated his idea that American locomotives could easily be converted to the Russian gauge. They felt too much time would be lost in conversion and also rejected his other suggestion of a "knock-down" change, shipping and reassembling old American freight cars. In conclusion, Stevens told Root that no further orders for either locomotives or cars would be placed with the American Government until the commission finished its work.<sup>21</sup>

Stevens attempted to be "diplomatic" with Root and

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<sup>20</sup>Darling, June 30, 1917, Diary; "Minutes of Meeting Held At The Ministry of Ways of Communication," June 30, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

<sup>21</sup>Railway Commission to Root, June 21, 1917, Root MSS, Box 136.

the Russian engineers concerning his personal feelings. He believed that the Railway Technical Board, a legacy of the Tsarist regime, consisting of some highly educated fifteen or twenty professors possessed "little or no practical experience in actual railway operation," and were all "equally impractical". Their attitude amazed him. One of the members startled him by commenting; "yes, Mr. Stevens, these things which you propose to put into effect, would better the service, move our trains, and result in economy, but what object is that to us. We have life positions, and if the railways make a profit, it goes to the government, and if a deficit, the National Treasury makes it up. 'Nichevo' -- what does it matter?"<sup>22</sup>

The Chairman's lack of success in combatting this attitude led to increasing difficulty with the Minister of Communications. By nature direct and impatient with inefficiency, Stevens shifted to confrontation tactics with Nekrasov concerning the minister's directive of labor involvement in railway administration. Petrograd newspapers quoted "the Americans as being "somewhat skeptical. . . about the possibility of managing the lines on the principles put forward by N. V. Nekrasov."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS.

<sup>23</sup>New York Times, June 21, 1917, 1.

Nekrasov reacted to this criticism by withholding his approval for the commission's inspection of the Murman Railway. The commission heard it had washed out and it was "very doubtful" if the Russians could complete its construction in 1917. Colt of the American International Corporation reported the railway in "bad shape" and even with the loan of four steam shovels and men to work them the work was not going well. When the commission discussed the railway with Nekrasov, the Minister "did not worry over it." Stevens told Colt he could do nothing without Nekrasov's invitation. According to Darling, "we had three promises at different times that the English and French would get this invitation for us but they never were able to accomplish it." Finally, Stevens discussed the matter directly with Nekrasov who said he did not need anyone to go over the Murman line; they had the best talent in Russia on it and everything was going along well there.<sup>24</sup>

The Russian attitude toward the Commission did not improve. In particular, Stevens and Darling became sensitive to the Russian rumors of commercial exploitation - a charge irreparably damaging to the mission's effectiveness. Stevens met this challenge head-on. He pleaded with Willard to expedite Russian orders of tools, locomotives, and cars; and suggested giving "free", on a government-to-government basis,

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<sup>24</sup>Darling, June 23, 1917, Diary.



Brown hoists, and cranes then in Panama. Otherwise, the machinery would lie and rust. Such an action Stevens hoped would not only gain Russia's appreciation, but would discredit an insinuation that the United States was attempting to foist off a "lot of second rate material at high prices."<sup>25</sup>

For all of Stevens' good intentions, the more recommendations the efficient American Commission submitted to the Russians the less likely they were to secure approval. Some of the recommendations did not consider the existing political-economic situation and labor difficulties. The commission, for example, recommended: increasing repair shops shift to double and triple shifts; keeping an inventory of raw materials for repairs; retaining locomotive spare parts on inventory; and the most immediate, establishing a supply department responsible for the maintenance of supplies at local points. Stevens also committed the United States to supply bar iron and steel as well as the necessary spare parts. The commission attempted to salve Russian sensibilities with the comment the "suggestions made are not in the way of criticism of the fine railway which was planned and constructed some twenty years ago. . ."<sup>26</sup>

No one seemed genuinely concerned about the railway situation even though the Russians told the Root Commission

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<sup>25</sup>Francis to Lansing, June 25, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 192-193.

<sup>26</sup>American Railway Commission to Nekrasoff, June 28, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

that the only assistance needed was transportation. While visiting General Staff Headquarters, Washburn spoke to A. A. Brusilov and urged him to invite Stevens to Army headquarters. Stevens, thus spent several days at Staff Headquarters, located about 500 miles southwest of Petrograd, and miles behind the Galician front. Conferences held with Brusilov's Staff produced no practical results. As far as railway transport to the front was concerned, not a member of the Staff had any practical ideas or even knowledge of the situation. The General in charge of such transport for more than a year did not know whether the line to Przemysl - the most important one - was single or double-tracked. The Russians, according to Stevens, asked for "some wholly impossible things," such as an immediate shipment of American locomotives and the building of large repair shops; and, one of the proposed shops was actually located some 100 miles inside of the Austrian lines!

Stevens also offered them the service of an engineer to supervise front-line railway construction, but the Russians "did not seem to care for it." When he suggested visiting the front, the request was denied and the railway chairman was never closer than 100 miles. Darling was disappointed with the Russian response because he had hoped to have the assignment. Later the commission learned why they did not want anyone, particularly an American, ". . .because things were happening there that they did not care to have advertised,

especially the action of the soldiers."<sup>27</sup>

Front line transportation, however, was incidental to the mission of the American experts; reorganizing the Trans-Siberian Railway. On June 29, Nekrasov, discussed the Commission's recommendations. They were becoming effective "as quickly as possible" but their realization was "slow" due to shortages of necessary machinery, implements and materials and war-time labor disorganization. To effect the recommendations the United States must render "full assistance as regards materials, machinery, etc." Stevens then pledged the United States to supply Russia with all that was necessary, even labor assistance by requesting American engineers and workmen with different specialities. Thus assured of continued American assistance, the minister accepted all the commission's plans including: operating procedures on Trans-Siberian; coal situation on the Tomsk Railway and increasing production at Taiga Mines; and locomotive-erecting shops at Vladivostok. The minister promised

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<sup>27</sup>Early in July, the Commission, excluding Stevens, left on a week trip by special train south of Moscow, returned north via army headquarters where Stevens joined them, and all returned to Petrograd. At Vitobsk, a man whom Darling mistook for a German spy, who was the former Foreign Minister, Milyukov, wished to join the train and reach Petrograd. The Russians in charge of the train would not permit him to ride with them, so Professor F. A. Golder, an American and interpreter, got off with Milyukov, but did not request Stevens' permission to leave the train. For this reason and "perhaps for others" Stevens fired him. Stevens did not mention this occurrence, but Darling did. Darling, June 28, July 11-13, 1917, Diary; Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS; Washburn to Willard, June 29, 1917, Washburn Correspondence, 1912-23, Washburn MSS.

to institute these measures "at once"; the railway mission felt that this was as much as could be expected.

Before the meeting ended, Francis commented on current rumors implying American management of the Russian railway system. The American Ambassador characterized these rumors as "absurd" but felt that they needed answers. He complimented Russian railwaymen on their competency and emphasized that the railway commission was only in Russia to "assist" them. America, because of its superior industrial capacity could supply Russia with engines, cars, materials, machinery and manpower. If necessary, the United States could send engineers to assist their ally in any area Russia specified. Nekrasov thanked the railway commission for their assistance and rationalized the existing situation. He ascribed the present "unsatisfactory results" to wartime industrial deficiencies and labor shortages.<sup>28</sup>

Nekrasov was the "mystery-man" whose attitude was so critical to the success of the Stevens' mission. Generally, he was held in low opinion by both Russian and foreigners. The Associated Press correspondent in Petrograd referred to him as "one of the evil geniuses of the Revolution" primarily responsible for hampering the Stevens' Commission. According

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<sup>28</sup>"Minutes of the Council on Reinforcement of the Line Vladivostok-Petrograd Held On The 16/29 of June 1917," RG 43, E 327, Box 1; "Minutes of Meeting Held at The Office of the Minister of Ways of Communication," June 29, 1917, ibid; Darling, June 29, 1917, Diary.

to Robert Crozier Long, Nekrasov's "unfitness was so notorious that the most obscure reporters in the Winter Palace press room treated him with disrespect." His physical appearance was a matter of ridicule; the Minister was a "big, fat, rosy-cheeked man with a girl's voice" whose incompetence and unreliability was scandalous.<sup>29</sup>

Two Generals, one British and the other Russian, also held Nekrasov in low opinion. Alfred Knox, the British General, felt Nekrasov was directly responsible for the Kerensky-Kornilov imbroglio; he wished to publicize the army commander's "treachery and then losing his nerve, wished to abandon the defense of Petrograd to the Soviets" in July. The Russian General, A. Denikin, characterized Nekrasov as one of the dullest and most fateful figures of the revolution who left an indelible mark of destruction on everything he touched. Nekrasov was the friend and confidante of Alexander Kerensky. When Kerensky became Premier of the Provisional Government, Nekrasov became Minister of Finance, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and acting head of the Government in Kerensky's absence at the front. His democratization of railway administration so as to allow the railwaymen to advise and minister the railroads led to excessive work loss while they met in committees and ultimately

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<sup>29</sup>Long, Russian Revolution Aspects, 288.

to the breakdown of transportation despite Stevens' efforts.<sup>30</sup>

Buchanan, the British Ambassador, had ambivalent feelings toward Nekrasov. He believed Nekrasov was a "strong and capable man, who was credited with the ambition of becoming Prime Minister." This minister did not inspire confidence because he was too much of an "opportunist" and had changed parties more than once to advance his own interests. On another occasion, Buchanan characterized Nekrasov as Kerensky's "evil counsellor" and implies that he held undue influence over Kerensky.<sup>31</sup>

Initially, Nekrasov appeared friendly to the American railway commission. In an interview published in the New York Times, he explained that the railway could render an "enormous service" to Russia. This could be accomplished by giving Stevens an "absolutely free hand" to decide what the railways needed. According to the transport minister, Stevens' task was to inspect the Siberian Railroad, to report all defects in construction or management and to offer possible solutions. Nekrasov pointed out the probable commercial benefits to the United States and alluded to railway construction planned since 1916. Before the

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<sup>30</sup> General Alfred Knox, With the Russian Army, 1914-1917, II (New York: 1921), 683, 685; General A. Denikine, La decomposition de l'Armee et du pouvoir fevrier-septembre 1917 (Paris: n.d.), 119-120.

<sup>31</sup> Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories, I (Boston: 1923), 157-158, 186.

commission arrived in Petrograd he said, "I regard the arrival of the commission as a most important event, both for Russia's successful conduct of the war and her development afterward." Nekrasov also pledged his department's cooperation in facilitating the work of Stevens and his associates.<sup>32</sup>

Arthur Bullard, Director of the Russian Division, United States Committee on Public Information, said "a hostile minister of ways of communication was replaced by one who was friendly." Stevens added the name, "Liverovsky" for the friendly minister. If actions speak louder than words, then there is no question that Nekrasov was obstructive in accepting the recommendations of the railway commission. He was jealous of his power and did not wish to share it with anyone. He was also playing politics with the railway experts. Almost a week after the important June 29 meeting, Stevens was trying to secure translations of the Minutes. Miller implied that Nekrasov had read a great deal of data into the Minutes that he did not wish the Americans to see, so he was stalling on transmitting a copy to the commission.<sup>33</sup>

By July, anyone who had first hand experience with the railway situation had little reason for optimism. An impartial observer, Emile Vanderveldt, socialist leader and

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<sup>32</sup>New York Times, June 4, 1917, 1.

<sup>33</sup>Bullard, The Russian Pendulum, 186; Fisher, "The American Railway Mission to Russia," Fisher MSS; Stevens to Nekrasoff, July 5, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1; Miller to Stevens, ibid.

Minister of Munitions in the Belgian Cabinet, toured Russia for two months, from May to July. In a confidential report, he outlined the "deplorable" condition of the railroads but did not appear concerned about the chronic car shortage on the railways. The Americans told Vandeveldt there were sufficient locomotives and cars on the Trans-Siberian to triple the traffic.

Vanderveldt, however, believed that the railway situation threatened Russia's military action, curtailed food transit to the cities and endangered industrial output so that factories were not assured of their supply of raw materials, fuel or of the distribution of their products. The situation did not result from administrative incompetence or whim; rather from negligence, carelessness, general indifference and irresponsibility. He thus unconsciously described the prevailing Russian attitude.

The Belgian socialist also detailed the soldiers' encroachment on the railways. On most railways there was one train a day; some hundreds of soldiers waited at each station only to see it arrive so crowded they could not secure passage. Soldiers sometimes spent their entire furloughs waiting for trains; their patience did not last. Since authority was weak, they forcible expelled other passengers and threatened railway personnel.

According to Vanderveldt, the Russian Government met



this challenge with firm measures and achieved its "first great success". Soldiers were no longer admitted to the stations on their days off. Adequate numbers of trains appeared on the lines and their speed was raised to that of ordinary passenger trains. As a result, during his fifteen days on the railway system nearest the front, he did not see any further attempts at martial encroachment.<sup>34</sup>

Certainly the railway commission was doing its best to improve this situation and spur the Russians to greater efforts. On July 2, Stevens notified Nekrasov of their additional locomotive orders. As usual, the Russians emphasized their equipment shortages as their major requirements while the American experts emphasized operational efficiency rather than dependence upon new equipment. To appease them, though, the commission did wire Willard for a rush shipment of 30,000 American type freight cars and 2500 decapod engines.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Stevens appointed Charles H. Smith, to meet with a representative of the Department of Communications to effect the new plan of train operation, divisional organization, dispatching districts and engine

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<sup>34</sup>"Rapport sur la mission accomplie en Russie de Mai a juillet 1917, par Monsieur la Ministre Vanderveldt, M. Louis de Brouckere, et le lieutenant Henri de Man," Received October 15, 1917, RG 59, 861.00/565.

<sup>35</sup>Darling, July 2, 1917, Diary; Stevens to Willard, July 3, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

runs recently adopted on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Smith who reached Russia in 1916 as a railway promoter of the Missouri Pacific and other American railroads, had not been able to proceed with his work due to wartime and revolutionary instability. He was "badly in need of funds" and could speak a little Russian. Smith became the American aide to L. A. Ustrugov, Associate Minister of Communications, chosen by the Kerensky government as a special commissar for the rehabilitation of Trans-Siberian Railway.<sup>36</sup>

The Root Commission, was also involved in Russia's railway problems and its infringement upon the railway group was involuntary and unintentional. Root, in his official report, concluded that her "fundamental" need for the prosecution of the war was improved transportation. He believed that the two primary difficulties were defective organization and wartime wear and tear on the rolling stock, with 40% needing repairs. This deficient transportation system deprived Russia of food and fuel, which though abundant, could not reach the areas where it was most needed.

At a meeting on June 26 including Root, General Scott, Michael Tereshchenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs (May to November 1917), Generals Brusilov and Loukovski, Chief of

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<sup>36</sup>Darling, July 19, 1917, Diary; Stevens to Nekrasoff, July 3, 1917, RG 43, E327, Box 1; Roland S. Morris (U. S. Ambassador, Japan) to Lansing, February 2, 1919, Foreign Relations, 1919, Russia, 250; Railway Review (Chicago), LXI (December 22, 1917), 768; Charles H. Smith, "What Happened in Siberia," Asia, XIII, No. 5 (May, 1922), 373.

General Staff, the Russians made urgent appeals for transportation assistance. Root claimed that he arranged a meeting with the Russian Generals between Stevens, the Railway Commission and the Minister of Ways and Communication. The ex-secretary of state also sought "in ways not open to the Commission of Railway Experts to aid in securing action upon their recommendations." Russell and Duncan spoke to the Soviets, urged them to speed up their work in the railway repair shops and emphasized the necessity for working two to three shifts. Root urged Tereschchenko to make Stevens' recommendations a matter of governmental policy rather than as a departmental problem in the Department of Communications.

Scott too heard about Russian woes regarding transportation direct from the Russian General Staff. Generals told him repeatedly that the most important question was that of transportation. They suggested that since the locomotives and cars could not be delivered before December while they had expected them in July, it seemed easier to ship American rolling stock and then change them to Russian requirements upon arrival. Time and again the Russian military said, "the present trouble is the bad situation in regard to the railroads; they cannot move coal for the furnaces, provisions for the troops, and the key to the whole situation is the railroads." In the meeting of June 18, Scott listened patiently to the military's pleas for rolling

stock, rails, tonnage, etc, and then replied that he would send the telegram to the United States but "the first question my government will ask me is do the Russians intend to advance." The Russian generals assured him that the advance would begin not later than ten days or two weeks. Circumstantial evidence, therefore, implicates the United States in pressuring the Russian Government for the ill-fated July offensive.<sup>37</sup>

Washburn, though, was optimistic about the ultimate success of the Railroad Commission; or perhaps hopeful is a better word. If the Commission's work could be completed by November, the United States would be serving a great purpose in Russia. Less optimistically, he believed that by late Fall, the Russians would be without fuel and without food. With improved railroad conditions, the Russians could be supplied with these necessities and the Russian Army in 1918 would, therefore, be a greater asset than ever before.<sup>38</sup>

Russell, another member of the Root Mission, was less optimistic. He entitled a chapter in his book, Unchained Russia, "A Broken Down Railroad and What Came Of It."

<sup>37</sup> "Report of the Special Diplomatic Mission to Russia, June-July 1917," Root MSS, Box 192; "Transcript of Proceedings of Conference Between General Manikovsky, Assistant to the Minister of War, and Officers, and General Scott, Chief of Staff, and Officers," June 18, 1917, ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Washburn to Lansing, June 29, 1917, Washburn Correspondence 1912-23, Washburn MSS.

The Trans-Siberian was "partly paralyzed and partly bordering on collapse" when he arrived in June of 1917. Somewhat humorously, Russell described 800 miles of steel rails intended to carry on the double-tracking of the Trans-Siberian as among the "Curiosities of the World's Unpremeditated Exposition of Stranded Freight at Vladivostok." An American engineer told him that the rails had lain there so long that they had begun to sprout. In a dramatic comparison of American versus Russian railroads he wrote: "We in this country build our railroads rottenly and finance them thievishly but operate them marvelously; Russia built its railroads marvelously, plundered them magnificently and then could not operate them at all." The American Socialist had the highest praise for American Railroad Commission and for Stevens personally, referring to the commission as "most able" and stating that Stevens' service was the equal of an general on the field of combat.<sup>39</sup>

While the American Commission was occupied with filling Russian orders for 48,500 freight cars and 2,875 locomotives, a serious "misunderstanding" developed between Root and Stevens. Both commissions were involved with Russia's transportation difficulties; although Root soon learned from Stevens that such "interest" was outside his sphere of authority:

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<sup>39</sup>Charles Edward Russell, Unchained Russia (New York: 1917), 175-76, 190-91.

The one and only thing I asked assurance of from President Wilson before the Railway Commission left the United States for Russia was that this Commission should not be interfered with in any transportation matters in Russia, either by an other commission or member of any other commission which assurance President Wilson granted very quickly and emphatically.

This Commission believes it has the Russian railway situation well in hand and it does not look with favor upon any outside parties whomsoever undertaking to interfere in any way with the program which it has laid out. These are matters which must be handled with a great deal of diplomacy and so, I can say with a great deal of confidence, the Commission has been handling them very successfully. There has been and will be no delay, as the shops of the United States are and will be employed upon Russian orders and expect in the course of three or four days to supplement the orders with recommendations for a very large further supply of both locomotives and rolling stock.

Under these circumstances, I trust you will understand my motive in writing this note. This Commission feels that its work is going better than it had expected and an attempted interference by any Commission or member of any other Commission would be a serious handicap to the successful completion of what it was sent to do. <sup>40</sup>

Stevens was not "diplomatic" and Root did not "understand" - as later events were to prove.

Unknown to Stevens, another potentially more powerful group was involved in the railway situation; and they also did not acknowledge the engineer's exclusive domain. A conference of Allied representatives met under the presidency of Arthur Henderson, member of the British War

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<sup>40</sup> Stevens to Root, July 1, 1917, Root MSS, Box 192.

Cabinet sent by the British Government on special mission to Russia, at the British Embassy. The conference unanimously agreed that tonnage losses due to German submarine activity made it impossible to fulfill their commitments; Henderson and Root were to explain the situation to the Russian Government. Both men were also to discuss transportation, the industrial crisis and the formation of an Allied Committee in Petrograd. They endorsed the recommendations of the Stevens Commission without mentioning the advisory group by name. Root commented specifically on the rapid deterioration of the railway ascribing it to ineffective discipline among the railroad employees and soldiers.<sup>41</sup>

Almost simultaneously, the American Railway Commission issued a public report praising the Russian railroads for their well-qualified personnel and practical system of management. This July 4 proclamation, however, recommended certain reforms designed to increase their efficiency:

(1) an improved system of train operation with greater divisional organization; (2) the construction of workshops at Vladivostok for the assembling of locomotives imported from the United States and the necessity of operating repair

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<sup>41</sup>Report of the Special Diplomatic Mission to Russia June-July, 1917, Root MSS, Box 192; Conference of the Subcommittee Representing the Allies to Prepare An Unofficial Memorandum of Subject To Be Discussed by Mr. Henderson and Mr. Root With The Russian Government, ibid.

shops on a 24 hour per day schedule: (3) measures for the acceleration and regulation of exchange of cars between the different roads for the speeding up of the system of loading; (4) the creation of a special Supply Department with powers of enforcement to oversee the entire network of roads including management, supply, and distribution of materials between the different railways. Stevens also felt it necessary to disclaim any "commercial considerations" when he requested an additional extension of credit to Russia amounting to \$375,000,000.<sup>42</sup>

Later on July 8, the day preceding the departure of the Root Commission, Russell told Miller and Darling that the soldiers and workers' council (Soviet) would not allow the recommendations of the American Commission regarding the Trans-Siberian to become operational. Russell said he had attended several meetings and from what he learned he believed that the Soviet was not in sympathy with the American Railway Commission: something of an understatement. A substantial section of the Soviet wanted peace "without"

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<sup>42</sup>McAdoo, in a Treasury report to President Wilson, reported that Mr. Stevens had "committed our government in an irresponsible but embarrassing proclamation" to supply Russia with \$140,000,000 for railway material deliverable in 1918. The difference in the amount may be due to the exchange rate. McAdoo to Wilson, September 29, 1917, Baker MSS, Box 3. Proclamation of the United States Railway Advisory Commission to Russia, July 4, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1; New York Times, July 5, 1917, 6.

<sup>43</sup>Darling, July 19, 1917, Diary.



annexations or indemnities", while a smaller minority wanted peace at any price. Since the object of the Stevens' Mission was to assist railway rehabilitation in order to keep Russia in the war, those Russians who desired peace opposed the program of the American Railway Commission.

Railroad workers and the soldiers, therefore, added to the disorganization of transportation. As early as April, the government circularized an impassioned "Appeal To The Soldiers On The Use Of The Railroads" outlining the situation: "Other people's seats are being occupied in the passenger cars, windows are being broken in them; the cars themselves are so overfilled with soldiers that the springs are weighted down and the axles are breaking; demands are being made upon employees - under threats of violence - which contradict the basic rules of safety in railway traffic. . ." The circular pointed out that every train carrying people forced out another train carrying food supplies to the front. Prince George E. Lvov, President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), Alexander Guchkov, Minister of War and Navy and Nekrasov warned that the violence against the railway employees would turn into violence against the soldiers' comrades in the trenches and disrupt the front.

This appeal to the soldiers' patriotism was unsuccessful; more extreme measures were necessary. The Provisional Government authorized the Supreme Commander Guchkov to

suspend and reduce furloughs and apprehend deserters. Ticket offices could be transferred from the railway stations in order to prevent the intimidation of their personnel. At the same time, Nekrasov organized temporary militia committees to maintain the railways' "security of movement". To ensure enforcement, the Ministries of Justice, War and Navy were to try cases arising from the commission of criminal acts on railways and waterways.<sup>44</sup>

The government persisted in its belief that magical transfusions of American rolling stock would solve their railway problems. Prince George E. Lvov, the Russian Premier, repeated the familiar refrain that the "key to the solution of all our military and economic difficulties" was "transport amelioration".<sup>45</sup>

Stevens did his best to assist the Russians, but the railway situation became more and more complex. Nekrasov had approved the construction of a locomotive-erecting plant at Vladivostok. American manufacturers, however, who had previously agreed to equip and operate such a plant, insisted on making the sale of locomotives for delivery at their shops. If the manufacturers would not assemble the locomotives at Vladivostok, then a military unit of skilled American mechanics would have to be sent with equipment to

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<sup>44</sup> Browder and Kerensky, Documents, II, 700, 703.

<sup>45</sup> CFC, CV, July 14, 1917, 11, 149.

operate the plant.

Willard, concerned about the Railroad Commission's huge orders of locomotives and cars, was not impressed with the importance of a locomotive-erecting plant at Vladivostok. He told Stevens that 500 locomotives and 10,000 cars had already been ordered and orders for 1500 locomotives and 30,000 cars under consideration. It was "unnecessary to erect shops at Vladivostok" if the money could not be provided for the remaining locomotive and car requirements. Finally, Willard told Stevens that 875 locomotives would be shipped by February 1918 and probably 1500 additional locomotives at a later date. Delivery though was at the builders' shops, so the erecting plant would be necessary after all.

Lomonossov, Russian railway Chairman in the United States, then took matters into his own hands; he told Willard it was inadvisable to erect shops at Vladivostok unless the additional locomotives were ordered.<sup>46</sup> This was exactly the type of short-sighted Russian railway policy that had led to the railway crisis, but it also confirmed the commission's evaluation of Russia's simplistic solution - more locomotives, more cars. If there was no locomotive-erecting plant at Vladivostok, how would the American

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<sup>46</sup> Francis to Lansing, July 13, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 193; Willard to Stevens, July 14, 1917, ibid, 193-194; Willard to Stevens, July 20, 1917, ibid, 194.

locomotives be assembled - probably at Harbin; then, after assembly, the locomotives would be hauled back to Vladivostok and further congest the Trans-Siberian before they could be useful.

Stevens was increasingly disillusioned by the lack of progress. After returning from a trip over the Donetz railways the commission learned that "not a single thing that it and the Technical Board had agreed upon had been attempted," and "not an order looking to such end had been issued; the Board had ignored the whole thing, the Minister of Communications asserting he had no power to act, which was probably true." Rejecting further delay, the commission felt that action was imperative. With the assistance of Francis, Stevens met with Alexander Kerensky, head of the Provisional Government. According to the engineer, he stated the situation in "plain words, if not diplomatic" and particularly emphasized the fact that the Commission was in Russia upon the direct invitation of the Russian Government and that "an apparent attempt, if continued, to ignore them might be regarded as an insult to Russia's American ally." Supposedly this "woke him up" and he issued an order to effect the commission's recommendations "immediately."

On July 19, the railway experts submitted a long report relating to the southern railways with two purposes in mind: to secure more daily work out of each locomotive and to expedite repairs of both cars and locomotives. Due

to the governmental reorganization, A. Liverovski became the new Acting Minister of Ways of Communication. The new minister was a short, thick set man about forty-five years of age with a very long mustache, who impressed members of the commission as being "energetic". Stevens wrote that the new minister was "cordial; a term he had never previously applied to Nekrasov."<sup>47</sup>

The same day, the Commission presented their plan and recommendations for the entire railway situation in Russia, but Liverovski asked them to hold off their discussion for a few more days. The Commission made so many recommendations, on the Trans-Siberian, the southern railways and the entire railway situation that it is difficult to differentiate between them. Most of the confusion arises from the Trans-Siberian recommendations specifying (1) modification of operating methods which would result in an immediate increased capacity of at least 50% without any additional rolling stock; (2) the abandoning of certain coal mines and the operation of others to capacity, thereby removing the congestion on the Tomsk Railway; (3) the temporary operation of 90 ton decapod engines over the light bridges pending the renewal of these bridges, thereby enabling

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<sup>47</sup>Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS; Stevens to Liverovsky, July 19, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 2; Darling, July 19, 1917, Diary; Fisher, "The American Railway Commission to Russia," Fisher MSS.

the handling of longer trains than could be hauled by the usual 50 ton engines; (4) cooperation of shop foremen to secure a full day's work so that rolling stock in need of repair could be returned to service promptly; (5) removal of the locomotive-erecting shops from Harbin to Vladivostok, thereby saving about 500 miles of locomotive parts received from America; (6) construction of ash pits, coaling and watering stations; (7) securing American spare parts for locomotives for repairing broken or worn-out equipment expeditiously; and (8) recommendations to the United States' Government that it furnish on priority orders the requisitions of the Russian Government for locomotives and cars.<sup>48</sup>

If July was unsettling to the Americans it was disastrous to the native engineers. Two Russians who were to manage the Siberian Railway under the above plan resigned and the commission was then further behind than two weeks previous. One Russian engineer who accompanied the commission on their southern trip tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide.<sup>49</sup>

The situation, however, was not entirely grim. On July 24, the American commissioners attended the dinner reception of the Central Association of Ways of Communications.

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<sup>48</sup>Fisher, "The American Railway Mission to Russia," Fisher MSS; "The American Railway Commission and Russian Railroads," Engineering and Contracting, L, No. 3 (July 17, 1918), 57-58.

<sup>49</sup>Darling, July 19, 1917, Diary.

Francis and Stevens gave speeches. Darling particularly enjoyed the Ambassador's speeches and personally felt the commission owed a great deal of their success to Francis who helped them continuously, "whenever and wherever he could." Stevens emphasized in his speech that the railway commission had not come to Russia to teach the Russians anything but rather to help in any way they could to help win the war; and that as engineers they were if anything superior to the Americans. When he concluded, there was "uproarious cheering" and the Russians and Stevens alternated in praising one another for the next half hour.<sup>50</sup>

This speech of the railway chairman was marvelously effective. Previously, the commission had decided that since all the railway officers were engineers, their undue sensitiveness to criticism would hamper any suggested improvements. The commissioners, therefore, told them that technically they needed no assistance; only assistance in operating methods. Then the Americans, also engineers, tactically admitted they could not assist them but suggested requesting a superintendent's staff to show them the proposed methods of applying the new changes. It was the most feasible and diplomatic manner of effecting change. Thus nothing was said to the railway officials until late in July and after the proposed plans had been finally approved and

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<sup>50</sup>Darling, July 25, 1917, ibid.

ordered put into execution. It then occurred to the Russians that it would be well to have a sample superintendent's staff sent out from the United States.

Liverovski requested the staff on July 25, and although this was what the commission desired, Stevens said he would have to consider the Russian proposal for a day or two as he was not sure that his government would furnish them. After one day's consideration he notified the Russians that the men asked for would be furnished. Soon afterward the Russians concluded that more men would be needed especially as it was expected to put the changes into operation in European Russia as well as Siberia.

Later the same month, Stevens requested an American unit of 129 men consisting of division superintendents, dispatchers, train masters, traveling engineers, master mechanics, and one telephone expert to assist and apply telephone dispatching to Russian lines. The locomotive companies were to furnish 80 experts to erect equipment at Vladivostok. Locomotive-erectors would be paid the same wages as that class of labor in the United States; the operating men would have a rating as army officers and be paid accordingly; the chief operating man would be a Colonel, his immediate assistants, Lieutenants on down. It would be a military contingent in organization similar in all respects to the railway engineers. The Commission applied to the United States for over 200 men the first part of August but



they did not reach Vladivostok until the following December.<sup>51</sup>

This action should have encouraged the commissioners; but on July 27, George Gibbs, the bridge expert, bluntly wrote his ideas about the railway situation. His first sentence indicated his attitude: "It is now five weeks since we gave the Minister a plan to effect a 40% increase in available motive power on the Trans-Siberian line." Next, he mentioned other recommendations designed to improve the railways without waiting for American men and materials. Unfortunately, the commission made a number of suggestions relating to permanent railway improvements which were of a long range nature. The Russians took the opportunity to discuss the former suggestions rather than the suggestions relating to immediate relief of the railways. Gibbs reminded his colleagues that he had proposed at the last commission meeting that they "side-track" consideration of permanent improvements and concentrate on an attempt to discuss railway improvement which could be accomplished by the Russians with the "means at hand."

Since their mission was to "help keep Russia in the war," they had to that extent succeeded. They had authorized a large amount of new equipment and the effect of this action had been "sentimental but important." Somewhat ruefully he

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<sup>51</sup>Darling, June 18, 1917, Diary; Oustrougoff to Stevens, July 25, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1; Stevens to Willard, July 30, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 194.

admitted that they had not succeeded in effecting any improvement and he, therefore, did not feel that they would succeed. Gibbs outlined briefly the commission's procedures during the past month; after the "present protracted talking match" between the engineers and themselves, the proposals would go higher up; then they would be told that some of the recommendations, those relating to the improvement in labor conditions could not be carried out; that others were being carried out when they were not; and that the transportation scheme would be tried if the commission sent over a "lot of men from America." Very much of a realist, Gibbs emphasized: "Not a single improvement will be made willingly and not a step will be taken by the Russians on their own initiative and no plan will be carried to a conclusion without continuous 'punch' from the outside." Under the circumstances, the bridge expert felt the commission had done all it was "justified in trying to do"; their work was finished because it was neither "dignified" nor "effective" for the commission to remain after its advice had been offered and accepted or rejected.

The American Government, however, was providing men and credits, and the United States, with the consent of the Russian Government, should appoint one of the commissioners to control the application of such assistance. Gibbs concluded that this matter should be discussed by the entire commission, a permanent organization instituted for the above

reason and the work of the Commission "brought to an end in a suitable manner."<sup>52</sup> There is no record of a reply from the Commission, but the latter with Greiner, both members of the National Defense Council, left Russia on August 14,

Chief of Staff Scott in a confidential report to Secretary of War Baker, was almost as discouraged as Gibbs. He reported leaving for the front on June 27 and to have three days' work time, traveling for two weeks. He did not consider the time ill spent because it impressed upon him the "insufficiency" of the railway equipment and the railways' "intolerable" operating conditions. Scott added that it was well "to begin any study of the Russian situation" with the railway problem. The Military Chief repeated how important it was to furnish Russia with cars and locomotives. Russia's two main difficulties were the revolutionary effect upon the army and the railway situation. Only with the restoration of discipline and rehabilitation of the railway could Russia continue in the war; and the railways were vital to military success.

Regarding the July offensive, Scott said that it was "impossible" for the members of the Mission to escape the belief that their presence was a factor in the determination to order an attack at that particular time; neither General Brusilov, who ordered the attack nor the generals who executed

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<sup>52</sup>George Gibbs to American Commission of Railway Experts, July 27, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

it, had any hope of taking Lemberg or Kovel. They had neither the means in men nor material for a sustained advance; the most they expected was a successful local battle which would "prove" to Russia and to America that "the army would and could fight" - this for its "political effect upon friends."

Scott then moralized on the question: "Can lives be ransomed with money? Yes they can. . . We have more money than any country in the world; shall we not then be willing to save our children's lives by spending it?" Through the exposition of precise and concise deduction, the General reached the conclusion that: (1) Russia would stay in the war if the United States furnished even a part of the aid she requested; (2) the Government was "eager to promise" that if aid were furnished, the war would be prosecuted; (3) even if she did not fight more vigorously in the next ten months than she had done since the Revolution, her value to the Allies would still be decisive because Germany had 150 divisions on the Russian front; (4) if Russia remained in the war - she apparently did not even have to fight - the war would be over a year earlier and an Allied victory assured; (5) it was, therefore, worth a "great sum of money" to the United States to keep Russia "even passively" in the war until the Spring of 1918 expecting her to become aggressive only during that summer; (6) what did the United States have to lose? - if Russia is "wobbling" then the munitions

could be sent elsewhere, locomotives and cars represented a greater chance of "total loss" but they were of no immediate use on American railroads because of their narrow gauge; should Russia make peace their presence would not benefit Germany because all of her resources would be commanded by the Germans anyway.

The general's conclusions were emphatic; that Russia would drop out of the war if the United States did not aid her. Altogether, he felt "it would pay us to lend Russia a billion dollars and send all the cars and engines we can, if doing so would prevent her from making peace this winter with Germany."<sup>53</sup>

While Root, Washburn and Scott were advising Washington to speed men and railway materials to Russia Colonel H. W. Thornton, the Assistant Director of Movements and Railways (War Office Staff) and representative of the British Government on the International Transportation Commission, was writing Willard contradictory advice. His commission coordinated Allied transportation requirements on the French railways. Thornton felt it necessary to mention two points which might not have been clear to Americans - namely, the necessity of conserving ocean tonnage and the sending of railway equipment to Russia. "I am quite aware", he said, that Russia needs help of this character and I do not for a

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<sup>53</sup>Scott to Baker, July 25, 1917, Root MSS, Box 136.

moment raise the slightest objection, - aside from all other considerations to do would be presumptuous," but he did "hope the transport needs of France" would also be recalled. What Thornton feared was that "if so large an amount of equipment is sent to Russia you may not be able to meet the demands of your army in France." Somewhat pessimistically he stated his private opinion that the war would have to be won on the western front; he doubted if "very much" could be expected from Russia. Thornton warned that the United States should concentrate its efforts. Ominously, he commented that General Jack Pershing was also "apprehensive" about Russian railway supplies and was in communication with Washington on the matter.<sup>54</sup>

During the first week of August both the American and British governments were discussing the Russian railway situation at the highest levels of government. On August 2, Buchanan informed the Foreign Office he "was not aware of the extent to which Americans are being asked by Russians to assist them in railway matters." A big "if" was the question whether or not the Americans, with the approval of Russian Government, were prepared to "take in hand whole question of transport re-organization and repairs of rolling stock." The British Ambassador admitted that the latter would be the "simplest solution" and the only alternative

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<sup>54</sup>Colonel H. W. Thornton to Willard, July 29, Baker MSS, Box 5.

would be for each of allied countries to divide up the Russian railway system into sections and then undertake the work of reorganization. He also suggested that the Transport Commission in Paris consider how the allies could assist the Russians in reforming their transport services and ensure the more efficient operation of the Murman Railway.<sup>55</sup>

In the United States Willard told Daniels that the United States needed to send railway men and more engines to Russia. Spring-Rice, Britain's Ambassador in Washington, also wrote "gloomily" to President Wilson regarding the Russian railroads but "the President did not think he knew much about it". The British Government apparently was urging the American Government to assume greater powers in the Russian railway situation and Buchanan in Petrograd was advised to take the lead with allied colleagues in pressuring the Russian Government to "give greater powers to American railway experts."<sup>56</sup> At this point the American Government had not agreed to assume these greater responsibilities.

There was a good reason for the Administration's unenthusiastic response to British advice and pressure; all the reports reaching the United States revealed Russia's

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<sup>55</sup>Buchanan to Foreign Office, August 2, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/153079.

<sup>56</sup>Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-21, 188; Foreign Office to Buchanan, August 9, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/153923.

hopeless situation in railway transport. On August 7, William V. Judson, American Military Attache and chief of the American Military Mission, reported that the Russian railway situation was "very distressing."<sup>57</sup>

Neither the diplomats nor the military, though, were as impatient as Stevens with the delay in effecting the American recommendations. The railway chairman wrote an abrupt letter to K. N. Vanifatiev of the Railway Engineering Council saying he was tired of taking and wished to see results! The inefficiency of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the consequent congestion of the much needed freight at Vladivostok had become "a national calamity to Russia;" was "the talk all over the world" and a "very serious handicap" in the matter of allied assistance to Russia. Since this "almost total collapse" developed from the "absolutely inexcusable manner" in which the Government was handling the West Siberian mining situation, the Taiga mines should be reopened "at once without any long drawn out conferences even if the strong arm of the military has to be employed." The American railway chairman felt it was "unreasonable" to ask the United States to extend more credit for materials to be shipped to Vladivostok when the latter was already terribly congested. Somewhat plaintively Stevens complained

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<sup>57</sup>Colonel William V. Judson (U. S. Military Attache at Petrograd) to War College Staff, August 7, 1917, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-15.



that a remedy should be applied immediately without "continuing these discussions;" the Commission was being "talked to death."

Four days later, on the seventh, Stevens was even more peremptory in his tone. The institution of longer locomotive runs should have been adopted two months previously; more specifically, American railwaymen would not arrive for several months, "too late, the Commission believes to avert a crisis which now threatens owing to the persistent delays of your railway administration in adopting better methods . . ." As the Commission had "quickly and cheerfully approved all requests" for railway equipment and it expected "proper cooperation" in applying one of the "simplest, quickest and cheapest remedies" - longer engine runs. In conclusion, the Chairman stated emphatically that the commission would not discuss any of the items in the minutes of the previous meetings except two points not yet approved; which the Americans felt was vital in improving the railways and successfully prosecuting the war.<sup>58</sup>

The following day, Vanifatiev, the new Minister of Communications, met with the American Commission; Darling confessed to his diary that: "we no sooner get in with one Minister than he is out and another comes in; we cannot seem to get them started on the Vladivostok stuff; we have shown

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<sup>58</sup>Stevens to K. N. Vanifantief [Sic], July 21/August 3, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1; ibid, July 25/August 7, 1917.

them how but they don't start." At the free-wheeling meeting, Ustrugov, the Deputy Minister, said that where the engine runs had been increased, the necessity for repairs increased proportionately; whereas on the Tomsk Railway where no changes were instituted, the percentage of engines under repairs remained stationary. Therefore, the economy realized through increasing runs was absorbed by the number of engines under repair. Considering the wear and tear on the engines, Ustrugov requested definite assurances that the United States would deliver the railway materiel on time.

Stevens, in turn, made two suggestions; both of which were either unanswered or rejected. First, he suggested that the Russians improve their methods of repair; and second, that the commission request more American instructors to equip the entire line from Omsk to Vladivostok. Ustrugov, however, stated that the Bolsheviks were causing labor problems and that the presence of American railwayment would increase local objections and only aggravate the existing labor difficulty.

Seeking a way out of the impasse, the chairman then asserted that if steps were not taken at once it might be too late to apply the proposed measures. He believed the next five to six months would be decisive for Russia and that firm measures to remedy the current railway situation should be taken "at once." Another commissioner, Miller,

said "quite plainly" that in the two months since their arrival, nothing had been done.

Excepting the Tomsk Railway, Ustrugov agreed to effect the American recommendations on the Trans-Siberian system. As Commissar of the latter with "full powers", the Deputy Minister put himself "on the spot" when he guaranteed that he, personally, would direct the execution of their proposals and would "take all necessary steps to apply the proposed measures as soon as possible." After acquainting the new Minister with current business, he would inspect the entire Siberian network. Ustrugov concluded the meeting with three promises: (1) to change the direction of the coal traffic on the Siberian railways; (2) to increase the production of the Taiga and Ural mines and (3) to accompany the American Commission the following day on an inspection tour of the railway and Vladivostok.<sup>59</sup>

What the railway commission did not realize was that the Provisional Government was fighting for its very survival. Judson reported on August 9 that the railway situa-

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<sup>59</sup>There are two reports of this crucial meeting; one is a Russian translation and the other is the briefer American summary. Minutes of the Meeting Held on July 26/August 8, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1; Minutes of Meeting Held in the Ministry of Ways of Communications, August 8, 1917, ibid; There is some discrepancy as to the identity of new minister. Another source indicates the appointment of G. Takhtamchiev sometime during the period July 23-August 8, 1917. See V. Victproff-Toporoff (ed), La premiere annee de la revolution russe, Faites-documents-appreciations sous le redaction de V. Victproff-Toporoff (Berne: 1919).

tion was worsening and that food conditions in Petrograd were deteriorating daily. The American Military Attache warned that Russian public opinion did not expect the government to last "more than a month or so."<sup>60</sup>

Judson was prophetic in this warning because the railway commission had to cope again with a new Minister of Communications, P. P. Yureniev. Stevens again requested that the Russians implement the American recommendations.<sup>61</sup> On August 10, Yureniev confirmed Ustrugov's appointment as Commissar with full power to implement the Commission's recommendations on the Trans-Siberian Railway. There would be no further discussion either of rationale or methodology and Ustrugov would deal directly with the Americans. Since Ustrugov would leave Petrograd not later than August 17 in order to effect the Commission's recommendations, the new Minister invited the American experts to accompany the Commissar on his inspection.<sup>62</sup>

It was ironic that as Stevens and Ustrugov planned this inspection trip, Britain's Assistant Military Attache

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<sup>60</sup>Judson to Scott, August 9, 1917, Root MSS, Box 71.

<sup>61</sup>Stevens to P. P. Yureneff, July 28/August 10, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

<sup>62</sup>Minutes of Meeting Held at the Ministry of Ways of Communication, August 10, 1917, ibid.

at Peking, Captain R. B. Denny, had just completed a ten day trip on August 2 over the Trans-Siberian from Petrograd to Harbin. He found the line as a whole in a "neglected state". Somewhat petulantly, Denny reported that the American Railway Commission had not succeeded in securing any kind of control over the line. The Attache mentioned Stevens' suggestion of repairing damaged rolling stock rather than placing new equipment that would interfere with the output of American munitions. Russian officials refused this suggestion because they had few expert mechanics and their repair machinery was inadequate; but most significantly, because their railwaymen would not work for American instructors. At the same time, Denny did mention the Commission's concern regarding the rolling stock and repeated the American's complaint that the Russians ran their railway equipment until it deteriorated.<sup>63</sup>

That Russia was suspicious of American motives is also confirmed by other British sources. While Yureniev was announcing to the press that the Government was taking immediate steps towards restoring the Siberian line to maximum effectiveness and promising unreserved cooperation with the American Commission, Tereshchenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs, was telling his tale of woe to the British Ambassador. Yureniev and Tereshchenko accepted a British proposal of

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<sup>63</sup>Captain R. B. Denny to War Office, August 12, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/193726.

railway assistance from General de Candolle. The Foreign Minister told Buchanan that he fully realized the seriousness of the current railway situation and knew that such an offer of assistance from an Allied Government "ought to be accepted". Tereshchenko reminded Buchanan that he had already given orders that the American recommendations regarding the Siberian Railway were to be carried out at once.

In the strictest confidence, the Russian confessed that the Americans were regarded with a "certain amount of suspicion not as much in railway as in financial circles on account of designs with which they are credited of acquiring large mineral concessions etc. but railway need was too pressing for such consideration to be taken into account." Buchanan assured Tereshchenko that the British offer of railway assistance was a "perfectly disinterested one". De Candolle was to meet with Yureniev and the Minister would decide how his services should be best utilized. The Foreign Minister assumed that the British were most interested in the Murman and Archangel Railways as the Americans were most involved with the Trans-Siberian.

In commenting on this dispatch, Balfour, Britain's Secretary of State, believed it should be forwarded to the United States to combat Germany propaganda in Petrograd. Balfour also felt that such an accusation was "very unjust to the present American Government." What is significant, is that the British were negotiating with the Russian Government bilaterally to place a British railway man in the

Ministry of Communications while pressuring the United States Government to assume greater responsibility for the Russian railways. It appears clear that if the American Government would not accept the responsibility the British Government would.

The Prime Minister intervened and on August 14 drafted a message to Spring-Rice in Washington advising him to "hint" to the American Government "discreetly" of Russian suspicions so that they could refute them if they "desired" to. Lansing was aware of Russian suspicions and insinuations and believed that they had originated in the United States.<sup>64</sup>

Actually, the situation was much worse than either Balfour or Lansing suspected. Darling's experiences during August revealed the extent of Russian distrust of the United States and the government's inability to cope with their railway labor problem.

On August 1, Darling learned that he probably would have to visit Kola to inspect the Murman line. Current rumors indicated that the government would soon place the railroads under a military dictatorship. He thought this was an "excellent idea" because labor was causing so much difficulty. The American commissioner noted somewhat ruefully, that time was passing rapidly with "nothing really accomplished."

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<sup>64</sup>Buchanan to Foreign Office, August 10, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/157706; Memo of Arthur James Balfour, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, August 12, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/157706; Buchanan to Foreign Office, August 17, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/161944.

Britain's General Michelson of the Committee on Foreign Supplies requested him to inspect the Murman Railway and on August 7 Darling left with a party of six including himself - two allied representative from General Staffs (British and French Officers) the Russian Engineer in charge of the Murman line, a representative from the Russian Navy and an interpreter. At Soroka, 237 miles up the line, Darling caught his first glimpse of the White Sea; the route followed the coast and with a chilling Northeast wind blowing, Darling had put on his sweater and raincoat to keep warm. He was trying to take notes by leaning out the window and privately accused the Russian engineer, of being "very discourteous." The Russian did not eat with the rest of the party, or in Darling's words "pay any attention and we are only trying to help him."

Four days later before crossing the Arctic Circle, Darling wrote in his Diary that the people did not seem to understand about construction because they were wasting money on ditches and slopes rather than working on the track and completing the buildings. Then he learned that the men did not want to work except at ditching where they were paid per cubic yard. At an overnight rest, they argued outside this window until one in the morning and were just starting to the Russian engineer's car to make them give certain concessions when the train pulled out and left them. According to Darling, the Russian engineer was becoming a



"little bit frightened" and ordered the train to proceed rather than staying the night.

The train continued to a Polar Circle crossing about 250 miles south of Murmansk where he found most of the grading (ballast) done on the railway but no buildings. On August 13 he met two American steamshovel men who said they had lots of work, nothing to eat and did not like it "at all." The next day, late in the evening Darling reached Kola. After meeting with the Governor-General, the railway people and the general manager, the Russians promised they would complete the railway no later than November 1.

On the return trip the Russian railway officials and Darling traveled slowly in order to meet the railwaymen in their committee meetings. The Russian engineer always gave decisions favorable to the men. At the station where they had trouble on the way up the train had to stop and wait for the Russian engineer to discuss the workmen's request which was finally decided in their favor. Some of the workers then told them that if the train had not stopped that they were prepared to bomb the train just south of the station. The Russians claimed they had 28,000 laborers on the work, but Darling said he did not see one-half that number. Never at a loss for a reply, the Russian's "explained" that there were one or two holidays while the party was en-route and the workers were in camp.

Two weeks later, after this exhausting trip Darling

was back in Petrograd; he did not return to good news because he learned that there was another Minister of Ways of Communication and that the new general manager of the Trans-Siberian, Ustrugov was to travel over the line and install the Division Superintendents. Since the entire railway commission was to accompany him, Darling became optimistic and though it looked as though they "really meant to do something at last." As the commissioner said, they had lost practically five months because of changes in the Ministry and other delays; Washington was also "very slow" in its actions.<sup>65</sup>

It did seem, though, that the Russian Government was finally redeeming its promises. On August 13, Stevens cabled Willard that after "long delays" the government had approved all the Commission's recommendations and that he should arrange to send twelve units of fourteen men, each unit consisting of one division superintendent, one master mechanic, one chief train dispatcher, two train masters, two traveling engineers, six train dispatchers and one line repairer to Russia. Ten of the units would serve at towns between Vladivostok and Omsk and two on the line from Petrograd to Moscow. All the units, according to the Chairman's directive should have quartermasters to handle food and quarters; Stevens also asked that they bring 1000

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<sup>65</sup>Darling, August 1-20, 1917, Diary.

selector phones and as many and other essential appliances as could be secured quickly. All of the men were to act as instructors in American methods and to return to the United States upon conclusion of the war. These expenses excepting the general superintendent, were to be paid by the Russian government through credits provided by the United States. Stevens was optimistic over the "great change recently in official spirit" and thought that the Russians were genuinely "enthusiastic" for American methods.<sup>66</sup>

The same day Secretary Lansing reported a conversation with Root. Root asked if Lansing had seen the address issued by the Stevens' Commission and when the Secretary said that he had not, Root sent him a copy of the July 4 proclamation. Lansing was alarmed at Stevens' commitments and activities; he wrote Wilson that the Chairman was "assuming an authority and giving the Commission a diplomatic character which neither possess." The Secretary was particularly upset over Stevens' pledge to supply locomotives, freight cars and additional credit to the Russian Government; a pledge which he felt Stevens had "no power to make." Although the pledge could not be rescinded without serious diplomatic consequences, Lansing felt the President should tell Stevens "as the Commission is not a diplomatic one,

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<sup>66</sup>Organization of Russian Railway Service Corps begins. Stevens to Willard, August 13, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 196-197.

that he has no authority to carry on negotiations or enter into agreements for the United States.<sup>67</sup>

Wilson had already heard of Stevens' "extraordinary action" from Root and directed that the Secretary send the following reprimand to Stevens:

The President appreciates very highly what Mr. Stevens and his associates are doing in Russia but thinks it wise to remind Mr. Stevens that it is important that the impression should not be created that he and his associates represent or speak for the Government of the United States. As the President explained to the Commission before they started, they were sent abroad merely to put themselves at the service of the Russian Government. Any assurances conveyed to the Russian people, therefore, as if authoritatively by the Commission would be a very grave mistake. The President does not wish in this way to discredit assurances already given but merely to<sup>68</sup> convey a very friendly caution for the future.

While the American Government was reprimanding Stevens for assuming greater powers than his mission warranted, the British Government remained active in trying to persuade the Russians to give the American railway experts fuller control. The cross purposes of the Anglo-American coalition were graphically revealed in a communique from Buchanan to the Foreign Office. Buchanan did not believe that he or his colleague could "intervene to any purpose" unless the Americans invited them to do so and unless the diplomatic corps could state "exactly what it is that Americans ought to be allowed to do." The British Ambassador

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<sup>67</sup>Lansing to President Wilson, August 13, 1917, Lansing Papers, II, 339.

<sup>68</sup>President Wilson to the Secretary of State, ibid, 342.

concluded that representations of a "general character would do no good." At the same time, the Foreign Office was apparently proceeding with its plan to place their own railway expert, de Candolle, in a working arrangement with Ministry of Ways of Communications.<sup>69</sup>

Eventually, the British Government instructed de Candolle to organize a commission for South Russia. The United States government was asked how far they were prepared to go in reorganizing Russia's railway system and the Americans replied that they were not prepared to assume greater responsibility. Britain, therefore, believed that either they or the Americans should assume control of the Russian railways.<sup>70</sup>

All, however, was not going smoothly with Stevens. As late as August 15, the Russians were raising objections to American railway instructors taking over the Siberian line. Ustrugov cited the difficulty of securing interpreters, but Stevens replied that it would not be an insurmountable obstacle. The Chairman assured the Commissar that a "much larger number of men could be profitable employed elsewhere than on the Siberian." He sought to allay the suspicion that the United States was sending more

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<sup>69</sup>Buchanan to Foreign Office, August 12, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/158315; Foreign Office to G. Barclay (Jassy), August 14, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/158542.

<sup>70</sup>F.O. 371/3009, W38/238443, W38/238443, W38/227738, W38/105075, W38/158627

men than was absolutely for the current critical situation. Stevens stated again that the United States did not think that "any means which can be employed by either Russia or itself should be neglected, nor any further loss of time be allowed, to enable the war to be pushed to a successful conclusion." So that there would be no misunderstanding, Stevens repeated that the above was the "prime object for which this Commission was sent to Russia." The engineer-diplomat also reminded Ustrugov that, "We are very much in earnest and believe that now we are started right, but owing to the serious loss of time, which has already occurred and which cannot be recalled, we must redouble our efforts to the utmost."<sup>71</sup>

Britain, however, continued to press the American Government regarding the problem of the Russian railways. The United States delayed their answer to the British Government and on August 18, the Foreign Office cabled Spring-Rice to "hasten" Washington in its decision. This decision to press, or rather pressure, the American Government into greater responsibility was also coordinated with French and Italian Ambassadors.<sup>72</sup>

Then unknown to both Francis and Stevens Britain was the "behind the scene manager" of the scenario which

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<sup>71</sup>Stevens to Oustrougoff, August 2/15, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

<sup>72</sup>Spring-Rice to Foreign Office, August 18, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/62466.

called for American involvement in Russian port facilities and her railways. Scott's plan of taking over Vladivostok as an American port was still circulating when Spring-Rice attached a "very confidential" addition to his cypher telegram. The British Ambassador repeated hearing that the Russian Government was prepared to place Vladivostok under American control and for that purpose, four or five regiments of railway engineers would be sent to organize transport and to secure order.<sup>73</sup>

Ignorance may be bliss because the American railway commission neither knew of these British actions nor did Stevens seem perturbed about the friendly reminder from President Wilson that he was not on a diplomatic mission. On August 21, the Petrograd correspondent of The Times quoted Stevens as saying that for the duration of the war, a "special railway dictatorship" was necessary. Darling, though, was more pessimistic, he believed that the Commission was just starting on the Siberian trip "that should have been made two months ago." The trip was again threatened by a strike of the Union of Engineers, but the commission finally left on August 24, The commission felt that it was best for them to leave and be replaced by other

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<sup>73</sup>Spring-Rice (Washington) to Foreign Office, August 23, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/166145.

railway experts because it "would have a better effect on the Russians." Specifically, Darling believed that they were leaving in order to prepare the way for the Russian Railway Service Corps.<sup>74</sup>

According to Darling, the commission left on August 24, but Ustrugov did not accompany them. Only after Francis had repeated interviews with Tereschenko, two interviews with Kerensky on the subject and informal conferences between the Commission and the Ministry of Communications, did the Russians agree to the inspection. Kerensky had previously told Francis that the Commission's recommendations would be implemented on the Siberian Railway and the government appointed Ustrugov to make them operative. Only when it seemed that the Russians were stalling about Ustrugov accompanying the Commission, did Francis tell Tereshchenko that he would consider the Commissar's failure to join the mission "almost a breach of international courtesy;" Ustrugov, therefore, joined the commission a week later.<sup>75</sup>

Whether or not the United States entered into an agreement with the Kerensky Government vesting control of the Trans-Siberian Railway with the American Railway Commission is a debatable issue. The only agreement that

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<sup>74</sup>New York Times, August 21, 1917, 4; Darling, August 22-23, 1917, Diary.

<sup>75</sup>Francis to Lansing, August 25, 1917, Foreign Relations, III, 197-198; Darling, August 31, 1917, Diary.



evidence supports is the one with Ustrugov to accompany the American experts on an inspection trip. Since Ustrugov eventually completed the trip only upon Francis's insistence, the Russians were neither favorably inclined toward the modified agreement appointing Ustrugov as Commissar of the Siberian Railway or; the latter may have been intended merely as a Russian figurehead to camouflage actual American control. Either way, the Russians were not enthusiastic about the agreement.

Notwithstanding contemporary opinion, the United States did not secure control over the Siberian railway system. Rumors, however, of such alleged control had been prevalent in Russia for months and American and foreign observers had reported these rumors. It is certain that American popularity suffered a decline during the summer months and that the British had felt it necessary to "hint" to the American Government about Russian suspicion. While it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, it is true that the United States was not the only nation interested in Russia's railways. Britain was attempting to place General de Condolle in the Ministry of Communications and possibly to assume control of the Russian railways in the south and all others excepting the Trans-Siberian. There is also an indication, though unproven, that Japan acquired an interest in the Chinese Eastern Railway, "a transaction also credited to the Kerensky Government." The latter was

first mentioned by Putnam Weale in the Shanghai Gazette of May 14, 1918, and was repeated in the Kokumin Shimbun.<sup>76</sup>

What is definite is that Stevens was in an untenable position in late August. The Administration was not aware of the railway situation at first hand and Root had undermined the Chairman's position with the President. At least one member of the railway mission, though, assessed the situation correctly when he said, "We cannot help the Russians if they will not help themselves." It remained to be seen whether or not after three months of delaying tactics the Provisional Government would implement the recommendations of the Stevens' mission on the Trans-Siberian Railway.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Francis to Lansing, August 25, 1917, Foreign Relations, III, 197-198, Darling, August 31, 1917, Diary.

<sup>77</sup> "The American Railway Commission and Russian Railroads," Engineering and Contracting, L, No. 3 (July 17, 1918), 56-57; Louis Edgar Browne (Staff Correspondent of The Chicago Daily News in Russia), "Defects of the Kerensky Government," (April 11, 1918), in New Russia in the Balance (Chicago: 1918), 7.

## CHAPTER V

### THE AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMISSION OF RAILWAY EXPERTS TO RUSSIA: PHASE THREE- REACTION AND TERMINATION, SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1917

All the activity regarding the Russian railway system did not center in Russia with either Francis or the American railway commission. Members of the Root Commission, upon their return to the United States, kept up an active publicity campaign on behalf of greater assistance to Russia. Scott desired greater transportation assistance to Russia and Rumania in order to prevent both those nations from making a separate peace with Germany. Washburn was in communication with Colonel House, Root, and Senator Hiram Johnson on Russian problems.

Bertron, the financial adviser of the Root Mission, reported early in September that the "all-important question in Russia at the present time is that of transportation, and the effective solution of many of the problems connected with the reorganization of Russia's industrial life." He also told the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce at the Bankers' Club in New York City that the Trans-Siberian Railroad was in "excellent condition" but its operation was

inefficient. Contrary to the recommendations of the Stevens' Commission, the financial expert accepted the Russian view that the "only remedy" was the introduction of more rolling stock and more engines. The "most effective assistance" he insisted would be through the introduction of expert mechanics and railroad men who would assist in the workshops and instruct the Russians in the greatest utilization of the existing facilities. In a New York Times interview of September 23, he stated further that the United States should not only organize Russian railroads but also operate them. Bertron specifically mentioned the report of the Stevens' Commission on the Trans-Siberian and Vladivostok situation and anticipated that the commission would make further detailed recommendations regarding "all other lines".<sup>1</sup>

The American Commission, particularly Darling, would have disagreed with Bertron's optimistic evaluation. On his inspection of the Trans-Siberian Railway Darling reported that at Omsk the railway company had not only just completed an office building costing over a million dollars but that the officials would not accept the

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<sup>1</sup>Scott to A. P. Coles, August 21, 1917, Scott MSS, Box 29; Scott to Tereshchenko, August 27, 1917, *ibid*; Washburn to Root, August 25, 1917, Correspondence, 1912-23, Washburn MSS; Washburn to Senator Hiram Johnson (California), August 27, 1917; *ibid*; New York Times, I, September 2, 1917, 3; "Transportation and Public Finance in Russia As Seen By the American Diplomatic Commission," The Economic World, n.s. XV, No. 10 (September 8, 1917), 334-335; New York Times, September 23, 1917, VII, 6.

American plan relating to longer engine runs. The railway experts also inspected the government and private mines at Taiga on September 5. Ustrugov talked with the men and then announced that there was not nearly as much labor difficulty as Petrograd imagined. He ordered the government mines to double their output by October 15, and if the private mines did not produce an equal amount, the government would expropriate them.

On September 6, the following day, the commission arrived in Karasnoyarsk, supposedly the "most anarchistic and bolshevik town in Siberia and Russia." Karasnoyarsk lived up to its reputation; the Bolsheviks took advantage of the government's embarrassment by announcing that they would only permit one hundred sixty-four loads daily to proceed west from Vladivostok. The Russian General Railway Union Congress, then in session in Moscow, denounced this action because one hundred and forty-four short tons of freight were still at Vladivostok awaiting shipment to European Russia. The labor situation, though, was not entirely bleak; while the Karasnoyarsk Bolsheviks were being disruptive, the workers' council at Irkutsk, with only one dissenting vote, agreed to the American Commission's proposed change in operating methods.

On this three week inspection trip, Stevens' associates were surprised to learn that many of the railway officers were not "in sympathy" with either the revolution or the

Provisional Government. Russian officials told the American railway experts that they particularly disliked the workers committees' interference with railway affairs. What is surprising is that the commission was not aware of this fact before the middle of September.

An unforeseen event, the incipient revolt of General Kornilov, commander-in-chief of the army, threw the government into turmoil and reacted unfavorably upon the commission. When Darling heard that Liverovski was Acting Minister of Communications, he wondered whether or not they would have to do all their work over again, just when they were succeeding in organizing the Siberian road.<sup>2</sup>

This instability had unfortunate repercussions; as the Provisional Government and the railway situation deteriorated, sections of Russian public became more outspoken in their criticisms of the United States. American Vice-Counsel Felix Cole at Petrograd, on September 11, reported to the State Department that the Russian journal Word, announced that America had refused the second half of the promised locomotives as a result of the Riga defeat. England, according to the same press announcement, had sent back a ship loaded with new heavy artillery meant for Archangel in order to "prevent expensive material, that would

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<sup>2</sup>Darling, September 1-7, 11, 17, 1917, Diary.

be useful on the French front, from falling into German hands." Cole recommended strongly that America censorship "prevent the dispatch from America by cable of editorial comment taken by Russian correspondents from American papers and containing uncomplimentary remarks or statements derogatory to Russian sensibilities."

David B. Macgowan, Consul at Moscow, confirmed Russian suspicions of American motives and outlined the current railway situation. On a trip through southwestern Russia and Roumania from September 23 to October 15, he was asked if it were true that the United States had bought the Siberian Railway, all the Russian railways, the peninsula of Kamchatka, and, finally the Altai Mountain territory. He mentioned "fabulous prices" for the supposed purchase including assumption of the entire Russian debt.

Macgowan also contradicted Vanderveldt's earlier report concerning the behavior of the soldiers. Deserters waited in the railway yards to force their way into and upon the roofs of railway cars. The consul felt that railway service was the "most impressive proof of social disorganization," because he passed parks of idle freight and passenger cars, and saw few moving trains. Hundreds of locomotives in a single park between Kiev and Jassy told their story of the failure of Russian mechanics to cope with the greatest practical problem of the country - the railways. It took two "wheezy" locomotives to move a single daily

passenger train to Roumania, often at not more than five miles per hour. Yard management at Jassy was so indifferent that the incoming train had to wait in a suburb five hours for the outgoing to pass. Soldiers took every car in motion by assault; they disabled a car under the eyes of the Red Cross party - the doors were wrenched from their hinges and other damage was done. It had to be uncoupled from the train. All and all, Macgowan painted a discouraging picture of railway conditions.<sup>3</sup>

Unknown to the Stevens' Commission and other Americans in Russia, Washington was moving to broaden the basis of assistance to the Russian railway system. Willard delivered an address entitled "The Patriotic Duty of the Railroad Man." to his staff of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Specifically mentioning Russia, he explained why Russia's railroad difficulties were of serious consequence to the United States. Willard referred to the possibility of Russia making a separate peace with Germany and that such an action would mean sending two million more men to France if Russia was unable to solve her transportation problem satisfactorily. As President of the railroad,

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<sup>3</sup>New York Times, September 2, 1917, I, 1; Novoe Vremya, August 22/September 4, 1917 cited in RG 59, 861.00/589; Washburn to Baker, July 8, 1917, Baker MSS, Box 4; Translations of Speeches at the Moscow State Conference, September 1917, RG, 861.00/591; Felex Cole (Vice-Consul, Petrograd) to Lansing, September 11, 1917, RG 59, 861.00/592; Maddin Summers to Lansing, November 1, 1917, RG 59, 861.00/913.



Willard commended Washburn for bringing Russia's railroad problems to the attention of the American Government. This speech was in the nature of a "pep-talk" to his men because he stated that he was releasing the railroad's orders for new engines in order to ship them to Russia. With increased efficiency on the part of all the employees, more equipment could be shipped to Russia where it was desperately needed.<sup>4</sup>

The State Department also undertook direct action to assist Russia. On September 10, Lansing and Viscount Kikujero Ishii, on special mission, pledged his nation to share with the United States the economic burden of furnishing Russia with war munitions, railroad supplies and other equipment. Japan promised further, to divert a large part of its merchant marine to the transportation of Russian supplies while Secretary Lansing agreed that the American embargo on export of steel would be lifted sufficiently to supply Japanese shipbuilders.<sup>5</sup>

However, the State Department did not realize that the railway commission was in the process of winding up its

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<sup>4</sup>Daniel Willard, "The Patriotic Duty of the Railroad Man," Railway Review (Chicago) LXI (September 8, 1917), 290, 292.

<sup>5</sup>The writer did not find the text of this agreement in the State Department files. This information is from contemporary articles which collaborated that America's shipment of locomotives and cars to Vladivostok would be carried in Japanese vessels. "Japan To Help Fill Russia's Railroad Needs," Railway Review (Chicago) LXI (September 15, 1917), 311 and "Russian Railway Improvement Program," ibid (September 22, 1917), 351.

activities. Stevens told Darling on September 20 that the Commission's work would be completed when they reached Vladivostok; the chairman planned to return to Petrograd and offer his services to the Russian Government. If the latter declined his assistance, he would still remain and winter in Southern Russia. Darling agreed with Stevens that their work was done and somewhat reluctantly said he would stay if the Russians requested his services. Darling, though, did not believe that the Russians would insist on him staying because he made plans the following day to return to the United States via Peking, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Manila and Honolulu.<sup>6</sup>

Not only were Stevens' plans in conflict with the State Department but also with the British program for reorganizing the railroads in Russia and Rumania. The Foreign Office had been more than concerned about the American Railway Commission devoting itself exclusively to the Trans-Siberian Railway and had already activated two plans for increased Anglo-American involvement in the operation of the Russian railways. One plan, proposed in August, was for the American Government to extend their "advisory" functions to the actual management of the Trans-Siberian Railway and all other Russian railways as well. While approval was pending, Britain succeeded in placing their own-

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<sup>6</sup>Darling, September 20-21, 1917, Diary.

"advisor", A. de Candolle, in the Russian Ministry of Ways of Communication.

General de Candolle arrived in Petrograd on September 14 and learned that the entire American Railway Commission was working east of the Ural Mountains so that no members were in European Russia. After two interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and access to information at the Ministry of Communications he sent a preliminary report to the Foreign Office. De Candolle felt that many of the Russian railway officials were competent men but were hampered by corruption in the lower ranks and extensive subdivision into numerous and parallel services inherited from the old regime. The General did not believe that the railways were any more inefficient than the other governmental departments; Russia's "outstanding" railway failure was due to "confusion elsewhere" as well as by inconsiderate demands made on them in both military and civilian traffic.

This British advisor felt that foreign personnel would be necessary in the mechanical departments of the Russian and Rumanian railways. The major objective of these foreign railways experts would be to simplify their staff organization. In view of his contacts, de Candolle must have read the recommendations of the Stevens' Commission, but his own evaluation differed from the Americans; only after changes were effected in Russian

railway staff organization, should reforms in traffic and train operation be instituted. Stevens' group had been wary of proposing internal personnel changes due to the labor problem (the railway committees) and Russian suspicion that Americans or other foreigners would assume their jobs. In three days de Candolle could not secure the information nor experience that the Stevens' Commission had secured in three months. Still, one does suspect that the Russians were not telling the Briton the entire truth about their railway situation nor of their dealings with the Americans. If the Provisional Government wished to evade its pledge regarding the Siberian recommendations, its best rationale would be to cite conflicting recommendations from British and American railway experts.<sup>7</sup>

Simultaneously, in Washington, the question of foreign personnel for Russia's railways was receiving great attention. Secretary of War Baker, after a conference with Willard, authorized the raising and equipping of approximately 250 railway officers to act as instructors on various divisions of the Russian railroad. Felton, Director-General of Military Railroads, and Black, Chief of the Army Engineers, were in charge of arranging the details of the assignments. In turn, Felton advised Willard that he could secure these railway experts on short notice and send them to Russia within three or four weeks if the army supplied them with uniforms.

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<sup>7</sup>General A. de Candolle to Foreign Office, September 17, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/183241.

America's second railway mission, destined to become the Russian Railway Service Corps, was being organized just as the Stevens' Commission was voluntarily terminating their work.<sup>8</sup>

The Commission was temporarily optimistic about the Trans-Siberian railway and Vladivostok; the situation had improved at the port and the accumulated freight had been reduced to 450,000 tons. Later in October, conditions appeared more serious. John K. Caldwell, the American consul, reported that a Russian official termed Vladivostok the "most anarchistic city in Russia;" the entire Russian Fourth Fortress Artillery Regiment was supposedly composed of anarchists. Caldwell pointed out that on several occasions since the revolution Japanese cruisers had entered the port and the effect of the visits had been "beneficial." Caldwell considered it "unfortunate" that the visit of the American Asiatic Fleet arranged for August 28 had been cancelled and recommended that such a visit be made "as soon as possible." He believed that frequent brief visits of American warships to Vladivostok were especially desirable in view of the men and money the United States would soon have there in the Vladivostok locomotive-assembling shops and along the Trans-Siberian line.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Willard to Scott, September 18, 1917, Scott MSS, Box 30.

<sup>9</sup>John K. Caldwell (American Consul, Vladivostok) to Lansing, "Social Revolution in Vladivostok", October 4, 1917, RG 59, 861.00/623; Darling, September 23, 1917, Diary.

One of the greatest problems at Vladivostok in the Fall of 1917 was the labor situation; American engineers, arriving to assist in the locomotive-assembling shops, could find few workers. One of the American engineers confessed his confusion by saying, "the temperament and the attitude of the Russian workman of today is absolutely inexplicable." The locomotives awaiting installation required 2000 to 2500 workers. Since the local labor market could not supply these workers, the engineer decided to depend upon labor contractors who would bring men from elsewhere. At this point, the American engineer in charge ran into what seemed to be a "stone wall".

This engineer reported that anything similar to a labor contract was prohibited by the "Council of Soldiers and Workmen"; each man was "free" and all were to share alike in any venture. Then, the Council announced that no foreigner would be permitted to participate in the work to the exclusion of Russians; if there were not enough Russians and a foreigner secured the job, he would be dismissed when a Russian desired the job. The workers themselves would elect their own foremen and would obey only them irrespective of the fact that the assembling shops were an American project, supervised by Americans. The Council also announced the appointment of a committee on the "Control of Production," consisting of three men, a technical engineer, a mechanic and an office clerk who would represent the Council and who

would be superior not only to the Russians in authority but to the Americans as well.

Even if these conditions had been accepted other and even greater obstacles confronted the American managers. Russian workers would have to be imported from different parts of Russia. It would take four months to assemble them and living quarters had to be furnished for the men and their families. If 2000 men were employed, they with their families would number about 10,000. The question of feeding and clothing all these people was a serious one. In a letter dated October 24, 1917, the American engineer said, "there is not a pair of workmen's boots or shoes to be bought in Vladivostok today; eatables are here still but in small quantities and at exorbitant prices; warm clothing is practically unobtainable."

Another of the Council's demands was that of a cooperative store with Russian operation and American management. All this provision of shelter and stores for 10,000 persons was incidental to the main job, that of building and supervising locomotive-erection shops. Chinese labor would have been preferable but such labor was not permitted by the Russian government. Industrial enterprise was then hampered or prevented by labor disorganization; the refusal of the workers to submit to authority and the so-called "self-government" of industrial units, which in practice meant "no

government at all." So, the American engineers were withdrawn in the Autumn of 1917.<sup>10</sup>

However, another question was almost as serious; Scott's plan for American control of the port. Stevens' attitude at this time can not be determined. Later, in a conversation between himself and Major Dunlop, the British officer remarked that it was "unfortunate" that the American commission did not take over the operation of the port of Vladivostok in May of 1917. Stevens wrote him that it was "extremely wise the Commission did not do so." Then he explained his reasons. The Commission had been convinced at the time of their examination of the port facilities and the local railway organization that the Russians in charge of the railway terminal were "intelligent, fairly well organized and entirely capable." They could have loaded 10,000 cars per day, but all of them would have had to remain at Vladivostok due to the inability of the Siberian lines further westward to handle this traffic.

Stevens' personal view as well as the other commissioners was that the United States would have been responsible not only for the operation of the port and terminal, but also for the safety of supplies already on hand. The

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<sup>10</sup>The American engineer was not identified. Captain F. P. Adams (U.S.R.) to George Creel (Chairman of the Committee on Public Information), January 18, 1918, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-23.



United States would thus be responsible "not only for the upbringing of the child, but also the the sins of its parents." Under the conditions then existing, Stevens doubted that any Russian Government could be held responsible for the damage or delay occurring to this material and supplies. If, however, such responsibility could be laid to a responsible government, the United States, the latter could have secured the disadvantages with the benefits of control.

The chairman did not imply that such an evasion of responsibility was deliberate in the suggestion, but such responsibility was inherent in the proposal. A year later, in May of 1918, Stevens felt that responsibility for the safety of the munitions and other supplies rested entirely upon the Allies and not upon a single power, the United States. He acknowledged that the Commission and the United States was "requested" to assume control of Vladivostok, but he was "very glad we did not do so." It is clear that he knew of the suggestion and that he opposed it. Francis and Scott, possibly more amenable or cooperative with the "Allied cause" as envisioned by Great Britain, obviously felt differently and actively worked for American control at Vladivostok.

During this period, though, work strain and poor health increasingly affected Stevens; he was ill but not

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<sup>11</sup>Stevens to Dunlop, May 19, 1918, RG 43, E 332, Box 13.

incapacitated, for over a month with head and sinus trouble. Members of the commission felt that he would have to return home if the situation did not improve. By late September Stevens was in a "serious condition" relative to these ailments. By September 25, Stevens was bed-ridden. Darling believed he should go to Japan and see a doctor; but admitted privately that Stevens was "too bullheaded" to follow his advice.<sup>12</sup>

It was also during the early Fall that criticism of the United States began to appear in conjunction with a Russian desire for peace. On October 16, John Ray, the American Consul at Odessa, reported that the Russian population apparently desired peace and a rapprochement with Germany. So, those Russians who desired peace had to attack the American Railway Commission because its sole object was to keep Russia fighting. One of the bluntest statements illustrating this attitude is that of A. I. Verkhovski, Minister of War, who recommended peace negotiations before the joint session of the Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs on October 20. Verkhovski believed that technical assistance was proving "far from adequate" and that it was marked by a "certain evasiveness among the Allies in fulfilling their promises." Of the 2375 locomotives ordered from the United States, only a small number

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<sup>12</sup>Darling, September 24-25, 1917, Diary.

had been delivered and with such delay that the assistance was "meaningless" because the replacement did not cover the losses from wear and tear. Specifically, the minister criticized the assistance of American engineers in increasing the traffic capacity of the Siberian Railroad which Verkhovski stated had yielded "nothing". Tereshchenko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs attempted to refute Verkhovski by stating that according to his figures, the American engineers had succeeded in increasing the traffic capacity of the Siberian Railroad five times.<sup>13</sup>

As usual, the government was still at cross-purposes with itself; the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing. Ustrugov, the new Commissar of the Trans-Siberian, appointed S. P. Lobanov as his liaison official between himself, the Ministry of Communications in Petrograd and American and with other governmental departments. In an interview with the Commercial Industrial Gazette, Lobanov, denied the current rumor that the American instructors would be working independently. Rather, these specialists would be responsible to senior railway officials in order to acquaint them with American operational methods. Lobanov emphasized that when their mission was completed

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<sup>13</sup> Browder and Kerensky, Documents, III, 1742; John Ray (American Consul, Odessa) to Lansing, October 16, 1917, RG 59, 861.00/735.

they would return to America.<sup>14</sup>

Despite existing suspicion directed at the Russian Railway Service Corps, the more informed were seriously alarmed about the inability of the government to resolve the railway crisis. An article in Ruskiia Vedomosti entitled, "The Railroads Are Stopping" carried an impassioned appeal for less talk and more deeds. Revolutionary phraseology - shouts, hysterics, wails, resolutions - were forgotten the next day. When thoughtful persons were saying that the railways were on the brink of ruin, no one listened and no one believed. "Autumn came and the railroads are stopping. . .trains cannot move if there is no fuel and no locomotives." In order to make the railways move, two things were needed - coal and the repair of the locomotives. The Ministry of Communications could "do nothing"; telegrams reporting the complete breakdown in various places, "horrify the leaders" but they are "powerless". They are powerless because they have no authority; authority in its negative form existed with the countless railway committees and unions. Yureniev, author of the article and former Minister of Communications, concluded that the railroads could not be reorganized until "all authority in the field of administration and technique is vested in the agents of the Ministry." The railroads had to

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<sup>14</sup>"American Aid on Russia's Railroads," Russia: A Journal of Russian and American Foreign Trade, III, Nos. 2, 3 (February-March, 1918), 11-13.

be rehabilitated immediately, because he prophetically warned, "tomorrow will be too late."<sup>15</sup>

It was already too late - too late for the Stevens' Commission, too late for the Provisional Government and too late for Russia. M. Ansberg, stated emphatically on October 26 that the Russian railroads were "paralyzed." Total shipments during the three month period of July through September were less than during January and February when the roads were blocked with snow. In August American locomotives began arriving at Vladivostok, but these only improved the railway situation to a small degree because the number of engines in operation decreased monthly. Many of the trains were idle for lack of locomotives, while "anarchic conditions" reached such a stage that the executive heads were resigning and on some of the railroads virtually the entire staffs had left. On the Riasan-Ural road the conductors arbitrarily introduced a twenty-four hour rest period after each run thereby delaying the trains.<sup>16</sup>

On October 29, the American Consul at Tiflis, F. Willoughby Smith, met with the Russian General Averianov regarding the Caucasus front. Averianov reported receiving only infinitesimal quantities of flour and unless he could

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<sup>15</sup>P.P. Yureneff, "The Railroads Are Stopping," Russkiiia Vedomosti, October 24, 1917 cited in Browder and Kerensky, Documents, II, 706.

<sup>16</sup>New York Times, October 28, 1917, I, 10.

begin moving supplies within one week, the railways' deterioration would prevent him from supplying the front altogether. When Smith asked what Americans could do to assist him, the general replied that with the existing temper of the soldiers, it would be "impossible to take over the railways and even protect them by force, unless that were considerable, as employees would object." He did suggest that the United States could produce material, repair shops, and with a proportion of skilled mechanics as examples "something might be done, if it were not already too late." Averianov opposed the use of force in railway operation because the soldiers were "all powerful."

The following day, the Military High Commissioner and Political Representative of the Republican Government for the Caucasus front told Smith that the Caucasus Railways were doing their best and deprecated foreign assistance except in so far as locomotives went. This Commissioner said he would advise Smith whether specialist advice were required, but thought that at present, "it would do more harm than good." Smith was disgusted by the intransigent attitude and "fears" of the Russian authorities; he felt that "everybody is afraid to act and someone must act."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>F. Willoughby Smith (Consul at Tiflis) to Francis October 29-30, 1917, November 2, 1917, RG 49, 861.00/871.

Ignorant of these contemporary developments on Russia's European railways, the American Commission proceeded with its inspection of the Trans-Siberian. Darling inspected the erecting plants at First River and thought that they were in "fine" shape. He believed that if the Russians loaded what they could haul, 300 loads daily, they could clear up Vladivostok in four months. Since the Russians were doing so well, Darling thought more and more of returning to the States; his work was complete and he did not think that he was needed in Russia any longer. He was not too happy about Ustrugov's conduct and believed that he was "stalling" a little over the whole situation.

There were also problems with the workers and soldiers who said that they would hold a meeting on September 27 to determine whether or not they would divide up the property or not. Darling ruefully concluded that, "we seem to get in the midst of all kinds of trouble wherever we are."

The American railway expert also thought it would be "tough" to spend the winter in Siberia when there was no real necessity for so doing except that Ustrugov would like American approval for his actions. Ustrugov was especially concerned about the request from the Mechanics Union in America to send men to work at Russian wages and under Russian conditions. The Commission did not recommend it for a number of reasons: first, it might be a case of

German propaganda; secondly, the American mechanics would expect the best positions and the Russian workers would be even more dissatisfied.

By the end of the month the Commission had decided on their tentative program. Stevens received a cable from Francis that the Allies were concerned about the operation of a certain line and wished him to inspect it at once. Miller and Darling were to wait in Vladivostok for the first contingent of American railway personnel, the Russian Railway Service Corps, and then return to the United States. Stevens, with his son, Smith, and two assistants were to return to Petrograd.

At the time, Darling thought that the results of the Commission's work in September had been "excellent". The railway experts learned that motive power was not as impaired as the Russian officials led them to believe because they classified engines as being "sick" when they were in roundhouses for repairs over twelve hours. Stevens, writing after the event, held that the last inspection trip over the Trans-Siberian of the full commission revealed that the railway officials and workers were indifferent and apathetic toward improvements and that politics absorbed the staff, rank and file. Still, Stevens did admit that "success to a limited extent seemed in sight" so that September may have marked the highwater mark of the American



confidence and optimism in their work and future railway improvement.

However, the Commission did proceed with its voluntary plans for terminating its services. On October 4, Stevens, Miller and Darling had a champagne and steak dinner in Harbin preliminary to parting company. The following day they met with Ustrugov who showed them his proposed routing of coal from the Cheremkova and other mines. Darling left for the States the same day via Shanghai, Nagasaki and Victoria. At Peking, Darling turned down an invitation to a stag dinner because he did not wish to speak in public about the Commission's work in Russia. Significantly, though, when Paul S. Reinsch, American Minister in China, questioned Darling as to the advisability of appointing a permanent American political commission for Russia that would deal with all problems including railways, Darling believed that it was a good idea.<sup>18</sup>

While Stevens was enroute to Petrograd, Smith, the American aide to Ustrogov, and two other Russian railway officials visited Darien and the Japanese director of the South Manchurian Railway. According to Smith, they visited locomotive and tire shops and, "it was all certainly a revelation to the Russians." At Smith's instigation, the "Jap Director" told Ustrugov that "they used so many

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<sup>18</sup>Darling, September 26-30, October 1, October 4-11, Stevens, "The Commission of Railway Experts to Russia," Stevens MSS.

overhead cranes because the men were to work at their machines and not to carry material; he then said that every step saved meant that much more money saved; he certainly told just what was needed." The party continued to Port Arthur, visited the Japanese Governor-General, returned to Dairen, visited the Fushun coal mines and reached Harbin October 10. Ustrugov was so impressed with the tour of the more efficient Japanese railway operations that he assured Smith that he would not only adopt the American recommendations but that "we shall have an American road here in a short time." The Commissar also directed Smith to travel with him from there on. Smith concluded that "the little trip to Japan was an eye opener to him" and that all would be "well here" because they were through giving suggestions to Ustrugov.<sup>19</sup>

This expression of confidence was neither realistic nor permanent. Stevens' diplomatic colleague sharply disagreed; later in September Francis reported that the general railway situation was daily growing more critical. He then suggested sending Daniel Willard with a few competent subordinates to Russia - their primary task would be "to advise" the government about all its railways excepting the Trans-Siberian. Francis informed the State Department that a "first class railroad man" would not be subordinate

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<sup>19</sup>C. H. Smith to Stevens, October 12, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 2.

but would work in cooperation with the Minister of Communications. According to Tereshchenko, the new American railway expert would be de facto transportation Tsar by dominating all the "Russian railroads outside Trans-Siberian system which Stevens commission has in charge."<sup>20</sup>

The new month of October did not begin auspiciously; Judson, Military Attache at Petrograd and newly promoted Brigadier-General, wrote the Chief of Staff that the Russians were very poorly supplied with winter clothing and food, an acute food shortage existed in the cities and that "the railroads seem to be getting worse rather than better." Judson stated that the largest locomotive factory closed down due to strikes and that the deterioration among cars and locomotives would probably "occur more rapidly" than could be offset by new American equipment.<sup>21</sup>

Only two days later, Lansing wrote President Wilson that Jules Jusserand, the French Ambassador, had called upon him and was "greatly disturbed" over the Russian situation. His government proposed holding an Inter-Allied Conference in Paris on October 16 to consider what means might be adopted to aid Russia and prevent her further disintegration

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<sup>20</sup>Stevens to Lansing, undated (Received September 17, 1917), Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 198; Lansing to John K. Caldwell (Consul at Vladivostok), September 21, 1917, ibid, 199; Francis to Lansing, September 28, 1917, ibid, 200. Francis to Lansing, September 29, 1917, ibid, 201.

<sup>21</sup>Judson to Scott, October 1, 1917, Scott MSS, Box 30.

Colonel House would be "most acceptable" as the American representative. Lansing, however, did not think it possible for House to attend the meeting but suggested having an "observer" present. The "observer", the secretary recommended was Ira Morris, Minister to Sweden, who understood the Russian situation among the diplomatic representatives. Lansing believed that the Russian situation was indeed "critical" and the Conference would be of material aid in lending stability to the Provisional Government.<sup>22</sup>

Judson concurred in use of the word "critical" but more specifically as applied to the railroad situation. The situation, in fact, was causing alarm among the Russians and Allies. Stevens and the Commission were dismissed by stating that they had all they could handle on the Trans-Siberian and were out of touch with the general situation due to their absence of a month from Petrograd. The Military Attache felt that the seriousness of the situation demanded the "immediate presence here of biggest railroadman available in United States with small but competent staff of four or five, but no commission, to act as constant advisers to Minister of Communications." He suggested Howard Elliot as advisor and placing the Stevens' Commission under his "general control." Francis had cabled the substance of this suggestion to Lansing on September 28

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<sup>22</sup>Lansing to Wilson, October 3, 1917, Lansing Papers, II, 48-49.

but with "some changes." Judson mentioned that Francis apparently wished to act as the advisor with Elliot as his assistant. He did not believe that the Ambassador was qualified for this special position and was endeavoring "to persuade" Francis to eliminate these suggestions.<sup>23</sup>

Four days later Judson sent two more telegrams emphasizing the seriousness of the Russian railroad situation. In the first, he outlined the "gradual disintegration of power of Government in all directions; anarchy nearer daily; strikes and threats of strikes everywhere, including railroads where general strike imminent unless unreasonable demands accepted." Ominously, the Attache mentioned the increasing occurrence of anti-American meetings initiated by the Bolsheviks who regarded American institutions as capitalistic and anti-democratic. In the second telegram he was more detailed as to the function of the American railway advisor who would "gradually absorb all administrative control and direction possible." Judson also warned that unless the United States acted immediately, the French and the English would assume control themselves on the theory that the United States had failed. The implication was clear; Judson believed that the United States had failed and that only a

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<sup>23</sup>Judson to War College Staff, September 29, 1917, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-16.

"crash" program of extended control and direction of all the Russian railways would salvage the situation.<sup>24</sup>

Surprisingly, Francis, perhaps in emulation of the Commission, continued to exude optimism about Stevens' progress. There was, though, some basis for this view because freight accumulations since May at Vladivostok had been reduced about 40%. Actually, the American Ambassador was more interested in refuting "the insinuations" of the British and the French that the American Railway Commission was "effecting nothing". In view of the fact that Judson was in substantial agreement with America's two Allies and that Francis himself wished to be named as "advisor" to the Minister of Communications, Francis seemingly was playing the middle-man and hoping that he would benefit from the new railway reorganization.<sup>25</sup>

While the American railway experts were attempting to effect their recommendations on the Trans-Siberian, General de Candolle was not inactive. Late in the month, he left on a ten-day inspection of the Donetz railways. The British General believed, in direct contradiction of the Stevens commission, that the "outstanding danger" was the growing shortage of operating locomotives; he did not ascribe the

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<sup>24</sup>Judson to War College Staff, October 7, 1917, State Department, 861.00/618; ibid, RG 165, Box 113, WCD 6494-17.

<sup>25</sup>Francis to Lansing, October 9, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, III, 202.

food shortage to the railways, but rather to the fact that there was little food to transport.<sup>26</sup>

On October 11, de Candolle reported on his inspection trip of the various civilian and military railroads of European Russia. He saw almost no traffic moving and military movements were even less. The general again repeated his belief that the railway problem centered upon poor operation of locomotives. He regretted that the suggestion to send over large numbers of second-hand locomotives from America had been rejected (the American Commission felt that their conversion to Russian standards would be too time-consuming and recommended the construction of new Russian locomotives). General de Candolle remarked on the "universal shirking" of the personnel in the railway workshops and the deterioration of the political and labor situation. He was especially concerned about the fuel supply since even with more workers in the Donetz mines, their output was decreasing.

Britain's railway expert confirmed that he and the French Mission had been in "constant touch" with Judson on the situation. De Candolle understood that the Stevens' Mission intended to devote itself exclusively to the Trans-Siberian which he admitted was "task enough". Then, he

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<sup>26</sup>A. de Candolle to Foreign Office, September 29, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/188348.

clarified the proposed function of the new railway "advisor". Francis had suggested Elliott who was "well known to Baring Brothers" to "direct Allied intervention on Railways of European Russia"; this person should be appointed immediately and select qualified personnel in locomotive repair, telegraph and telephone communications, railway stores, coal mines and the operation of inland navigation. The Russian Railway Service Corps, was being organized for this purpose and was already enroute to Russia, but whether or not the general was aware of the fact is difficult to determine.

Continuing, the general was optimistic that with the above program the European railways would be in "something approaching order" by the following Spring:

. . .With proper tact especially in initial stages I do not anticipate that it would be difficult to secure that this reorganization be virtually controlled by Americans or some other Ally. But control must be in the hands of one person not Commission. Finally time is terrible short and unless Americans are prepared to act at once they ought to delegate the job to one of the other Allies. <sup>27</sup>

The Foreign Office found de Candolle's telegram "most convincing" and repeated it to Washington. Britain also sent another telegram to Washington with a copy to Petrograd pointing out the "extreme urgency" of the railways in European Russia being "taken in hand" without "further

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<sup>27</sup> Foreign Office to Spring-Rice, October 18, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/197488.



delay." British officials then directed Ambassador Spring-Rice to determine whether or not the United States would "appoint an official as suggested and undertake this reorganization if the Russian Government can be induced to agree to it."<sup>28</sup>

Later, on October 17, the War Office wrote Secretary of State Balfour asking whether the American Government was willing to undertake the reorganization of the Russian railways in Europe or whether they proposed to limit themselves exclusively to the Trans-Siberian Railway. The British Army Council approved the tentative appointment of Elliot; and while he was enroute would instruct General de Candolle to place himself at the disposal of the American Government to take preliminary steps to deal with the situation pending the American's arrival. Upon Elliot's arrival, the Army Council would direct de Candolle to act as his assistant. Significantly, the Council was prepared to go further regarding the reorganization than the Foreign Office was. However, if the American Government did not wish to extend their railway efforts beyond the Trans-Siberian, "the Council are ready to place General de Candolle at the disposal of the Russian Government, and they are prepared to procure any additional railway experts whose services may be

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<sup>28</sup> Foreign Office to Spring-Rice, October 11, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/197488.

required by him."

This "inter-office" communication created quite a flurry at the Foreign Office. A telegram had just been sent to Washington on the subject and Cecil, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, agreed that this suggestion could be transmitted to Washington because de Candolle had established "excellent relations with the Americans in Russia." The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, wrote a draft telegram to Washington on October 22 but did not add the last sentence concerning de Candolle assuming control if the Americans did not. He did add a somewhat enigmatic postscript to the draft regretting that, "in spite of all precautions to the contrary, the tel. (telegram) drafted on 197488 was dispatched as it stood." The British leaders obviously felt that they had not put their "best foot forward" in initiating the proposal. At the same time they did not wish to either threaten the United States with alternative action or give them an "easy out" regarding American responsibility for Russian railway transportation.<sup>29</sup>

Soon, de Candolle's reports became increasingly pessimistic; on October 18 he reported that the labor situation was more and more unsatisfactory, locomotive repairs were desultory due to personnel shortages, and the fuel problem more acute. He did not believe that the fuel shortage

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<sup>29</sup>The file is extensive. Refer to F.O. 371/3009, W38/199556.

would bring the railroads to an "actual standstill" but it led to a decline in fuel available to the factories and to some reduction in service. The latter, in turn, would cause a shortage of "necessities", create greater unrest and further impair transport and manufacturing.

Even more significantly, the British general believed that the prospect of reorganizing the railways of European Russia in time for Spring was "becoming more remote daily." Again, he urged most emphatically that "not a moment should be lost in coming to a decision as to who of the Allies is to help in reorganization." The situation was in such a state of decomposition that it would be impossible to avoid the labor question. According to de Candolle, the Minister of Communications, who was apparently Liverovski again, informed him that the department intended to establish a special Bureau under an Assistant Minister to deal with the labor question. His most encouraging news was that Stevens returned to Petrograd on October 14 and told the Briton that the American commission had brought about some improvement in locomotive work on the Trans-Siberian Railway.<sup>30</sup>

The day following Stevens' arrival in Petrograd, the State Department suggested that Stevens act as advisor to the Minister of Communications. Miller would assume full

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<sup>30</sup>On October 22, the Foreign Office noted that the American Government had not replied to their telegrams of October 18 and October 22. De Candolle to Foreign Office, October 18, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/201842.

control of the Trans-Siberian and would receive "support" on the latter railway when George Emerson's three hundred man service corps arrived. Somewhat crytically, Lansing concluded, "I recommend above arrangement and feel certain no better selection than Stevens could be made for particular place or duties you [Francis] have in mind in Petrograd."<sup>31</sup>

It appears that Lansing was not only rejecting the suggestions that Elliot or Francis act as "advisor" to the Russian Government on railways, thereby confirming Stevens in the position, but the American secretary of state did not see the necessity of informing the British Government of his action. Seemingly, the proposal for such an "advisor" had originated with the American, French and British military missions in Russia. Judson, the American Military Attache, had approached Francis with the scheme and the latter had embellished to his own advantage. Lansing's directive, under the circumstances, is purposely vague and encouraged Stevens to pursue an independent course.

Steven's interpretation of his role as "advisor" and his reaction to his appointment is interesting:

I was told by Ambassador Francis that I had been appointed with the approval of our State Department - subject to my consent - as - what the Russians called Director-General of all

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<sup>31</sup>Lansing to Francis, October 15, 1917, Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia, II, 202-203.

railways, but knowing the Russians - I interpreted it correctly as meaning "advisor". I did not want to undertake it, but in war times there is no room for excuses.<sup>32</sup>

The Chairman's description of his difficulties on this last visit to Petrograd is also enlightening. He called on the Minister of Communications and placed himself at his disposal; then he waited two weeks, became impatient and requested through Francis his orders. Soon afterward he met with Liverovski and Tereshchenko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. At this time, Tereshchenko asked Stevens to inspect the railways east from Moscow to Cheliabinsk and recommend measures to expedite the shipment of food supplies to Moscow and South Russia. It is difficult not to impute ulterior motives to the Russians; this is too similar to the tactics employed with de Condolle. Liverovski and Tereshchenko were not creative; on both occasions they sent energetic and embarrassing Allied railway experts on "inspection trips."

Stevens left by special train, made his inspection and was returning to Petrograd when he learned that "riots and hell" had broken out in the capital. So he remained in Moscow. This so called Director-General of the Russian railways was bitter about his recent experiences with the Provisional Government. He recalled that representatives of the British and French Embassies insisted that the Americans "take hold of the Roumanian situation" by sending a "good

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<sup>32</sup>Fisher, "The American Railway Mission to Russia", Fisher MSS.

railway man" to Odessa in order to assist in the transportation of supplies from Russia to Roumania.

Pressured from all sides for decisive action, the new "advisor" called on the government "for authority"; there Tereshchenko stated categorically that "they did not need any assistance and that they were receiving altogether too much advice."<sup>33</sup> The implication is clear; to paraphrase T. S. Eliot, the Provisional Government ended "not with a bang but a whimper."

Britain, however, continued to importune Washington for immediate assistance to the European railways. Late in October, Spring-Rice informed the Foreign Office that the United States was sending 150 operators to Russia on November 5 and American officials were well aware of the urgency of the situation. Simultaneously, Britain was working on plans for reorganizing the Russian railways in the Caucasus since neither Russian nor American assistance extended to this system.<sup>34</sup>

The same week, General de Candolle presented a memorandum almost in the nature of an ultimatum to Liverovski,

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<sup>33</sup>Stevens to Willard, December 9, 1917, MS, Department of State cited by Edward J. Finnegan, "The United States Policy Toward Russia, March 1917-March 1918" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Fordham University, 1947), 181-182.

<sup>34</sup>Spring-Rice to Foreign Office, October 21, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/69808. War Office to Foreign Office, October 22, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/202782.

the Minister of Communications. His major recommendation was to "establish at the Ministry of Communication a Department of Relationship in charge of a representative of one of the Allied Nations, preferably from that country an intensified amount of material and personnel are imported." According to de Candolle's report to the Foreign Office, "it was worded so as to bring out our idea that the United States Government should take the lead in all railway matters." He suggested an Allied organization to assist the railways and to intervene directly in railway matters when necessary. Actually, this confidential memorandum served two purposes: to recommend allied intervention in Russian railway matters (preferably directed by the United States) and to point out needed technical reforms.<sup>35</sup>

Britain, however, continued to press the United States; on October 23, the Foreign Office sent the following telegram to Spring-Rice in Washington for the American Government:

We are very glad to learn of the efforts which are being made by the United States Government to reorganize the Asiatic portion of the Trans-Siberian Railway. The railway question in European Russia is

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<sup>35</sup>Briefly the technical reforms divide into nine categories: (1) locomotive operation; (2) repair service; (3) fuel supply; (4) inland navigation; (5) private railways (repair cooperation); (6) decongesting terminal junctions; (7) greater elasticity in the delivery of rolling stock; (8) greater continuity in higher staff appointments and (9) organization of a buffer department to free the technical staff from labor domination. A de Candolle to Liverovski, October 24, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 2; de Candolle to Chief of Staff, October 26, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/204887.

however of vital importance and brooks no delay. We sincerely trust that United States Government may see their way to undertake this reorganization also. . . . Should they find it impracticable to do so, we should be glad to know as soon as possible so that we can consider whether task could not be undertaken by the French or ourselves.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, it appears that Stevens was not fully informed of British intentions regarding American railway assistance to Russia's European railways. When Major General Poole sent Stevens his railway bulletins and suggested that the American Chairman send Poole copies of the Commission's reports, Stevens replied in a long three page lecture to the British general. He reminded the British expert that the American commission was "purely an advisory one"; it made no formal report to Washington nor could the Commission ensure, formally or informally, that the Russians accept their advice. "Therefore," according to Stevens, "there does not seem to be any need for exchange reports such as you suggest, at least as coming from us, although I fully appreciate your motives in advancing such suggestion."

Poole must have been amused and chagrined when the American commissioner-chairman, proceeded to enclose a copy of the July report covering the railway lines from Petrograd to the Donetz Basin. Stevens stated that if these temporary suggestions had been heeded, there would have been

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<sup>36</sup>F.O. to Spring-Rice, October 23, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/205826.



a subsequent increase in the railways' efficiency. Quite bluntly, Stevens admitted that even after four months all efforts to secure action had been fruitless. Stevens, though, was optimistic about the Siberian Railway and believed the transport situation considerably improved. The crucial section of the letter supports the conclusion that Stevens was unaware of the current negotiations between London and Washington regarding his prospective promotion to "Tsar of Russia's European railways;"

There seems to be a wide spread impression, whether circulated intentionally or otherwise, that the intentions of this Commission are to take over the operation and improvement of the Russian Railways into its own hands. Such a report is entirely unfounded. Neither the United States nor the Commission regards itself as in any way responsible for the operation of any of the railways in Russia.<sup>37</sup>

Stevens would have won no accolade for tact. He specifically pointed out that Poole's bulletin was "very interesting" but also "misleading." The figures of locomotives "out of repair" was not twenty-five to thirty percent as Poole stated, but only about ten to fifteen percent. This discrepancy was due to the fact that when the Russians were changing the boiler water, an operation taking from 3-24 hours, they classed the locomotive "out of repair." Altogether, America's expert reported that the Russian state railways were operating at no more than sixty

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<sup>37</sup>Stevens to Poole, October 25, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 2.

percent of their "real efficiency". There were two reasons for this situation; first, "the deplorable condition" of labor and second, "the lack of proper organization and the application of well proven methods of railway operation". In retrospect, the American railway chairman did not give Poole, the British expert, "the time of day".<sup>38</sup>

Ironically, the same day, October 25, Spring-Rice informed London that the State Department was prepared to undertake the reorganization of Russian railways in Europe. According to the Ambassador's report Francis knew of this decision. Stevens was to assume control of the European railways while Miller would supervise the Siberian railway. Willard, directing the American mission in Washington, was also sending 300 railway superintendents and inspectors to work under Stevens in Europe. Apparently the United States' decision was reluctant but decisive. After giving the British the run-around, Wilson finally decided to assume the responsibility for the entire railway network. Then, a few days later, London instructed Buchanan to ask whether or not Stevens wished the Army Council to place de Candolle under his direction.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>The writer did not find the corroborative evidence in the American archives or in the principal's private papers. This information is entirely from British official sources: Spring-Rice (Washington) to Foreign Office, October 25, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/205826; F.O. to Buchanan (Petrograd), October 29, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/205826.

The United States took immediate action; the Railway Review of October 27 printed an article entitled, "Railway Service Corps Going to Russia." According to the article, George Emerson, General Manager of the Great Northern Railway, headed the corps and was then selecting 208 men of all sections of operating and mechanical departments from the western railroads as personnel. The corps was being organized at the request of Felton, Director-General of railways, and the members expected to receive their military commissions and then leave for Russia.<sup>40</sup>

There seemed to be little agreement on American railway policy. Toward the end of October two Americans in Russia who were in a position to observe events at first hand wrote contradictory reports about the existing Russian situation. Judson wrote to the War College that "conditions other than political are not improving except that Trans-Siberian functioning, due to Stevens' efforts and arrivals of locomotives . . ." Stevens, though, was busily withdrawing his previous complaint to Francis that the Russians were not effecting the commission's recommendations; he believed that the work was proceeding satisfactorily and the Russians, specifically

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<sup>40</sup>Members of the Russian Railway Service Corps were not military personnel although they wore uniforms and held military ranks. It was not until years later that their status was regularized by an act of Congress to qualify them for military benefits. This is an example of the lack of coordination relative to American policy in Russia.

Liverovski, were cooperating.<sup>41</sup>

The British were admittedly not happy with the existing situation of the Russian railways in Europe, nor conspicuously certain of American railway policy. De Candolle reported on October 30, that the Trans-Siberian was improving, but not greatly. Stevens was leaving for Moscow and the East on an expedition connected with locomotive redistribution and expected to be away for some time. This departure and Stevens seeming reluctance to become in actuality "Tsar of Russia's Railways" piqued the general so that he stated, "to me Stevens does not bring into use personality needed for European Russia." He still pined for Elliot or some other "really big people" to handle the situation. As de Candolle saw the situation:

It is obvious that W (Willard) fails to appreciate the urgency of task or indeed its nature. Except on Trans-Siberian it is not a case of tackling details piecemeal but rather for working from the top downwards in order to lure the next mass to move more or less in the right<sup>42</sup> direction. But time is of course the main consideration.

Time, though, was shorter than the general imagined. Robert Creel of the Foreign Office did consult the Director of Military Intelligence, asking whether or not ". . . any or all of this information should be communicated to the United States Government and, if so, what comments should be made to the latter thereon." British policy makers reached the decision, initialed by Balfour that, "we might

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<sup>41</sup>Judson (Petrograd) to War College Staff, October 28, 1917, RG 165, Box 483, WCD 10220-D-11; Stevens to Francis, October 29, 1917, RG 43, E 327, Box 1.

<sup>42</sup>De Candolle's evaluation of Stevens and subsequent British actions are in F.O. 371/3009, W38/209348.

perhaps telegraph Washington referring to the action which we understand Col (Colonel) House would take." But it was not until November 7 that the Foreign Office cabled Buchanan whether the "American Government suggested to Russian Government that Mr. Stevens should be entrusted with the task of reorganization of Russian railways and have Russian Government agreed?" This was also repeated to Washington but event had outrun policy. Stevens was unavailable, the American Government had not been informed of de Candolle's critique of Stevens and more importantly the Bolshevik coup d'etat soon turned the query into an academic question.<sup>43</sup>

On November 3, however, de Candolle was still concerned about Stevens continued absence from the capital. He did report that Francis hoped that when Stevens returned he would "take full charge of intervention in railways of European Russia". Another American, unnamed, with operational experience was transferred from Financial Commission duties to work under Stevens in Petrograd. Apparently, the general was more optimistic than on previous occasions because he added:

Should Americans thus take problem really in hand it will in my opinion lead to more decisive action and quicker practical results if eventually British and French Missions were to limit themselves

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

to having merely liaison officers. That need not of course prevent our offering to serve under Americans in initial stages while they are still short of personnel.<sup>44</sup>

The British War Office was not reassured by de Candolle's communications particularly his telegram of October 30 and pointed out to the Foreign Office that there seemed to be "some uncertainty" as to the "actual appointment of Mr. Stevens in connection with the re-organization of Russian railways in Europe." The following telegram was therefore sent to Buchanan and repeated to Washington:

War Office consider that the selection of the Chief of Railway Reorganization in Russia should be left in the hands of the United States Government and that it is essential that no delay should occur in the nomination.

Failing selection of Mr. Stevens it is hoped that United States Government will at once<sup>45</sup> nominate a man of similar qualifications.

As far as the British were concerned, the United States did not clarify its Russian railway policy until November 11:

Mr. Stevens has been instructed to co-operate with Russian Authorities in re-organization of Railways in European Russia. United States Government feel that (?matter) should be approached at this stage by offer of such co-operation, rather than by proposal that entire control and supervision should be handed over to Stevens.

United States Ambassador Petrograd has been so advised.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>De Candolle to Foreign Office, November 3, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/210768.

<sup>45</sup>F.O. to Buchanan, November 7, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/212616.

<sup>46</sup>Spring-Rice to F.O., November 11, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/215405.

Stevens' movements during this period are difficult to chronicle; there seems to be some difference of opinion between himself and Francis as to where he was and why he was away from Petrograd. Ambassador Francis stated in his memoirs that Stevens wired him from Moscow that his mission was completed and that he would await further orders. Since the telegram arrived on November 11, Francis suggested that the chairman remain in Moscow and then return to Petrograd where he would "protect" him. The ambassador admitted that he did not know whether or not the railway chairman received the telegram. Francis subsequently learned from other sources that Stevens had attached his private car to the Siberian express enroute to Vladivostok.<sup>47</sup>

Stevens, however, disputes the ambassador. After his trip eastward to Siberia expediting grain shipments to Moscow and other large cities, he began his return trip to Moscow. On arrival at Samara, he heard rumors of outbreaks at Petrograd. Two days after his arrival in Moscow, the Bolsheviks seized the Kremlin and the city. The railway ceased its operation to Petrograd; telegraph and telephone communications were virtually non-existent. Finally, he telephoned Francis in Petrograd who advised him that: (1) the affair was a "mere flurry"; (2) Kerensky would "come back stronger than ever"; (3) Stevens should return to Petrograd.

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<sup>47</sup> Francis, Russia From the American Embassy, 131.

Stevens felt, after the event, that Francis had misled him. The Ambassador knew that Kerensky and most of his Cabinet "were fleeing for their lives in disguise." Stevens concluded that there was "no way" for him to return to Petrograd; even if he had "chosen to do so." Stevens, therefore, did not wish to return to Petrograd and could not secure a train in that direction.

However, he could have waited in Moscow for further developments. This he did not do. He finally persuaded the Bolshevik Commissar of Railways to attach his car to the last train of the Siberian Express to run for almost four years. Stevens reached Harbin fourteen days later. "Chaos was everywhere;" he could not understand why there were no "general wholesale massacres" because the Bolsheviks had extended their authority to the Urals. The railway chairman stated that it was a "mystery" to him that none occurred.<sup>48</sup>

Francis repeated a somewhat different tale to General de Candolle, stating that Stevens returned to Moscow on November 10 but "quickly" decided to go back to Siberia. On November 18 Stevens sent the Ambassador a telegram stating he was proceeding to Harbin to await the arrival of the American railway specialists. De Candolle was quite disconcerted by the information remarking that Stevens could not be

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<sup>48</sup>Fisher, "The American Railway Mission to Russia," Fisher MSS; Stevens, "Russian Railway Service Corps, Inter-Allied Committee and Technical Board," Stevens MSS.



in Petrograd before January 1. "Until then United States will thus have no railway representative at all for Russia in Europe. . . Stevens will have to watch both Europe and Asia." But the main consideration of the general was much more pointed:

During the present troubles nothing can be done toward furthering an Allied General intervention in European railways. To what extent this may or should again be attempted will depend on type and policy of government, shortly to be formed. When it is formed however our chances of real success would be enormously increased (to say nothing of invaluable time gained) were everything in readiness at the start of its career for taking any action we may deem advisable. It is little short of disastrous therefore that United States are almost sure to be without even proper representative here at that critical moment.<sup>49</sup>

De Candolle was not inactive. According to his report he was proceeding with two policies relative to the Russian railways: (1) general intervention which probably could not produce "substantial results" before the Spring of 1918 and (2) stationing officers drawn from the French and General Poole's missions at selected junctions "preferably Headquarters of regional committees in order to watch and hasten their transit traffic." The French favored policy number two which would yield "more immediate results though only on very restricted scale." In a somewhat surprised tone, de Candolle reported that except for the serious railway block at Moscow, the railways were

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<sup>49</sup>De Candolle (Petrograd) to Chief of Imperial General Staff, November 19, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/221682.

"running less chaotically than might be expected."<sup>50</sup>

This telegram was interesting for many reasons. Britain's railway general reported a major Russian complaint against the United States. The materials for the new cars were not arriving at Vladivostok in complete units thereby delaying the newly erected locomotives in their runs westward. More significantly, the general added that the "unexpected departures to Siberia and . . . return home" of the American railway commissioners and their failure to take any action on European railways were due to personality conflicts with Francis. De Candolle said he heard "rumors that Mission has found it irksome to work under United States Ambassador who too often interfered even in details."

To this report was appended a note: "Mr. Francis appears to be unsympathetic to his compatriots as well. Perhaps it is undesirable to repeat to Washington. . ."<sup>51</sup> America's Ambassador was, therefore, in poor repute with the British policy makers. In retrospect, and reading between the lines, he did cause unnecessary difficulty between the Root and Stevens Commissions, did interfere with the railway commission's work and may or may not have

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>F.O. November 23-25, 1917, 371/3009, W38/224701.

misled Stevens as to his powers as "Director-General of the Russian Railways."

At the moment when the British and French were preoccupied with the general problem of intervention and maintaining vantage railway observation-control points, Americans were reading a roseate description of the Railway Commission and its achievements. In the November 30 issue of the Railway Age Gazette, Miller described Russian conditions and described, the Commission's recommendations. What everyone, including Miller, seems to have forgotten was that the conditions of two months previous no longer existed. It was an optimistic view and reaffirmed Stevens' allegation that no more than fifteen percent of the locomotives were actually out of repair - at least it was not the 25 to 30 percent figure the Russians used. It was ironic that Miller's remarks received so much attention when they were already invalidated by the Bolshevik coup of November 6-7. Some of his remarks were especially ill-timed:

The condition of the railways has been grossly exaggerated. Like our own, they are at present overtaxed with unusual traffic, but in many respects they are quite all right and their physical property and terminals are excellent.

. . . . .  
 . . . The railways are now clear and effective<sup>52</sup>  
 operations have been established over the whole system.

Stevens, Francis and Miller all obviously heard a

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<sup>52</sup>Henry Miller, "The Railway Situation in Russia: Henry Miller, of Railway Advisory Commission Describes Conditions and Gives Recommendations," Railway Age Gazette, LXIII (November 30, 1917), 979. A shorter article appeared later: "Russian Railroads Are Not So Crippled As Has Been Represented," Current Opinion, LXIV (March, 1918), 222-224.

"different drummer" relative to their respective statements of Russia's current railway situation; then, the British stole the drum. The superficial aspects of Anglo-American cooperation entirely disappeared. At a meeting of War Cabinet on December 10, British policy makers decided to halt further orders involving fresh credit for equipment of a "non-warlike nature." Balfour in Paris had discussed this with other Allies and this decision had been reached nine days previous. Prudently the government added that "this stoppage of further orders should be carried out as quietly as possible, and without publication." The same day, Balfour in Paris reported that Colonel House promised to "persuade" Stevens to return to Russia and undertake the reorganization of the Russian railways.<sup>53</sup>

Persuasion, though, is often slow; unfortunately the British were becoming more and more impatient. Late in November the British Director of Military Intelligence informed the Foreign Office that "the action of the American Railway Mission in Russia, in so far as the European section of the railways in that country is concerned, appears to be of a half-hearted nature and without definite results. . . ." He suggested asking the American Government what their railway program might be. If they were serious about their

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<sup>53</sup>F.O. December 1, December 2, 1917, F. O. 371/3010/3019, W38/229362; Lord Bertie (Paris) to F.O. December 10, 1917, 371/3009, W38/229364.

policy they should be formulating plans and preparing the dispatch of personnel and material for work on the European railway system:

If on the other hand the American Government are not ready to undertake the task in spite of the ample resources at their disposal and their peculiarly favorable position. . . they should admit the fact and thus permit of preparations being taken in hand at once by the British authorities, or by an inter-Allied Railway Commission, with a view to launching the work with a minimum of delay if and when the internal situation in Russia becomes more stable.<sup>54</sup>

Some difference of opinion developed on this point. Balfour had discussed this question in Paris, but was "not sure" what its current status was. The War Cabinet discussed the question and approved the incorporation of the above message with an additional allusion to House's statement regarding Stevens' return Russia. Spring-Rice, therefore, was to "remind the United States of this promise and endeavour to ascertain from them what their Russian railway programme really is." The Director, however, reported that he wished the above telegram sent to Washington:

. . . as it involves only the preparation of a scheme for reorganizing the Russian railways to be put into execution, not now, but should the moment again become propitious; It might be for instance that the Kaledin adventure might materialize in which case a reform of the Southern Russian railway system would be essential to its success.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>The Director's "suggestions" were proposed on November 29 and were followed by intermittent British high level discussions. The telegram inquiring as to America's railway policy was sent on December 12. F. O. 371/3009 W38/227738.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

In the middle of December General de Candolle outlined the existing railway situation. Railway traffic was still moving although westward bound transport on the Trans-Siberian was declining "very seriously" due to labor trouble at Vladivostok and a freight shortage at Stretinsk. More than a week previous, the Bolsheviks had dismissed the department heads at the Ministry of Communications; but, the Bolsheviks were having difficulty with VIKZhel and were sowing dissension among its members. Only the Bolsheviks were acting and it was in vain that de Candolle urged the higher Ministry officials to continue working, but he added, "officials as a body are not likely to abandon their attitude of passive resistance until too late." With the increasing anarchy and shortage of fuel, the railways would break down before the end of January. Considering the "temper of workmen," he concluded that it was unlikely foreign intervention, "particularly British" could succeed in workshops and locomotive running services. De Candolle also discouraged "early intervention for war purposes" due to the existing political situation.<sup>56</sup>

Then, on December 29, the United States destroyed the British plan for railway intervention. Spring-Rice informed London regarding the American attitude:

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<sup>56</sup>General de Candolle to Chief Imperial General Staff, December 15, 1917, F. O. 371/3009, W38/237733.

. . . State Department replies that for the present United States programme of railway organization in Russia is suspended pending drawing (?clearing) up of internal situation. In the meantime Mr. Stevens has been asked to wait at Nagasaki for further instructions and the vessel transporting 300 railway engineers which had arrived at Vladivostok has been ordered back to Nagasaki.<sup>57</sup>

So ended America's first railway mission to Russia.

What is the verdict of history on the success or failure of the Stevens' Commission, America's first railway mission to Russia? Francis' ambivalent feelings are quite apparent in his memoirs when he implies that Darling and Greiner and, by implication, Stevens did not accomplish anything constructive. Also, the Ambassador indicated Stevens' was confined to the hospital for "about two months." Undoubtedly this incapacitated the Chairman during June and possibly part of July. Stevens says he was ill about "two weeks"; circumstantial evidence from Darling and Washburn indicates that he was ill more than two weeks. On June 29, Washburn in a letter to Willard remarked that Stevens' illness had "materially delayed the work of the railroad commission."<sup>58</sup>

What of the principals involved and other observers; how did they regard the commission? Darling believed that

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<sup>57</sup>Spring-Rice (Washington) to F.O., December 29, 1917, F.O. 371/3009, W38/245433.

<sup>58</sup>Washburn to Willard, June 29, 1917, Washburn Correspondence, 1912-1923, Washburn MSS.

the overcentralization of the Russian railway system with all directives originating in Petrograd led to distribution difficulties. He thought it "weird that in the yards at Petrograd and many other points there were thousands of unemployed cars and many engines while the large cities and the army were in need of supplies of which there were ample stores in the country." His Russian railway colleagues were "highly educated but sensitive" and "not so familiar with railway economics as the Americans." On the reception of the commission, Darling thought it "well received. . . especially after it had been demonstrated that they were acting for no commercial interests; were not seeking jobs and did not undertake to criticise their (Russian) work."

Stevens, according to Darling was "particularly well received" and Francis was commended for his assistance:

It is doubtful if our work could have been so successful had it not been for the help of Mr. Francis in his many talks to the railway officers and obtaining interviews with the ministers and Kerensky.

The most difficult part of the work was to get our recommendations put into effect; it was only after working with four ministers and their general managers and getting their successive approvals that Mr. Stevens and Mr. Francis insisted on taking them up directly with Kerensky, who ordered them put into immediate practice. This order resulted in very prompt action.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Darling, May 1931, "The Condition of Russian Railways in 1917 and the Assistance Furnished to Improve Them By the United States Through Its Commission of Advisory Ry. Experts and Service Corps of Railway Operating Men," Hoover Library, Darling MSS.



Stevens, on the other hand, was unnaturally reticent about the commission's effectiveness. When he was unable to aid the Russians in late October because they would accept no further "advice" he told Willard on December 9: "I did not see what I could do. . .our people in Washington do not quite understand the Russian situation."<sup>60</sup>

He also bore the physical marks of his tribulations in Russia. In the middle of December when the Russian Railway Service Corps arrived at Vladivostok and then without landing its personnel returned to Japan, the Chairman accompanied them. According to Charles S. Stephenson, naval medical officer in command of the American Naval Hospital in Yokohama, Stevens arrived in a pitiful condition; he was suffering from "malnutrition." Because Stevens was a civilian, the hospital commander could not accept him as a regular patient but entertained him as a houseguest in the commanding officer's quarters until he finally regained his health.<sup>61</sup>

For all of Stevens' mental, emotional and physical anguish as Chairman of the Advisory Railway Commission, one

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<sup>60</sup>Stevens to Willard, December 9, 1917, MS. Department of State cited by Finnegan, "The United States Policy Toward Russia, March 1917-March 1918", 182.

<sup>61</sup>U. S. Congress, House, Eulogy: Rear Admiral Charles S. Stephenson; Naval Medical Officer and Lawyer by Congressman Anderson, Eighty-ninth Congress, first session, June 28, 1965, Congressional Record, Vol. III, No. 116, 14377.

almost hesitates to question its effectiveness. There is little doubt that the following writer correctly pinpointed the importance of railways in the "Great War" and particularly the Russian system:

When a long time has passed, men will realize that this war was won by railways and conversely they will discover that the republic of Russia was overthrown by the Bolsheviki because of a broken-down ramshackle railroad.<sup>62</sup>

But how effective was the commission in rehabilitating this "broken down ramshackle railroad?" One eyewitness, the Associated Press Correspondent in Petrograd, felt that the Commission had a great deal of promise. Supposedly the Ministry of Communications, the Army, and even some extreme socialists received it enthusiastically realizing that nothing but railroad reorganization could forestall famine and anarchy. The Russians hampered the commission by the "exigencies of official courtesy;" Stevens had to praise the conditions of totally ruined roads and express admiration for incompetent officials. Generally, the improvements at Vladivostok and the replacement, though inadequate, of the rolling stock were the most practical results of the first American railway mission to Russia.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Newell D. Hollis, "Railroads Ruined Russia", Philadelphia Bulletin December 6, 1918, 16.

<sup>63</sup>Long, Russian Revolution Aspects, 287.

Arthur Bullard, connected with the American Committee on Public Information, believed that the technical difficulties were insignificant when compared with the political and diplomatic complications. According to his view, the final plans were already approved for railway reorganization when the Kerensky Government fell.<sup>64</sup>

The historian, Robert Warth, believes that the special railroad commission, though less publicized than the Root mission was of more practical significance.<sup>65</sup>

Actually, the moderate view prevails; according to this viewpoint, American diplomatic activities in 1917 were of an uneven quality. American assistance to the Russian railway system did keep the Provisional Government in power and continue the Russian Army as a threat to Germany on the East.<sup>66</sup>

There is also the view that the Stevens' Commission was caught in the midst of both Russian and American governmental confusion. Its duties were poorly differentiated from those of the American Embassy and those of the Root Mission. Originally a brainstorm of the United States and continued by American initiative with very little Russian

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<sup>64</sup> Arthur Bullard, The Russian Pendulum: Autocracy-Democracy-Bolshevism (New York: 1919), 186.

<sup>65</sup> Robert Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution (Maryland: 1954), 100.

<sup>66</sup> Finnegan, "The United States Policy Toward Russia, March 1917-March 1918", 357.

enthusiasm, the Kerensky Government only accepted the railway group because it hoped that American supplies would accompany the mission. Unfortunately, the greater part of the first two months was spent in talk and frustration without much constructive results. When the Bolsheviks seized power, the commission of railway experts was only then getting down to business.<sup>67</sup>

Not to be outdone in polemics, the Soviets have provided a simplistic evaluation of the Stevens' Mission. The accepted view is that the United States' Government dispatched the Commission for the purpose of spying on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Supposedly, the United States wished to facilitate Japanese intervention at a later date.<sup>68</sup> This naivete reveals little understanding of American policy during 1917. A more accurate accusation would be that the Americans aided or attempted to alleviate their railway difficulties for selfish considerations - namely, to maintain the Russian Army on the Eastern front and prevent 1,000,000 American casualties.

The British certainly tried to ensure that Stevens would become the railway director of the Russian railways,

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<sup>67</sup> Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920, I, 21, 286.

<sup>68</sup> I.I. Genkin, Soedinennye Shataty Amerikii SSSR - Ikh Politicheskie i Ekonomicheskie Vzaimootnosheniya (The United States of America and the USSR - Political and Economic Relations Between Them), Moscow-Leningrad: 1934 cited by Kennan, ibid.

but the American Government revealed little enthusiasm for further involvement. Francis' reluctance to increase the power and influence of his diplomatic rival is also apparent. Stevens himself did not evidence any eagerness for such a position of control and even scorned his supposed "promotion" to "Director-General" as being nothing more than a glorified powerless "advisor." Then again Stevens may have received a misleading impression from Francis although such a conclusion appears doubtful. Since the British authorities, usually "super-sleuths" in the intelligence division experienced difficulty in determining what America's railway policy in Russia was and American policies were so ill-coordinated; there is little evidence to support an agreement among the Anglo-American powers and Russia vesting control of Russia's railways in the hands of Stevens. One can cite General de Candolle's confidential memorandum to Minister Liverovski and exchanges between the Foreign Office and Britain's railway expert, but it is by no means certain that the American Government was aware of British scheming or approved it. It appears that the United States' State Department and President Wilson "stalled" their eager ally until the Bolshevik coup transformed the question into an academic question - for the time being. Finally, if there is any truth in the allegation that Stevens became the "Tsar of the Trans-Siberian," the Soviets have been

unnaturally reticent in discussing such capitalistic machinations.

Probably the best epitaph of the Railway Commission was that written by its chairman. According to Stevens, the Russian idea of Allied assistance was: "They want us to put a big bag of money on their door-step and then to run away."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Knox, *With the Russian Army*, II, 419.

## CHAPTER VI

### STEVENS IN DEFEAT AND RETREAT

In reviewing Stevens' activities as chairman of the ten man advisory commission to Russia during the period from June to the Bolshevik coup d'etat of November, 1917, certain events assume great importance.

No one who is familiar with the documents of this turbulent era would argue that the Provisional Government met the nation's problems and, Russia's railroad crisis was just one of its many problems. The Government's instability continually frustrated the efforts of the American Commission of Railway Experts. For example, four Ministers of Ways of Communication held brief office during the period prior to the Bolshevik seizure of power: N. V. Nekrasov, March 19-July 23; G. Takhtamychiev; N. Yureniev, August 8-September 15; and A. Liverovski, September 15-November 7. As Darling said plaintively more than once, "we no sooner get in with one, then he is out and we have to start all over."

The Russians did not request the Commission, and never had any intention of permitting Stevens and the Commission to supervise their railways. They only wished the American railway experts to recommend large equipment purchases and then leave. Unfortunately for the parties involved, the Americans were too conscientious; President

Wilson instructed them to give their "advice" to the Russians and whether or not they desired or heeded the "advice," Stevens and railway experts insisted on giving it to them. Ironically, the Americans were detailed to the Ways of Communication, but there seemed to be little communication between the Russians and the Americans.

One of the reasons for this lack of communication was the personality and actions of Nekrasov. As Minister of Communications, Nekrasov was one of the key officials involved in contacts with the commission. He was also the intimate friend and trusted adviser of Kerensky. More than any other single individual, he thwarted and restricted the activities of the Stevens' commission. The name of the game was "stall and delay;" a tactic not designed to combat Stevens' impatience or that of the Commission. Russian railway disorganization was so far advanced by the time the American commission arrived in Petrograd, it is doubtful that with more sympathetic ministers the result would have been any different. When Kerensky finally did appoint a Minister who was "more friendly" Liverovski, it was too late for the commission to implement the changes delayed for three months.

What the Commission failed to realize was that the Provisional Government was fighting for its very life. It had little or no power to enforce its decisions and its approval of any American recommendations could only be



tentative. A good example is the coal situation; Stevens never understood the political implications of his recommendations, that the Government could not use force in compelling the workers to reopen the mines.

However, all of the censure does not devolve upon the Russian Government; a great deal lies with the Wilson Administration. Stevens' Commission had ill-defined aims, and it is not surprising that it assumed a diplomatic character that may not have been imputed to it. Wilson was too pre-occupied to pay close attention to the railway experts and initially did nothing to differentiate the aims of the Root and Stevens' Commissions. More significantly, the President did not clear his own chain-of-command; the State Department, Treasury, and War Departments were continually interfering with one another. Of the three department heads Lansing, McAdoo and Baker; Lansing ranks a poor third in influence; it appears that McAdoo and Baker were involved in a power struggle on who would "run the war." Both departments, in wartime, expand their powers if they have able administrators. Both Secretaries were competent and both were far too involved in the operation of State Department. In many cases, the "right hand did not know what the left hand was doing."

The United States also pledged Russian assistance that it could not meet without seriously hampering the domestic war effort. American railway manufacturers

during peacetime, the years 1914 to 1917, were hard pressed to complete their Russian contracts. When the United States entered the war, domestic needs should have assumed priority. This, however, was not the case. Soon after entering the war, Wilson permitted the Advisory Council of the Council of National Defense, chaired by the railway executive Willard, to advance Russian railway contracts before completing American orders. There may be a relation between this directive and the fact that American railroads had to be nationalized during the first world war.

France also received extensive transportation assistance from the United States. This, combined with America's military efforts on the western front, tended to obscure Stevens' attempts in 1917 to rehabilitate the Trans-Siberian Railway. American aims in offering assistance to France and Russia were dissimilar. Railway assistance to France sought only to bolster her current military capacity. United States' aid to Russia in 1917 was conditional upon her continuance of the war. Specifically, American aid was designed and executed in an emergency atmosphere engendered by the crises of wartime demoralization, revolution; and later, civil war and allied intervention.

The instruments of railway diplomacy were also fragile. The American Ambassador in Petrograd, Francis,

was to all intents and purposes a "party hack." Arthur S. Link in his studies of the Wilson Administration emphasizes this fact and also the President's individualistic control of diplomacy outside the regular channels of the State Department and its career diplomats. Francis, deliberately misled Stevens as to extent of control he would have over the Trans-Siberian system and, at a later date, attempted to have himself named as Director-General; a stratagem that the Military Attache Judson vetoed.

Even the Ambassador's kindest critics have amply revealed his deficiencies. Bruce Lockhart in his work, Memoirs of a British Agent, remarks that Francis had no knowledge of Russian politics: "Old Francis doesn't know a Left Social Revolutionary from a potato." The same author concluded that Francis was "a kind old gentleman, who was susceptible to flattery and swallowed any amount of it. His knowledge of anything beyond banking and poker was severely limited. He had a traveling spittoon - a contraption with a pedal - which he took with him everywhere. When he wished to emphasise a point, bang would go the pedal, followed by a well-aimed expectoration." Francis O. Lindley, British Commissioner in Russia, reported in a confidential message that the "United States Ambassador is a man who is always under the influence of the last speaker." According to Lindley's evaluation, Francis' personal doctor stated that the Ambassador was suffering from

"incipient senile decay" but the Commissioner added "I can observe no change in his condition since I first knew him."

Relations between Francis and Stevens were not cordial. Stevens, in his personal papers, continually reiterated that "at no time" was the Chairman of the Commission "under the authority of the American Ambassador to Russia, but under that of the Secretary of State." The British War files document that Francis was as much of a trial to his American colleagues as to the British.

More significantly, Francis did not keep Stevens advised of his activities that were infringing upon the engineer's domain. The Ambassador's meeting with the Allied representatives in Russia, contacts with the Root Commission and with the Stevens' Commission placed him in the vortex of activities designed to rehabilitate the Russian railways. His personal sense of imposing order upon American railway efforts in Russia seemed to equate with an assertion of his personal authority and dominance of the various missions and personalities involved. It was neither prudent nor tactful and the result was not unexpected; a clash of personalities between Francis and Stevens.

Stevens is the more complex personality of the two. America's railway chairman was a professional engineer;

not a career diplomat. One has only to cite his undiplomatic comments to Root, Poole and others to indicate the extent of his tactlessness. One unpublished study emphasizes that Stevens was a man of "authoritarian temper and irritable disposition." It is true that superficially many of his railway colleagues, certainly Darling, would agree with such an evaluation; Darling even remarked that the chairman refused to accept medical advice and was "too stubborn" to seek medical attention. Stevens was not a healthy specimen of American manhood; he was 64 years of age when he arrived that June morning of 1917 in Vladivostok to face problems that were unsolvable. He contracted erysipelas soon after his arrival and suffered at various times from bronchial infections. Russian food was not of the best quality and it was a real occasion when the commissioners had a "square meal." His stubbornness is also well documented; Stephenson, the medical officer commanding the American Naval Hospital in Yokohama, reported that Stevens was suffering from malnutrition in December 1917.

America's railway chairman was a competent, courageous, and efficient businessman-engineer. Stevens was a self-made man in the Horatio Alger tradition. He became accustomed to having his organizational and engineering genius recognized and continued to demand this same

recognition in his new field of operation - diplomacy. However, the same factors which ensured business success did not necessarily ensure diplomatic success. In fact, the factors involved, rapid decision-making, in business operation mitigated against his success as a diplomat. Stevens regarded procrastination as an unmitigated evil and was impatient to have clear, definite policy guidelines. The State Department, under the direction of Lansing and later under Charles E. Hughes gently reminded him more than once that diplomacy was a delicate instrument for maneuvering other nations into a position advantageous to American interests, but the realization never seemed to dawn on the railway engineer. If so, he successfully ignored it.

Stevens himself remarked that "a large proportion of my work might be called diplomatic." He could have begun his practice with his American compatriots. The engineer reported that the "unofficial" American Consul at Omsk (Harris) "swallow (ed) hook-line, bob and sinker" everything that Admiral Alexander Kolchak, Supreme Governor of Russia, told him and cabled it to Washington. His reports were so at variance with those of Stevens that the State Department ordered him to send the engineer a copy of all his cables. As Stevens phrases it in his papers, "they were a curiosity and their tenor soon changed."

Paul S. Reinsch, American Minister in China, also had difficulty with the engineer-diplomat. Stevens says that he "took no part in anything affecting our situation-- he was practically a nonentity." Supposedly when a matter concerning the Minister did develop, Reinsch dismissed it with the Statement, "take it to Stevens, he seems to be running everything over here." Sarcastically, the railway chairman concluded that it was "a politic thing for an American official to say."

The reason for their mutual antipathy is not difficult to understand, Reinsch in his article entitled, "Japan's Lone Hand" in the February 1920 issue of Asia demonstrated his support of China and covert opposition to Stevens' internationalization of the Siberian and Chinese Eastern Railroads: "The railways there belong to Russia; the Manchurian Railway, to Russia and China jointly. Both national interest and equity demand that these lines should go back to their respective owners as soon as possible without being loaded with new foreign encumbrances."

Actually, the Minister and the engineer had much in common; both men were in substantial agreement on one point which Reinsch emphasized in the Asia article: "Experience has amply shown that the ownership by a foreign government of a railway in any country in practice destroys

equality of commercial and industrial rights." Having accepted this premise, the Minister stated that Japanese control of the eastern part of the Trans-Siberian railway and of the Chinese Eastern would not only be a threat to world peace, but would be "a direct attack" on America's policy of equal opportunity. Although Reinsch and Stevens reached different conclusions regarding the operation of the Siberian and Manchurian railroads, both diplomats were staunch defenders of the "Open Door."

Stevens, however, had the more influential position; he was chairman of the second and third railway missions to Russia, the Russian Railway Service Corps and President of the Technical Board of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee, during the Siberian intervention. After prolonged negotiations during 1918 with Dmitri Horvat, Director of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and bi-lateral negotiations with the Japanese Government, Stevens, ably assisted by Roland S. Morris, American Ambassador in Tokyo, succeeded in placing American railwaymen on the Chinese Eastern and the Trans-Siberian Railways. In March of 1919, representatives from the United States, Japan, Great Britain, China, France, Russia, Italy and Czechoslovakia organized the Inter-Allied Railway Committee with two subordinate boards, a Military Transportation and a Technical Board to finance and operate the Chinese Eastern and Trans-



Siberian Railways. Qualified engineers from each of the countries were members of the Technical Board.

By the terms of the agreement, actual control lay with the Technical Board and a special American-Japanese agreement specified that its president would be John F. Stevens, the American engineer and the American Representative. From the beginning of the negotiations, Stevens felt that he should have "absolute authority." He predicted that the agreement was "weak" and foredoomed to failure. In his final report on the Technical Board submitted to Secretary of State Hughes, he commented that it may have been "the best that could have been obtained, but I doubt it." Admittedly, he fought arduously to secure modifications so that his control of the Chinese Eastern and Siberian Railroads would not be dependent upon the Japanese military commanders along the railway lines. Stevens always believed that the government should have allowed a longer time for the negotiations thereby securing a stronger agreement.

America's engineer-diplomat also reached two conclusions concerning the Inter-Allied Railway Committee: (1) it was only a device "to save the Russian face" by stipulating in the agreement that its chairman would be a Russian; (2) the task of implementing the "practical intent" of the agreement lay "entirely" in the hands of the Technical Board.

Although the Inter-Allied Committee recommended an advance of \$20,000,000 from the various powers to rehabilitate the railways; only the United States, Japan and China advanced any money and in the amounts of \$5,000,000; \$4,000,000 and \$500,000 respectively. Stevens returned about \$900,000 to the United States when the Technical Board dissolved itself on November 1, 1922.

Significantly, none of the other powers advanced any money toward the rehabilitation of these railways excepting the three most interested nations - the United States, Japan and China. Great Britain and Italy paid only their transportation costs. France, according to Stevens, "never paid a dime nor even acknowledged repeated requests for payment." In early 1919 France contracted verbally to pay the transportation costs of the Czech troops but repudiated this oral pledge stating that the new government of Czechoslovakia should pay its own nationals' bills.

During his tenure as President, Stevens instituted major operational innovations; for example, he installed a telephone system on the main line from Vladivostok to Omsk. The American system of train dispatching necessitated American personnel so the president assigned members of the Russian Railway Service Corps as inspectors on the Vladivostok to Omsk main line. He assigned Japanese

inspectors to the north line of the Ussuri Railway from Nikolsk (Nikolaevsk) to Habarovsk (Khabarovsk), the entire main line of the Amur Railway and the branch line of the Chinese Eastern Railway from Harbin to Changchun. Stevens also assigned British engineers to the lines west of Omsk as far as the authority of the Kolchak Government extended.

Stevens had to contend with the activities of the "brigand" Cossack leader, Gregory Semenov, whose armored trains terrorized the Trans-Baikal Railway and whose officers even attacked an American detachment which was sleeping on one of the station platforms. The American doughboys promptly attacked the train, chastised the bandits, and ordered them out of their sector.

Czech inspectors were also troublesome and wished to facilitate the transportation of their troops which had originally dominated the Trans-Siberian Railway prior to Allied intervention. Stevens finally confined their activities to the shops and engine houses.

As American president of the Technical Board, Stevens documents that the Japanese Command attempted unsuccessfully to prevent the Czech evacuation; the military wished to keep the Czechs as a buffer between themselves and the advancing Bolshevik troops. Stevens therefore sent Major Benjamin O. Johnson, commander of the Russian Railway Service Corps, with 25 heavy locomotives and 300 cars to Chita. The

Japanese were practicing delaying tactics and Stevens advised the Czech commander to "fight his way out." When the Czech demurred, Stevens replied, "all right, stay there and starve and freeze." When the Czechs realized that the Japanese intended to keep them at Chita, the commander told the Japanese that the trains were going to leave regardless of their attitude; the Japanese did not wish to fight the Czechs and the Czechs left Chita.

On October 20, 1920, the president faced a new situation relative to the operation of the Chinese Eastern Railway. On that date, the Russo-Asiatic Bank and Chinese Government agreed to the installation of a new Board of Directors. The bank selected all the Russian members and the Chinese Government all the Chinese members; not more than one or two had any practical knowledge or experience in railway matters. Stevens approved this agreement as "a matter of routine" because he could not prevent the agreement.

In undiplomatic language, he accused the new board of directors of fiscal irresponsibility in tariff matters and "overhead" charges. This new board continually cut tariffs and deliberately induced almost financial bankruptcy. Overhead charges including the cost of administration and higher supervision and excluding the directors' salaries were as high as 28% of the railway's total

expenditures; the average in the United States was not more than three to four per cent. Stevens concluded, "it is perfectly plain why foreign supervision, backed by real power, is the only hope for redemption of the Chinese Eastern Railway."

During the summer of 1922, a representative of the Russo-Asiatic Bank questioned Stevens "unofficially" as to the feasibility of a foreign loan. Stevens, never at a loss for an answer, stated only if the creditors exercised "absolute control over all finances of the railway." This, of course, was not the answer the management hoped to receive and indirectly hardened the Chinese Government against the internationalization of the railway during the Washington Conference the same year.

During the summer of 1922, the Japanese held a traffic conference at Changchun between the representatives of the Chinese Eastern Railway and the South Manchurian Railway to adjust tariffs between the two companies. As a result of this conference, without previous consultation or notice to the Technical Board, the South Manchurian Railway secured a "strong advantage" over in the Chinese Eastern in routing of the latter's most important products. The Japanese railway company had the power to "kill Vladivostok as a natural outlet for Chinese Eastern products in favor of Dairen, the port of the South Manchurian Railway."

Exportation and importation via Vladivostok gave the Chinese Eastern the long haul distance and consequently the greater revenue. Once the new arrangement was in effect, two-thirds of the exports originating in the Chinese Eastern territory were trans-shipped from Dairen rather than Vladivostok.

All of the 133 meetings of the Technical Board utilized English as the official language and in the deposition of the archival materials after November 1, 1922 Stevens probably acted in an arbitrary manner. He took the archives to Washington over the objections of the Japanese member of the Technical Board who exchanged sharp letters with his son, Eugene C. Stevens, seeking to re-open the issue. America's railway diplomat did compromise; he assured the member nations that they could inspect the archives and make copies of its documents. Still, it did nothing to mollify the Japanese, who felt from the beginning that they had been outmaneuvered diplomatically, if not militarily in Siberia.

Stevens' value was well known within the State Department; he had his own code and the secretaries changed it frequently to preserve its security. He never kept his criticisms of American Far Eastern policy to himself; did not hesitate to inform the State Department of his views and opinions. Stevens desired "absolute control" of the Chinese Eastern and Siberian Railways and was disappointed with the

subsequent agreement installing him as president of a weak Technical Board.

His relations with Morris, Ambassador at Tokyo, were close but even he received telegrams asking "if I am to be kept in the dark as to the policy of the United States if it has any." Strong-willed and opinionated, he characterized American foreign policy during the three year period from 1918 to 1921 as "worse than useless." The engineer-diplomat also stated bluntly, "I think it is due to give me some expression if any change in the past policy of drifting is to be expected and when."

The American engineer-diplomat also emphasized the animosities existing among the various nations; specifically, "the old jealousy of France toward England, expressing itself in the suspicion that England was trying to put something over in Russia in the nature of concessions--and an always present attitude that some one would insult France--at times it was a comedy." Stevens remarked in his private papers of China's fear and suspicion of Japan. Whenever he visited Tokyo, he shuttled to Peking on the return trip "to quietly soothe the nerves of the Chinese Government. . . ." Apparently, Chinese officials were unduly worried about Stevens' attitude.

This Chinese apprehension was misplaced in view of Stevens' personal attitude toward the Japanese. After Wilson

withdrew American troops and the Russian Railway Service Corps left Siberia in 1920, Stevens commented wryly, "it is little I can do here but bluff." Stevens' evaluation of Japan's activities in Siberia were also blunt: If the Japanese would take their intrigues and troops out of the way, the country would at once begin to return to normal conditions: their continual howl about the Bolsheviks is only dragging herring across the trail."

During the years 1918 to 1922, life was exciting in the Far East and Stevens often found himself involved in James Bond-type cloak-and-dagger situations. When Japanese military authorities arrested Major F. M. Clark, American railway inspector for the Technical Board, on November 1, 1921 using the trumped-up charge that Clark proposed to overthrow the Vladivostok Government, his son Eugene C. Stevens informed the State Department that the Japanese planned a raid to secure supposedly incriminating documents. He immediately requested that the American Legation in Peking furnish him with a guard to protect the documents against the planned raid. Simultaneously with the arrest of Clark, the younger Stevens learned that an important key was missing from the United States' Confidential Courier's car and he thwarted an effort to burglarize his home.

Aid, however, did not arrive. The State Department



ordered neither soldiers nor marines to Harbin. Secretary of State Hughes did not endorse the younger Stevens' request because the "extraordinary and doubtful use of the Legation Guard would tend to create belief that Technical Board is in fact engaged in politics. . ." Hughes reveals a naive view of Stevens' activities, which had created such great Japanese suspicion.

Stevens served three Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Warren G. Harding and worked with three secretaries of state, Robert Lansing, Bainbridge Colby and Charles E. Hughes. Not only did he head three American railway missions to Russia and Siberia, but he was an informal "observer" at the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Arms. Although recalled from his duties in Harbin, and experienced in Far Eastern politics - specifically railway politics - he was not directly consulted on the technical matters relating to the resolutions on the Chinese Eastern Railway. The resolutions, returning full sovereignty to China in the operation of the railway but also holding her financially liable for its profitable operation, did, in effect, terminate his usefulness on the Technical Board and undermine his authority.

The British representative Sir Auckland Geddes at the Washington Conference commented that the conference dealt with the "very important question of the open door. . . and

from the door, the avenue leading in was becoming more and more an avenue of railroads." This astute observation receives its confirmation from Stevens who declares bluntly and emphatically in his private papers that his object was to maintain the "Open Door" and further boasts, "I prevented the Japanese from taking the Chinese Eastern Railway." He further asserts that the reason the United States promoted and supported the Technical Board was to keep the "Open Door" intact. There is no misunderstanding on this point, the policy was directed against Japan: "I was in charge for 4 years, I may be supposed to know what I was there for."

He is not boasting in his statement that he kept the Chinese Eastern Railway intact, but the United States did not maintain the "Open Door." After 1922 the United States and Japan withdrew their interest and influence from Siberia and Manchuria. There was, however, one important difference; it was a temporary retreat for Japan and a permanent retreat on the part of the United States. Thus, if one judges Stevens' activities using his own measuring rod of success, maintenance of the "Open Door"; Japan defeated him and the United States by frustrating the American plan to internationalize the Chinese Eastern Railway. However, this may be too harsh a judgment; the immediate object of American diplomacy during the years 1918 through 1922 was to prevent Japanese seizure of the

Chinese Eastern and the eastern portion of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Therefore, he was successful in the immediate goal and failed in the long-range goal - maintenance of the Open Door. The State Department was unwilling to coerce China into internationalizing the railway although Stevens continually urged such action.

In retrospect, the first railway mission, the Advisory Commission of Railway Experts to Russia set the pattern for United States' involvement in Russia, then Siberia and finally, Manchuria. If Stevens as chairman had not been in Russia at the time of the Bolshevik coup d'etat, none of the two subsequent railway missions would have developed, and Russia's recovery of Siberia and the Maritime Provinces might have ended quite differently. The Soviets should be grateful to Stevens and the United States for their services in evicting Japan from the strategic heartland of Asia and their major avenue of commerce, the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Altogether, Stevens spent three days less than six years in Russia, Siberia and Manchuria, serving as the United States' "railway diplomat." Many of the railway improvements such as train dispatching, reorganization of the railway repair shops and the introduction of train time tables, which the Soviets later claimed, were due to his work, organizational genius and that of the Russian

Railway Service Corps. America's engineer-diplomat once described Russian trains as being "strings of match boxes coupled with hairpins and drawn by samovars." When he left Harlin in 1922, he had corrected many of the railroads' operational defects. With American funds plus his own efforts, he had to a great extent, succeeded in rehabilitating the Russian and Siberian railroads.

Stevens wrote his own historical epitaph:

It was a unique experience, one which I think was never paralleled in history, under the conditions which existed. I have never regretted it, although taking 6 years out of the business life of a man past 60 years of age is a serious matter, but one's country has the first call upon him in peace or war.

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS INVOLVING THE RUSSIAN RAILWAY SERVICE  
CORPS (R.R.S.C.) AND THE TECHNICAL BOARD OF THE  
INTER-ALLIED RAILWAY COMMITTEE UNDER THE  
SUPERVISION OF JOHN F. STEVENS  
NOVEMBER 1917-MARCH 1919

November 1917 - The Russian Railway Service Corps (R.R.S.C.) is a semi-military organization formed under the State Department for service on Siberian Railways. Its immediate administration is under the Chief of Engineers, United States Army. Members of the Corps have the legal status of civilian employees of the State Department. Letters of appointment in the service are signed by the Adjutant General of the Army, but are in no way connected with or carry any rank in the United States Army.

State Department learns of rumor current in Siberia that work of Stevens is entering wedge for American absorption of railway and that arrival of R.R.S.C. will be definitive proof. R.R.S.C. leaves San Francisco. Stevens wires Willard that further efforts to assist railroads "absolutely useless" - no government.

Russian "debacle" has no effect on Russian railway contracts in the United States.

American Ambassador Francis at Petrograd urges that internal conditions not interfere with program of Russian Railway Service Corps. Acting Secretary of State, Polk, directs the formation of interdepartmental commission on Russian affairs. Francis sends American Emissary, Henry J. Horn, to relieve railway congestion at Moscow per arrangement with Ministry of Ways and Communication but does not recognize Soviet government.

Morris, in Stockholm, reports announcement of Russian railway union threatening to halt train operation if civil war not ended.



November 1917 - Francis repeats that he did everything possible to keep Russia in the war, but does not believe separate peace likely.

Basil Miles, State Department adviser, Division of Near Eastern Affairs, recommends presidential address to Russian people on war aims, conditional aid to her to continue if America could prevent supplies from falling under German control; Wilson rejects suggestion.

December 1917 - Russian Railway Service Corps, composed of approximately 200 railway engineers arrives on transport Thomas at Vladivostok with an additional 100 man contingent of Baldwin Locomotive personnel to erect locomotives in Vladivostok. Stevens believes interpreters with compliment to be agitators, advises dismissal. Russian officials at port advise chairman that it would be unsafe to land the American railwaymen; Stevens on own initiative orders the corps to Nagasaki.

Soviets interested in railway assistance; Trotsky comments to Judson publicized: "The North American plutocracy is willing apparently, to grant us locomotives only in exchange for the heads of Russian soldiers. We consider this too high a price Messrs. diplomats"

Reinsch, American Minister in China, suggests Chinese administration with international support in the North Manchurian railway zone of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Lansing instructs Peking that China is entirely within her right in employing troops to protect her sovereignty and territorial integrity, but the United States does not encourage armed conflict.

Caldwell, American Consul at Vladivostok, agrees with Stevens that the railway service corps can not work constructively and recommends that they wait in Japan.

December 1917 - Judson, Military Attaché at Petrograd, wires that Russia's current problems vitally connected with transportation inquires as to status of Russian railway orders, wishes to demonstrate that nation's policy is to assist Russia regardless of governmental policy.

United States informs Bakhmetiev, Russian Ambassador (Washington) of credit termination.

C. H. Smith and Ustrougov arrested and released.

The transport, Thomas, leaves for Nagasaki because Bolsheviks control the ice-breakers.

F. Willoughby Smith, American Consul at Tiflis, warns that the Siberian Railroad must be kept open in order to supply the anti-Bolshevik generals M. V. Alexeev and Alexis M. Kaledin.

Stevens arrives in Nagasaki with Russian Railway Service Corps, states that the railways and all other industries are operating at only 30% of capacity, and concludes: "We are going back and will stay there as long as we can be of any assistance to the Russian people."

C. H. Smith reports to Stevens on inspection trip of Trans-Baikal Railroad: is optimistic that the railwaymen will work with Americans and that best policy is one of watchful waiting.

M. Antov, railway adviser to the former government, but currently a Bolshevik collaborator describes chaotic transportation conditions.

American Military Attaché at Jassy, Roumania suggests that the Americans and Japanese guard Trans-Siberian Railway and that a 13,000 man contingent from the Phillippines could do the job.

December 1917 - Summers, Consul-General at Moscow, wires that General Brusilov and Alexeev recommend allied occupation of the Siberian railway.

War College, in a policy recommendation, states that, "civil war in Russia is in the interests of Germany and contrary to those of the allies;" since "the defection of Russia increases the military burden of the United States, such supplies as rolling stock, and shipping can no longer be furnished in quantity; America can not prevent the Russians from making peace so this nation should take advantage of our own helplessness and make the most of it." Major Sherman Miles, General Staff, recommends aiding Russia in money, administrative and transportation advisers, transportation matters, Red Cross personnel and material, food distribution, as well as potential military aid, both in men and material - all to keep democracy alive in Russia.

The Railway Review (Chicago) reports that the Russian Railway Service Corps is homeward bound.

Bakhmetiev urges that R.R.S.C. remain in Japan and that their expenses be charged against the credits of the Russian Government. Stevens wires Willard for ample funds earmarked for corps and Baldwin personnel. Willard cables chairman to await further orders in Japan, situation should be more definite in thirty days, believes that there is "great opportunity" for most valuable work in Russia by corps when government more stable.

January 1918 - Rumor communicated to the State Department that the Russian Secret Police nullified Stevens' work by contradictory telegrams to railway officials in the provinces.

Caldwell informs Lansing that Russian Railway Service Corps can land with entire safety at any time, delay not due

January 1918 - to hostility but because work impossible then, recommends discharge of undesirable interpreters before corps returns from Japan. Stevens with Colonel George Emerson, commander of R.R.S.C., enroute to Harbin to make final decision as to assisting the operation of the Siberian Railway.

Colonel D. W. Ketcham, Acting Chief of the War College, disapproves recommendation to send American troops from Phillippines but also states that, if Japan does put troops along the Siberia railroad "we undoubtedly should immediately and simultaneously take a like action."

Willard advises Stevens not to become discouraged and states, "you will not be deserted."

Ustrougov, Vice-Minister of Communications, who was working with Stevens planning to visit Petrograd in effort to secure funds.

Department desires Stevens' evaluation as to whether part of corps can be employed and believes that he and Emerson may be able to handle Soldiers' and Workers authorities.

Francis hopes that Willard will not order Stevens' return and that of the R.R.S.C. Emerson and Stevens ordered to proceed alone to Vladivostok to investigate situation.

Japanese request permission from Britain and the United States to occupy, unilaterally, Vladivostok, the Chinese Eastern and Amur Railways. Tokyo opposes joint military effort, communicates attitude to President Wilson. Wilson and the Division of Far Eastern Affairs suggest an international commission.

Ministers of the United States, Italy, France and Britain report from Jassy, Rumania that inter-allied Technical experts

January 1918 - state that several armored trains would "speedily control" the eastern bases of the Trans-Siberian once occupied by the Allies.

Britain proposes to the United States that Japan occupy the Siberian railroad.

February 1918 - Entente - Allies appear willing to sanction Japanese occupation of the entire Trans-Siberian Railway to the Urals in order to prevent supplies from falling into German control.

Stevens advises Lansing that he is attempting to reach agreement with General Dmitri Horvat, Russian head of the Chinese Eastern Railway (C.E.R.), to place Russian Railway Service Corps on the railway; believes coalition with Bolsheviks "useless," states that America should assume operation of Siberian Railway during the war and that Russians would approve of such action.

American Consul at Harbin approves Stevens' suggestion and requests policy decision.

Stevens reaches agreement with C.E.R. to place R.R.S.C. on railroad; Japanese not sympathetic to plan, as they desire such railway control.

Stevens returns to Yokohama, Lansing approves R.R.S.C. proposal, congratulates chairman on work. Stevens confers with Viscount Ichiro Motono, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, outlines his plans to send railway contingent to Siberia and Motono neither agrees nor disagrees with American plan.

Chairman receives favorable reports of labor conferences with workers' committees on Chinese Eastern, Trans-Baikal, and Tomsk railways.

To prevent Siberia from falling into German control, Stevens thinks it will be necessary for Japan to take some action.

February 1918 - DeWitt C. Poole, Consul at Moscow, on special mission, recommends that the United States at once take over and operate the Siberian Railway and that Chinese and Japanese troops police the railway. Summers, Consul-General at Moscow strongly endorses this recommendation.

March 1918 - Bolsheviks sign separate peace treaty. Allies contend that delay in occupying the Siberian Railway will result in complete German domination.

Emerson confirms that Trans-Baikal Railroad between Manchuria Station and Irkutsk cut in several places.

Chinese take control at Harbin, police Chinese Eastern eastward to Russian frontier, cooperating with the Russian railway employees. Over 100 of the R.R.S.C. also cooperating with the Russian railway administrators.

Trotsky requests American engineers and railway equipment, Bolsheviks ask United States for Stevens to assist in railway reorganization.

Petrograd telegraphs all Siberian railway workers to disregard orders of Ustrugov and states that former Kerensky railway official will be arrested when he re-enters Russia. Trans Baikal railway in accord with Soviet but will also work with Ustrugov. Omsk, Tomsk and Trans-Baikal railroads in the hands of workmen who deny authority of the management.

Francis pays "particular attention" to Russian transportation, emphasizes his "close" relationship with Stevens and can not understand his failure to keep him advised. Francis, per Trotsky's request, wishes six railway units of R.R.S.C. sent to Vologda. Lansing replies by asking specifically what the railwaymen are to do and what railroads they will work.

March 1918

- Lansing wires Stevens to "take no action" on Francis' request.

Ustrugov, resigns as special commissioner of Siberian railway. Stevens hopes that Lansing will consider matter carefully before ordering R.R.S.C. to European Russia. Ambassador Francis describes transportation situation as "deplorable" while mentioning that Russia and Allies believe that railroads "our special care."

The United States declines to join with Allies in requesting Japan to intervene in Siberia. American military advisers hostile to Japanese intervention.

Jules Jusserand, French Ambassador in Washington, informs State Department that Japan will intervene with or without Allied approval, Allies fear a German-Japanese rapprochement. Jusserand emphasizes (1) occupation of the Trans-Siberian terminals at Vladivostok and Harbin for the preservation of Allied supplies and the maintenance of communication facilities, both military and economic with Russia; (2) control to the Trans-Siberian Railway by occupying Chita Pass, the key to the several railroads of northern Asia; (3) the reinstatement at Irkutsk and Tomsk of the Siberian governments overturned by the anarchists and German prisoners; (4) establishment in Siberia of a center of resistance; (5) prevention of Russian shipment of grain supplies and Turkestan cotton to the Germans.

April 1918

- Russians organize governing board for Chinese Eastern composed of Horvat, two other bankers, Alexander Kolchak and two Chinese; Japanese financial and military support promised upon acceptance of conditions; it is feared that this attempt of reactionaries will create situation unfavorable to general interest of Allies. Ustrugov in charge of Chinese Eastern technical management, Horvat to handle political matters.

April 1918 - Rumors circulate in London newspapers that German banks have offered the Russian government a one billion ruble loan to be guaranteed by the revenues of the Northern and Siberian railways.

Francis advises Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Robins, head of American Red Cross Commission to Russia, that R.R.S.C. would act in advisory capacity, so that corps would reorganize and "virtually" direct entire Russian railway system, especially Trans-Siberian. Ambassador confides to Robins that Stevens has been "frightened since October and would recommend his remaining on Chinese Eastern or returning home."

M. Brukhanov, member of the National Food Department to Central Executive Committee of the Council of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, states that improvement of the Trans-Siberian Railway the "most urgent question" because European Russia dependent upon Siberia for its grain.

Captain Pellet, French officer with Atman G. Semenov of the Siberian Cossacks, suggests to United States' Major David P. Barrows that American engineers operate the Chinese Eastern between Harbin and Olovyannaya.

N. A. Kudashev, Russian Imperial Minister in China, informs American colleague that he "supposed" the arrangements for Stevens' assistance to the Russian railways excepted the Chinese Eastern because of China's and Russia's special treaty rights.

James G. Bailey, Secretary of the American Embassy Petrograd, suggests the establishment of a large-scale international packing company operated by a commission of American meat and food products men to process meat, animal hides, fats and tallow; with assistance of American railwaymen such an organization would be of "inestimable value" to the United States and the Allies.



April 1918

- Francis reports that Soviet government has not specifically defined uses for railwaymen.

Stevens after difficult negotiations reaches agreement for placing the R.R.S.C. on the entire Chinese Eastern Railway at once.

Felton, Director-General of Military Railroads, wires Stevens that his work is regarded as of "prime importance and once abandoned very difficult to resume."

Stevens recommends the return of the 100 men still at Nagasaki as there is no possibility of using them west of Manchuria.

Francis requests Emerson and two to five engineers to confer with him at Vologda. Lansing instructs Stevens to send Emerson or next best man if it interferes with work on Chinese Eastern. Chairman informs State Department that Francis' request places United States in embarrassing position with anti-Soviet Chinese Eastern administrators. Lansing hestitates regarding return of Nagasaki contingent, queries Stevens as to possibility of utilizing them in European Russia.

Britain hopes that the United States will use "great circumspection" in the employment of American engineers for the European railways.

May 1918

- C. H. Smith reports Siberian railway men anxious to have American assistance; believes coalition of forces in Siberia possible, offers his services to investigate situation.

Japanese newspapers print articles of alleged American activities in Siberia, Ambassador desires denial of agreement between Bolsheviks and the United States relating to control of the Siberian Railway. Lansing instructs Morris in Tokyo

May 1918

- to deny all statements of American economic activity in Siberia.

Kolchak becomes Director of Chinese Eastern, railway agrees to political administration and operation of the Trans-Siberian. Semenov and Kolchak argue over jurisdiction, Cossack leader heads independent Trans-Baikal Government without Chinese Eastern connection.

Stevens warns Lansing that advice of "no value" must have power to enforce suggestions, Nagasaki units organized for service "anywhere," possibility exists of utilizing entire Emerson contingent in Russia.

Moser at Harbin reports that Semenov wishes American railway engineers under Stevens to operate all railways in his zone of operations.

State Department reminds Stevens that Russian Railway Service Corps is not to participate in civil war, work on Chinese Eastern must avoid semblance of supporting Semenov or any faction.

Emerson leaves Vladivostok via Amur Railway for Vologda, does not reach Irkutsk until May 26. Stevens confers with special commissioner from Soviet authorities in Moscow who protests American presence on Chinese Eastern. If Emerson to be transferred to Francis' authority, chairman disclaims responsibility for subsequent actions as Chinese Eastern officials concerned about apparent United States-Soviet reproachment. Secretary of State informs Stevens that Francis is to report "fully" before taking any action.

America's railway chairman attempts to resign because he is not needed in Harbin, his services could be of more use elsewhere and he desires to return to the United States.

Trotsky orders disarmament of Czechoslovaks. Czech-Bolshevik clash at Irkutsk, Marinsk

May 1918

- and along Trans-Siberian Railway. American Consul at Irkutsk, Ernest L. Harris mediates, Emerson mediates at Marinsk.

June 1918

- Wilson believes that Czechoslovak troops might form a nucleus for military occupation of the Siberian railway.

Former Belgian Minister to Petrograd, Jules Destree, comments that Trans-Siberian is the only remaining link with the outside world, can be destroyed at any time by the German prisoners along the line and that its destruction would mean "the complete abandonment of Russia to the Teutons."

Report reaches State Department that the Bolsheviks have seized control of the Trans-Siberian and that the railway is not operating between Chita and Manchuria Station.

Continued clashes between Czechs and Bolsheviks, truce arranged by Emerson breaks down.

An American resident in North Manchuria describing the railway's condition concludes that though the rolling stock is in poor condition, the system could be thoroughly operational with either the Allied or German control.

Emerson reports the Trans-Siberian from Krasnoyorsk, about midway between European Russia and the Pacific, eastward is controlled by the Czechs, but the stations are nominally controlled by Red Guards.

Lansing encourages Stevens, says that railway improvement vital to Russia's rehabilitation, chairman only American with such detailed knowledge of railway situation, and that he must remain in Siberia. Chairman replies by cautioning against cooperation with Soviet government.

Caldwell at Vladivostok estimates that the port has 91,964 long tons of railway material.

July 1918

- At the seventh session of the Supreme War Council meeting in Versailles, July 2-4, 1918, the members recommend Allied intervention in Siberia and Russia for the following reasons: (1) to save the Czechoslovaks and to gain allied control of Siberia; (2) because Bolshevik power is waning and opportunity exists to advance democracy; (3) to win the war (4) immediate action would ensure Allied control of the Trans-Siberian as far as the Urals in a very few weeks. The Supreme War Council appeals to President Wilson to approve the recommended policy before it is "too late."

On July 6, conference at White House to discuss conditions in Siberia; Wilson, Lansing, Baker, Daniels, General March and Admiral Benson accept Allied proposal of intervention. Japanese will command Allied troops.

Horvat issues proclamation declaring himself head of government. Japanese announce that they will disarm Czechs if they do not recognize Horvat.

August Heid, Representative of the War Trade Board in Vladivostok, reports that Stevens' engineers and railway men could solve the transportation question and that an American military force would be received with "open arms" and aided "in every possible way."

Czechoslovak troops overturn Soviet government in Vladivostok, Washington orders Nagasaki contingent to Vladivostok. Stevens confirms order and states, "I will put railways on the map quickly." State Department instructs R.R.S.C. to cooperate with Russian railwaymen and facilitate the movement of the Czechs.

The United cautions China that any attempt on her part to seize control of the Chinese Eastern would be viewed with "regret" and would arouse Russian resentment. It is, however, "entirely appropriate" that China guard the lines of the

July 1918

- Chinese Eastern within Manchuria and that she act alone in this action.

Russian railway supply situation in Siberia, the United States and Japan in a chaotic condition; on Chinese Eastern Railway, 475 locomotives in use and 187 under repair; 71 locomotives, unassembled in Atlantic ports, one locomotive in Russian storage shed at Seattle, contracts for 10,000 locomotives cancelled, but could be reinstated, 8,000 cars unassembled at Vancouver, complete equipment for engine and car repair shops ready for shipment at Seattle; 20,000 tons of rails at Vancouver and Seattle; and thirty locomotives in Japan.

August 1918

- Lieutenant Colonel T. H. Lantry, heading 84 man R.R.S.C. contingent, arrives in Vladivostok to begin work on the Siberian Railway behind the Czech lines at Khabovorsk. American and Japanese troops land at Vladivostok on the same day, joint communiqué issued in Washington and Tokyo confining the objects of intervention strictly to safeguarding the passage of Czech troops and assuring Russia there will be no interference with her political sovereignty.

Japanese troops delay their movement to Manchurian-Siberian frontier with demand to guard and virtually control the Chinese Eastern Railway; Chinese officials, supported by allied representatives in Peking, refuse their consent.

State Department refuses approval of Japan's proposal to the Chinese Eastern Railway Company of changing the gauge on the railway to conform with that of the South Manchurian railroad; such a change on any section of the Trans-Siberian system would totally disorganize it. Best results can be attained if Stevens were to operate the Trans-Siberian, Chinese Eastern and other branch railways. Horvat and Russians would be displaced; Chinese commission would coordinate management of Chinese Eastern within their territory with Stevens.

August 1918 - Duty of Stevens and R.R.S.C. is to serve the requirements of the military forces. The United States welcomes the cooperation of Japan in the above program so that Stevens and his engineers can operate the Siberian railways during the military occupation and subject to military requirements.

Stevens informed State Department that R.R.S.C. has "no shadow of authority;" attempting to work with railway authorities but every faction claiming jurisdiction.

Lansing instructs Caldwell at Vladivostok to publicize announcement that American railway contingent then arriving to assist in the reorganization and operation of the Siberian Railways.

Emerson reports from near Irkutsk that he and his men are cooperating with the Czechs in the repairs of bridges blown up by "enemy"; did not travel west of the Urals and never in communication with Francis.

American railway chairman informs Lansing that about 18,000 Japanese troops disembarked Vladivostok, dominating "everything," making effort to control railway, will succeed unless United States takes "firm stand." Stevens recommends that railways should be taken under military control at once and operation in hands of his commission and R.R.S.C. Russian operation "merely a joke," can increase efficiency 100 per cent; he should according to personal view have the opportunity to handle railway situation. Unless he can do so his . . ." usefulness over here is a farce, especially with Japanese influences predominating. . ."

British, Czech, French and Japanese commands meet for the first time with Russian railway officials to establish an Allied Board on Railway Affairs to Serve as an intermediary between the Allied commands and the Russian railways.

September 1918 - Morris presents aide-memoire to Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs relative to Stevens' control of the Siberian railways. Japanese raise two objections: (1) Allied military council at Vladivostok plan to assume control of the railroads; (2) Allied governments at the port may not favor such control.

Japanese General places railroads under military control, rapid action necessary or R.R.S.C. "out of business completely." Wilson disturbed by above report.

Stevens wires that Japanese have advanced the Chinese Eastern one million yen, invites similar Allied action, confirms the engineer's belief that they intend to dominate railway system.

John V. MacMurray assures Chinese Government that Stevens' commission would exercise its functions as a "trust of America with all due regard for the rights of all parties. . .including China." Suggests that United States welcome Chinese appointee with "some title such as Special Commissioner of the Chinese Eastern Railway."

Ernest L. Harris, Consul-General at Irkutsk, "strongly" urges that the railway be placed "in charge of the Stevens' commission which must be in the position to assume active management at once."

Morris in Japan notifies State Department that General Staff has a definite policy in Siberia and that Foreign Office will not influence it, merely explain it "after the event."

Lansing explains policy to Morris in detail, namely, that the United States through Stevens and the Russian Railway Service Corps would operate the railways effectively "without prejudice" to any existing legal or political rights.

China denies reported Japanese loan, Horvat according to Japan's Foreign Office

September 1918 - demanded payment in advance and General Staff complied. Japan suggests that Horvat ask Stevens to assume control of Chinese Eastern.

Departmental policy emphasizes that Stevens was the "official advisor" to the Russian Ministry of Ways of Communication. America disclaims "all purpose to obtain any interest or control in the railways of Russia." Insists that Stevens and the R.R.S.C. are "agents of the Russian people."

MacMurray reports that Japanese influence is so predominant in Chinese Cabinet, that Government will not accept American proposal unless assured of support from other Allies.

Reply from Japan emphasizes two points: (1) last Russian Government confirmed Horvat's appointment as director of Chinese Eastern and Ussuri Railways (2) Stevens' commission and R.R.S.C. empowered by previously recognized Russian Government for a specific mission; therefore, neither can act as Russian agents "outside scope of defined mission." In conclusion, Allied military representatives at Vladivostok recommended that control and management of Russian railways be left in hands of Russian officials. Rejects American proposal.

American Ambassador in Japan thinks Japanese Government ready to agree "in principle;" suggests that General Kikuzo Otani senior officer of the Allied forces, assume the military protection of the railways and designate Stevens as director general "with full powers to operate the entire system.

France accepts American proposal. Russian Minister in China protests infringement upon 1896 rights, stating it creates precedent for expanding Chinese power.



September 1918 - Shimpei Goto, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, states that his government ready to accept American proposal but British Government unwilling to agree. Morris feels that General Alfred Knox, commander of British forces in Siberia, and Colonel Archibald Jack, British railway expert, have apparently approved proposal.

The United States modifies proposal so that Stevens manage the entire system under the protection of the military authorities in control in the different localities through which the railroad passes.

Bakhmetiev protests the appointment of special Chinese commissioners as infringement upon Russian rights in the management of the Chinese Eastern Railway.

Stephen Pichon, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, recalls the fact that the capital stock of the Chinese Eastern Railway belongs to the Russo-Asiatic Bank, of which more than two-thirds of the capital is French; "reminder" is solely to make some reservation regarding the Stevens' mission on this railroad.

Morris in Tokyo believes that French approval has strengthened American position, Britain has made no commitment, and reiterates that he will agree to no terms which do not meet the approval of Stevens and Emerson.

Stevens summarizes conditions: (1) Vladivostok car plant, no organization, no control, output 25 cars weekly-with efficient management, 75-100 daily; (2) Harbin locomotive plant, no proper organization nor management, production, two locomotives weekly, under his "absolute control," six locomotives daily.

Stevens and Horvat begin negotiations vesting operational control with

September 1918 - American railway expert. Morris lists three complicating factors in these negotiations: (1) Ustrugov, claiming jurisdiction as the last legally appointed director of the Trans-Siberian Railway, opposes any action decreasing his authority; (2) Czech representatives whose forces are now protecting the railroad, can give Stevens only passive support; and (3) the Omsk Provisional government and the Ufa conference of all Russia wish to show that Stevens is acting with their knowledge and consent, but do not request recognition.

October 1918 - Major Benjamin O. Johnson, former superintendent of the Northern Pacific Railroad and second in command of the Russian Railway Service Corps, reports that physically, the Russian railways were in "very good shape" and that personally, there was not "one single American trans-continental line in the splendid condition of the Trans-Siberian."

Britain informs State Department that she will approve whatever agreement the United States and Japan propose since they are two nations "primarily concerned."

Moris wires Lansing that Ustrugov advocates "utterly impractical plan" suggesting that Russians under Japanese advisers operate the line from Changchun to Harbin and from Harbin to Karymskaya; he feels that this is impossible. Stevens refuses to consider it but Ambassador is more optimistic regarding Japanese approval of railway proposal.

Horvat and Ustrugov agree to American operation of the Trans-Siberian comprising two important articles: (1) railway protection will be the responsibility of the Allied military forces; (2) the "technical administrative and economical management of all the railways in said zone shall be entrusted to John F. Stevens," who shall be appointed by

October 1918 - the senior military officers of the Allied forces in the several districts occupied by them; Stevens' title will be Director-General.

Lansing reiterates to Morris government's insistence that Stevens and R.R.S.C. will represent Russia and not the United States "or any possible interest" of the United States.

Report from American Ambassador in Tokyo states that Chinese Eastern under Japanese military occupation, Horvat admits he has lost operational control of the railway. American troops can not guard the line because Japanese soldiers appropriated all the barracks; Japan should state clearly the meaning of her occupation. Morris further warns that American assent to the proposed plan of operation would ". . . be artificial and dangerous, and Mr. Stevens' position would rapidly become untenable."

Morris meets with Japanese Foreign Minister Yasuya Uchida; Minister states frankly that the Government "still hesitates" to face the "severe criticism" resulting from Stevens' operation of the Chinese Eastern. Japan has no objection to his operation of the Trans-Siberian. Japan's counter-proposal is that Stevens appoint a Japanese railway expert to his staff and assign him to duty "exclusively" on the Chinese Eastern subject to the chairman's instructions. Stevens believes it feasible, and Morris recommends holding this compromise in reserve for further negotiation.

A. I. Lipetz, chairman of Russian Railway Mission in the United States, writes memorandum detailing 34,342 tons of railway supplies as a "most urgent" requirement for American tonnage; previously approved by President Wilson and statement sent directly to William B. Stanert of the War Trade Board.

- October 1918 - Morris advises deferment of action upon Japanese applications pending with the War Trade Board until the Japanese Government decides as to extent of cooperation with the Government of the United States in Siberia. If Japan does not agree to Stevens' management of the Siberian railways, he further recommends adopting a "more strict" policy toward licensing material for military and industrial use in Japan.
- November 1918 - Stevens contends that the basic principle of successful management is centralized authority and responsibility. A Japanese railway director, Yoshio Kinoshita, Director of the Traffic Bureau of the Japanese Imperial Government Railways with equal authority backed by exclusively Japanese troops, could enforce his orders against the chairman's judgment. The American railway expert states that not a member of the R.R.S.C. would work under any plan that involves Japanese management directly or indirectly.

Morris' British colleague in Japan supports Stevens' railway plan, expresses regret that the proposals have such a purely American flavor fearing that it excites Japanese suspicion.

Russian officials of the Trans-Baikal Railway report complete demoralization, employees have not been paid for three months, 40% of locomotives in need of repairs or useless, with resultant complete blockade of freight and passengers. A similar blockade exists on the Chinese Eastern. Kinoshita informs Stevens that Japanese railway men were attending school at Mukden learning the Russian language and methods, so that railway crews would be available. Stevens believes this will mark the completion of Japanese plan to absorb Russia's interests in the Chinese Eastern and assure her control of "all economic activities" in northern Manchuria and Eastern Siberia.

November 1918 - Stating that the Trans-Baikal was taking three trains daily, all military but used entirely for Japanese commercial goods' Stevens reports that the Russian railway system will break down and the three hundred Japanese railwaymen waiting along the Chinese Eastern line will immediately assume its operation.

Britain's railway expert at Vladivostok, Colonel Jack, former supporter of American proposal, favors the practical elimination of Stevens and suggests that Ustrugov, new Minister of Communications in the Omsk Government, operate and supervise the railways. Morris attributes this new policy to the influence of General Knox and Sir Charles Eliot (British High Commissioner in Siberia) who have never supported American proposal and who consistently advocated military and financial support for the central Siberian government.

Former Consul at Odessa, John A. Ray, reports that Japanese troops have occupied Verkheudinsk, and landed others at Possiet Bay thus ensuring control of "every possible entrance" into Siberia and Manchuria. Verkhneudinsk is the junction of the Mongolian trade route with the Trans-Siberian Railway and Possiet Bay is the terminal of the railway from Kirin.

United States protests the presence of the very large number of Japanese troops in north Manchuria and eastern Siberia. Supports Stevens and asserts that divided control of the operation of the Siberian railway system is "foredoomed to failure; emphasizes the feasibility of international control under the Stevens Railroad Commission acting for the Russian people.

Manifest of the steamship Cadaretta, sailing from Seattle, Washington to Vladivostok on November 23, includes \$821,036. of railway materials consigned by the Russian Mission of Ways of Communication to August

November 1918 - Heid, representative of the War Trade Board.

War Trade Board applies economic pressure to Japan by restricting licenses for the export of cotton and the import of silk.

December 1918 - Morris receives amended Japanese railway proposal with two significant changes (1) provides for supervision and assistance rather than control and will displease Stevens who desires "absolute control; (2) changes Stevens' position from that of general manager with power to choose his staff to that of president of the technical board. Ambassador believes that plan is practicable; it will give Stevens a position of great influence but its success depends on the future attitude of the Japanese authorities.

Consulate in Vladivostok suggests that the State Department confine itself to the Amur Railway; Morris believes that the government should not modify its position that Chinese Eastern is part of the Trans-Siberian system, otherwise, it would admit Japan's claim of succession to Russia's rights in the Chinese Eastern.

Stevens discounts practicality of adviser to the Russians without obligations compelling them to act upon his advice; desires "supreme authority" whose orders must be obeyed. Believes that proposed plan would result in "absolute failure," proposed chairman would be a "figurehead" and board a "farce." Morris regrets his unwillingness to give a trial of the plan, but informs department that Stevens' assumption may be correct.

Department expresses concern in the Siberian railway situation because transport paralysis will endanger American economic rehabilitation program in Siberia.

December 1918 - Government believes that proposed plan should be given a "fair trial" but declines to have Stevens placed in a position where his special capability can not be effective.

United States' Government recognizes examples of Japanese suspicion and rumor: (1) America is seeking control of Russia's railways and is employing the Russian Railway Service Corps for that end; (2) the nation is attempting to dominate Siberian trade through fisheries and other exploitation; (3) the R.R.S.C. in fact is a selected complement of agricultural experts, industrial promoters and others who will use their work with the Russian railways as a cloak for their purpose, which is to establish American interests and control. Morris, therefore, is to emphasize such assistance as: (1) the employment of Stevens and R.R.S.C. in Russia's service; (2) organization of the War Trade Board especially the Russian Bureau; (3) military assistance to the Czechs; (4) Red Cross activities; (5) Y.M.C.A. activities.

Stevens still argues against advisory capacity, states that he and R.R.S.C. commanders have reputations "we do not care to exchange for useless sacrifice." States, "let us start right or not at all, far better to take a long time to negotiate than to undertake what would be not even a forlorn hope." Railway diplomat emphasizes that "authority and not advice must be basic, also the concentration of authority in final analysis in one man in all matters operation."

Japanese Foreign Minister discouraged by Morris' amended plan, Ambassador surmizes that he dreads reopening the question with the military authorities. Notes that Japanese Government may meet situation in any one of three ways: (1) indefinite delay; (2) eliminating

December 1918 - Stevens and the R.R.S.C. by adopting British plan sanctioned Kolchak to vest control in Allied committee; (3) refusal with subsequent deployment of Japanese railway experts on the Chinese Eastern and Amur Railways.

British War Office most anxious for acceptance of Colonel Jack's counter-proposal for operation of the Siberian railways, including the Chinese Eastern; United States inquires whether Britain regards American proposal unfavorably and urges approval of own railway program.

Harris at Irkutsk reports that Kolchak government wishes to entrust the Siberian railways to Stevens' control.

Morris submits amended railway plan embodying negotiations with Japanese Foreign Office with these changes: (1) Technical Board is for the purpose of administering instead of giving advice and assistance; (2) Russians do not retain managerial responsibilities; (3) President manages the railways' operation, has authority superior to the Russian managers, can appoint assistants and inspectors, defining their duties without reference to the technical board. The Ambassador hopes that Stevens will approve this plan so that he can close these "protracted negotiations."

Stevens unenthusiastic about amended plan, inquires whether or not Morris has agreement regarding the president of the technical board, hopes that president's power includes dismissal of Russian officials and independence from board. Railway chairman criticizes plan because: (1) Technical Board in "all matters" of operation and railway economics must be independent of Allied committee; (2) president must exercise his judgment regardless of board's views; (3) president must have "absolute power" to enforce his orders to any and



December 1918 - all Russian railway officials; (4) railway protection by Allied troops must mean that American soldiers shall be distributed in sufficient numbers as far west as are Japanese soldiers. His conclusion is that the amended proposition makes "no essential change" from the original Japanese proposal, feels that ambiguous wording should be clarified.

To these criticisms, Morris replies that he has a "definite understanding" with the Japanese Foreign Office that Stevens will be named as president of the technical board. The Ambassador also states that neither the technical board nor the inter-Allied committee can interfere with or modify the authority of the president because authority is conferred directly by the agreement of the associated nations and not by the action of the committee or the board.

Rumors circulate that Stevens is going to resign and return home. Morris believes that this report offers opportunity for substitution of British expert Colonel Jack who will consent to cooperate with Japanese plans. Ambassador hopes that Stevens will refute this rumor and express his intention to complete the railway negotiations. Stevens refers to above as "fabrications" concocted by the British and Japanese due to the personal ambitions of "certain local representatives" responsible for existing opposition to American plan.

Railway chairman reports that he can in "no way" submit to even semblance of Japanese control, Japanese newspapers in Harbin publishing "most bitter scurrilous attack" upon American motives in general.

Manifest of the S. S. Yukon, sailing from Seattle to Vladivostok carries approximately 10,000,000 pounds of railway

December 1918 - supplies in addition to 2334 cases of rifles consigned to Heid. A specific breakdown of cargo is: 1854 cases shoes for Russian Railway Union of Moscow from the Russian Mission of Ways of Communication; 3400 tons rails and accessories; 384 tons spare car parts; 61 tons machinery, 8 complete locomotives and 4 incomplete locomotives all for Russian Minister Ways of Communication.

More than 800 mechanics unemployed in Madison, Illinois due to cancellation of Russian contract for 6500 steel cars.

I. V. Bogdanovitch, A. I. Dolenjev and L. T. Ellinsky, members of Omsk Railroad Mission, arrive in the United States to study railroading; reports that the Baldwin Locomotive Works has shipped 700 freight engines to Russia and 200 more on order from the United States Railroad Administration with other orders in process for 50,000 freight cars.

The Nation speculates on the sale of Russian rolling stock with governmental approval so that the funds can be applied to the interest on Russian bonds held in the United States; repeats rumor that Russian Ambassador used American loans, credits and funds from the sale of railway material to organize the Russian Information Bureau in New York City.

January 1919 - According to Paul R. Wright of the Chicago News, countless lives can be saved in Russia if American railway men now in Siberia are allowed quickly to reorganize the lines. Today the "highest authority on Siberia, the American engineer, John F. Stevens, said: "It is true that Russia's calamity can be alleviated greatly if the railway men have their chance. The railways are at the heart of the whole matter. The whole nation depends

January 1919 - on them, and until their tangle is straightened out nothing else can be done. This needs to be done very soon."

Acting Secretary of State Polk notifies Morris that some plan of action must be adopted "at once"; ". . . unless we are willing to undertake the task in the face of existing difficulties we should promptly give way to others who will." Department approves modified plan and believes it should be tried," but as Stevens must operate plan believes decision must rest with him especially in view of opinions he has expressed."

Stevens wires Morris that he does not wish to "quibble" regarding the modified railway plan but desires "authority with proper support not hampered by mischievous or ignorant interference, either active or passive." Feels that it would be wiser to use "explicit language" rather than wording leading to "uncertainty."

The United States and Japan reach railway agreement. Morris states that his British colleague received instructions to submit a plan and urge its acceptance, but the instructions were "so garbled" he asked for its repetition. American Ambassador informed him of bilateral agreement and the Briton will not present his nation's railway program.

Harris cables appeal of the Omsk Government that Stevens and the American Railway Commission immediately assume control of the Siberian Railway. Russians admit they lack the technical and administrative knowledge to operate the railways at this critical time; "Omsk Government asking no conditions, it will comply with every request; it simply appeals for help."

January 1919 - Stevens replies to Harris that with united efforts the existing railway situation can be improved; he instructs Consul-General that his personal sentiments are those of American Government, namely "Russia for the Russians."

Memorandum of conversation with Japanese Minister and Morris emphasizes that Stevens will be president of a technical board to operate the Chinese Eastern and Trans-Siberian railways; it is further understood that ". . . the Governments of Japan and the United States are both prepared to give him authority and support which will be necessary to make his efforts effective."

Polk cables Lansing that large sums of money will be necessary to carry through the plan for operating the Siberian railways; the Russian Ambassador has "no funds for any real railway reorganization and has already exhausted sums set aside for maintaining Railway Service Corps."

Lansing states that President wishes to present a full and frank evaluation in confidence to the members of the congressional committees; Polk is to emphasize: (1) the Trans-Siberian Railway as the principal means of access to and from the Russian people, as an opportunity for economic aid to Siberia, assistance to Bolsheviks and the potential value of the railway for developing American commerce particularly from the west coast of the United States to Russia; (2) the action of Japan in seizing control of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Secretary instructs Polk to arrange through the Russian Bureau or through the President's special fund for a limited temporary advance to Stevens.

Morris transmits to Stevens press reports regarding the railway agreement; (1) Asahi- "America and Japan have reached an

January 1919 - agreement concerning management of Siberian Railroad, whereby America will practically control the railroad, yet Japan will not lose anything in consequence;" (2) Chugai Shogyo - "The existing situation in Siberia renders it natural that stronger powers should exercise control. As Japan lacks facilities for making repairs along line of railroad it is impossible for her to supply rolling stock and other railroad material. The only country that can do this is America and it is impossible for us to contend with her in actual power. It is inevitable therefore that America should exercise control. While in form it is a joint control power, it is no exaggeration to say that it amounts in substance to exclusive control by America. America has just attained the primary object for which she was striving during Kerensky's regime;" (3) press report of Viscount Yasuya Uchida's statement to party representatives: "The essential facts are that America has had close relations with these railroads since Kerensky's regime. A numerous railroad service corps, composed of engineers including such powerful men as Mr. Stevens, have entered Russia and it would be difficult for America to withdraw from Russia at this time. . . . Eastern Siberia stands in same relation to Japan as Mexico to United States, America cannot be allowed entire control of Eastern Siberia. On this point there is a complete understanding between United States and Japan."

Oliver M. Saylor writing from personal observation discusses railroad condition in Russia: "Most of the full-size American freight cars sent to Vladivostok have not penetrated much beyond mid-Siberia. Huge engines, imported from America after the outbreak of war, are lying rusting on side tracks because some part

January 1919 - of them, irreplaceable in Russia, has been destroyed. I counted fifteen of them in one row on a siding in the Ural mountains. Most of the many engines that helped carry us across Siberia would be scrapped in America even today with all our need of motive power, for they were ridiculously inefficient or extremely unsafe."

George V. Lomonossov, former head of the Russian Railway Mission in the United States defends the Soviet Government and asks the United States: "We owe you very little; we have no treaties with you and never had any, and in the division of Russia you do not intend to participate. Why then do you keep your soldiers in Russia?"

China informs the United States that the Manchurian Railroad (Chinese Eastern) stands on "a different footing" than the Trans-Siberian and Ussuri Railways. Since Russia has lost control of the railway, "in accordance with the Chinese Eastern Railway contract China should assume control of the Railway. A third party has no right to interfere."

February 1919 - Polk questions State Department and Cabinet regarding President's suggestion to discuss appropriations for Stevens in committees. Consensus of both groups was that "any attempt to commit Congress to a definite policy on the Siberian railroad, which is only a part of the whole Russian problem, would be hopeless unless some definite information could be given them on the whole subject." Vice-President believes that if Congress discusses Russian question, it would probably "jeopardize all the appropriation bills." Acting Secretary concludes that Congress would not commit itself "to any proposal for financing the railroad" because "it is badly frightened over the amount of money

February 1919 - we are spending" and "completely at sea as to what should be done in Russia. . ."

Polk instructs Reinsch to suggest to the Chinese Government, "the wisdom of abiding by the advice of this Government. . ." Minister in China replies that Chinese "understand and do not object to agreement."

Stevens and Morris recommend the appointment of Charles H. Smith as the American representative on the Inter-Allied Railway Committee. The Advisory Commission of Railway Experts to Russia appointed Smith in August 1917 as foreign adviser to Ustrugov whom he served until April 1918; after that date to present, Smith acted as business manager for the Siberian Red Cross in Vladivostok.

Wilson withdraws the suggestion of presenting to congressional committees the Administration's proposal with reference to the Siberian railways. Whenever appropriate Polk to advise Congress on Government's Siberian railway policy; War Trade Board, Russian Bureau such advance funds "for the temporary support of Stevens;" and reminds Polk that "it is essential that we maintain the policy of the open door with reference to the Siberian and particularly the Chinese Eastern Railway." Polk is to accept the railway plan on behalf of the United States, with reservation as to financial responsibility.

Chief of Staff March instructs Major-General William S. Graves that American troops may be used when necessary "to give authority and support to Mr. Stevens as President of the Technical Board to operate the railways."

Polk advises Reinsch that Government's opinion of the Chinese Eastern administration is that status is the same which existed prior to the Bolshevik uprising. American Minister is to "take firm position with Chinese Government and say we

February 1919 - believe China should cooperate fully and without reservation in making effective the principles agreed upon by Japan and the United States in plan for restoring railways."

China continues to insist upon its right as a partner in the Chinese Eastern railway and as territorial sovereign, to take over the railway's administration; accepts agreement but suggests that it has the "right and duty" to deputize a trained expert on the Technical Board of equal rank with Stevens.

Japanese representatives appear "greatly dissatisfied" with Stevens' proposal to place Japanese railway experts on the line from Changchun to Harbin and also all of Amur Railway. On the main line of the Chinese Eastern and the Trans-Siberian he will require in the beginning the Russian Railway Service Corps as well as Japanese and other foreign experts so that R.R.S.C. can train these other railwaymen in the modern system of train dispatching. Japanese "desire and expect Mr. Stevens to turn over to their sole supervision a substantial portion of the Chinese Eastern." Stevens points out the main line cannot be placed under different systems of operation without defeating purpose of the agreement; this applies equally to the request of the Chinese Government in regard to control of the C.E.R.

Frederick F. Moore serving as intelligence officer with the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia reports that according to Colonel Emerson, commander of the R.R.S.C., the Trans-Siberian loses money on freight charges of five cents per ton mile while American railways operated in the pre-war period at good profits with freight charges computed in mills per ton mile. The line was strewn with scrap metal; the Japanese bought this scrap as junk, remilled it at home and sold it back to the Russians at from five to ten



- February 1919 - times its cost as scrap. Repair shops inefficient without modern machinery; whole system over-manned and used for no other purpose than to create jobs.
- March 1919 - First meeting of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee held in Vladivostok; L. A. Ustrugov, Russian representative, elected chairman. Joint meeting of Committee and Technical Board. Members of the Technical Board are: John F. Stevens, United States of America; Colonel A. Jack, Great Britain; Colonel Leverage, France; Engineer S. Danilevski, Russia; Major M. Garibaldi, Italy; H. Nagao, Japan; Dr. Jeme Tien Yow, China. Colonel A. Jack is the only member of the Technical Board who is a member of the Military Transportation Board.

Technical Board plans move to Harbin; will occupy offices in the Administration Building of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Horvat, as administrator of the C.E.R., will accept notice of Inter-Allied supervision and Stevens' operation; he will immediately issue instructions to all his subordinates asking their support and cooperation.

English adopted as the official language of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee. General principle adopted that no discrimination in favor of any nation shall be made in forwarding of freight and passenger traffic. Technical Board discussing financial requirements; the nations will be asked to advance an initial sum, "probably 20,000,000."

Czecho-Slovaks invited to join Inter-Allied Committee.

Lieutenant-General Takeoutchi, Japanese representative, becomes Chairman of the Military Transportation Board.

Question arises at meetings of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee and the Technical Board whether or not committee decisions

March 1919 - must be unanimous or if a majority of both is sufficient to institute action. The only members who insist upon unanimity are the Chinese and Japanese representatives. United States urges decision by majority vote.

The Russian funds for maintenance of the Russian Railway Service Corps are expended; salary payroll amounts monthly to \$42,000. Actual expenses of the R.R.S.C. during the seventeen months of its existence averaged about \$80,000 a month, about equally divided between monthly salaries and occasional allocations of \$75,000 every few months for maintenance and upkeep in Siberia. Advances for the Corps from the current National Security and Defense Fund will be available only up to July 1, 1919.

Inter-Allied Committee discusses prospective declaration to the Russian people. Eliot, British member of the committee, recalls the necessity of showing the declaration to Stevens before publishing it. Ustrugov, in discussion of the declaration, states that the creation of the Inter-Allied Committee is "only a continuation of the participation of the Allies in the matters of Russian transport, the foundation for which was laid down by the American Advisory Commission of Mr. Stevens, invited to Petrograd by the Russian Temporary Government."

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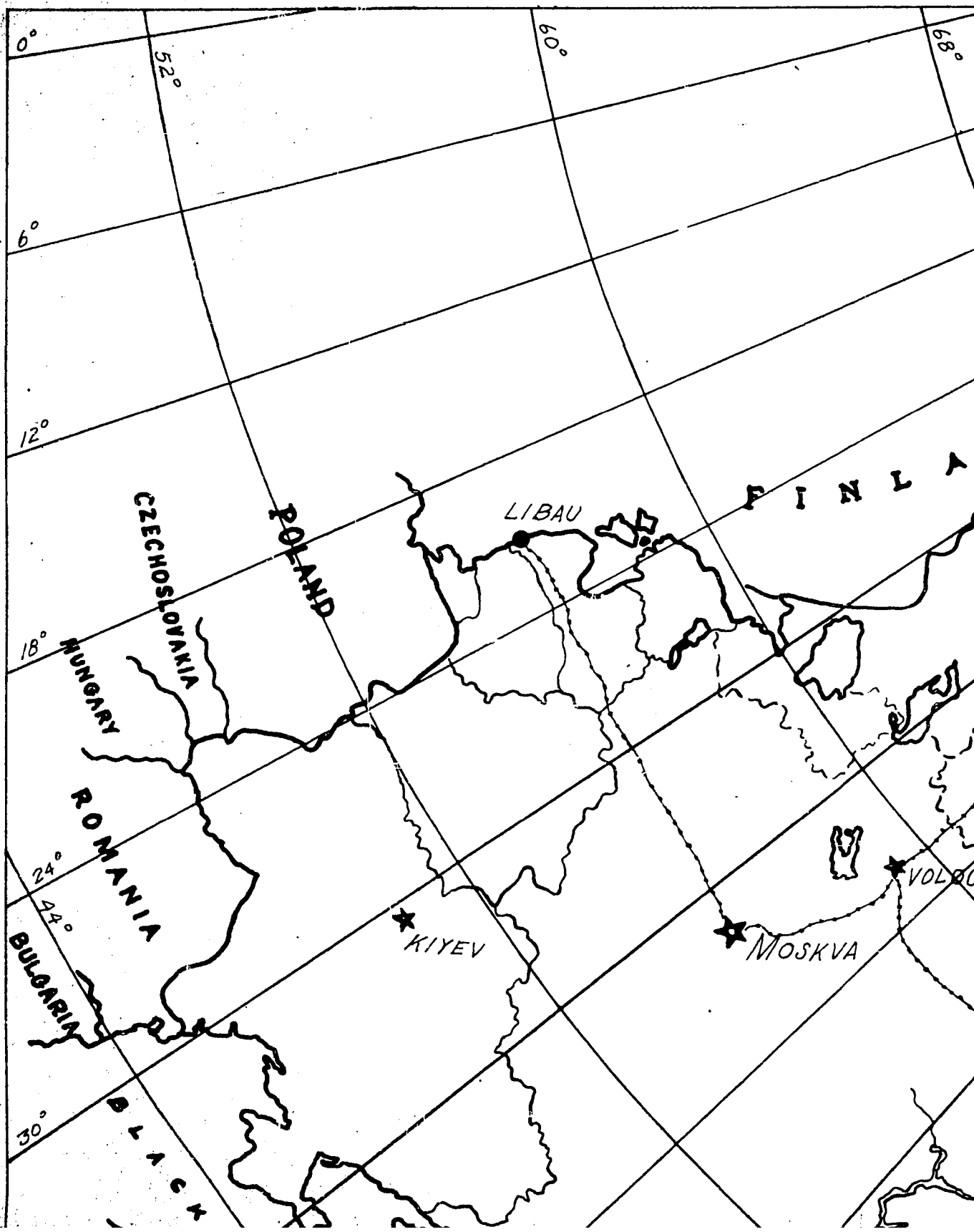
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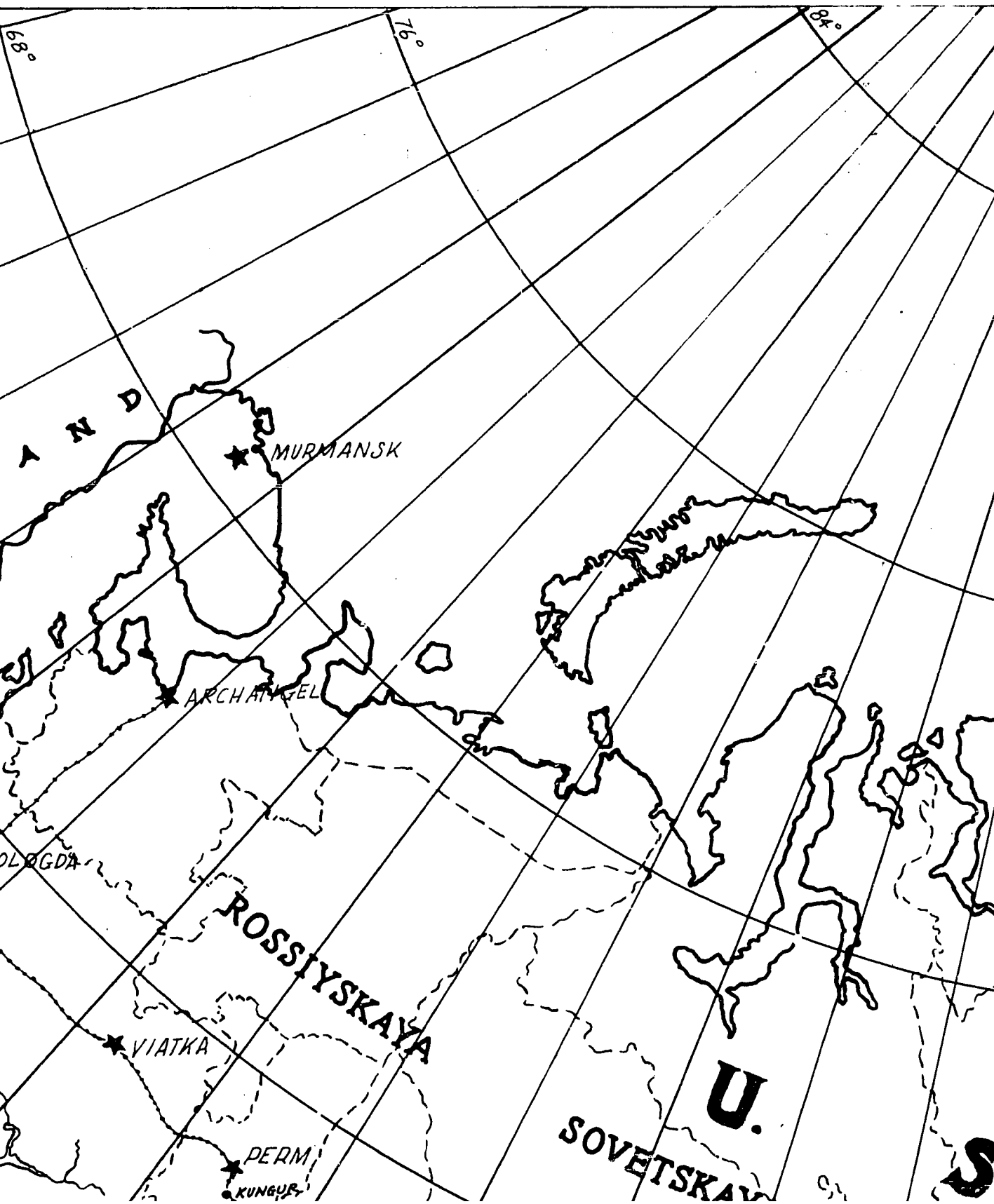
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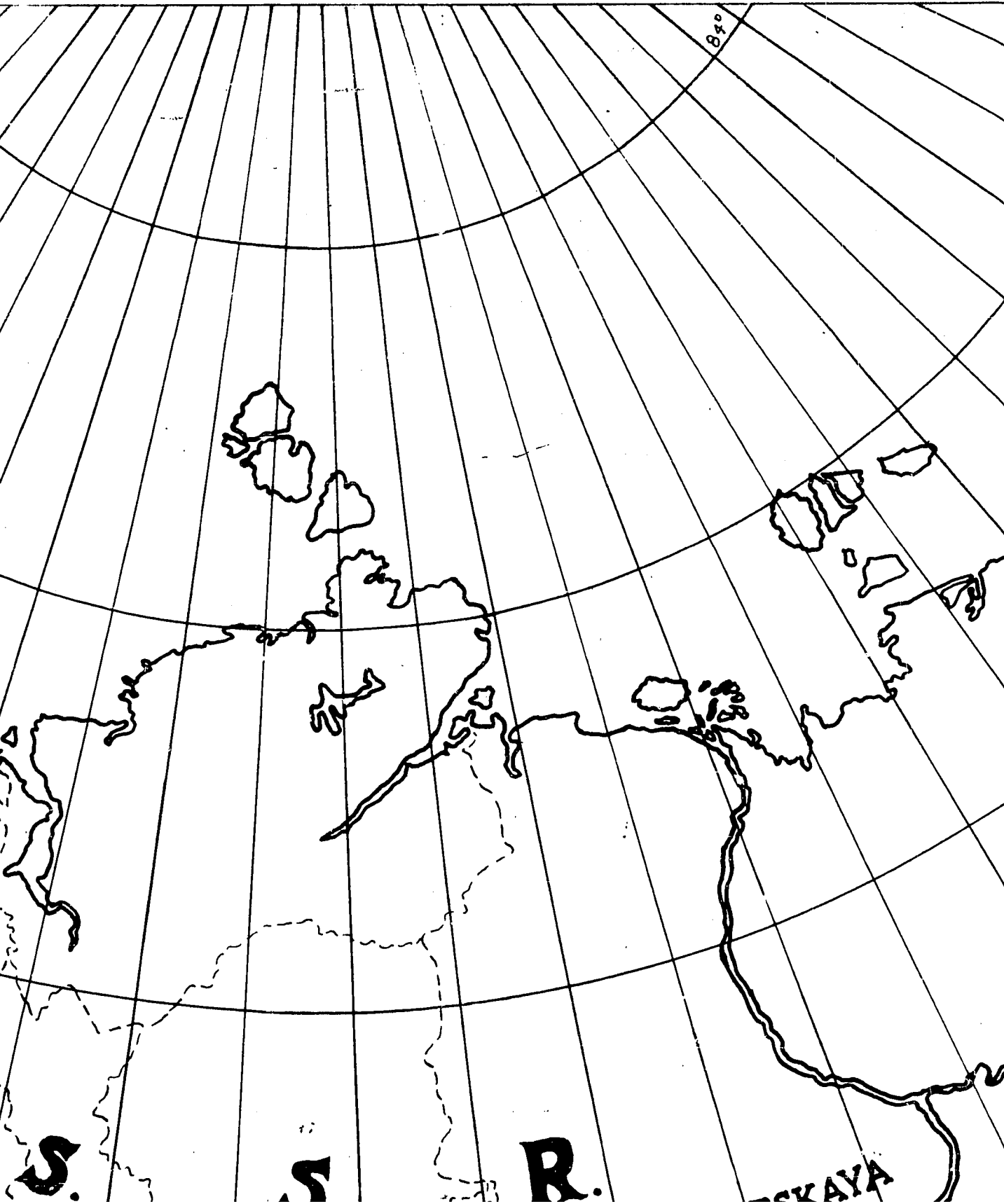


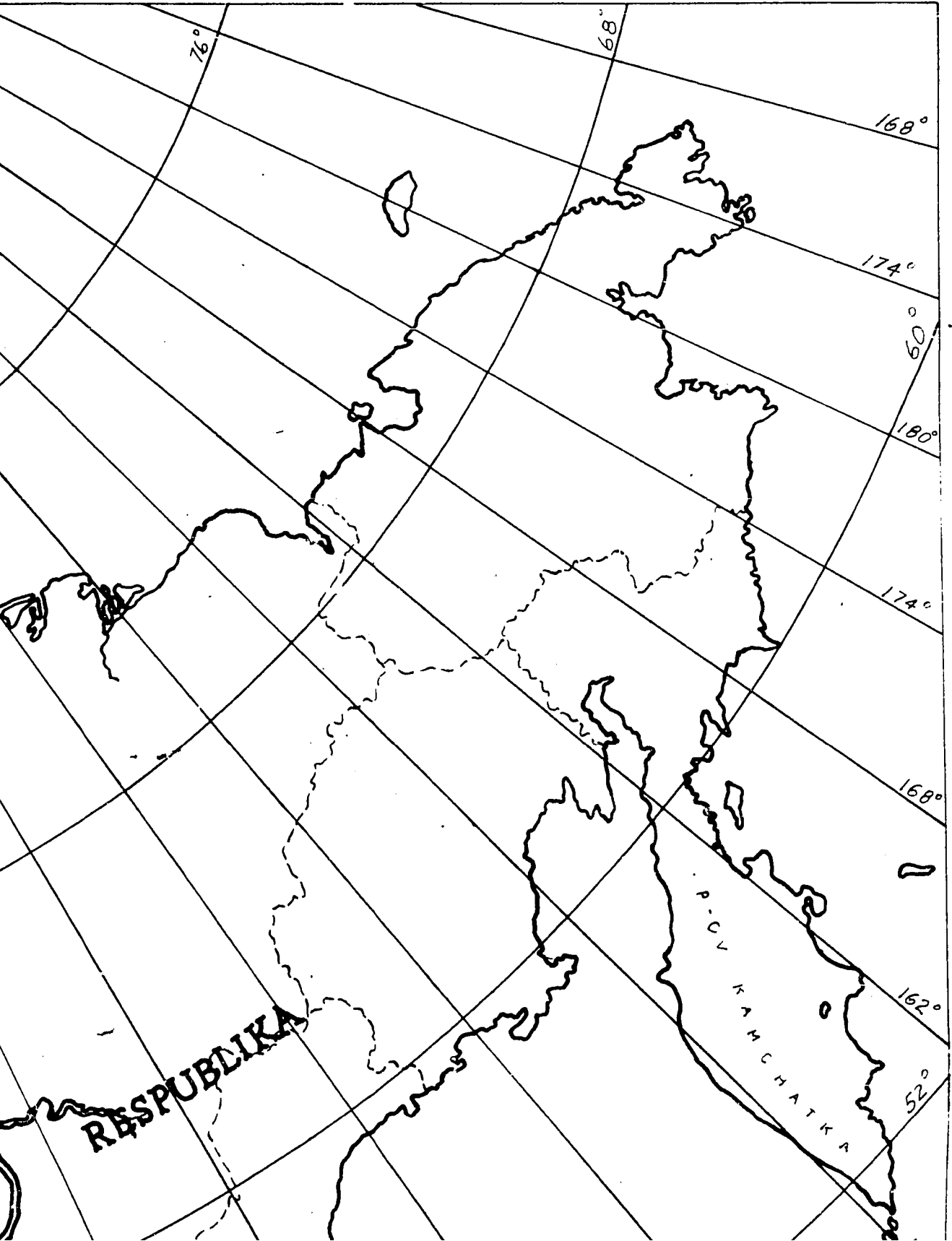
March 1919

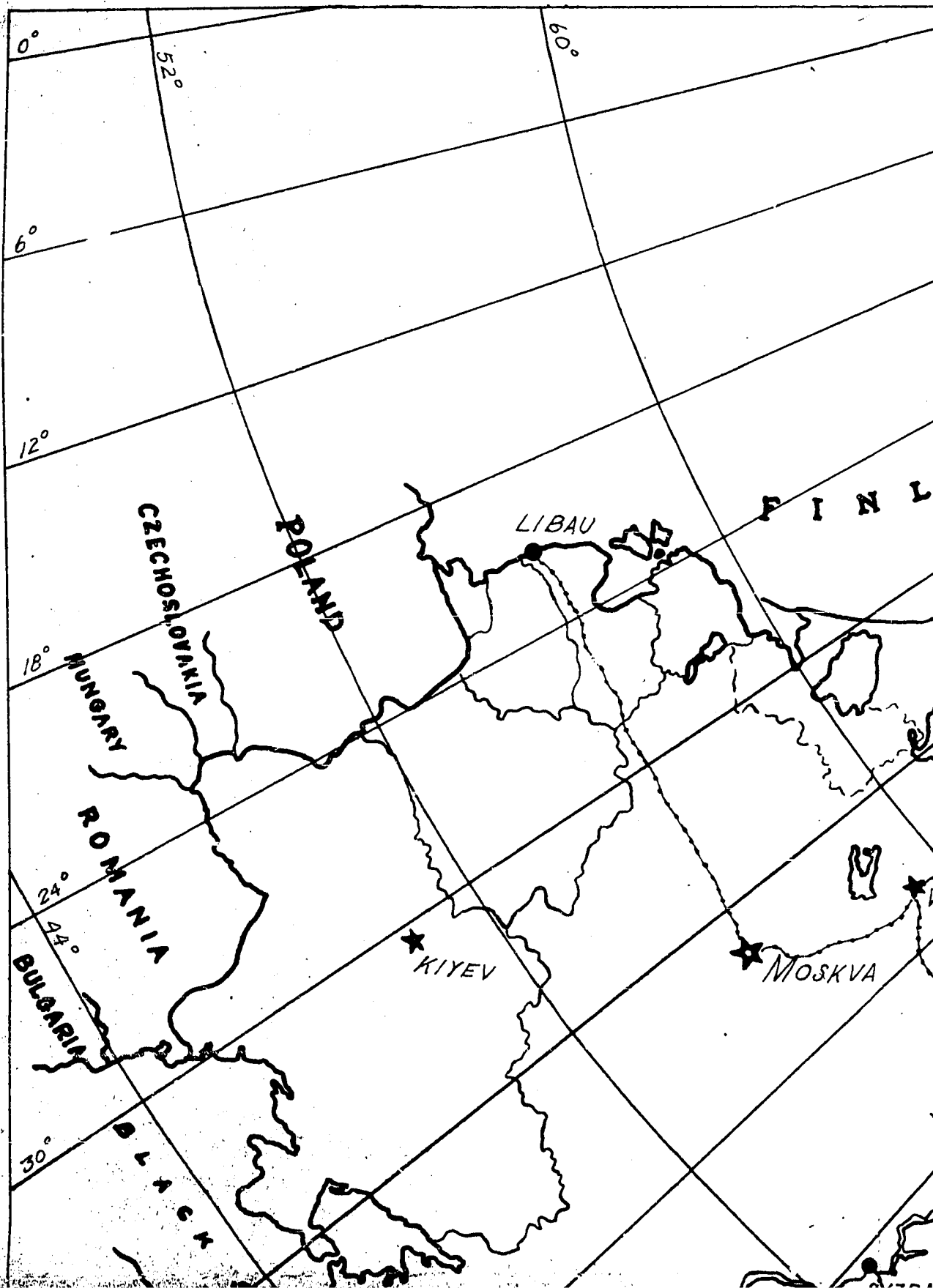
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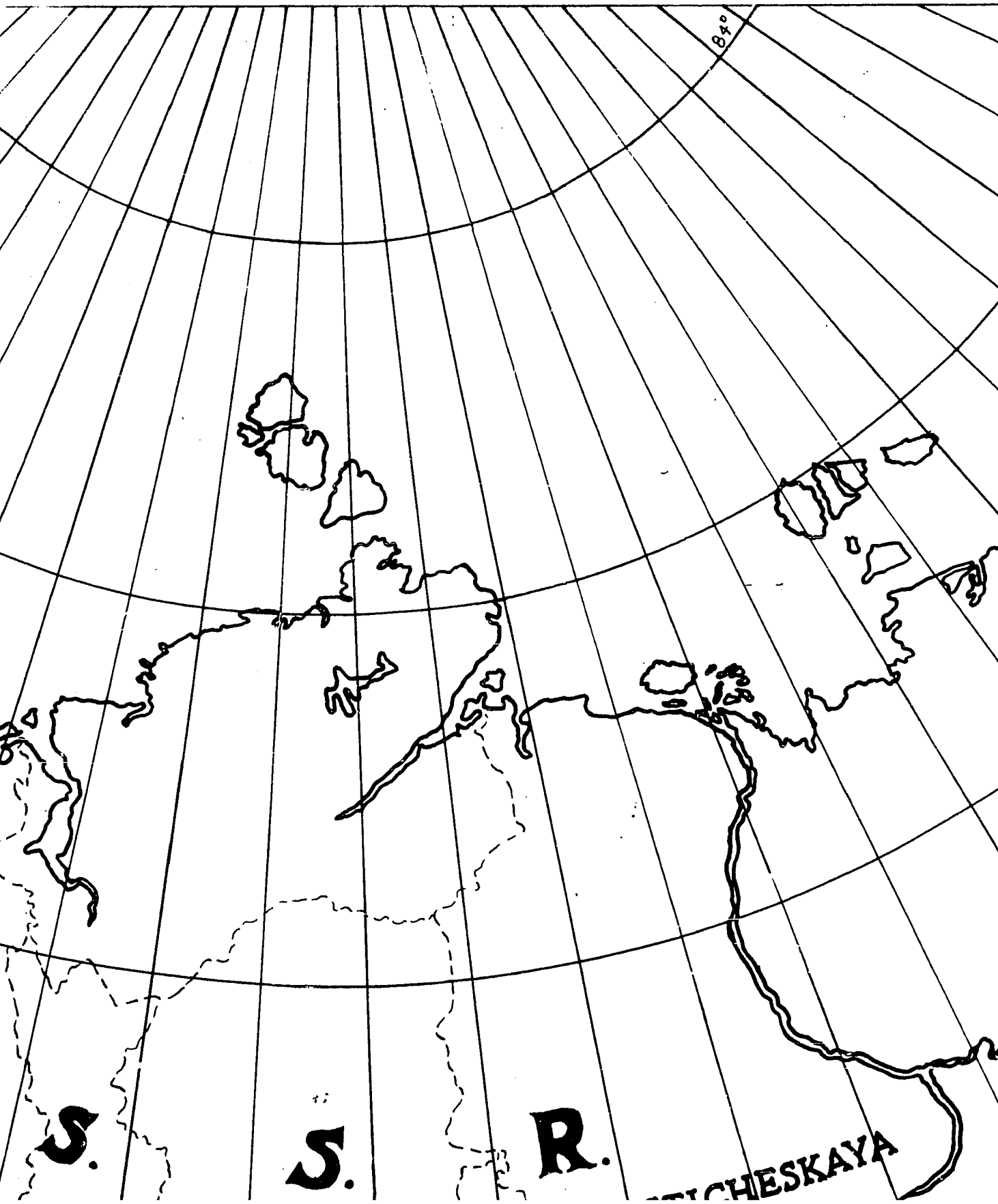












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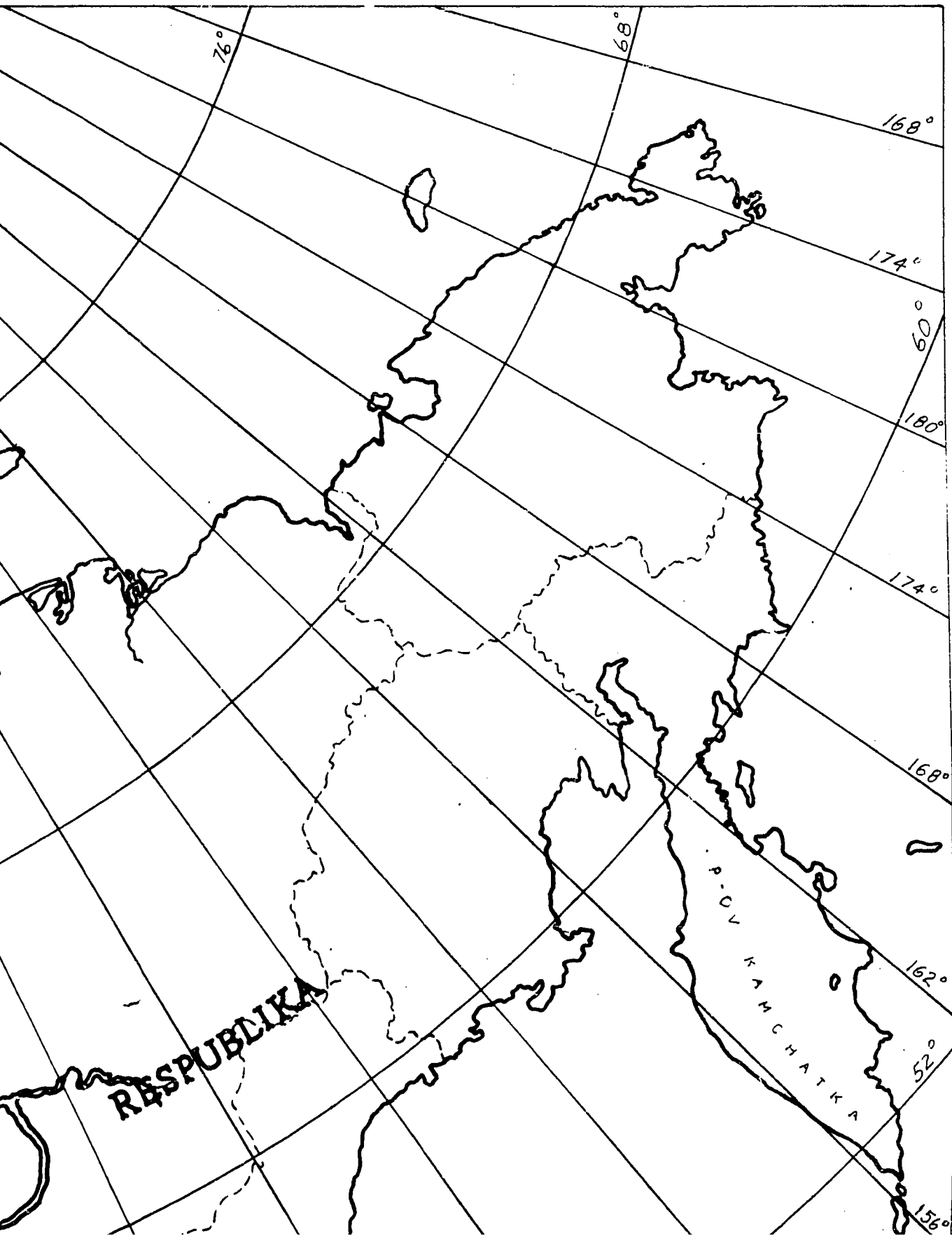
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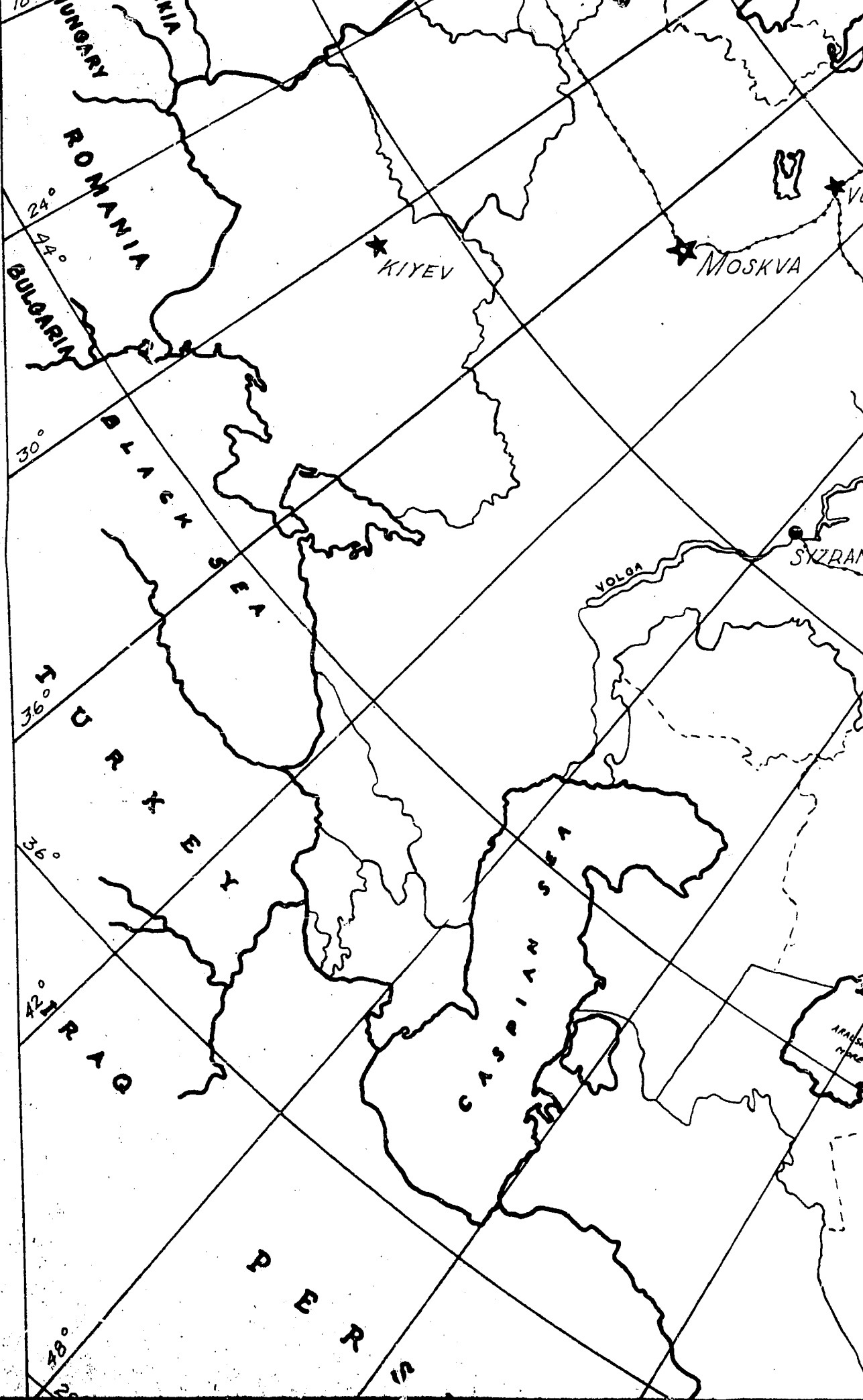
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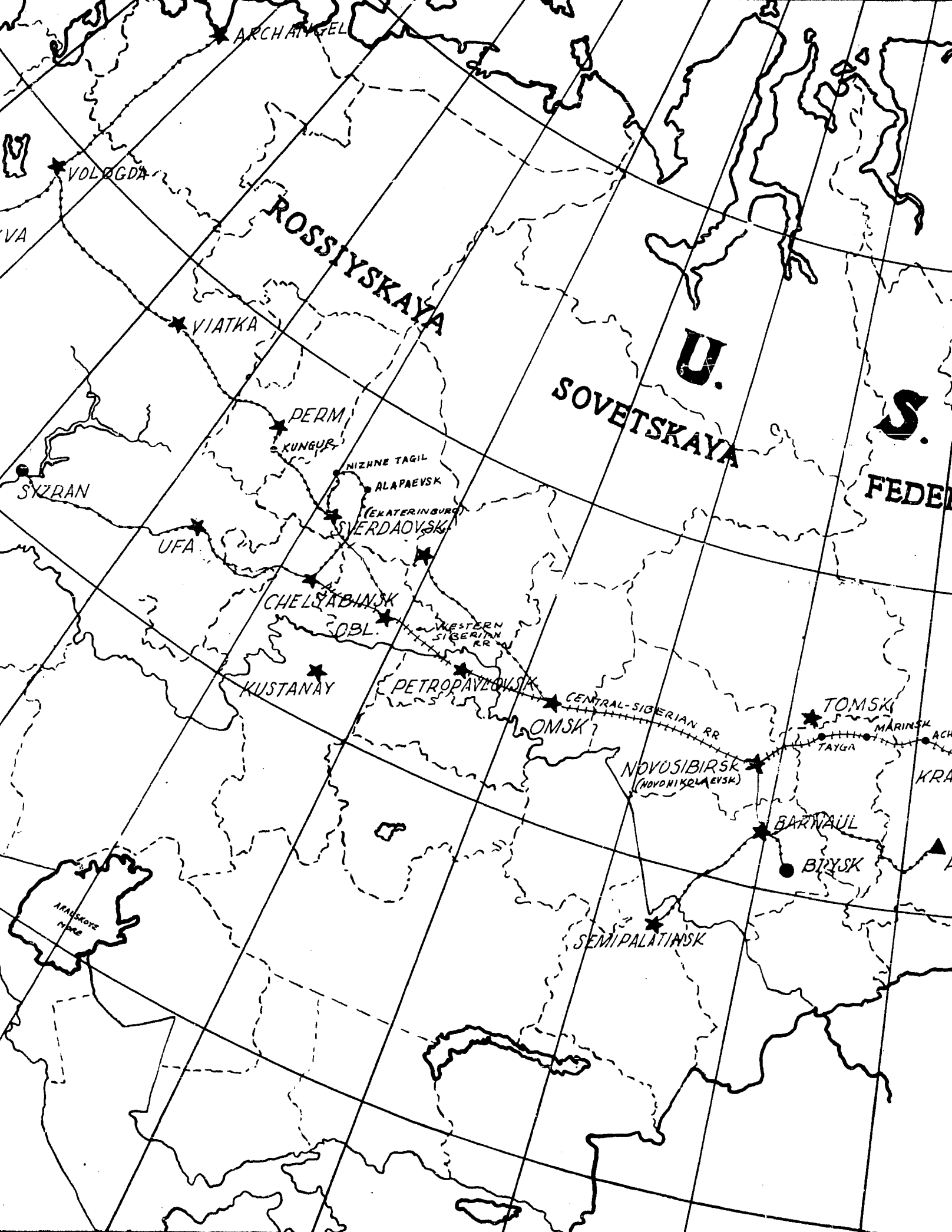
**Р.**

**СИБИРЬ**









ARCHANGEL

VOLOGDA

ROSSIYSKAYA

VIATKA

PERM

KUNGUR

NIZHNE TAGIL

ALAPAEVSK

(EKATERINBURG)

SVERDLOVSK

UFA

CHELJABINSK  
OBL.

WESTERN  
SIBERIAN  
RR

KUSTANAY

PETROPAYLOVSK

CENTRAL-SIBERIAN RR

OMSK

NOVOSIBIRSK  
(NOVONIKOLAEVSK)

TOMSK

MARINSK

TAYGA

BARVAUL

BIYSK

SEMI PALATINSK

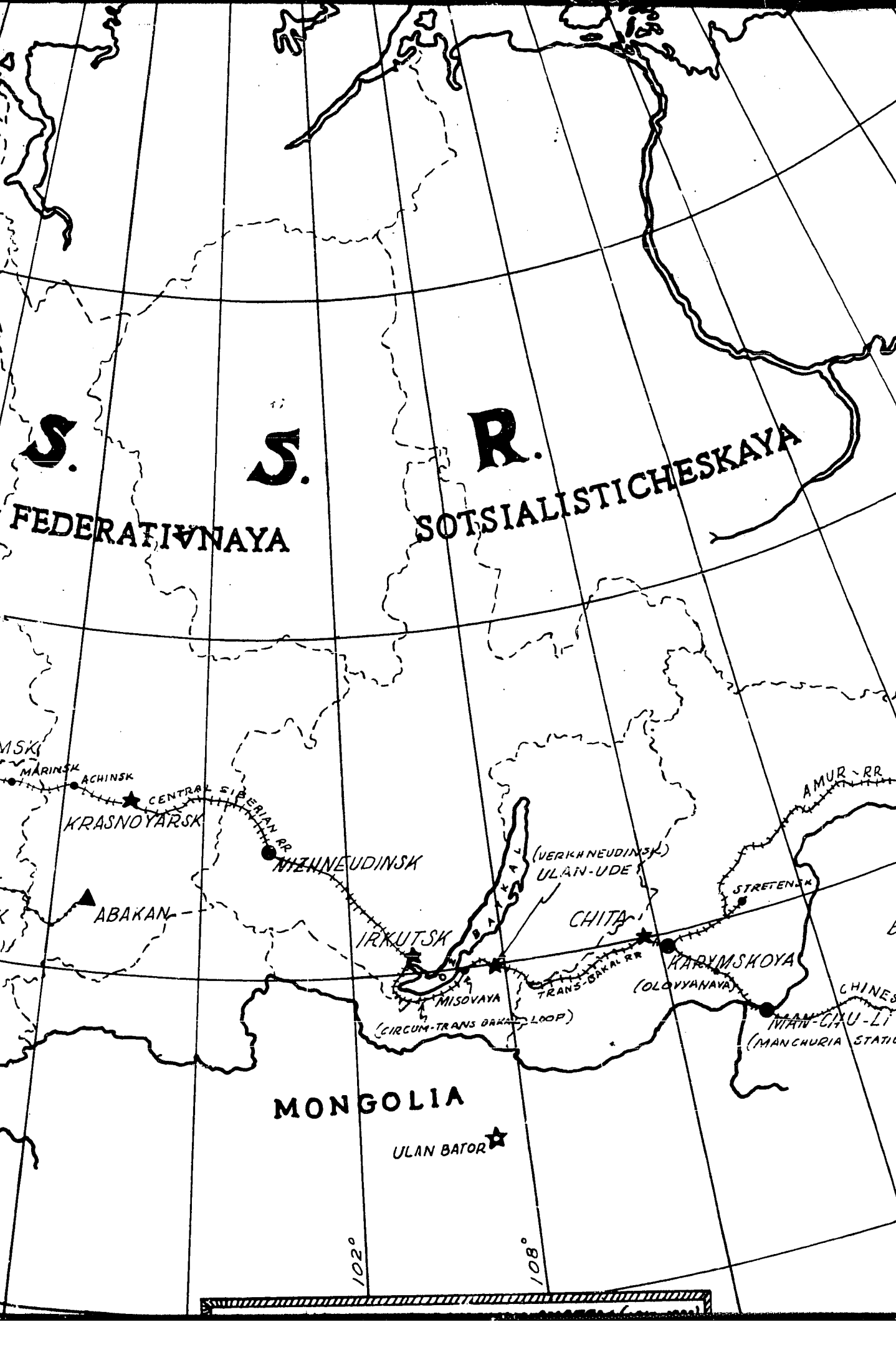
ARALSKOYE  
MRE

U.

SOVETSKAYA

S.

FEDER



**S. S. R.**  
**FEDERATSIYANAYA**

**SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA**

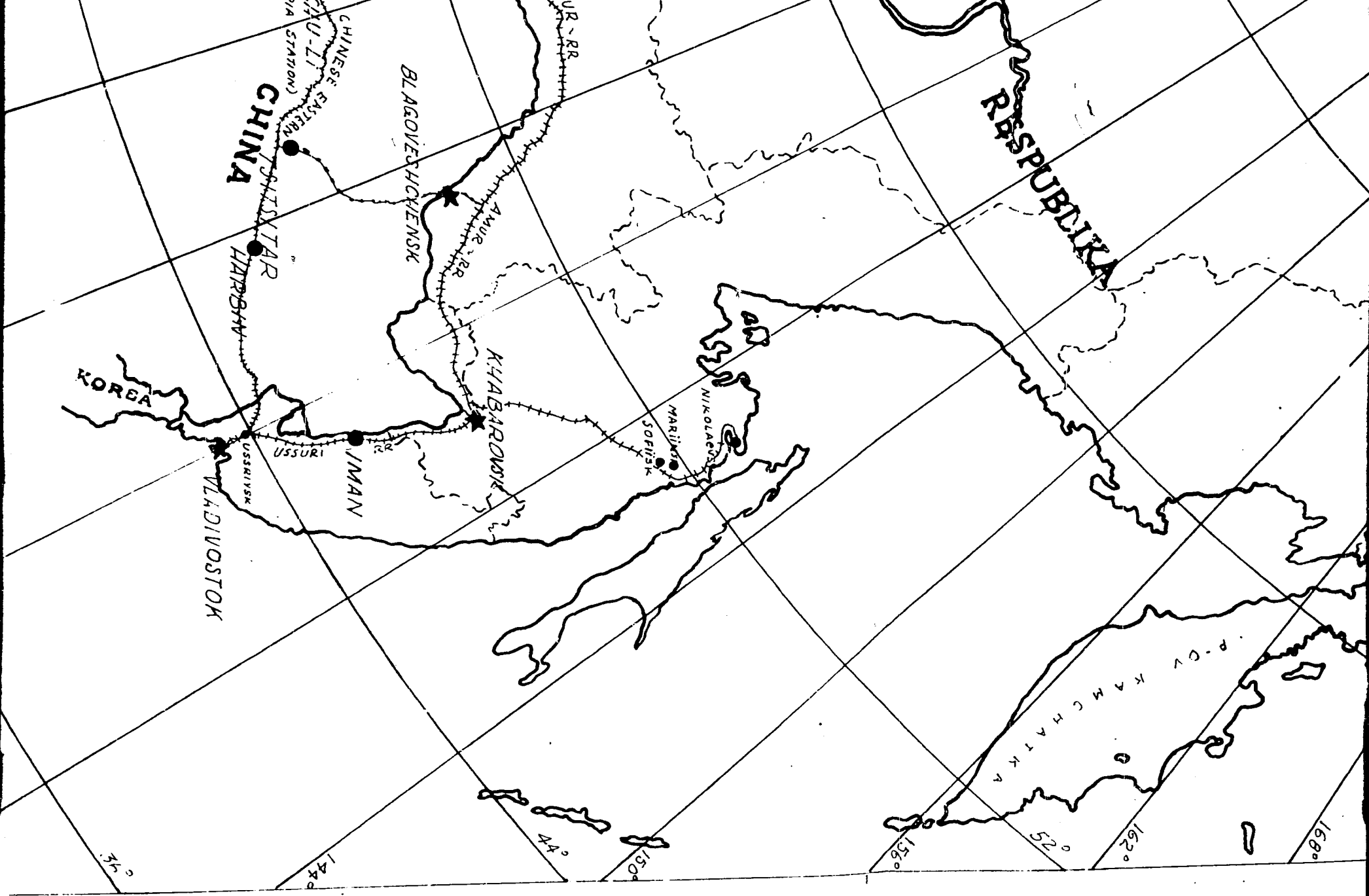
MOSCOW  
KRASNAYARSK  
IRKUTSK  
CHITA  
ULAN-UDE (VERKHNEUDINSK)  
KADYMSKOYA (OLOVYANAYA)  
MISOVAYA  
STRELENK  
AMUR-RR  
CENTRAL SIBERIAN RR  
TRANS-BAIKAL RR  
CIRCUM-TRANS BAIKAL LOOP  
CHINESE  
NIAN-CIU-LI (MANCHURIA STATION)

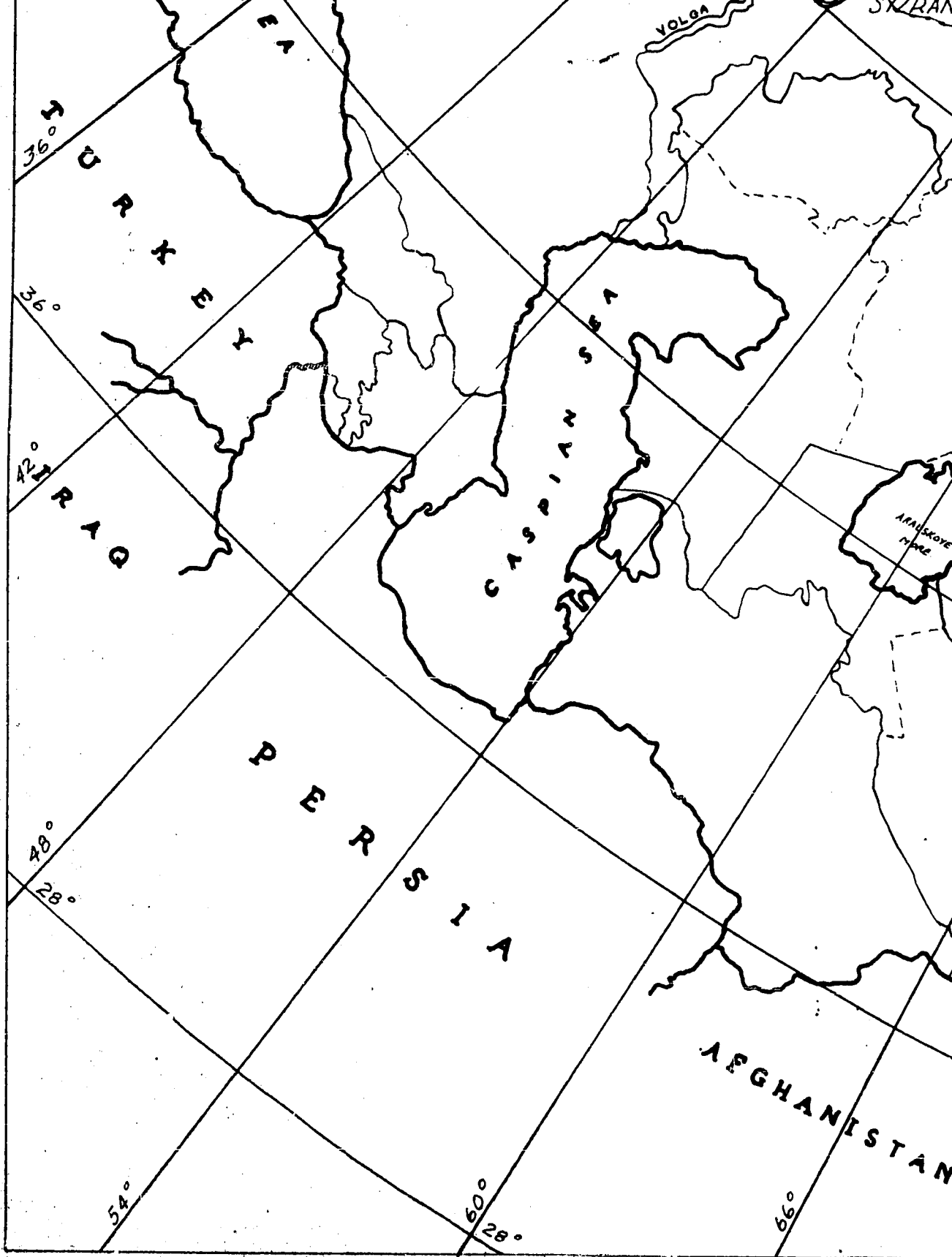
**MONGOLIA**

ULAN BATOR ★

102°

108°





36°

36°

42°

48°

28°

54°

60°

28°

66°

TURKEY

PERSIA

AFGHANISTAN

CASPIAN SEA

VOLGA

ARMENIA





**TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM (1917-1922)**

1. WESTERN SIBERIA (CHELYBINSK - OLB.)
2. CENTRAL SIBERIA (OLB. - IRKUTSK)
3. CIRCUM-TRANS-BAKAL-LOOP (IRKUTSK - MISOVAYA)
4. TRANS-BAKAL (MISOVAYA - STREGENSK)
5. AMUR (STREGENSK - Khabarovsk)
6. USSURI (Khabarovsk - VLADIVOSTOK)
7. CHINESE EASTERN (VLADIVOSTOK - MANCHURIA STA.)

★ NATIONAL CAPITAL (PRESENT)      ○ ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES (PRESENT)  
 ☆ MAJOR POPULATION CENTER  
 ● MINOR POPULATION CENTERS

===== ALIGNMENT (TRANS-SIBERIAN RR SYSTEM)  
 ----- OTHER RAIL SYSTEMS (PRESENTLY EXISTING)

90°      96°

102°      108°

114°



