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FAR EASTERN REPUBLIC (1920-1922): CASE OF BOLSHEVIKS' MANEUVER

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Abstract

The article focuses on the analysis of a historical byway of the Russian Far East – the conditions for emergence, the fight for independence and loss of autonomy of the Far Eastern Republic that existed in 1920-1922. The purpose of the study: the analysis of the conditions for emergence, the fight for independence and loss of autonomy of the Far Eastern Republic. Through the use of the principle of objective historicism, the synchronous method and the method of historical modeling, the authors analyze the features of the Civil War in the Far East, the foreign-policy basis of the creation of the Far Eastern Republic, the reasons for the emergence of the Far Eastern Republic, the fight of the Far Eastern Republic military with the Whites and the invaders, the relations of Soviet Russia and the Far Eastern Republic and the reasons for the Far Eastern Republic's loss of autonomy. The authors conclude that the Far Eastern Republic was a buffer state that, according to its creators, was bound to disappear from the political map of the world after protecting Soviet Russia from Japanese aggression.

Keywords

Civil War – Far East – Far Eastern Republic – People's Revolutionary Army

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Introduction

The Civil War in the Far East is one of the least studied areas of Russian history of the 20th century¹. This is due to the fact that the authors of memoirs describe the events very briefly, and the documentary base is rather poor because the power in the Far East repeatedly passed from hand to hand and most of the documents were destroyed. Moreover, many documents were lost in the fires that destroyed most of the Far Eastern cities during the Civil War. Unfortunately, the opportunistic approach to the events of the Civil War in the Far East is still present among historians.

Out of the abundance of works on the Civil War in the Far East, A.D. Samoilov's monograph "Standing guard over the conquests of October: (the downfall of counter-revolution in the Far East)" is of particular importance². Based on a wide range of sources, Samoilov uncovers the events of the Civil War and highlights the participation of the local population.

The Civil War in the Far East is one of the most developed topics in memoirs. The existing memories can be divided into works wherein the authors describe the events of the entire Civil War or its episodes.

The first group includes the work of M.I. Gubelman "The fight for the Soviet Far East 1918-1922"³. The author, one of the organizers and leaders of the partisan movement in the Far East, talks about the revolutionary events and their participants, starting with the Vladivostok uprising of 1906 and ending with the end of Japanese intervention on the island of Sakhalin in 1925.

The memoirs of participants in the Civil War in the region – B.L. Belyaev's "The people and events of Primorye: from the history of the fight for the power of the Soviets in Primorye in 1917-1922"⁴ and P.M. Nikiforov's "The memoirs of the Prime Minister of the Far Eastern Republic (FER). The triumph of Lenin's policy in the battle with the intervention in the Far East (1917-1922)"⁵ – not only contain information about the events of that time but also present the biographical essays of participants in the aforementioned events. Memoirs of M.I. Kazan "Memoirs of the mission secretary"⁶ allow one to see how the FER government managed to overcome diplomatic isolation and establish ties with the Chinese government and the diplomatic missions located in Beijing.

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¹ N. V. Lyapunova; A. G. Greshnihin; E. V. Tatyeva; A. P. Rudnitskaya y O. A. Nesterchuk, "Political work in the southern front military forces throughout the Russian civil war (1918-1920)", *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews* Vol: 7 num 6 (2019) y M. G. Sergeeva; N. L. Sokolova; M. L. Kunitsyna; T. M. Rozhnova; K. S. Rozhnova; A. V. Paklina y M. A. Berseneva, "Creative component of the professional activity of a university teacher", *Revista Inclusiones* Vol: 7 num Especial (2020): 353-363.

² A. D. Samoilov, *Na strazhe zavoevanii Oktyabrya: (krakh kontrrevolyutsii na Dalnem Vostoke)* (Moscow: Mysl, 1986).

³ M. I. Gubelman, *Borba za sovetskii Dalnii Vostok. 1918-1922* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958).

⁴ B. L. Belyaev, *Lyudi i sobytiya Primorya: iz istorii borby za vlast Sovetov v Primore v 1917-1922* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1959).

⁵ P. M. Nikiforov, *Zapiski premera DVR. Pobeda leninskoi politiki v borbe s interventsiei na Dalnem Vostoke (1917-1922 gg.)* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat. 1963).

⁶ M. I. Kazanin, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow: Pamyatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2009).

Methods

In the investigation of the topic, the following methods were used: the principle of objective historicism, the synchronous method and the method of historical modeling.

The principal method used in the study was the method of objective historicism. This is due to the fact that the Far Eastern reality changed and developed in time from 1920 to 1922, and this process must be considered.

The synchronous method was when studying any stages of the fight of the FER troops with the White Guards and the invaders in the Far East. The "horizontal section" made through this method allowed us to see the process of the fight and the achieved goals.

The method of historical modeling or the reconstruction method was utilized during the analysis of the reasons for the FER's loss of autonomy that showed the actual situation in various areas of Far Eastern life.

Results

The Features of the Civil War in the Far East

The Civil War in the Far East was different not only due to its duration (lasted until 25 Oct. 1922) but also several specific features, both internal and external, that were not present in other regions of the former Russian Empire. This, in our opinion, is explained by low population density in the region; agricultural nature of the region; the possession of weapons by the population; a significant amount of regular troops in the region; a large number of prisoners of the First World War; Japan's desire to add the Far Eastern regions of Russia to the Empire; the active participation of the Entente countries' invading forces in hostilities in the Far East; partisan warfare; exceptional cruelty on both sides, etc.

The key feature was the low population density in the region – the area of over 3 million km² was occupied by merely 1.7 million people. This was due to the fact that most of the Far East became part of the Russian Empire only in the middle of the 19th century. The difficult climate forced the settlers to occupy southern parts of the region suitable for agriculture. That is why most towns were located along railways and rivers⁷.

The population in the region was predominantly rural. The relative share of the industry in 1908 (the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Amur and Ussuriisk railways, sea and river fleets, goldmines, the Suchan coal mines and the service facilities) made up 0.35% of the country's industry. The existing cities (except Vladivostok and Khabarovsk) did not differ much from villages. The peasantry was more socially homogeneous, the proportion of the well-off section was greater than in the European part of the country. The poor were represented by immigrants from the land-poor governorates of European Russia who arrived in the Far East during P.A. Stolypin's agrarian reform⁸.

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⁷ A. I. Baksheev, "K voprosu o kharaktere "kolonialnoi zavisimosti" Sibiri v XIX – pervoi chetverti XX vv. Sovremennaya nauka: aktualnye problemy teorii i praktiki". Series: Gumanitarnye nauki num 1 (2016): 9-13.

⁸ L. N. Dolgov, *Dalnii Vostok Rossii v period revolyutsii 1917 goda i Grazhdanskoi voiny* (Vladivostok: Dalnauka, 2004).

As one of the main income sources of Far Eastern peasants was hunting, they not only had weapons but also knew how to use them. That is why people from the Far East and Siberian were highly valued in the Russian and Soviet armies. Most of them were armed with Berdan rifles. All this contributed to the mass partisan movement during the years of the Civil War⁹.

As it was a border region, there was a significant number of regular troops. Moreover, in 1917, there were about 100 thousand prisoners of war from the Austro-Hungarian and German armies in the camps of Siberia and the Far East. Furthermore, at the end of March 1918, the relocation of the Czechoslovak Legion (50 thousand people) to the Far East began, and as early as June 15,000 soldiers were in Vladivostok under the command of the chief of staff, Major General M.K. Diterikhs. Former soldiers of the Quadruple Alliance countries were taking an active part in the Civil War in the Far East on both sides¹⁰.

The decision on the need for military intervention was made in December 1917 at the Paris Conference of Entente countries. The governments of these countries officially put forward six reasons for landing the troops in the Far East: 1. Protection of foreign citizens – residents of the region; 2. The wish to maintain the Eastern Front against Germany; 3. The salvation of Siberia from the Bolsheviks; 4. Assisting the Russian people in preserving democratic freedoms; 5. Protection of Czechoslovak soldiers – former prisoners of war from Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war; 6. Curtailing of Japanese aggression in the Far East¹¹.

Summing up the four-year invasion in the Soviet Far East, it is worth noting that none of the six "goals" set by the governments of the Entente countries were fulfilled.

Foreign-policy reasons for the creation of the FER

Japan's desire to add the Far Eastern regions of Russia to the Empire Having been late to the colonial division of the world, the Japanese government sought to make up for this "oversight". For this, a strategic plan was developed, according to which, Japan was to take part in several wars that would significantly increase its territory. Therefore, by participating in the intervention, Japan expected to

- either obtain the areas located to the East of Baikal and assume control over the Siberian railroad and the Chinese Eastern Railway,

- or transform Vladivostok into a free port through the destruction of the fortress and build fortification along the entire sea coast in the Vladivostok region and on the border with Korea, establish free trade and free navigation along the Sungari, Amur; transfer the Chinese Eastern Railway and Northern Sakhalin, fishing rights throughout the Far East to Japan, destroy the Russian navy in the Pacific Ocean, equalize the rights of Japanese subjects with those of the Russian population, etc. (17 demands in total)¹².

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⁹ A. I. Baksheev, "Sotsialno-psikhologicheskoe myshlenie sibirskogo krestyanstva v period NEPa", *Istoricheskaya i sotsialno-obrazovatel'naya mysl* Vol: 7 num 8 (2015): 11-13.

¹⁰ E. Yu. Bondarenko, *Inostrannye voennoplennyye na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii: 1914-1956*. Dissertation Doctor of Historical Sciences. (Vladivostok. 2004).

¹¹ M. I. Svetachev, *Imperialisticheskaya interventsia v Sibiri i na Dalnem Vostoke (1918–1922 gg.)* (Novosibirsk: 1983).

¹² A. A. Azarenkov, *Interventy i vopros o vlasti v Vostochnoi Sibiri i na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii k nachalu 1920 g. Istoriya "beloi" Sibiri: Abstracts of scientific conference*. (Kemerovo. 1995).

Fulfillment of these demands would contribute to the transformation of the Russian Far East into a Japanese semi-colony, a source of raw material for Japan. However, despite the uncertain status of the Far East, the Japanese actively exported gold, raw materials and equipment from the small enterprises of the region with the help of their 120-thousand-people army¹³.

The fight of Japan and the United States of America (the USA) for the influence in the region

The main organizer of the intervention in the Far East was the US government. The States tried to add the region to the area of American economic influence. However, the State Department made a strategic mistake by signing the agreement with Japan (the Lansing – Ishii Agreement) on 2 Nov. 1917 that recognized "Japan's special interests in China". According to the Agreement, the USA expected to use Japan as a military force in the Far East and believed that the Japanese would withdraw troops after the completion of the task. That was the mistake of the White House Administration. As previously mentioned, Japan had no intention of leaving the Russian Far East voluntarily.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the FER took advantage of this confrontation during the Washington Conference (1921-1922). The FER delegation published the following in the US press: information about the secret French-Japanese agreement on the creation of an administrative entity in the Far East entirely subordinate to Japan; the French Note to Japan dated 2 Sep. 1921 confirming the existence of a secret Franco-Japanese agreement regarding the Washington Conference and the creation of the anti-American bloc; the agreement on 12 Mar. 1921 signed by the Japan, France and the White Guards, according to which, France and Japan agreed to relocate the army of General P.N. Wrangel to the Far East, provide it with arms and help it to overthrow the government of the FER. In return, Japan gained full control in the Far East and could place its own troops in the necessary cities. Due to the publication of these documents, the discussion of the "Siberian issue" was disrupted which contributed to exacerbating the contradictions between Japan and the USA¹⁴.

The reasons for the establishment and the declaration of the FER

The attitude of the central authorities of the Soviet power to the Far Eastern question had a considerable influence on the events in the region. One must give credit to V.I. Lenin who successfully used the historical experience of Russia. Let us recall that during each enemy invasion, the Russian government despite the unfavorable conditions at the outbreak of war, always won due to, among other things, the territorial factor. Using the large size of the country, the Russians always retreated to the East, collecting troops for a winning strike while the invaders had to separate their troops to control the conquered lands and their communications. That was the case at the beginning of the 17th century, in 1812 and after that.

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¹³ A. I. Baksheev; V. V. Filimonov y D. V. Rakhinskii, "Diskurs sibirskoi suverenizatsii: ot oblastnichestva k sovremennoi modernizatsii territorialnogo ustroistva", Sotsialno-politicheskie nauki num 1 (2019): 66-70.

¹⁴ Yu. N. Tsipkin y T. A. Ornatskaya, Vneshnyaya politika Dalnevostochnoi Respubliki (1920-1922 gg.) (Khabarovsk. 2008).

A distinctive feature of the Soviet foreign policy during the Civil War (1918-1922) was the reason which allowed temporarily giving up on the borders of the country to win time and retain not only power but also most of the country. That is why the Brest Peace Treaty was signed. V.I. Lenin commented on this occasion, "They say that by making peace, we give free rein to the Japanese and the Americans who can immediately capture Vladivostok. But by the time they reach only Irkutsk, we can strengthen our socialist Republic"¹⁵.

Based on this, on 14 Mar. 1918, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR instructed the chairman of Centrosibir N.N. Yakovlev to carry out a local policy of "maneuvering, retreating, waiting" due to the inevitable temporary retreat of the Soviet power. Moscow believed that all actions of Centrosibir had to be based on the idea of holding on for the longest possible time in the most difficult conditions. The Soviet leadership believed that the main danger for Soviet Russia in the East was Japan which is confirmed by V.I. Lenin's telegram on 7 Apr. 1918¹⁶.

The Far Eastern population followed Moscow's instructions and survived through the fights with soldiers, invading forces of the Entente countries and the internal counter-revolutionary forces until 18 Sep. 1918 and after that began a partisan war. Although the Siberian Red Army was defeated, the Far Eastern and Siberian soldiers defeated the main force of the counter-revolution – the Czechoslovak Legion.

The fight of the Red Army on the Dauria, Grodekovo, Ussuriysk, Verkhneudinsk and Baikal fronts in 1918 delayed to the East of Baikal significant forces of the united counter-revolution which were planned to be transferred across the Volga to attack Moscow. The Far Eastern troops diverted considerable enemy forces. However, despite the recognition of the service of the Far East, the Center could not provide the troops with real help preferring not to participate in a direct confrontation with the invaders in the East. Therefore, to avoid a war with Japan after the defeat of A.V. Kolchak's armies, on the eve of the Polish attack in the West, the troops of the fifth Red Army stopped on the western border of the Transbaikal Region¹⁷.

The Far East was instructed to create a buffer state – the FER on the territory of the Zabaikalskii, Amurskii, Primorskii and Kamchetskii regions, the right of way of the Chinese Eastern Railway and in the North of Sakhalin.

Following this plan, on 3 Mar. 1920, the Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party created the Far Eastern Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party which consisted of two groups – one was in Verkhneudinsk and the other in Vladivostok. The Far Eastern Bureau was tasked with creating the buffer state to carry out party work in the Far East.

On 5 Mar., the Interim Representative Government was created with the Chairman Menshevik I.A. Pyatidesyatnikov, the Socialist Revolutionary Mikhanoshin and the Bolshevik N.K. Goncharov. On 28 Mar. 1920, the Interim Government held the Congress of Workers of the Transbaikal region in Verkhneudinsk and on 6 Apr. proclaimed the establishment of

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¹⁵ E. M. Shchagin, V. I. Lenin i sozдание Dalnevostochnoi respubliki. V.I. Lenin i Dalnevostochnaya respublika: collection of academic works (Vladivostok: 1985).

¹⁶ B. M. Shereshevskii, Lenin i Dalnii Vostok (Khabarovsk: 1970).

¹⁷ P. A. Novikov, "Borba za Zabaikale (mart-noyabr 1920 g.)", Belaya armiya. Beloe delo: istoricheskii nauchno-populyarnyi almanakh num 14 (2004): 69-81.

the FER. According to V.I. Lenin, the main purpose of this step was the need to not only postpone the war with Japan but also possibly avoid it¹⁸.

The Constituent Assembly of the FER, proclaiming itself the People's Congress, passed the Constitution of the FER on 27 Apr. The FER Authorities offered all countries to recognize it as an independent state and establish diplomatic relations. On 14 May 1920, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR G.V. Chicherin set a notification to the FER on its recognition by Russia.

The fight of the FER military against White Guardsmen and invaders

The aforementioned territory had three operating governments that included the Bolsheviks in some form: in Verkhneudinsk, Blagoveshchensk and Vladivostok. The Western and Eastern parts of the FER were separated by the so-called Chita Holdup, territory controlled by the forces of ataman G.M. Semenov, as well as the newly arrived kappelevtsy (up to 20,000 soldiers in total) and the Japanese.

After the FER was established, the formation of the buffer state's military began. The troops included former members of Kolchak's army who had defected to the Red Army in Irkutsk and the Irkutsk Governorate, as well as East Siberian and Transbaikalian partisan fighters (up to a half of the total number). On 11 Mar. 1920, the FER troops were renamed into the People's Revolutionary Army (hereafter the PRA) and on 18 Mar. the Bolshevik G. Eiche was appointed its commander. All male citizens of the FER over 20 years old had to serve in the army for two years.

The FER government attempted to dismantle G.M. Semyonov's regime by force. However, considering the Center's demands to avoid a conflict with Japan, the FER government, along with reinforcing the PRA, launched a wide-scale campaign for the "peaceful liberation" of the Transbaikalian region and the Far East.

In April, the PRA's two Chita offenses from the West showed that the FER troops could not destroy the Chita Holdup while the Whites were being supported by Japanese forces. After that, the PRA had to cease military action and the attempts to capture the Eastern Transbaikalian region not to provoke the Japanese. The troops that remained on the territory controlled by the Japanese were not bound by any treaties so freely attacked Japanese, Semenov's and Kappel's troops¹⁹.

In May – July 1920 representatives of the FER and Japan held negotiations on the Gongota railway station. As a result, on 17 Jul. the Japanese agreed to withdraw troops from the Transbaikalian region and the Khabarovsk area by 15 Oct. In early October 1920, under the guise of partisan units, part of the PRA started to occupy the close approaches to Chita, and on 19 Oct. attacked the Urulga railway station. The PRA troops and partisan units proceeded from the North and the East and on 22 Oct. 1920 occupied Chita and named it the new capital of the FER. All troops of the White Far Eastern Army moved from the Transbaikalian region to China by 21 Nov.²⁰

¹⁸ A.I. Baksheev. NEP v Sibiri. Atmosfera i logika voyny: monografiya [The NEP in Siberia. The atmosphere and logic of war: a monograph]. (Krasnoyarsk. 2020).

¹⁹ A. I. Baksheev, NEP v Sibiri. Atmosfera i logika voyny: monografiya (Krasnoyarsk: 2020).

²⁰ A. I. Baksheev, NEP v Sibiri. Atmosfera i logika...

During the Chita conference of 28 Oct. – 11 Nov. 1920, members of three regional governments formalized the union into the FER and elected a government, which included the Bolsheviks A.M. Krasnoshchekov (the Head), G.K. Rumyantsev, N.M. Matveev, P.M. Nikiforov and non-party O. Kuznetsov and F.A. Ivanov, created ministries and regional governments. From 12 Feb. to 27 Apr. 1921 the Constituent Assembly of the FER took place in Chita and all the party members and non-party individuals passed the Constitution²¹.

In early 1922, the PRA commanded by V.K. Blyukher went into a counter-offensive, defeating the Whites at Volochaevka on 12 Feb. 1922 and liberating Khabarovsk on 14 Feb.

On 25 Oct. 1922, the PRA troops entered Vladivostok. The Civil War and military Intervention were over. Combined actions of the PRA and partisan units resulted in the complete evacuation of the Imperial Japanese Army and the remaining White troops from the Primorsky region and put an official end to the military intervention and the Civil War all over Russia.

The relations of Soviet Russia and the FER

Soviet Russia provided all possible support to the FER. For example, in November of 1921 V.I. Lenin signed the decree of the Council of People's Commissars on providing the army commander V.K. Blyukher with 1.5 million gold rubles. The resources of the PRA were also reinforced. There are records of V.K. Blyukher's requests to Soviet Russia to provide a squadron of aircraft with technical equipment and materials (15 for reconnaissance and 10 fighters) to reinforce his 17 aircraft. V.K. Blyukher also requested three powerful and seven pack wireless stations with crews, eight Hughes telegraphs per rifle brigade and command units, 15,000 versts of cable and 3,000 telephones²².

However, the leadership of the FER was at the spotlight of Moscow's attention. It was evident from the fact that the head of the government was replaced almost annually. Moreover, during the 30 months of the Republic's existence, six commanders-in-chief of the PRA were replaced, and most of them were sent from Soviet Russia. Red Army commanding officers made up a large share of the PRA commanding officers. Those were, most notably, the commanders-in-chief of the PRA V.K. Blyukher, I.P. Uborevich, K.O. Avksentevskii. Moscow paid equally close attention to junior commanding officers of the PRA, for example, in 1920 1,200 middle- and junior-ranking officers arrived in the FER²³. The Soviet government had the same attitude towards other Ministries of the FER and considered them local branches of the Soviet People's Commissariats. Although Far Eastern people were most successful in solving these problems than their colleagues. However, the latter did not use the Far Eastern experience in solving economic problems (the reduction of unemployment and the provision of the army with food without requisitioning produce from peasant farms, the order of financed taxes and a fixed wage that corresponded to the minimum wage, etc.), preferring to bring the FER to accordance with the Russia-wide standard²⁴.

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²¹ A. A. Azarenkov, "Demokraticheskii kompromiss". Ideya "bufera" na Dalnem Vostoke v planakh i taktike politicheskikh sil – uchastnikov grazhdanskoi voiny v Rossii (yanvar 1920 – yanvar 1921 g.) (Komsomolsk-na-Amure: 2001).

²² L. I. Vaganova-Vilkins, Nekotorye osobennosti voennogo stroitelstva DVR (1920-1922). Izvestiya Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A. I. Gertsena (2008): 90-93.

²³ L. I. Vaganova-Vilkins, Nekotorye osobennosti voennogo stroitelstva...

²⁴ V. V. Sonin, Stanovlenie Dalnevostochnoi respubliki (1920-1922) (Vladivostok: Izd-vo Dalnevost. un-ta, 1990).

Reasons for the FER's loss of independence

On 14 Nov. 1922, the People's Assembly of the FER declared the power of the Soviets over its territories, and on 15 Nov., the Bolsheviks government in Moscow passed a decree about the dissolution of the FER and its absorption into Soviet Russia.

Current attempts to prove that the FER could exist as an independent state²⁵ disregard the fact that historically and economically the region was always an integral part of Russia, whatever its name was in the course of its history. One should also understand that in the context of the actual international situation, regions like the Far East could not preserve complete independence.

During the analysis of the reasons why the FER could not exist as an independent state, we shall focus on the following.

I. The occupation of a part of the FER territory by foreign invaders. After the disappearance of the FER from the political map of the world, a territory of 2,647,523 km² with a population of about 2 million people was annexed to the RSFSR. However, a significant share of this territory would not be controlled by the Soviet power for a few years. Thus, the right of way of the Chinese Eastern Railway was controlled by China until 31 May 1924, and the North of Sakhalin was abandoned by the Japanese only on 15 May 1925. Therefore, a foreign invasion could be repeated from the aforementioned locations.

II. A significant part of the FER territory was under the control of armed units that did not recognize the FER or the Soviet Power. The Kamchatka peninsula and a lot of uyezds in other regions were controlled by various units of "White Guardsmen" who, by the time of the dissolution of the FER, amounted to over 4,000 people²⁶. It must be noted that their number increased after the official end of the Civil War due to the discharged members of the Red Army and the PRA who had to face the realities of the post-war life.

III. Some territories of the FER were still in the area of geopolitical interests of other countries. Not only Japan and the USA but also the semi-colonial China used this opportunity to put forward territorial claims to Russia. It was not just the claims, many areas of the Far East were in the zone of action of the Honghuzi who were terrorizing the locals. This could be suppressed only by a state with a powerful economy and the military which the FER was not at the time because the five years of the Civil War and the invasion have taken their toll.

At the same time, one could not expect the RSFSR to concede to the loss of the Far East. This is evidenced by the policy of recovering the European territories lost during the Civil War implemented by I.V. Stalin in 1939-1940.

²⁵ Yu. N. Tshipkin, "Dalnevostochnaya respublika: byla li alternativa? Nekotorye voprosy istoriografii", Otechestvennaya istoriya num 3 (1993): 162-176.

²⁶ A. A. Azarenkov, "Demokraticheskii kompromiss". Ideya "bufera" na Dalnem Vostoke v planakh i taktike politicheskikh sil – uchastnikov grazhdanskoi voyny v Rossii (yanvar 1920 – yanvar 1921 g.) (Komsomolsk-na-Amure: 2001).

IV. Once the relations with the RSFSR had been severed, the army of the FER would have lost most of its officers – citizens of the RSFSR: the PRA commander-in-chief and the Military Minister of the FER I.P. Uborevich, a significant part of the officers, most of the crews of armored trains that were the key element of heavy weapons. All this would have affected the Republic's military and decrease its chances to survive.

V. The destruction of the Far Eastern economy. A lot of towns were destroyed: in Nikolaevsk-on-Amur alone only 40 out of 2,107 houses survived; the port with all the facilities, manufacturing enterprises, the power plant and the telephone exchange station were demolished. The Amur and the Siberian military flotillas, private and state-owned steamship companies (the Amur, the Baikal, the Lena and the Far Eastern Shipping Company) were destroyed²⁷. Not to mention the losses from the evacuation of valuables abroad, even though it was tremendous.

Railroad transport was destroyed. Over half of the cars were standing idle and 213 locomotives required major repairs and could not leave the depots. In 1923, the cost of the goods, including the craftsmen's labor amounted to 43.5% of the pre-revolutionary amount. The number of goods decreased to 36.1% compared to 1913. According to the calculations of the Far Eastern Revolutionary Commission (Dalrevcom), the losses from the Civil War reached 603,407,009 rubles 83 kopeks in gold. Cultivation areas decreased by 42.3%²⁸.

VI. Rising unemployment. Due to the decline in manufacturing, unemployment climbed and amounted to 20% in 1922 and 28% of the total number of workers in 1924. Considering the state of the economy, Dalrevcom could not combat this phenomenon, however, the Committee was interested in keeping qualified workers in the Far East. As a result, the practice of communal labor continued to exist in the FER during the summer period. In 1923, there was a plan to involve about 6,000 unemployed people in communal labor which would cost the state about 100,000 golden rubles²⁹.

VII. Loss of human resources. Not only was the economy ruined but also human resources were lost (the population of Khabarovsk alone decreased from 52,000 to 30,000 people). Overall, human losses in the Far East during that time amounted to about 80 thousand people³⁰.

To sum up the facts, it is worth noting that by the time the FER joined Soviet Russia, the region had been in an ailing economic state due to the Civil War and the invasion, and contemporaries believed that it could not overcome the crisis by itself in the following few years.

The cession (voluntary or forced) of the FER to any powerful neighboring state was only a matter of time. In this case, the status of the "new" state can change from a banana republic to an autonomous region (republic) within another state or, as in the case of the FER, a regular administrative entity within Soviet Russia.

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²⁷ Yu.N. Tsipkin, "Dalnevostochnaya respublika: byla li alternativa? Nekotorye voprosy istoriografii", Otechestvennaya istoriya num 3 (1993): 162-176.

²⁸ Yu.N. Tsipkin, Dalnevostochnaya respublika: byla li alternativa?...

²⁹ S. V. Galitsin, "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii po okonchani Grazhdanskoi voiny i interventsii", Vlast i upravlenie na Vostoke Rossii num 3 (2014): 200–206.

³⁰ S. V. Galitsin, Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie na Dalnem Vostoke Rossii...

Conclusion

The FER was a buffer state that, according to its creators, was bound to disappear from the political map of the world after protecting Soviet Russia from Japanese aggression.

In summarizing the events of the Civil War in the Far East and the formation of the FER, it is worth noting that Moscow's position regarding the events in the Far East was rather reasonable and consisted in instructions to hold on in unfavorable circumstances and establishment of the state-wide order once the local forces had stabilized the situation.

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