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Aleksandr N. Lenkoff

LIFE OF A RUSSIAN EMIGRE SOLDIER

An Interview Conducted by

Boris Raymond

Berkeley  
1967









Aleksandr Lenkoff, October, 1962. San Francisco, California





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## PREFACE

In March, 1966, the Center for Slavic and East European Studies authorized funds for a pilot project to be undertaken by Boris Raymond for the preservation of information on the Russian Revolution and the Russian emigration. As proposed by Mr. Raymond to Professor Gregory Grossman, Chairman, Center for Slavic and East European Studies, the scope of the project would be to:

- a. explore the possibilities of gathering written and printed material for the Bancroft Library and initiating an inventory of similar collections;
- b. begin the compilation of a bibliography on the general topic of Russian emigrants in the Orient and in California; and
- c. conduct a series of interviews with carefully selected members of the Russian community whose recollections of the past would be of permanent historical value.

The work of the project was carried out by Mr. Raymond during the summer of 1966 under the supervision





of a faculty committee appointed by Professor Grossman consisting of Professor Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Department of History, and Professor Oleg Maslenikov, Department of Slavic Languages. Three oral history interviews were conducted, with Alexandr Lenkoff, Valentin V. Fedoulenko, and Professor George C. Guins. Mr. Raymond prepared a bibliography of works on the Civil War in Siberia and the Far Eastern Russian emigration that were available in San Francisco collections. A start was made on bringing in materials for the California Russian Emigré Collection in the Bancroft Library.

In his report to the faculty committee at the conclusion of his part of the work, Mr. Raymond proposed an expansion of the project with an emphasis on the study of the history of the Russian emigration in the Far East and on the study of the history of the present structure of the Russian community in San Francisco. He concluded:



Such a study seems important because it represents (1) an example of how a whole stratum of a nation made the adjustment to conditions of exile and how it preserved and expanded the values it already held; (2) it sheds light on the character of the group that left Russia and furnishes a measure of the value of the human material that was lost to Russia because of the Revolution; (3) it sheds light on the problems faced by later anti-Communist refugee groups (Chinese, Hungarian, Cuban); (4) it sheds light on the political events of the twenties, thirties, and forties in the Far East; (5) it sheds light on the causes, strengths, and weaknesses of the anti-Communist fight by the White Russian movement; (6) it is invaluable as one important phase of an eventual definitive study of the Russian Revolution; (7) it sheds light on the cultural contribution that Russians have made and are making to California history.

The destruction of most of the major centers of this Far Eastern emigration (Harbin, Tientsin, Shanghai), the rapid dying off of the émigrés, and the sustained loss of documents which is constantly occurring, make it imperative that such a study, if done at all, be done within the next few years.

This group of three interviews with Russian émigrés is the second unit in a Russian émigré series. The first unit was proposed and conducted in 1958-59 by Dr. Richard Pierce under the faculty supervision of Professor Charles Jelavich and Professor Riasanovsky.



Four interviews were done then, with Paul Dostenko, Boris Shebeko, Michael Schneyeroff, and Elizabeth Malozemoff (interviewed by Alton Donnelly), and some Russian émigré papers were collected at that time. The interviews have been handled through the facilities of the Regional Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library.

Willa Klug Baum  
Head, Regional Oral History Office

15 July 1967



## INTRODUCTION

Half a century has passed since the 1917 Revolution scattered hundreds of thousands of Russian refugees throughout the world. Today, only a relative handful of these people remain alive, and their numbers are rapidly decreasing. The once-thriving Russian colonies in Europe and Asia have all but disappeared. One of the remaining large Russian colonies is in San Francisco. Here one can still encounter a relatively large number of individuals who were active participants in the Revolution and the Civil War, and in the subsequent establishment of the Harbin, Tientsin, and Shanghai emigrant communities. The following oral history interview with Alexandr Lenkoff is one of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the Center for Slavic and East European Studies to preserve the story of the Russian emigration and particularly of those Russians who eventually made California their home.





While Mr. Lenkoff is not one of the better known members of this emigration, his unique experiences as an officer who had come up from the ranks in the Tsar's army, as an anti-Bolshevik conspirator, as an unemployed refugee in China, as a mercenary soldier serving in the private army of a Chinese warlord, and finally as an editor of an anti-Communist émigré newspaper give insight into the strange by-ways on which the Russian Revolution has cast a whole generation.

The interview took place on August 9, 1966, in the modest flat where Mr. Lenkoff lives with his son and his memories. The walls of the front room, which also doubles as a bedroom and dining room, were covered with old pictures of the Imperial Family and of uniformed men, most of whom have long been dead. Several photographs of Mr. Lenkoff himself showed a robust young man in military uniform or in wrestler's trunks. Though retired, Mr. Lenkoff was busy editing a monarchist publication in Russian, and he maintains



close connections with his co-believers in France, Australia, and other parts of the world where little colonies of old Russian émigrés still survive.

In order to facilitate the technical handling of the interviews, I asked Mr. Lenkoff only very general and brief questions, letting him answer them at length and in his own fashion. As he spoke in Russian I immediately translated his answers into English, dictating into a tape recorder. After the transcript had been typed, Mr. Lenkoff, with the aid of his son, read and corrected the manuscript.

Boris Raymond (Romanoff)

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## EARLY LIFE

World War I, 1914

Experiences as Soldier and Officer

Lenkoff: I was born in 1896, on the ninth of February of the old style. I graduated from the Petergoff gymnasium in 1914 and entered the Ijorsky factory twenty-seven miles from St. Petersburg. This was a steel factory working for the Russian fleet. There were some 26,000 workers working there. In 1914, when war was declared, some three hundred of our young workers volunteered for the front. I enrolled in the artillery regiment which was stationed not far away from the capital. I was held in the reserves for five months and then was sent into active service. While still a soldier on the German front I received two St. George crosses and became chief non-commissioned officer. In 1915 I finished the officers' school for machine gunners



in Oranienbaum and then was returned to the front as an officer. When the war was over I was already a captain in rank.

### Conditions in Factories in Moscow, 1918

After the end of the war when the army had already become decomposed and disintegrated, I returned to St. Petersburg. Seeing the chaos, the enormous numbers of strikes and disturbances, and the general filth, I moved to Moscow. There were many workers in our Ijorsky factory who during the time of Kerensky were monarchists -- the majority in fact. These were government factories, not private ones, and worked for the Naval Ministry. Some of our skilled craftsmen received as much as three hundred rubles a month. This was gold rubles. This salary was approximately the equivalent to that of a commander of a division. There was only one such factory around St. Petersburg; this was the metallurgical factory. There were, however, shipyards owned



by the government where similar conditions existed.

Now the workers of these factories were in fact co-owners of them in the sense that the smallest salaries that the workers received there were about sixty rubles. I received above sixty-five rubles, in fact I received at the minimum a hundred and ten rubles, because of the large bonuses for any work that was done which was of high quality. Sometimes these bonuses were twice what our regular salary was supposed to be.

We had a fine hospital, excellently furnished for three thousand bunks, excellent surgeons and doctors. This was because this factory was part of the large network of factories owned by the Naval Ministry. It was quite difficult to get a job in such a factory. You had to pass a very rigid physical examination. We had a form of a trade union in this factory. We had an elected "starosta," or elder, who would represent us with the engineers and with management.



Strategy of Tsar's Army Officers  
to Fight Bolsheviks

In Moscow I arrived in February of 1918. I didn't stay in Moscow very long. Those of us who arrived in Moscow were officers and we had gone there to see where it would be best for us to go to fight the Bolsheviks. There were twenty of us in this one hotel. Some wanted to go to Trans-Baikalia, to the group of Ataman Semenov; some wanted to go to Hetman Skorapadsky in the Ukraine; some wanted to go to the French Foreign Legion; there were also suggestions to go to Arkhangelsk, where the English had landed. As is typical among Russians, we argued but did not arrive at any final decision. I decided to go with another officer to Semenov. I still had documents from World War I which had been prepared showing that I was a simple soldier and that I was returning home.

We finally got on the Trans-Siberian train





which was going towards Irkutsk from Moscow. In Moscow there was near famine at that period; there was almost no bread. So on the train we were going without having any idea whatsoever where we were heading for. When we reached Chelyabinsk we were amazed to see that the women were selling bread, geese, butter, and eggs at the railroad station there. We did not realize that Siberia had not yet been touched by the revolution and by famine. We were, of course, travelling in railroad cars which were stuffed with pro-Bolshevik people.

#### Reasons for Success of Revolution

**Raymond:** Why were there so many pro-Bolshevik sympathizers?

**Lenkoff:** The revolution was not made by workers and peasants. The revolution was caused by the higher officials who were surrounding the Tsar. The Duma that had been called to help the Emperor administer the country, headed by Milukoff, had wanted to trans-



form the country into a parliamentary form of government like in the West, despite the fact that the Duma had never had any popularity or success among the workers, the peasants, or the intelligentsia. Even at this time its main aim was to overthrow the Tsar's government. The greatest culprits of the overthrow of the Tsar were his own generals and his own entourage who were commanding the army and the front, including his own uncle, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich, who asked the Tsar to abdicate. Of course the immediate cause was that Petersburg at a certain time did not have enough produce, and this caused insurrections. This insurrection was supported by soldiers in the Reserve Army who did not want to go to the front. Seeing the chaos that began to take place in the capital, the German general staff sent agents and a group of Communists into Russia. The simple people supported the Bolsheviks primarily because of very appealing slogans, for instance the slogan "Factories to the workers -- places to the workers," and another slogan,



"Steal from the thieves," also another slogan, "End the war. Go home." This was the most important and the most successful slogan that the Bolsheviks had. They claimed in this slogan that the war was necessary for capitalists. This was the main reason -- the attractive slogans; also "Divide the land from the landlords and take the land over."



## CONFLICTS WITH BOLSHEVIKS

## Return to Kurgan

Lenkoff:           Just before we reached Omsk, we were on the platform of a passenger car and a railroad worker came up to us and said, "Come over to my compartment and we'll drink some tea." This was the chief of the railroad station of Chita who was returning from Moscow also. He got on the train in a little compartment and when he shut the door he said, "Well, I know that you're officers. Where are you going? I know where you're going. You're going to Semenov. I want to warn you that just before Krasnoyarsk there is a Soviet control board which arrests officers and sends them to Krasnoyarsk. Even if you do trick them to get through that point, you will certainly not be able to go through the checkpoint in Irkutsk, where they are particularly careful not to let any able-bodied men reach Semenov." He





advised us to go back to a small city called Kurgan, about a hundred and fifty miles back west. So we went to Kurgan. The town was quiet. We stopped at the home of one of our former officers who had been a member of our regiment and who lived in that town. We didn't have any work and didn't even look for work because we lived with this officer. Very soon thereafter, a lot of arrests began in the town, especially of the richer people who were being nationalized.

#### Czech Arrival and Aid to Secret Officers' Society

In March of 1918, the Czechs arrived. Many of the Russians were hopeful that the Czechs would help them against the Bolsheviks. When the Czechs arrived, they occupied the railroad station, the telegraph, and all other such installations, and controlled them together jointly with the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks



didn't like this arrangement, so they sent a detachment of sailors some two hundred strong to Kurgan. When the Czechs arrived we had hoped that they would help us overthrow the Soviet regime. The Czechs replied that they had no right to do so because they were tied up by orders from the Allied Command, such as the French General Janen, and that they were not going to participate in the internal affairs of Russia.

During this time we organized a secret officers' society in Kurgan which consisted of some hundred and twenty men, and we became acquainted with a lieutenant of the Austrian General Staff who was a Czech. He told us that the Czechs would secretly supply us with weapons -- provided, "We will give you fifty rifles, forty-eight rounds per man, a hand grenade, and a couple of light machine guns, provided that you confront us with a fait accompli and manage on your own strength to overthrow the Bolsheviks by morning. Then we



will be able to help you with additional trucks. But if you lose, then we will be forced to help the Bolsheviks disarm you." We decided to take the chance and were able to free the town during that night from the Bolsheviks. This was on the night of the second or third of June, 1918. There were some three hundred Bolsheviks there. We caught them by surprise, and furthermore, we were more experienced. They ran away from the town, leaving three killed. We lost two -- killed.

The population of Siberia, including the peasants, was completely on our side. But at the same time each individual peasant was mostly concerned with preserving his own farm, and the support to us was not as much as it should have been. After we occupied the city, the Czechs gave us twelve trucks, which we were now able to use to transport our infantry. We set out to chase after the Bolsheviks who had gone into the villages surrounding the town.



### Advance and Capture of Shadrinsk

In four or five days we decided to advance on the town of Shadrinsk, having left thirty or forty of our men to defend Kurgan. In this, we were relying on the help of the Czechs, who were supposed to be guarding the railroad station. We occupied Shadrinsk in the same manner, and also the town of Dalmatov, where about fifty Czechs held back the Bolsheviks a few miles out while we captured the town. Part of the things that attracted the Czechs was the fact that they were great enemies of the Hungarians. When we would take Hungarians prisoners, the Czechs always asked us to surrender these prisoners to them. Right at the time when we took Shadrinsk, in Omsk an anti-Bolshevik government called the Directory was formed. The head of this government was Grishin-Almazov. This Directory did not last long. It was overthrown and a temporary Siberian Government was formed under the leadership of the Russian Admiral





Kolchak. After this we received a lot of help from Omsk, and many volunteer companies came to our aid.

### Siberian Volunteer Army Grows

In August of 1918, an army of volunteers was being formed in Siberia to fight the Bolsheviks. All this coincided with an insurrection in Russia itself. On the sixth of August, 1918, the workers of the Izhevsky factory in the Viatskaia Gubernia rose up against the Bolsheviks, some ten thousand workers in all, also the Votkinski factory workers arose and went east to join the Siberian army. After their uprising, they held their factories for two months until the Siberian army units reached them and began to advance westwards towards Russia. The advance could not continue indefinitely because the Soviets were supported by troops from many different



nations, including Chinese, Hungarian, Latvian, and Estonian troupes, and the Siberian army lacked especially ammunition and military equipment. After we occupied Dalmatov, we continued going west towards Kaminsky factory, and from there we moved north to Bogdanovich, which was some hundred and fifty versts from Kurgan. There we advanced. This was on the branch railroad in Ekaterinburg. When we reached the station of Egorshino in August, 1918, the organization of the Siberian army had progressed to the point where we were no longer detachments operating independently in partisan formations but had become incorporated into a regular army administration, and I was made commander of a battalion of two hundred cavalymen. It was there that we officers again began to wear our epaulettes. From there I was transferred to the South Army near the town of Verkhneuralsk, and there we were sent to attack the city of Orenburg, which we were, however, unable to occupy, because it was too strongly defended by



the Reds. This was already July of 1919.

### Retreat to the East and into China

At this time the Siberian Army was already retreating eastward, and we of the South Army formed its left wing. Our contact with the main body of the army had, however, been interrupted by Bolshevik detachments. We were unable to restore this contact. Therefore we started retreating southward, and after a series of unsuccessful battles we were in effect surrounded by the Bolsheviks near the town of Orenburg. We consisted of eight Cossack regiments, each regiment being about eight hundred men, and a fifteen hundred non-Cossack infantry division, which was called the Twenty-first Infantry Division of the Siberian Army. The Cossacks decided to surrender; our infantry division decided to somehow or other escape the Bolsheviks, and so we entered into what is known as the Hungry



Steppe, the Turgai Steppe, and began to move eastward, hoping to reach the small town of Kokchetav, which was approximately a thousand miles eastward.

In Kokchetav we rejoined the main body of the Siberian Army, which was also retreating toward Irkutsk. We continued our retreat together with them. When we reached Irkutsk, there were some twenty thousand of us, and we could have occupied the city, but the Czech command, which was headed by the French general Janen, ordered us not to advance towards the city. They did not want to have the Czech transports damaged by the fighting. Of course we could have fought and beat the Czechs too, who were no more than one division strong, but our commander, General Voitsehovsky was not inclined to fight the Allies, especially because Admiral Kolchak had already been shot, and he ordered us to obey the international commands.

When we reached Chita we had to fight numerous detachments of Red partisans, and we joined the detachments of Ataman Semenov. We were under the command of General Verzhbitsky





who fought together with Ataman Semenov but was not subordinated to him. Chita was abandoned by our forces in October of 1920. This time we had three corps. The first one was commanded by Ataman Semenov; the second was commanded by General Smolin; and the third by General Molchanov. I was under General Molchanov. We retreated and fought our way towards Manchuria through the lines of Red partisans. In Manchuria when we crossed the border we gave the Chinese our weapons, and we went through Manchuria disarmed until we reached the Maritime Provinces. There we once again were armed and continued to fight. We advanced towards the city of Khabarovsk and took the town in December of 1921. Our regiments had become smaller and smaller in the meantime, and the Red forces were constantly increasing, so that we finally had to retreat from Khabarovsk towards Vladivostok. We were able to hold Vladivostok until October of 1922, and then we retreated back across the border into Manchuria to Harbin.



## CHINA, 1922-1948

## Life in Harbin and in the Chinese Army

**Lenkoff:** In Harbin I stayed two years until 1924, and I worked there as a mechanic, as a warehouseman, and also as a wrestler in a circus. I was unsuccessful in getting a job on the Chinese Eastern Railroad, and finally, in 1925, I joined the Chinese army. Beginning with 1924 in Harbin, rumors were spread that those Russian emigres who would join the Chinese army would be given arms and after a period of service these armed Russians would be able to cross the border and return to the Maritime Provinces of Russia. Mugden was the city where the beginning of the formation of this military detachment took place. This was the capital city of Marshal Chan Tso Lin, and one of his Russian assistants, a Colonel Chekhov, was in charge of recruiting Russians to the Chinese armies. Chekhov delegated General



Nechaev, who was in Harbin, to be a recruiter there. The first formation consisted of two companies of approximately a hundred and fifty men in total. These two companies were moved towards the town of Shanghaiguan. Then later in 1924 they were transferred to the Shantung province to serve under Marshal Chan Sun Chan in the town of Tsinanfu. By this time there were already four companies. I joined the detachment in the spring of 1925, in April.

Raymond: Why did you join the Chinese Army?

Lenkoff: I did not have much to do in Harbin, and to work as a fireman did not particularly attract me. I personally could not believe that this would be the beginning of an attempt to overthrow Communist power in the Maritime Provinces, but I was given the rank of captain in the Chinese army, and this seemed an attractive future. My pay was ninety silver dollars a month. The most I earned before was fifty rubles a month in my job in Harbin. When I joined the Chinese army I was able to bring in with me sixty other



men. This is one of the reasons why I was given the rank of captain. All of these were experienced cavalymen. In our ranks at Tsinanfu there was already a cavalry detachment among the Russian soldiers which was commanded by Colonel Barteniev. He had two cavalry companies; each consisted of approximately a hundred and eighty people.

#### Russian Detachments in the Chinese Army

It was very difficult for us to understand how the Chinese felt about us. How could we tell what they thought about us? They treated us well without interfering with anything we did. This was probably due to the fact that we were militarily strong. We lived in regular barracks, and we spent much of our time training and taking military courses, which were being given by our own officers. Although we wore Chinese uniforms, all of the military formations





and commands were according to the old Russian military manner. We refused to eat Chinese food, and we were supplied with all the necessary produce to have a regular Russian diet. We had our own bakeries that were on railroad cars.

Soon thereafter a separate cavalry regiment was formed, and from the infantry detachments an infantry regiment, Regiment Number 105, was formed in 1926. Tsinanfu was a large Chinese city, and the barracks were about a mile away. There was not originally a Russian colony there, but after our detachments began to be stationed there, Russian traders came in. There was a cinema. We had our own small church in the barracks, and because we were well paid we had a following of Russian traders following us even on our military marches. Some of our soldiers had their wives; other wives stayed in Harbin.



## Battles

Our first engagement was against the Chinese bandits called Hunghutse. We were sent to chase them away the moment they showed themselves either in rice fields or elsewhere. Our direct military commander was the military governor of the province, Marshal Chan Sun Chan, to whom we were subordinated. Before we had been organized, this marshal had had his own Chinese troops, in the approximate amount of a hundred thousand, and they were poorly armed and very poorly trained, and he also had two Hunghutse regiments working for him, Regiments Number 26 and 28. These two regiments consisted of very brave men, and when they found out how well we fought, they insisted on fighting side by side with us. Their commander used to come visit our regiments and would say, "If we would only have had such soldiers, we would be able to beat every enemy we ever had." One characteristic thing about all the Hunghutse is that



they are truthful to their word. Once he gives his word, you can absolutely believe his promise. We developed a very close relationship with the Twenty-eighth Regiment of the Hunghutse, because there was a complete mutual trust between us. These two regiments that had been formed from the Hunghutses now considered themselves part of the regular Chinese army, and once they had given allegiance to their military governor, they would serve him completely faithfully.

#### 1. Battles with Chiang Kai Shek, 1926

In the beginning of 1926, we were moved sixty miles away to a town called Taianfu where we fought troops which were under the command of U Pei Fu and Chiang Kai Shek. At this time, Soviet advisors were on the staff of Marshal Chiang Kai Shek. We considered that all these detachments were Communist influenced and were opposed to



Nationalist Chinese Armed Forces led by Marshal Chan Tso Lin and others. As part of our advance towards Shanghai, we occupied Nanking, and thereafter we moved towards Shanghai, about six or seven hundred of us. We were paid regularly, though we were subject only to Russian discipline. Marshal Chan Sun Chan would give general instructions to our general, Nechiev, and would leave all the operational and military details to be worked out by his own staff, which consisted of old Russian officers that he had selected for himself. He, of course, had some Chinese officers who were interpreters. The only other Chinese that we had besides interpreters were cooks.

## 2. Capture of Shanghai

Advancing towards Shanghai, we got some three armored trains. These consisted of American-made metal railroad cars, which were





covered by sacks full of sand. There were up to two six-inch guns on each railroad car. Our advance towards Shanghai was opposed by the International Settlement authorities, and a Shanghai Volunteer Corps was mobilized. Our General Nechiev had ordered us to advance towards Shanghai and attack it from the Chinese side. This was, again, in 1925. The Chinese forces that were supposed to defend the city rapidly retreated, and after a few rounds were fired towards the Chinese section of the city, Shanghai was taken by our Russian troops. However, the Shanghai Volunteer Corps began to demand that the Russian soldiers under General Nechiev be disarmed, and our detachments were sent back to Tsinanfu either by land or via Dairen by sea. The Chinese troops of our military governor, however, remained in Shanghai. It is said that the city of Shanghai gave our military governor four million dollars in silver as a contribution and also gave him three wives.



### 3. Advance on Tientsin and Peking

We had marched from Mugden to Shanghai, and when we were sent back to Tsinanfu after April of 1926, we began to advance towards Tientsin by order of military governor Chan Sun Chan. Just before we reached Tientsin, we came to the Imperial Canal, which formed a natural water obstacle. To oppose us were sent out some military academy students of Marshal Fen U San who were advised by Soviet advisors. They were very well-armed and very brave; there were some thousand of them, at least eight hundred, and we had a fierce battle. The results for them were very pathetic. Many of them were killed, and those who were not were pushed into the canal and drowned. Not a single one survived. Then we resumed our advance towards Tientsin, but Tientsin, seeing our strength, surrendered without a fight. We took Tientsin without a fight, by-passing it, and began to advance



towards Peking. I was then a cavalry commander, as before. We finally occupied Peking. But then the Russian detachments were immediately moved out of the city -- approximately twenty miles outside of it -- in order to prevent us from attacking the Soviet consulate. All we did was to send some shells over the city of Peking, one of which landed in the Austrian consulate. These guns were on our train.

#### 4. Armored Trains, Attack on Kalgan

After the city was taken, we were moved back to a fairly large railroad station, where we celebrated Easter of 1926. From there our infantry detachments moved towards Kalgan, and our cavalry detachments remained close to Peking, where one of our armored trains was destroyed. After the occupation of Shanghai, our own Russian engineers built for us five of the very most modern armored trains, such that



don't even exist now. One of the armored trains, named Peking, was very low with streamlined armor and guns up to six inches in diameter. The other armored trains also had Chinese names. These trains were built in Tsinanfu by Russian engineers. These were the pride and joy of the Marshal. The first armored train that we lost was near Kalgan. There is a sharp uphill climb which requires two trains to push the whole train, and this armored train was going ahead with an armed guard. The troops of Marshal Fen U San, utilizing the fact that our train had to climb uphill, loaded a series of empty railroad cars with stones and let them run downhill on the same track against our armored train, and there was nothing left from our train.

Our technicians built about five miles away from the city spur tracks which led into nothing, and when new empty railroad cars loaded with stones were being sent against our other armored trains, they would switch the tracks, and these railroad cars loaded





with stones would just fall off the mountain. Then these spur tracks would be advanced a few miles further up, and the same process would be repeated, until the defenders became discouraged and stopped sending these stone-laden trains against us. Finally the city of Kalgan was occupied.

5.                   Opposition Improves,  
                      Demobilization of Russian Detachments

After we occupied Kalgan, we began to encounter highly disciplined and highly armed military detachments of Marshal Sung Chu Fan, who reoccupied Shanghai and chased out the troops of Chan Tso Lin, who was the chief of our military governor. Shanghai was reoccupied by Sung Chu Fan in 1927. We had at that time about five airplanes, but they were old-fashioned and poorly armed. Against us, towards the middle of 1927, there began to appear excellently



armed and numerous airplanes. At that time Chiang Kai Shek and Fen U San were in alliance, and their troops began to be very well armed with American and English military equipment, and we had to begin retreating towards Tsinanfu. About one hundred miles away from Tsinanfu there is a town called Kaifeng on the railroad track, where four of our armored trains were stationed, guarding the sudden approach to the capital. The best armed of the trains, named "Peking," was commanded by a Russian officer who miscalculated, who placed these trains in such a way that well-armed Chinese forces began to advance towards him. Kaifeng was taken from the rear by these forces, and the four armored trains could not be moved out because they had been stationed in a cul de sac. Finally all of the military detachments reached Tsinanfu, and the Russian detachment of General Nechiev was demobilized. This was in March of 1928.



## Lenkoff Returns to Tientsin as Civilian, 1928

This was the end of the Chinese Northern Army, and I returned to Tientsin. Marshal Chan Sun Chan was killed on the platform of the railroad station in Tsinanfu by a Chinese student woman. Chan Tso Lin, our supreme chief, was a Manchurian. When I was discharged, I was owed one thousand and two hundred silver dollars which I never received. This is not the mistake of the Chinese. The advisor of the Tupan, which is the title of the military governor, was Nicholas Merkulov, who's brother had been chief of government in the Maritime Provinces in the early twenties. This was mainly a mistake of Merkulov. I was unable to have saved any money at that time and ended up in Tientsin without a penny and had to begin all over again. When I arrived in Tientsin from the Chinese army, I didn't do anything. I drew posters for one of the cinemas in the town. Then I heard rumors that all the members of the Chan Tso Lin's army were going to be arrested, so



I went to Shanghai. This was in July of 1928.

Shanghai Volunteer Corps  
in International Settlement, 1928-1936

When I arrived in Shanghai, it was also difficult to find work, not knowing the language, and I decided to enlist in the Russian detachment of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps in the International Settlement. There I received, besides full room and board, thirty silver dollars a month and all the equipment. In a month I was lance corporal, and later that year I was corporal, and in two years I was a sergeant. A sergeant received eighty dollars, which was adequate to sustain and support myself and the family. In the Chinese disturbances of 1932, I was wounded in the shoulder.





### Civilian Work, 1936-1948

In 1936, I left the Volunteer Corps and began to work for the International Saving Society, which sold lottery tickets. I worked there as a guard. I received a hundred and twenty dollars a month. I continued working there throughout the war and the Japanese occupation.

It appeared that Hitler, who was the head of the Fascist movements, was going to be the head of that force which was going to destroy Communism. There are certain points of similar interests between what the Russian emigres wanted and what was going on in the Fascist countries. At that time, Hitler carried on a clear anti-Communist struggle, from everything we could read about him. It was this appeal to anti-Communism that coincided with our opinions. We felt that since we were anti-Communist and he was anti-Communist but yet he had so much more power,



we who did not have any power or arms should support him who could be an effective force against Communism. We, of course, did not know what went on during the war in Germany. We made a mistake; we did not realize that he was not fighting Communism but was fighting Russia.

In 1938 I really began to suspect that Hitler was not really anti-Communist as he was using this as a slogan. I began to suspect this because two of us, both wrestlers, went into a restaurant in Shanghai, with three Germans sitting there, employees of the large German firm Kunst-Albers. They spoke Russian, and they began to sing a song. They started singing, "Volga, Volga our dear mother. Volga is a German river." I came up to them and said, "What kind of a river is Volga?" He said, "German." I hit him, and he fell off the chair. The second one came up, and my friend hit him again. He called the police. These



Chinese policemen told us to go away. In that moment I got a suspicion all was not right.

After I left politics, I began to become interested in sports again and started editing a sport magazine in Shanghai called the Olympic.

I only left Shanghai in 1945 to go to Tientsin. This was still during the war. I did this because there was much more food and clothing available in Tientsin. There I worked as manager of a printing establishment until 1948. Then when the American forces offered to take us back to Shanghai because the Communist Eighth Army (Palu) was already coming to Tientsin, we abandoned everything and went back to Shanghai. There I lived in barracks in the former French concession. We stayed one month, and then all of us went to Tubabao, Samar, Philippine Islands.



FROM PHILIPPINES TO U. S., 1949 TO PRESENT  
Evacuation of Russian Emigres  
to Philippines, 1949; Entry to U. S., 1953

**Lenkoff:** In Tubabao I arrived as one of the first on the twenty-ninth of January, 1949.

Upon the arrival of all the emigres, a total of five thousand, various establishments organized: a school for children was opened, a church was organized, a theater, a cinema, a police station, a fire department and two hospitals -- a TB and a general hospital. There I worked as a police lieutenant.

Life on the Philippines would have been great, were we not bothered by numerous typhoons which destroyed many times our barracks and tents.

In June, 1953, we left for the States.

When I came to San Francisco, I got a job as a janitor in the Standard Oil Company downtown until I reached my sixty-fifth birthday, after which one cannot work there any longer.





Now I am a retired pensioner.

### Ideas on Government

I am a strong monarchist. A monarchy is something that many people are afraid of, because people don't understand the essence of monarchy. They have completely forgotten what they had under the monarchy. I, as a realistic man, see the matter in the following manner. Under a monarchy I had complete freedom; where I wanted to go I could go. Under the monarchy there was a strict and definite order of what could be done and what was not allowed. As a religious man, I was against anti-religious laws.

Remembering the cost of items that they sell also now, it was better to live then. Under the monarchy I could have a suit together with shoes for ten rubles. Before, Russia supplied with bread half of Europe; now it buys bread itself. It disgusts me that there



is no private property in Russia even though  
I'm a worker.



## APPENDIX

The following autobiographical sketch covers Aleksandr Lenkoff's military career during and after the Civil War in Russia. Mr. Lenkoff gave it to Mr. Raymond in September, 1966, for inclusion with his interview. Nikita Lvov is a pseudonym for Mr. Lenkoff.



Lt. Colonel Aleksandr Lenkoff, March, 1920. Chita, Siberia







A. Lenkov

NIKITA LVOV

My life has passed, and now, at the sunset of my days, in the winter of my life, I remember with much gratitude all those good, honest principles with which military training inspired my soul.

And if now and then it was rigorous, that also steeled my endurance and will power, which later helped me to bear firmly the great trials which have been the lot of the true Russian people in the hard, feverish times which have befallen our Motherland.

But everything passes. The great Imperial Russia will be reborn, there will be created in time and in accordance with the new requirements of warfare, new military schools, and they will be inspired for the new generation, I believe, with the same traditions and testaments which made us--cadets and volunteers of a military era--into real Russian officers, who loved their Motherland unrestrainedly and are devoted even to this day to the Sovereign Ruler--the Czar.

1914.

The young technician Nikita Lvov worked in Russia's only metallurgical factory, the Izhora, of Moscow management; more correctly, it was not a factory, but several factories located on the Izhora river, near Petrograd.

The product of the mill's manufacture was armor for the warships of the Russian fleet.

The factory's numerous tall smokestacks were enveloped by a dense, black smoke.

The round saws sang screechingly, cutting up the red-hot steel beams, strewing about sheaves of bright sparks.

The earth shook under the heavy mills of the rolling workshop.

Fiery blocks of metal were made red-hot in huge stoves which heated their bodies with sprayers.



Large hydraulic presses of 15,000 tons bent the thick armors into fantastic shapes.

A fearful, boiling "milk,"--molted-steel--flowed out of the foundries in moulds.

The numerous turner's lathes of the locksmith's shop drawled their songs of various harmonies.

A heavy odor came out of the gas shop.

The colossal electric station roared angrily in the uninterrupted distribution of its energy to all the workshops.

A strong vapor from the burned oil enveloped the tempering shop, where the oil boiled in huge basins, tempering the huge armors.

The hammers in the finishing and moulding shops beat incessantly.

A strong heat drew out of the copper-smelting and copper-rolling shops.

The electric mills in the boiler and pipe shops screeched. Over all the shops, as if in a race, hovered the electric cranes, carrying in their iron talons an incredibly heavy load.

Life in the factories boiled like a spring, but in unison with this life beat the hearts of the Russian Workmen; in their look pride and responsibility were evident. How could they help being proud, for they were forging and creating the support and might of their motherland; at that time they were wreaking the miracle of naval technique: the powerful, newest battleships, which were being made ready for their launching in 1917--these were the Navarin, the

Minburn, the Izmail and the Borodino--30,000 tons each and with a



speed of 31 knots and 14-inch guns. This was as if an answer from "backward" Russia to "progressive" Europe.

\* \* \*

One not very pretty summer day in 1914, there flew into the factory amid the mass of 20,000 workers the fearful word of only 3 letters: War.

The people of the factory began to drone and fidget.

The enraptured cries sounded: Long live Russia, Long live the Czar, Long live our victorious Army and Navy, War till victory, Death to the Germans, etc.

Over all the forests of national flags there swayed in the hands of the workers the huge portrait of His Majesty Emperor Nikolai Aleksandrovich. All this solemn, shaking procession was deafened by the powerful national hymn: "God save the Czar." The rise in spirit was undescrivable. Victory shone in the eyes of each worker.

According to Russian mobilization law, the workers in these factories were not subject to levy into the army. Despite such a privilege, there had already volunteered for war 600 men from the factory, in order to punish the usurper, the haughty German enemy who had overstepped his bounds. In the number of these volunteers went also Nikita Lvov.

It grieved Nikita Lvov's heart that the war prevented his participation in the completion of the ships, but, charged with hatred for the enemy, he hurried to enlist, fearing an early ending of the war.

A well-shaped, powerful athlete, eighteen-year-old Lvov was put into the artillery in one of the reserve divisions not far from Petrograd.



Military service suited Nikita Lvov's temperament, and he adapted himself with special zeal to military regulations, liked his superiors, and was in turn liked by them.

Time passed by unnoticed, and Lvov was already in the training detachment, where he especially liked the invaluable, exemplary orderliness in everything--from display of equipment, cleaning of the riding-school horses, and gymnastics to practical, instructive firing on the range.

After a short while his shoulder-piece already had the diagonal chevron of a gunner.

One cold December day in 1914 Lvov moved in his echelon to the front. Approaching the front-line zone he saw for the first time the marks of war--in the air the enemy's plane soared on high, shot round with the disgorged white flakes of shrapnel. Two light weapons were firing on it from somewhere.

Nikita Lvov received his baptism of fire in East Prussia, where he found himself in the complement of the N Artillery Brigade, and it did not bother him much; he felt a little giddy, but all that quickly passed as he grew used to it; bullets fell around him, and later he was already investigating with interest his weapon's targets--he became a good artilleryman.

Further battles on the front gave him not only two wounds, but also two Georgian crosses--he is already a veteran non-commissioned officer. As one having an educational qualification of the first category, Lvov was sent to the rear to enter one of the artillery schools.

However, as they say, "you cannot escape destiny, and it will be as fate will have it. That is the way it happened with Lvov, too. On the way to the rear he took sick with paratyphoid fever and was put into one of





the hospitals. His sickness was protracted and prevented his entrance into the school, where the course had already begun. Upon recovery he had just about decided to return to his unit at the front, but a meeting with some of his friends among the volunteers of a reserve infantry regiment (at that time a battalion) brought Lvov within the walls of the Line Officers' School at the city of Oranienbaum, once famous throughout all Russia, and where during wartime there was located a school for ensigns of which a new class was just beginning, and that same military school gave him the rank of ensign. He became a good front-line infantry machine-gun officer.

A short period of service in one of the reserve regiments in the south of Russia almost protracted itself into a long duration, and could have ended with Lvov's easily landing in the staff, and that would have meant not seeing action.

The commanding officer of the reserve regiment obviously favored the young ensign, a cavalier of two crosses, and immediately appointed him as junior officer in the training detachment for as long as he was to remain in the regiment.

Furthermore, examining carefully Ensign Lvov's diligent service, the Commanding Officer already had in mind his promotion to head of the training detachment. Such an "entrenchment" in the rear was not to Lvov's liking, for he could have sat the whole war out in the factory. That was not what he had volunteered for. The repeated, stubborn requests made by Ensign Lvov to the regimental commander to send him to the front always met with refusal, but at last his request was favored by the commanding officer, and he was sent with the very first group of officers, who went singly to the front.

Ensign Lvov was not going to the front as a recruit now, but as an experienced officer who had seen action.



Lvov distinctly understood the difference between his first trip there and this one. The first time he went in charge of ten men, whereas he must now carry a considerably greater responsibility and above all not lose the honor and dignity of a Russian officer in any respect, for the uniform of an officer--even the simple overshirt--is very important and must be worn with honor. These were the thoughts with which young Ensign Lvov's head was crammed full.

At the front Ensign Lvov was given command of the infantry reconnaissance unit in one of the newly-formed regiments, with which every day he went into so-called "contact" with the enemy, for which he received the pride of the young officers, the "whortleberry"--the order of St. Anne of the fourth degree "For Bravery"--the red sword knot.

When in reserve, while the regiment was resting, Ensign Lvov took as many courses as possible among those which arose at that time in accordance with their need. Lvov was rightly asked: "What courses have you not taken?" The regimental adjutant, upon receiving a form for sending in a certain number of officers' names for the successive courses, bindingly wrote Lvov's name first without asking his permission, knowing it would be given. Lvov went into all the courses thoroughly, although they were indeed not continuous--bomb-throwers, grenades, communications, searchlight, mine-throwers and cavalry--and if you add his knowledge of artillery acquired in the artillery training detachment rounded off by the experience of actual combat, and his knowledge of machine guns acquired in the Oranienbaum machine-gun school, then you can imagine what military knowledge this young officer possessed.

The 1916 battles gave Nikita Lvov the rank of lieutenant. The regimental commander, the fighting Colonel B, a Serbian, was able to



notice in Lt. Lvov qualities and capabilities of an officer who could be something more than just a company commander, and after some time Lt. Lvov was already the commander of one of the battalions of the regiment.

At the beginning of the small but bloody revolution of 1917, Nikita Lvov was a 2nd Captain, whose chest was adorned with officer's badges up to the badge of St. Vladimir of the fourth grade, inclusive.

1917 had come. On the horizon of this year, there suddenly began to move dark, black clouds, and they were playing in the velvet of the purple, gold ribbons of lightning. There, deep in the rear, in the very heart of the country, remained those who were the brains and soul of the nation, those who held the threads of thought and word, the intelligentsia of a great country, sate and satisfied.

The initial ecstasy of the rise in spirit had quickly wearied these first-rank people and was over for them.

Having hidden the national flags of the first days of the war, they yawned over telegrams from the front and were bored with the protracted war. They were not concerned with Russia's great grief; they did not hear the battle commands. They lounged and roamed about lazily. In the midst of the lighted streets of the large cities, in the stylish foyers of the theaters, in the midst of the screeching orchestras of the taverns and the night-clubs, smoking aromatic cigars at the tables of the restaurants--they quarreled, talked and dreamed about the "great brotherhood" of peoples, and their bedulled eyes and flat, flabby figures dreamed of revolutionary outbursts.

They did not love the Motherland. They were bored. Their wives lounged about in carriages and saw neither the women in deep mourning, nor the girls with sad eyes in the white Red-Cross aprons.



And the young affected dandies, sons of the wealthy, becoming bored with their mothers and fathers, did not hear the call of the Motherland, stopped up their ears from the cries of the wounded and the signs of death.

Lest they be ashamed to meet the glances of the girls and the cripples in the grey greatcoats on crutches, they also donned greatcoats. They formed the masquerade of the Great War.

They decked themselves out in fantastic uniforms, wore sabres, shoulder-pieces and monograms.

By the well-aimed expression of one officer, these were the gay "rear-echelon hussars" and the brilliant "Red-Cross lancers."

They appeared deep in therear in mobile baths, mess-halls and first-aid detachments, and they saved their hideous, wretched bodies, the bodies of cretins, slaves and cowards.

...And along with them went the bright youths in students' caps, in gymnasium greatcoats, in cadets' uniforms--they went to military schools and into the ranks of the army, to replace those who had died.

And then the fearful thing was carried out. That happened which cannot be described without shudder and agitation.

Revolution. This word flew round all Holy Russia and uprooted the Russian people's belief in God, their oath to the Czar and their love for the Motherland, and the revolution uprooted the soul of the valiant Russian army.

The international gang of political scoundrels, with the aid of fifty million gold German marks, overthrew the Imperial government of Russia and replaced it with the "provisional" government--that false, ungifted





and un-Russian government which lasted six months--with the full consent and agreement of the Duma with its leading personalities: Rodzyanko, Milyukov, Lvov, Guchkov, Chkeidze, and Shulgin, and with the complete betrayal of the High Chief of Staff and the front and army commanders.

"Long live freedom!" "Down with war!" "No annexations or contributions!" "Down with officers!"

What is this? 2nd Capt. Lvov could not understand at all. In his mind utter confusion arose. How did they overthrow the Czar? Why? How could that have happened so quickly? Where is the Czar's faithful guard? Where are the army's valiant regiments, and how is it that not one of them arose in defence of His Majesty? Where, indeed, are the true generals, loyal to the Czar and the throne.

Lvov was shocked by everything that had happened. And he could only say to the Assistant Regimental Commander, who suggested at an officers' meeting that they adapt themselves to the situation: "Colonel, there is no situation here to which we might adapt ourselves, but only chaos. Everything is lost now, the army, the navy, and perhaps Russia herself. I find no word with which to express my revolt at what has happened."

Indeed, the regiment in which Lvov served showed itself to have a rare firmness at that time.

The soldiers were still backward about starting anything against their superiors, and, to be truthful, they had no grounds for so doing, inasmuch as they all lived amicably in the trenches, sharing the joy of victory and the sadness of defeat. But once an organism receives the contagion, you cannot cure it; as it progresses, the



organism gives up and dies. That is the way it happened here, too. New supplements brought to the front more and more of the different agents of corruption and propaganda, and within the regiment, after a short while, they began to talk of the election of superiors. First of all they decided to elect a new regimental commander.

The regimental committee sat almost a whole night and in the morning declared its decision, which sounded as follows: "Utilizing the right given us, the soldiers, by the revolution, to elect worthy commanders, thus the regimental committee of N Regiment, carrying out the will of the officials of the regiment, has resolved the following: 'To remove the former Regimental Commander Colonel B from the regimental commandship, as one who is not in accord with the spirit of the revolution, and in his stead to elect as the new Commanding Officer 2nd Capt. Lvov.'"

Here 2nd Capt. Lvov's cup of indignation overflowed. That night he invited to his quarters the president of the regimental committee, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer F, once a faithful and clever reconnaissance man, a platoon commander, an exemplary soldier, and frankly expressed his revolt to him at the way in which the regimental committee insulted the old fighting regimental commander, Colonel B, electing in his stead him, Nikita Lvov. Such a way of electing commanders Lvov called idiotic and harmful not only to the common cause, but even for the soldiers themselves.

2nd Capt. Lvov categorically refused such an electoral honor.

The persistent requests on the part of the regimental committee that he, Lvov, should remain even if only for a while with the regiment, irritated him all the more, and the regimental committee president's every word revolted him.



Finally Lvov presented an ultimatum:--to assemble the regimental committee immediately and revoke its decision as to the dismissal of Col. B from the regiment and to request the latter with apologies to remain in his place. The president replied that it was now impossible to do that.

But once that was impossible, then 2nd Captain Lvov considered it impossible for himself to remain in the regiment, and requested the president of the regimental committee, out of old friendship, to give him traveling papers immediately and to furnish him, off the record, with a wagon to reach the nearest station of Polese, so as to leave the regiment before morning.

As a result of all their arguments and retorts, Regimental Committee President F agreed with Lvov's arguments and honored his request--he gave him his traveling papers and secretly provided him with a wagon, on which Lvov left the regiment, having gone beforehand to say good-bye to the "rejected" commanding officer.

The calendar showed the second half of September, 1917.

Having arrived at the railway station of Polece, 2nd Capt. Lvov met there an old friend of his, an officer in one of the hussar regiments, Capt. Lebedev, who had returned from leave and was awaiting horses at the station. 2nd Capt. Lvov detailedly related to him the events of the last days and his constrained attitude of leaving the regiment.

Capt. Lebedev suggested that Lvov serve in his cavalry unit, a shock division named for Gen. Kornilov. The distinctive marks of this detachment were the red and black angles worn on the shock-trooper's left sleeve.



Capt. Lebedev outlined to Lvov what he, in his turn, would have to put up with in the "cadaverous" rear and impossibility of authority.

2nd Capt. Lvov did not think long in agreeing to serve with Lebedev; he wanted to do so all the more, as he was already familiar with the cavalry. Upon his arrival at the mentioned division, Lvov was named senior officer in one of the squadrons.

An interesting new service was beginning for 2nd Capt. Lvov. Separate skirmishes with the Germans showed Lvov the difference between volunteers and mobilized soldiers. No committees, no presidents, and, of course, no elected commands. The purpose of the forming of such detachments was to raise the fighting spirit in the already propagandized military units and to move them forward, but this goal in the end was not attained, and such shock units often turned out to be the targets of attacks, insults, and even firing on the part of the revolutionary soldiers.

2nd Capt. Lvov of the Infantry was renamed 2nd Capt. Lvov of the Cavalry.

At the end of October, 1917, the "head" of the provisional government, "Commander-in-Chief" Kerensky fled across the border dressed in woman's clothes. He abandoned his regime, acquired by revolution, to the road which the Bolsheviks had chosen. When the rule went over entirely to the Bolsheviks, there was nothing for the shock detachments to do; they disbanded and took off every man for himself.

In January, 1918, Capt. Lebedev and 2nd Capt. Lvov arrived in Moscow, where they had been asked to go by such officers as themselves, so that they might together go "where they are still fighting."

The Petrov Hotel in Moscow was the meeting place of twelve persons disobedient to Soviet rule. Many routes were indicated which they





might take, namely: to go via Archangel to service with the English, into the French Foreign Legion, to Hetman Semenov in the Far East, to Gen. Kornilov on the Don, and even Skoropadsky's address was mentioned --in one word, wherever you pleased, if with the devil himself, just to fight against the betrayers and destroyees of the "motherland--socialists and communists.

When it came time to make a general decision as to where they should all go, they were unable to do so.

Each one wanted to stand on his own proposal, his own plan, and influence everybody to accept them. As a result of such a disagreement, Nikita Lvov and Stepan Lebedev decided to go alone to the Far East, to Cossack Captain Semenov who had revolted against the Bolsheviks.

The train for Siberia left Moscow in a violent snowstorm, carrying incognito two Russian officers disobedient to Soviet authority.

In cars filled with soldiers and "bag-carriers" they traveled to the Far East, amid vile language, tobacco smoke, and pushing and jolting.

Despite the fact that Lvov and Lebedev were also in soldiers' great-coats, with epaulettes, it was at once visible to experienced eyes that these men were officers, and all the more so as Capt. Lebedev wore a pince-nez.

These officers had had in mind as the ultimate point of their trip the city of Irkutsk, not knowing at all the obstacles which would undoubtedly have begun for them considerably earlier than they supposed.

Approaching the city of Omsk, on one of the stops, Lvov and Lebedev were standing on the car platform, when there came up to them a railroadman with the appearance of a perfect gentleman, and invited them to



come to his quarters for a cup of tea, to which they agreed.

During the conversation the railroadman looked attentively at them and said: "Gentlemen, I see that you are not enlisted men, for which reason I invited you here,--you are officers, and undoubtedly you are going to Capt. Semenov's detachment, but bear in mind that there are special control points in the stations at Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk, where all those suspected of being officers are taken from the trains and sent for questioning to the city to CHEKA, and there they are investigated in detail. I think you know what kind of an institution that is, so keep that in mind. My own advise is that you change your route, get off this train at the next station, and get on a train going back. Go as far as the station of Kurgan--that is a town we have already passed, and remain there till a time favorable to us all.

"The town of Kurgan is quiet, and you will live there peacefully and take a look around, but later we shall see how the events turn."

The other two looked at each other and decided to follow the man's advice--that is what they did, they got off at the train's next stop, thanking their new acquaintance for his kind advise.

The small but comparatively wealthy city of Kurgan welcomed the newcomers unperceived.

The Soviet authority was not manifesting itself here actively, and actually, people lived peacefully for a while, but every week it became noticeable that small detachments of Red armed strength were arriving in the city, consisting for the most part of sailors. The people of Kurgan took guard and began to show some unrest, especially after the Kurgan Soviet Council imposed tribute on almost all the solvent people of the town and federalized all private enterprises, and also began to make arrests.



At the end of March, 1918, there arrived at the Kurgan station the first echelon of Czechs, who, together with the Reds, were utilizing the railway station, the telegraph and rolling-stock.

The people of Kurgan met the arrival of the Czechs there with secret joy; they thought that in the case of any reprisals on the part of the Reds the Czechs would defend the city.

The Officers' secret organisation, which Lvov and Lebedev had succeeded in joining with great difficulty, carried on a more active work towards the overthrow of Soviet authority in Kurgan with the appearance of the Czechs in the city.

The leaders of this organization put themselves in touch with the Czechs to clarify what stand the Czechs would take towards a possible anti-Communist revolt against the Soviet authority, and whether they, the Czechs, would be able to help the revolters in any way.

The Whites received an answer very hazardous for them, namely: the Czechs categorically refused help in manpower, but agreed to give 50 Russian rifles with 50 rounds for each, 2 Lewis light machine guns with 10 discs, with 470 rounds each, and 50 hand grenades, but with the condition that whereas if the uprising should succeed and the Czechs should be confronted with the accomplished fact of the overthrow of the Soviet authority, then they would recognize the new authority in Kurgan, yet if the revolters should meet defeat at the hands of the Reds, then the Czechs would proceed jointly with the Reds to the disarming of the Whites.

This quite definite answer from the Czechs gave rise to insecurity and even fear in some of the members of the Officers' organization, fortunately in the minority. The head of the organization LtCol. K categorically refused to participate personally in any steps against



the Reds, considering such an open move untimely. Capt. Lvov and Lebedev and a few more officers persistently demanded that the Czechs' terms be accepted immediately, recalling that "putting off time is comparable to death."

It was decided by a majority of the members to move immediately against Soviet authority.

The dissenting members of the organization, numbering 9 persons with LtCol. K at the head, were arrested and kept in custody at the staff of the Officers' organization. After the revolt they were set free and entered the ranks of the newly-formed volunteer detachment in Kurgan.

The step was planned for the night of June 1, but in view of the fact that the Czechs had not been able to furnish all the supplies, it was necessary to postpone the revolt until the night of June 3.

In the early morning of June 3, 1918, the town was deafened by rifle fire and the putt-putt of machine guns--that was a small band of volunteers, White insurgents, in the number of 120 men, which hurled a challenge at the Red usurpers.

At the head of these gallant volunteers were Nikita Lvov and Stepan Lebedev. Kurgan was taken in 5 hours. An infantry company of 100 bayonets, with 2 Maxim heavy machine guns and 8 light machine guns, and a cavalry platoon of 20 head was the armed strength of the White insurgents.

After taking Kurgan the White insurgents went to another neighboring town: Shadrinsk in the district of Perm, which was also taken in battle from the Reds, with the seizure of a large quantity of equipment and arms, but the important thing was that with the capture of Shadrinsk, the local volunteers formed their own insurgent detachment in the strength of 100 bayonets, with machine guns, under the command of





the energetic Captain K.

The Kurgan volunteers came to call themselves the Kurgan Volunteer Detachment, and its strength, with the capture of Shadrinsk, also increased to 200 infantrymen and 60 cavalrymen.

The attack undertaken by the Kurgan unit on the next town of Dolmatov was also crowned with success, saddened by heavy losses in the detachment--almost half of the detachment was removed from the ranks as killed or wounded: among others, Capt. Lebedev was killed in the battle for this town.

Nikita Lvov took over the detachment.

This daring challenge, hurled by a small group of volunteers, was the first alarm sounded in Western Siberia, calling together for the struggle with the Communists all the Russian people; but by no means did all answer, although the call was heard just the same. Omsk, Petropavlovsk, Ekaterinburg and other cities fell, and after 5 or 6 months Admiral Kolchak's army, 300,000 strong, was already moving onto Central Russia.

Nikita Lvov's small cavalry detachment had already grown into a cavalry regiment with 650 sabres, but the Regimental Commander Capt. Lvov had not grown so fast--he was only 23½ years old. He was a true son of that National Russia who has so heroically unsheathed her sword in the fight with the Red devils. Nikita Lvov was one of those fighter-heroes who knew no personal pleasures, knew not their youth with its carefree delights, but knew only the obligation of service to the Motherland.

The initial successes of the Siberian army threw young Capt. Lvov with his cavalry regiment out of the snowy Siberian spaces onto the Southern front, to Orenburg, where in fiery vanguard battles the Southern Army of the White forces, under the command of brilliant Hetman Dutov, dealt the



Red Army blow after blow, but soon it was constrained to curtail its movement forward and to move back, for the general withdrawal to the east of all the Siberian Army had been designated, and, accordingly, the right flank was bared, which forced the Southern Army not only to curtail its victorious movement forward, but even to withdraw.

The Red General Staff succeeded in separating the Southern Army from the Siberian Army, with the complete suspension of communications between them. The Southern White Army, which had been operating in regions poor in railways, was naturally unable to synchronize its departure with the Siberian Army, for which reason it remained, with the withdrawal, as a large bulge in front of the Siberian Army which was withdrawing to the east.

The attempts of the Southern Army to join the Siberian Army were unsuccessful, for on the main route towards the proposed union, the towns of Chelyabinsk, Kustanay and Troitsk had already been captured by the Reds.

Having lost all hope of union with the Siberian Army, the Southern Army changed its course to the town of Berny, in the hope of joining forces with Hetman Annenkov's units, but also here it met with insuccess--having lost the battle for the station of Chelkara, where the attack on the Whites by the Turkestan Soviet Corps manifested itself--, the Southern Army, changing its course again, moved back to the Aral Sea, in the hope of joining forces with Gen. Akulinin's units at the city of Gurev, but time had been lost and large forces of Reds were moving out from there. There remained no routes of withdrawal.

The army was getting shaky. There appeared some sort of wanton, loud-talking persons who persuaded the soldiers and Cossacks not to move, but to await the arrival of the Reds, and, in order that the Reds might



treat them less harshly, it was suggested to the soldiers that they arrest all the officers, as the authors of everything that had happened. Hordes of Reds were moving from three directions. Desertion began.

The ranks of the once solid army began swiftly to thin out. Entire Cossack regiments began surrendering to the Reds. Where to go now? Surrounded on three sides by the enemy, only on the fourth side did there gape the yellow jaws of the Russian Sahara, the hungry, uninhabited Turgay Steppes, and that is where units of the Southern Army were squeezed in. The Orenburg Cossacks, forming three-fourths of this army, knew, as natives of this region, this fearful vastness of sand, and of course had no intention of getting out that way.

A small group of the Southern Army consisting of the Yaitsk division (81st, 82nd, 83rd and 84th Infantry Regiments), each with an average of 300 bayonets, a separate light battery with four guns, and Capt. Lvov's cavalry regiment with 300 horses, preferred perishing on the hot sands to surrendering to the Reds.

After 4 days' journey on the sands, made red-hot by the scorching sun, all the horses fell from lack of fodder and water, and consequently the artillery was also abandoned on these sands.

Tormented with hunger and thirst, the people moved like shadows, only having one pound of meal to eat a day and a very limited quantity of water not exceeding two tea-glasses.

On the fifth day they made their way to the small Kirghisian settlement of Irgiz, where there stood the Olash-Orda Kirghisian guard detachment numbering 100 men.



The tired, hungry people made a two-day halt here. They laid in a supply of water, each as he could best gather it, but the important thing was that the leader of these troops, Gen. Galkin, made arrangements to buy from the Kirghisians 300 camels, which were delivered to him in two days.

I shall not describe here the horrible march of the remnants of the Southern army over the hot sands of the barren wasteland, which lasted for more than two months, for it has been described by me long ago in the Russian newspaper "Russian Army" in Vladivostok.

The detachment came out of the steppes into the province of Akmolinsk to the city of Kokchetav, in the number of 1,200 men, and proposed to begin its reformation there, but it did not succeed in doing this. Artillery fire in the direction of Kurgan was growing stronger and stronger,--that was the retreating Siberian Army waging severe rear-guard battles on the Tobol River. The remnants of the Southern Army which had come out of the Steppes were fused into the Siberian Army as supplements and began, without resting, another battle-march, and ICY one, where the hot sands of the wasteland were replaced by the hard Siberian frosts.

Omsk, Altai, Krasnoyarsk, Sheglov, the Siberian Taiga, Lower Udinsk, the station of Zima, the mines of Cheremkhovsk, the "holy" Baikal, Upper Udinsk, Chita, the station of Olovyanaya, Dauriya and Borzya were the silent witnesses of the physical sufferings and numerous losses in manpower of the White Army in the bloody battles with the countless hordes of Reds. These colossal losses in manpower made themselves felt. The regiments of the fatigued white warriors amounted to 300 bayonets, without the possibility of even partially supplementing these horrible losses.





This heroic White Army, which had defended its native soil against the usurpation of the Communists and had gone its fighting way from the Volga to Manchuria, did not surrender to the Red devil its flag of honor and its belief in the righteousness of its struggle with him.

The White Army, pressed to the Chinese border, did not think long before going across China to the Russian Maritime Province, the last little piece of ground of the once Great Russia, surrendering their weapons to China.

The influx of Japanese troops into the Maritime Province gave the newly-arrived White Army the possibility of resting for almost a year. The "pink" authority of "Comrade" Tolstonski-Krasnoshchekov, which had asserted itself in the Maritime Province, was quickly liquidated by the unarmed White Army and passed into the hands of the Provisional National government, who succeeded anew, though only partially, in arming the unarmed fighting units which had come to the Maritime Province.

Again the military bugles began to sound on the training-grounds-- an army was preparing itself for the expansion of its occupied territory. The alluring place in the distance was the town of Khabarovsk.

Nikita Lvov is already a colonel and the commander of a cavalry regiment, the regiment which he had brought from the banks of the Tobol. Active doings of the Red Guerrillas in the regions of the large Maritime cities and the large villages as well as the accumulation of regular Red forces in the region of the city of Khabarovsk forced the White Army to active deeds.

In the winter of 1921 the White Army wage a general attack to the north, on the city of Khabarovsk, which was taken, but this victory cost the army very dearly. Into the cruel frosts, where it went down



as low as 92 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit), the White warriors in rubber galoshes, torn cloaks, poorly armed, with insufficient food, almost without medical supplies, with a small-numbered complement in its line units, but above all amid a local population which had been inimically attuned to them, waged an unequal struggle with the adversary which had inexhaustible supplies of everything.

The great decrease within the units through, wounded, killed, frost-bitten and sick made the fighting units so small-numbered that it became necessary to abandon further combat and evacuate the conquered territory and return to the point of departure, to the regions of the Maritime cities of Spask, Nikolsk-Ussurysky and Vladivostok.

The White troops, having given the Motherland ALL THEY COULD, tired, sick, frost-bitten and wounded, abandoned their native soil at the end of October and again went unarmed into China.

And so ended the heroic fight of the true sons of National Russia, of the White warriors with the international Red hordes who had usurped all Russia and enslaved the Russian people, with the full permission and even the aid of her former European allies, who did not understand, more truthfully did not wish to understand, that the White armies were shedding rivers of their blood not only for Russia but also for their own (the allies') welfare and only now recognized the cost of Russian blood, written on accounts presented to them.

Nikita Lvov turned up in Harbin, without any means of existence, but as a man of great physical strength, a former athlete, young healthy, without any work, he joined a circus which was playing at that time in Harbin in the capacity of wrestler, which gave him the possibility to live about three months without particularly wanting. Later he was a loader in a sawmill of the Chinese Eastern Railroad, and later he worked for a year and a half as a stoker for a local merchant.



But none of these vocations suited Nikita Lvov's temperament.

At the end of 1924 war broke out in China--the North was fighting against the South.

The governor of Northern China, Marshall Chan - Lo - Lin, decided to organize a Russian fighting unit, one with all forms of arms: infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineers, armor and aviation.

There is where Nikita Lvov found work to his liking, all the more so as the politics of Chan - Lo - Lin had a clearly anti-Communist hue. The Russian unit was headed by the brilliant Russian general NECHAEB, the clever cavalryman of the Imperial army. Nikita Lvov left his work, and to his call to his former comrades-in-arms there gathered about a hundred men who believed in Nikita Lvov. He also believed in them and knew them, and together they went into the Chinese army, to gen. Nechaev at Shantung.

The general, knowing Nikita Lvov from the Russian Army, willingly accepted him with his detachment and assigned him to a cavalry regiment in his organization, and gave him the duty of one of the assistants to the regimental commander, with the rank of captain in the Chinese Army.

Again the cavalry calls began to sound on the drill-grounds of the hitherto unknown Chinese province, and their notes died away somewhere far off in the hills of this Chinese "Switzerland."

Again battle-marches, again battles, again victories and defeats, mostly victories, and again the blades of the Russian cavalrymen were tinged with enemy blood.

In 1928 this epos ended too. Southern China, with the manifest help



of several European countries, emerged from this conflict as the victor over the North.

As a result of such a situation, the Russian bayonets, sabres, guns and aviation became unnecessary in the Chinese Army. The Russian unit was disbanded, but their remained behind 2,000 graves of Russian officers and soldiers, scattered from Mukden to Shanghai, from Tsingtau to Kalgan.

Nikita Lvov appeared in Tientsin, where there was a comparatively large Russian colony. Here Nikita Lvov settled down reasonably well, having work in a movie-house--he wrote placards put out as advertisement at the entrance, and it looked as if he might be able to exist somehow with his family, but soon his tranquillity was violated.

There crept through the city some sort of evil rumors to the effect that they were going to arrest and imprison all the former members of the Russian unit which had fought on the side of the killed Marshall Chan - Lo - Lin. Nikita Lvov did not think long in deciding to leave Tientsin and went with his family to Shanghai.

Shanghai welcomed Nikita Lvov inhospitably, harshly. The difficulty in finding work immediately, frightened Lvov, and he came to look to the side of least resistance in finding work and decided to join the Russian Guard Detachment in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps.

...Again military service--watches, patrols, rifles, machine-guns and participation in the Sino-Japanese conflict of 1932, when Nikita Lvov, like several othermembers of this regiment, was wounded in the shoulder. The detachment at this time was renamed the Russian Regiment of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps.

Nikita Lvov served seven years in this armed fighting unit, half-Russian and half-English in organization, and finally decided to say





(25)

to himself: "Enough, I must demobilize."

The calendar showed 1935.



Report to Subcommittee on Russian Emigré Project

by Mr. Boris Raymond



Berkeley: The General Library  
Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486

September 29, 1966

To: Professors Gregory Grossman, Oleg A.  
Maslenikov, Nicholas V. Riasanovsky  
Center for Slavic and East European Studies  
2538 Channing Way  
Berkeley, California  
From: Boris Raymond  
Re: Report on the Russian Emigré Project

#### I. ANTICIPATED SCOPE OF THE PILOT PROJECT

The pilot project grant was given for general related purposes. A series of oral interviews were to be held with California residents of Russian extraction whose experiences during the civil war and émigré life in the Far East would be of interest to scholars. In addition, an initial compilation of a relevant bibliography would be done; an exploration of other sources of material would be made; finally, an investigation would be made of the possibility of acquiring some of the valuable written material scattered among the Russian community.

#### II. RESULTS OF WORK

##### 1). Oral interviews

Three biographical interviews were conducted. They were of varying length and historical interest.

a). The interview with Professor George C. Guins was the lengthiest, covering some twenty or more hours of actual recording time, but the variety and importance of his recollections seemed to warrant this expenditure of time. As an active participant of the Tsarist administration of the little-known Siberian Resettlement Program, as a member of the Kolchak government in Siberia, as one of the leading public figures in the Russian émigré society of Harbin, and as the educator of several generations of Californians of Russian émigré extraction, Mr. Guins has a great deal to tell, and I purposely allowed much more time for his interview than was originally planned.

b). The interview with Mr. Valentin Vassilievich Fedoulenko is also fairly long. Mr. Fedoulenko is best known for his activities



in bringing several thousand Russian refugees from Communist China into California between 1948 and 1952. He was vice-chairman of the Russian Emigré Association in the Tubabao camp in the Philippines where emigrés lived while awaiting permanent resettlement. His efforts on their behalf, even after his arrival to California, especially in cooperation with the then-Senator Knowland, are an important and interesting phase of history, which was the reason for his selection in the first instance. It turned out that Mr. Fedoulenko was very well-informed about certain phases of the civil war. He had been close to Admiral Kolchak as a member of his personal bodyguard, and to the Merkulov government of the Russian Maritime Provinces in 1922, where he served under Admiral Stark in a highly sensitive capacity. Finally, Mr. Fedoulenko was one of the first Russian émigrés to settle in Shanghai. He knew the colony's life from the beginning to the end. All this material, I believe, will be of some interest to future scholars.

c). The interview with Mr. Alexander Lenkov was the shortest. Mr. Lenkov participated in an almost unknown series of engagements during June of 1918 in Siberia, which led to the White Army's occupation of Kurgan. Secondly, he served for a period of years as a captain in the Nechaev Force, a force of Russian mercenaries who had hired themselves out as soldiers in the service of one of the North Chinese generals during the Chinese civil war of the late twenties and early thirties. Thirdly, Mr. Lenkov was for a time in the late thirties an active contributor to the Russian fascist press in Shanghai. These three aspects of his life appeared of sufficient interest to warrant a brief series of interviews with him.

All three interviews are finished and are now in the hands of the Regional Oral History Office of Bancroft Library for transcribing, editing, final typing and binding.

## 2). Bibliography and assessment of library resources

Appended to this report are four separate lists of pertinent materials found in three locations in San Francisco, the library of the Russian Center, the Library of the Russian-American Women's League and the Far Eastern Archive of the Russian National Museum. In addition, a brief list of titles found in other works, which appear to be pertinent, but which have not been yet found anywhere, was also made.

Most of this material is of some bibliographical rarity indeed. The manuscripts located in the Museum of National Culture are irreplaceable. Many of the titles located in the other libraries were printed in China in the twenties and thirties in small editions, and were at that time not acquired by our academic and research libraries for lack of either interest in, or awareness of, the Far Eastern Russian Emigration.

## 3). Other sources of information

In the brief period of time I had, I was able to become acquainted with the scope of the problem involved in conducting a full-scale research project dealing with the history of the Russian





emigration into California from the Far East. I also met a number of the individuals who would be of great help in obtaining additional material for such a project. I have also compiled a list of libraries and private archives that would seem to warrant some investigation.

4). Acquisition of material for the California Russian Emigré Archive of Bancroft Library

I was able to obtain a limited amount of material for the Archive. This material consists of rare maps, reproductions of old magazine and newspaper articles and several mimeographed works. It can serve as a starting-point for a more extensive archival collection. In this connection I was able to set some wheels in motion for the eventual relocation of the whole of the Russian National Museum, presently located in the Russian Center in San Francisco, to our Bancroft Library Archive. The suggestion for such a possible relocation, although stated in general terms, was listened to with some interest by both Mr. Anatol Lukashkin, the honorary president of the Museum, and Mr. Nicholas Slobodchikoff, its present director.

I also discussed this with Mrs. Malazemov, who has extensive materials on the life of the Russian colony in the Bay Area. She, too, was interested.

III. EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT

As the pilot project developed, it became clear to me that the future structure of the project should be altered so as to place primary emphasis on the study of the history of Russian emigration in the Far East and on the study of the history of the present structure of the Russian community in San Francisco. The functions of oral interviews, of compiling bibliographies and of collecting for the Archive should be treated either completely separately from each other, or should be subordinated to the central focus.

Such a study seems important because it represents (1) an example of how a whole strata of a nation made the adjustment to conditions of exile and how it preserved and expanded the values it already held; (2) it sheds light on the character of the group that left Russia and furnishes a measure of the value of the human material that was lost to Russia because of the Revolution; (3) it sheds light on the problems faced by later anti-communist refugee groups (Chinese, Hungarian, Cuban); (4) it sheds light on the political events of the twenties, thirties and forties in the Far East; (5) it sheds light on the causes, strengths and weaknesses of the anti-communist fight by the White-Russian movement; (6) it is invaluable as one important phase of an eventual definitive study of the Russian Revolution; (7) it sheds light on the cultural contribution that Russians have made and are making to California history.

The destruction of most of the major centers of this Far Eastern emigration (Harbin, Tientsin, Shanghai), the rapid dying off of the émigrés and the sustained loss of documents which is constantly



occurring, makes it imperative that such a study, if done at all, be done within the next few years.

I feel that the oral biographies should be restricted to that material which is found to be unavailable in already published form or in manuscript form in existing archives. My impression is that there is a tremendous amount of material available in written form which should be first explored before the expensive process of oral interviews is resorted to.

The task of acquiring material for the California Russian Emigré Archive of the Bancroft Library is a matter that can be best handled in cooperation with the Bancroft librarian and the Slavic bibliographer of the general library's Acquisitions Department. I personally hope that the leads which this pilot project uncovered will not be allowed to die of neglect. I want especially to stress that in the Russian National Museum and in the libraries mentioned below, there exists unique material which, if lost or destroyed, could never be replaced. All this material should be preserved, and the natural place for it is in a library of the size and competence of the Bancroft Library.

BR/jf

CC: Mr. Donald Coney, University Librarian and  
Acting Director of Bancroft Library  
Mrs. Willa Baum, Head, Regional Oral History  
Office



Bibliography of works on Far Eastern Russian  
Emigration by Mr. Boris Raymond for the Center  
for Slavic and East European Studies, September,  
1966.



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- 1). 1939 booklet. Russkie v Tsindao.
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- 3). File of old magazines, (Zharptitsa).
- 4). Booklet, 1926-1941, of the officers' association in  
Shanghai.

Brown paper package containing:

- 1). Newspaper clippings from the Shanghai Evening Post,  
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- 2). Typed material on Far Eastern immigration in Manchuria.
- 3). Varied material analyzing immigration groups in Manchuria  
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- 4). Colonel Tornofsky -- Russkaia emigratsiia v Shankhai --
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(Museum No. 9507)

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Black file entitled "Morskie rasskazy." Vol. 1. Ocherki.





(Museum Nos. 9511-9516)

Federation of Russian Charitable Organizations in the U.S.A.  
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Boris Raymond was born of Russian parents in Harbin, China, in 1925. His father, Dmitry Romanoff, had been a young officer of the Imperial Guards during the first World War. After the Revolution he found himself in Siberia, in the ranks of Admiral Kolchak's White armies, with which he eventually retreated through Siberia to China, where Mr. Raymond was born. His maternal grandfather, Boris Ostroumoff, played a prominent role in Manchuria as General Manager of the Chinese Far Eastern Railroad; he was mentioned by Professor Guins in his interview.

Mr. Raymond was educated in Irish and British schools in Tientsin, Shanghai, and Saigon. In April, 1941, he came to San Francisco, where he graduated from George Washington High School in 1943.

After serving in the United States Army and seeing combat as an infantryman in Europe, Mr. Raymond returned to California, where he began his studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He received the B.A., M.A. (Sociology), and M.L.S. degrees from this institution. In 1964 he joined the University Library staff as Russian bibliographer. He is presently [1967] Assistant Director of Libraries, University of Manitoba in Canada, where he is continuing his research on the history of the Russian emigration.























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