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A Political History of the Kurile Islands

by

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Introduction

The background of the first Russian-Japanese contact is one of curious opposites. This period found Russia in possession of dynamic new power and her empire was spilling over Central Asia and the Far East. Japan had become completely withdrawn and hid in her isolation from the eyes and influences of the Western nations which threatened to topple the shaky structure of the Shogunate.

The genius and force behind the first Russian drive in Asia was Peter the Great -- 1672-1725. This forceful individual had by the drive of his own personality, reformed Russia from a backward, feudalistic state and turned it into a powerful nation. Most of his energies were consumed in trying to bring Russia up to the standards of the West. In doing this he "remodelled everything: administration, finances, army, navy, industry, mining, commerce, church, schools, and social customs."¹ He realized that the first need for the modernization of Russia was free intercourse with the West and in order to do this, he entered into a twenty year struggle with Sweden for the domination of the Baltic Sea.² Thus the Asiatic policy of Russia at this time took a secondary position to that of the European policy, but the historical continuity of the Asiatic policy

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1. A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, Russia and Asia, New York, 1933, p. 70.
 2. Ibid., p. 72.

remained the same. Even during the many wars in Europe, Russian cossacks, adventurers and fugitives from justice were carving new territory for Russia from the vast frozen lands of the north. Even with the major endeavors of expansion taking place in the west, the traditional policy of northward expansion went on in Asia.

At the end of the twenty year struggle with Sweden in 1721, Russia swung her attention to the east and to Asia. This is a classic trend in Russian policy; when the limits of expansion are reached in Europe, the tide of imperialism moves into Asia. It was during this time that Peter invaded Persia and took among others, the province of Baku. It was also his intention to invade India, but he died before achieving his aim.³ Another interest of this energetic Tsar in Asia was that of scientific exploration, and it was this that sent the first official Russian explorers to the coasts of Ezo and Japan.

The Japan of this age was anything but dynamic. The exclusions laws of Tokugawa Iemitsu (1622-1651) not only forbade the coming of foreigners to Japan, but likewise, did not permit the Japanese to go abroad. The laws were carried so far as to forbid the making of vessels which would be large enough to go to sea. The reasons for the exclusion of foreigners from Japan will not be discussed in this paper, but let it suffice to say that by 1640 there were no foreigners in Japan but a few authorized Chinese

3. Ibid., p. 78.

and Dutch.⁴ These few foreigners were all but imprisoned in their factories at Nagasaki. Through this port came the small trickle of foreign goods and ideas, and for over two hundred years it remained Japan's only contact with the outside world. To make more binding the exclusion decree (promulgated in 1623)⁵ the Japanese issued another decree in 1637 forbidding Japanese subjects leaving Japan, and those who left were forbidden to return.⁶

Thus the scene was set for the first Russo-Japanese relations. On the one hand, a new power rising in Asia and seeking new fields of commerce, conquest and scientific discovery; and on the other, a static, feudalistic government seeking to maintain its status-quo by excluding the influx of foreign ideas and commerce.

4. G. B. Sansom, Japan, A Short Cultural History, New York, 1943, p. 451.

5. Lobanov-Rostovsky, op. cit., p. 83.

6. Sansom, op. cit., p. 452.

Russian Expansion to the Kuriles and Japan

The first Russians to reach the Kurile Islands and to commence the exploration and trade with the aboriginals of these islands were the adventuresome Cossacks who had pushed beyond the Urals in 1581 and had finally swept all the way down the Kamchatka Peninsula by 1697. It was in this year that the scouts of the adventurer-explorer, Vladimir Atlassov, found a fisherman from Osaka, Dembei by name, who had been shipwrecked on the peninsula of Kamchatka. Dembei told Atlassov exaggerated accounts of the wealth of the Kuriles, and acting on these stories, Atlassov sent a subordinate to pillage the nearby islands of the group. Dembei was sent on to Moscow in 1701 where he held conversations with the Tsar. The Russian court was much impressed by Dembei and by his account of the vast wealth of his country, and in gratitude for his information, they made him a professor in the Academy of Arts and Sciences where he taught Japanese to several scientists to aid them in their explorations in the Kuriles.¹

As a result of his conversations with Dembei, Peter the Great (1672-1725) ordered a reconnaissance to be made on the Kurile Islands. This first official expedition to the Kuriles was sent out in 1706 under the command of Vasily Kolliesov, a merchant from Kamchatka. His orders were to explore the islands and to determine what kind of

1. N. N. Ogloblin, "Pervyi Yaponiets v Rossii" (The First Japanese in Russia), Russkaia Starina, 1892, Vol. 72, pp. 10-24.

people lived on them, how they fought, what kind of trade they carried on, and what kind of government they had. Koliessov succeeded in reaching the islands, but native resistance prevented him from obtaining the information requested.²

A second expedition was soon formed under the command of Anzivorov, and the surviving crew-men of another Japanese shipwreck were employed as guides. This expedition also succeeded in reaching the island nearest the coast, but again, native resistance prevented them from making detailed observations. The first two expeditions having failed to achieve their objectives, the Tsar ordered another expedition to the islands. This time, Ivan Petrovich Kosirewski, grandson of a Polish prisoner of war and he, himself, a condemned murderer, volunteered to lead the expedition to expiate his crime.³

The Kosirewski expedition was ordered to "investigate Kamchatka and the nearby islands, to inquire into what government the people owed allegiance and to force tribute from those who have no sovereign; to inform themselves as much as possible about Japan and the way thither, what weapons the inhabitants have and how they wage war; whether they might be willing to enter into friendly commercial relations with Russia, and if so, what kind of merchandise

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2. Pamiatniki Sibirskoi Istorii (Documents of Siberian History), St. Petersburg, 1882, Vol. 1, p. 461.
 3. Frank Alfred Golder, Russian Expansion on the Pacific, 1641-1850, Cleveland, 1914, p. 23, n.

they might be induced to buy."⁴

The Kosirewski expedition landed in August, 1711 with fifty Russians, eleven Kamchatkans and a Japanese, possibly the same one as used the year before by Anzivorov. As in Anzivorov's case, Kosirewski encountered resistance from the natives and landed only after a sharp fight in which ten natives were killed and many others wounded.⁵ After this skirmish, Kosirewski did not attempt a landing because he found the island too heavily armed and too well defended for his small force. He sent a message ashore demanding tribute and subjugation, but the doughty islanders replied that they paid tribute to no one. They added that they had no fox or sables, but they did have beaver which they traded to the Japanese to the south for such goods as they needed. Thus, Kosirewski and his men returned to Kamchatka empty handed. He visited the islands again in 1713, and this time, returned home with a small quantity of silks and metals, as well as iron kettles, varnished cups, and cotton and silk goods which were of obvious Japanese manufacture. He also had a chart which he had drawn from information supplied by natives and which showed the relative position of about half of the islands, and located the city of Matsumae in the southern part of Ezo.

Kosirewski sent his report to the provincial governor along with the booty which he had obtained. However, a

4. Harry Emerson Wildes, Aliens in the East, Philadelphia, 1937, pp. 74-75.

5. Pamiatniki Sibirskoi Istorii, p. 462.

subsequent investigation by provincial authorities disclosed that he had kept a large portion of the materials for himself, and he was brought to trial a second time. He was pardoned again, this time because he took the vows and entered a monastery.⁶

The Scientific Explorations

Most of the exploration done up to this time had been carried out by local veevodas (governors) or by Cossack criminals who sought to expiate their crimes by discovering new sources of tribute. However, Peter the Great was not content to leave the exploration of this vast, rich area to the whims of renegades. After perusing carefully the report received from Kosirewski's expedition and interrogating Dembei, Peter conceived a new expedition to be organized on a scientific basis. Feodor Luzhin and Ivan Yevreinov were appointed as heads of this semi-secret expedition, and they were ordered to retrace the course of Kosirewski. Their instructions, other than the secret ones, read in part:

You are to go to Kamchatka and farther, as you have been ordered and determine whether Asia and America are united; and go not only north and south, but east and west and put on a chart all that you see.⁷

Luzhin and Yevreinov left Russia in 1719 and with a Dutch sailor, Hendrick Busch, as a guide, they left Yakutsk for Kamchatka in 1720. Peter took a great personal interest

6. Golder, op. cit., p. 113.

7. Ibid., p. 114, n.

in this expedition and tried to keep in touch with its movements. The expedition reached as far down as the fifth Kurile, but here they were forced to return after having lost their anchors in a storm on the sharp rocks off the coast of this island. When they returned to Yakutsk in 1722, they refused to give their information to anyone but the Tsar, himself. Indeed, the contents of this report were kept so secret that a Russian scholar writing in 1891, 169 years later, still did not have the facts of this voyage, although he had access to government files.⁸ The report is believed to have contained a revised map of the Kuriles plus other geodetic information.⁹

The next party of exploration to be sent out was that of Vitus Bering. The plans for this expedition had been drawn up by Peter the Great before his death in 1725, and his instructions were as follows:

1. To build in Kamchatka or in some other place one or two decked boats.
2. To sail on these boats along the shore which runs to the north and which, since its limits are unknown, seems to be a part of the American coast.
3. To determine where it joins with America. To sail to some settlement under European jurisdiction, and if a European ship should be met with, learn from her the name of the coast and take it down in writing, make a landing, obtain detailed information, draw a chart, and bring it here.¹⁰

Bering, the man chosen to head the expedition, was a Danish naval officer who had been connected with the Russian navy since 1704. His lieutenants were Martin Spanberg,

8. N. N. Ogoblin, op. cit., p. 78.

9. Ibid., and Wildes, op. cit., p. 78.

10. Golder, op. cit., p. 134.

likewise a Dane, and Alexei Chirikov, a Russian. This was to be a much more scientific expedition than the others, and the personnel consisted of a corps of scientists, naturalists, astronomers, historians, etc. The advance party left St. Petersburg on January 24, 1725 and after a hazardous trek across the ice and snow of Siberia, they reached Yakutsk in June of the following year. After a fruitless voyage, this expedition returned to St. Petersburg where the Senate, indignant with the lack of success on the part of Bering, was loathe to pay him his salary. However, through the office of influential friends in the government, Bering obtained backing for a second expedition. The plan for this operation was set forth in writing by Bering, and was divided into five objectives, the third of which concerns itself with Japan and the Kuriles and reads as follows:

It would not be without advantage to find a sea route from Kamchatka or Okhotsk Rivers to the Amur River or Japan, since it is known that these regions are inhabited. It would be very profitable to open trade relations with these people, particularly, the Japanese, and as we have no boats there (Okhotsk Sea), we might arrange it with the Japanese that they meet us half way in their boats. For such an expedition a ship about the size of the one mentioned above would be needed (forty or fifty tons), or one somewhat smaller might serve the same purpose.¹¹

This part of the expedition was to be entrusted to Captain Spanberg. He was given additional instructions as to how he should conduct his affairs with the Japanese. His first duty was to find a route from Kamchatka to Japan. He was to examine the islands between Kamchatka Cape and

11. Ibid., pp. 166-169.

Japan (the Kuriles) and to take note of those islands under the jurisdiction of the Emperor of Japan and try to enter into friendly relations with the inhabitants. From these islands he was to continue to Japan and there to learn about the government, ports, and the possibilities of entering into relations with the people. He was also ordered to return any shipwrecked Japanese he might find in Kamchatka to Japan as a sign of friendliness. This was to become a routine approach of the Russians in their efforts to open Japan to trade. Most of the subsequent emissaries carried with them shipwrecked Japanese in an effort to show their good will.

Spanberg was further instructed that upon contact with the Japanese he was to give as his reasons for coming the return of these shipwrecked sailors, and if they were not received by their government, as they usually were not, he was to put them ashore in a secluded spot. He was instructed not to carry out Bering's suggestion in the original outline for the expedition, of meeting the Japanese in the Kuriles and carrying out the trade there. This method was employed with limited success at a later date.

Spanberg's fleet consisted of three ships; the flagship "Archangel Michael," the "Nadeshda," captained by Walton; and the "St. Gabriel," commanded by Shelting. These vessels left from Okhotsk on July 15, 1738 and soon after leaving port, they lost sight of one another in a heavy fog.

Spanberg turned back after sailing in the vicinity of Urupp

and arrived back at the Bolshaya River on August 17 where he was awaited by Shelting; Walton joined them there a week later.

In the winter of 1738-1739 Spanberg had a fourth boat constructed and equipped with oars, in order to move among the islands with greater ease. On May 21, 1739 the four vessels left Kamchatka and arrived at the first Kurile Island on the twenty-fifth. Here, they picked up an interpreter and departed for Japan on June 1. On June 14, Walton was separated from the rest of the fleet in a storm. Spanberg continued his course, and on June 16 he sighted the coast of Japan. Here Spanberg made a brief visit, but fearing treachery on the part of the Japanese, he withdrew and proceeded to sail farther southward. Again, he approached the coast, and this time, contacted some of the Japanese in a small village ashore. After some trading and exchanges of pleasantries, Spanberg again took leave, this time because of the large number of guard boats which the Japanese threw around his vessel.

His mission to contact Japan completed, Spanberg sailed northward, and after a short stay in one of the Kurile Islands, he arrived back in Kamchatka on the 29th of August.

Spanberg reported the results of his trip to Bering and requested permission for a third voyage on the grounds that if his ships had not become separated in the fog, he would have been able to bring those Kuriles nearest Kamchatka under Russian domination. Bering, however, refused this

request, and ordered Spanberg back to St. Petersburg. On the way, Spanberg received orders from St. Petersburg to return to Kamchatka and to make his trip to the Kuriles and Japan again. He arrived back in the summer of 1740, and after wintering at Okhotsk, he received a new ship, the "St. John," and set sail with his fleet on May 23, 1742. On this cruise he had, in addition to the regular crew, two young men from the St. Petersburg Academy to act as interpreters. These two had learned Japanese from two shipwrecked Japanese who had been taken as teachers to St. Petersburg.¹² On this trip, Spanberg again became separated from the rest of the fleet, but he still succeeded in putting men ashore in Komaishi in Miyagi Prefecture on the main island of Honshū, and made a brief visit to the east coast of Hokkaidō (Yezo). He arrived back in Okhotsk on August 26 without succeeding in his plan to conquer the Kuriles; and thus, his last voyage ended in failure.

This entire series of expeditions caused a sensation in Russia, not because of the scientific discoveries which resulted, but because of the intrigue and bitter denunciations which occurred in the ranks of the scientists and officers. The major charge to come out of the violent quarrels was that Spanberg had never been to Japan, but through errors in navigation, had sailed the coast of Korea, instead. The Admiralty College could not decide the case and turned the documents of the persons concerned over to

12. Ibid., p. 228.

Professor Shishkof of the Naval Academy. Shishkov ruled that Spanberg actually had been in Japan, but the information contained in his journal was too inaccurate to chart the position of the islands of Japan.¹³

The Matsumae han's Activities in the North

There is reason to believe that vague rumors of activity on the continent by a strong and possibly hostile power were current in Japan in the middle of the Seventeenth Century. These tales were probably brought to the North country by the Kurile natives who came to Japan on trading jaunts. However, it is possible that sailors of the more independent lords returned from the coast of Asia bearing these alarming stories.

The actual knowledge that it was Russia which was sweeping across Asia and into the northern islands came into the hands of the Shogunate very late. It was on the basis of a book written by Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 called the Seiyō Kibun 西洋紀聞 (A History of the West) that the officials of the Shogunate learned of the existence of a nation called Moskobiya.¹⁴ Even the coming of Spanberg and Walton did not acquaint Japan with the fact that a new

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13. Ibid., p. 227, footnote as quoted from the Zapiski, Hydrograficheskovo Departamenta, IX, pp. 363-365.
14. Kawano Tsunekichi 河野常吉. "Anei Izen Matsumae-han to Rojin to no Kankei 安永以前松前藩と露人との関係 (The Relations of the Matsumae Clan with the Russians before 1772), Rekishi Zasshi, 1916, p. 19.

power was coming into the Pacific sphere. The first report of these vessels simply described them as foreign ships, and not until a much later date, and as the result of the Dutch at Deshima 出島 recognizing certain coins and cards as Russian, did they learn of the identity of these unwelcome callers.¹⁵

The first Japanese to learn of the activity of the foreigners were the members of the Matsumae han who had taken over the administration of the Island of Hokkaidō (Ezo) in 1590. This was the most unique fief in Japan. Its wealth was not measured in rice as was the usual fief, but rather, in fish and furs a good deal of which was gotten from the native Ainu, who were the original inhabitants of this region. The Matsumae officials farmed out rights to trade with the aborigines to "contract merchants" who were licensed to trade. It is from their records that the first documentary evidence is obtained. In 1756 a report was sent to Matsumae written by one Minato Kakunosuke 湊覺之助 who wrote as follows:

When Makita Tomouchi 牧田 伴四 went to Akkeshi as Supreme Magistrate in 1756, there was a foreign vessel¹⁶ anchored at an island off the coast. There were around a hundred crewmen who all looked alike. I saw them when they came to gaze at Akkeshi in Ezo, and they resembled merchants. They had with them, contrary to rights, three Ezo women. (The name Ezo applied to the natives as well as to the island which later became known as Hokkaido.) They stayed for

15. Ibid., p. 19.

16. Written in the Japanese text as Karajin 唐人. This usually means Chinese, but here and in subsequent documents it seems to refer to foreigners in general.

three days. When they left they fired flaming stones. By afternoon they (The Russians) could no longer be seen.¹⁷

These men were not positively identified as Russians, but the fact that they were unidentified foreigners in this area, at this time, points strongly to the fact that they were, because no other nation had vessels or nationals active in the North Pacific during this period. There is no Russian data available to substantiate the fact that these men were Russian, but many outlaws were active out of Siberia and Kamchatka during this period. The fact that no record was kept of their activities could lend strength to the claim that these men were Russians, probably hunter-outlaws.

The next encounter with the Russians was again reported by Kakunosuke. In 1759 he was residing at Akkeshi where he had been sent to gather silks for tribute and to oversee the pacification of some of the Ainu who were giving trouble. He reported an interview with Kakkoro, tribal chief of Etorofu 擇捉, in which Kakkoro told him that in 1758 foreigners had landed in the Kuriles and had established a guard station there. He said that they were many in number and that they had built several houses. Kakunosuke noted that Kakkoro was wearing red cloth of foreign make and carrying a spear of iron, also of foreign make. Besides these things, he also had in his possession an axe which he had obtained from the foreigners, and Kakunosuke records

17. Kawano, op. cit., p. 21.

the fact that he was impressed with its manufacture.¹⁸ It was also during these interviews with the tribal chiefs that Kakunosuke learned of the names of the various islands in the Kurile chain. These are believed to be the first warnings that the Matsumae clan had of the Russian activity in the Kuriles. Indeed, it was only in 1754 that the officials in this clan opened up trade relations with the Kuriles, and then only with Kunashiri 國後, the island closest to Hokkaidō. The Matsumae clan never dominated the Kuriles north of Etorofu. However, the Ainu maintained a lively trade between all the islands of the chain, and some of those in the southern group would go to the extreme north in hunting season. It was from conversations with these Ainu that Kakunosuke was able to chart the names and positions of the islands. This had been attempted earlier by Arai Hakuseki in his book, Ezo-Shi, 蝦夷史, but this chart contained many errors in the relative positions of the islands. Even before this, as early as 1700, the names of some of the islands had been entered in the village registers which had been sent to the Shogunate. The map drawn by Kakunosuke was fairly accurate even when compared to those of modern times.¹⁹

None of these incidents were reported to the Shogunate by the Matsumae clan. On the contrary, every effort was

18. Hokkaidō-chō 北海道廳, Hokkaidō-shi 北海道史 (A History of Hokkaido), Tokyo, 1918, pp. 311-312.

19. Kawano, op. cit., p. 23.

made to keep such information secret. Other incidents concerning the Russians and the Ainu continued to be reported to the Matsumae authorities. In 1768 a score or so of Russians landed on the eastern shore of Uruppu 得撫 and, after building a house there, they engaged in hunting sea otter. In 1771 an official of the Matsumae went to the island of Kunashiri and reported that barbarians came to this island and hunted sea otter with firearms. A year earlier, the Russians left their base on Uruppu and came on a hunting expedition to Etorofu. Here, they killed the tribal chief, Niseokote, and one other and frightened many others into fleeing the island. There was information of the cruel treatment the Ainu suffered at the hands of the Russian hunters as early as 1769. In this year an Ainu from Rashowa 羅處和 came to Etorofu saying that he had been cruelly treated by a Russian called Ivan Reenchichi, and that his household goods had been destroyed by this man.

As a result of the excesses of the hunters, the Ainu of the island of Rashowa banded together and decided to report the Russians to the Matsumae. In 1771 they joined forces with other Ainu and crossed over to the island of Uruppu, the base of the Russian hunters in the Kuriles. They attacked the Russians on both the eastern and western sides, and after killing and wounding a score or so, they drove the remainder, about seventy, into the sea. On the basis of these reports, it is obvious that the Matsumae clan knew of the Russian activity in the Kuriles as early

as 1756, but none of these incidents were reported to the authorities at Edo.

The Shogunate Learns of the Russians

The honor of reporting the activities of the Russians to the Shogunate fell to a world adventurer and spinner of tall tales, Count Moritz August Beniowsky. Beniowsky was a Hungarian nobleman who had been a Colonel in the Polish army. During his service with the Poles he had been taken prisoner by the Russians and sent to Siberia. Here he rounded up a group of fellow prisoners and captured a Russian ship. Placing himself in command, he began a voyage of high and dubious adventure which took him to Japan. He visited on the coast of Japan at Awa 阿波 and sailed southward to the island of Ōshima 大島 in the Ryūkyū 琉球 chain. Here he picked up supplies and, as an expression of gratitude, he wrote a letter to the Japanese government to be transmitted to them by the Dutch at Deshima.

This letter confirmed for the Japanese all the rumors they had been hearing for years about the Russians. Beniowsky assured them that the Imperial Russian government had every intention of conquering Japan and was even now (1771) preparing bases in the Kuriles for the sweep southward. Not only this, but they were also sending men to spy on the lands of the Matsumae.

The warnings of Beniowsky were not clearly grasped by the Shogunate officials. In the first place, they didn't understand why Beniowsky would give such a warning to them

even if it was so; and in the second place, they were not familiar with the geography of the north and reference to the Kurile Islands and Kamchatka were not understood by them. They therefore did not take steps to defend themselves from the promised attack, but rather, sought to keep all news of the warning secret in order that public discussion of it might be prevented. They undoubtedly feared that the disclosure of the news of a threatened attack would cause them to lose their hold on the government.²⁰

The policy of secrecy which they sought to maintain was a dismal failure. Too many people had been involved in the translation of the letter to permit a close control of its contents. The Dutch officials translated it into Dutch and the Japanese translators into Japanese. Thus it was that the first news of the warning leaked out of Nagasaki. In August of 1774, Hirasawa Motoyasu 平澤元愷 heard the news from the translator, Matsumura Yasuno 松村安野. In 1777 / ^{Rin} Hayashi Shihei 林子平 heard of the warning while on leave for study in Nagasaki, this time from a Dutch captain. There is good reason to believe that the Dutch aided and abetted the spread of such terrifying rumors concerning Russia. Beniowsky, himself, had little to gain but the embarrassment of Russia. He carried his rumors clear around the world, and upon his arrival in Europe, he informed the French government that the British and Russians were in a secret pact to divide the world. This caused a

20. Tabohashi Kiyoshi 田保橋潔, Kindai Nippon Gaikoku 近代日本外史 Kankei Shi 近代日本外国関係史, (History of Recent Japanese Foreign Relations), Tokyo, 1940, pp. 138-40.

minor sensation in the courts of Europe where the diplomats were politically sophisticated, so the effect on the uninformed Shogunate can be understood.

The Matsumae clan did not hear of the warning until 1778 when Hirasawa Motoyasu 平澤元愷 was vacationing in Ezo. While in the territory of the Matsumae he stayed with Matsumae Hiromichi 松前廣道, uncle of Michihiro 道廣, the clan chief. At this time he told his hosts of the warning the Shogunate had received and of the other information concerning Russian conquest in Asia.²¹

Meanwhile, the Russian situation was becoming complicated. The visits from these fierce foreigners became more frequent and their demands for trade relations became more persistent. In June, 1778 a group of Russians from among those who lived on Uruppu arrived in Kiitappu 霧多布²² in two boats with the tribe chief from Kunashiri, Tsukinoe, as a guide. They landed, after firing their guns, to the east of Kiitappu in Notsukamaku, the commercial section of the city. Using a Shimushiru 新知 Ainu as an interpreter, they met with the head Matsumae official for this area, Araitā Ōyoso 新井田大八, and the senior censor, Kudō Yaoueimon 工藤八百右衛門, and demanded of them the opening of trade relations. The two officials explained that they could make no such arrangements, and after promising an answer by the following year, they left for

21. Kawano, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

22. Now the city of Nemuro 根室.

Fukuyama 福山 where they reported the incident to clan authorities and waited instructions.

Three other officials, Asari Kōhyōe 淺利幸兵衛 Kudō Seiueemon 工藤清右衛門 and Matsui Shigehyōe 松井茂兵衛 were sent as emissaries to Akkeshi 厚岸 bearing the reply of the han authorities. They left from the city of Matsumae in April but did not arrive in Akkeshi until August due to the unfavorable winds encountered on the way. Meanwhile, the Russians had grown tired of waiting in Etorofu and had come to Akkeshi. When the three emissaries arrived, they informed the Russians that trade relations would be impossible and ordered them to leave. The Russians tried to get other information from the men such as the names of the officials in Matsumae who had refused them permission to trade. There is no reason given for the Russians requesting such information, nor is there any attempt to explain it in the documents available, but it would appear from the events subsequent to this, that the Russians were seeking better information to facilitate the trade mission which they sent several years later to Nemuro.

The Japanese refused to disclose the information and sent the Russians on their way after first allowing them to purchase fifteen hyō 俵²³ of rice, some tobacco and sake.

This incident coupled with the many other recorded and unrecorded meetings between the officials of the Matsumae

23. A hyō equals roughly 1.9 bushels, but a variable measure.

clan and the Russians, gave them an excellent opportunity to observe the Russian activities and to formulate a policy to counteract the growing pressure in the north. Despite their many opportunities, the northern han continued to ignore the threat as if paralyzed by fear. They were alarmed first of all by the strength the Russians displayed; the ships which brought these strangers to their shores were mightier than any they had ever seen before. Also, there was the added menace which was supplied by the exaggerated accounts of the complement and armament of each vessel. The Japanese had never seen ships equipped as were the Russian ships, with small boats which were lowered over the side; and when they reported to their chiefs the coming of the Russian ships, they counted each of these small boats as a ship-of-war. Thus, despite the growing alarm, the Matsumae han took no real measures of defense, and the only actual policy which they produced was one of keeping these happenings from the Shogunate.

The Matsumae officials were not interested in keeping the Shogunate uninformed in order to preserve their peace of mind. For a long time they had been engaging in a profitable bootleg trade with the Russians through the Ainu. That is, the Matsumae officials were selling Japanese goods to the Ainu who would trade them to the Russians for Russian goods and would in turn sell these to the Japanese. As this was strictly forbidden under the laws of the Shogunate, the Matsumae officials were willing to allow the

occasional depredations of the Russians to go unpunished in order that their lucrative and illegal trade might continue.

Response of the Intellectuals to Russian Contacts

The increasing pressure on the Kuriles aroused not only the official government, but it gave rise to a series of theories by intellectuals as to how this situation should be dealt with. One of the foremost of these men was Kudō Heisuke (1738-1809) 工藤平助 a physician from a northern han who was residing in Yedo. He wrote a two volume work entitled Aka Ezo Fūsetsu kō 赤蝦夷風説考 (A Report on Rumors Concerning the Red Barbarians) in which he set forth an account of Russian activity in the north, and in which he recommended that Japan get busy and open up the north country herself. He said that the Russians were after the precious metals in the mines of the north and that Japan should open these mines and use the metals to trade with the Russians. This would have two results: the Russians would halt their descent on Hokkaidō, and Japan would be able to strengthen her defenses by her increase in wealth; and could, also, learn more about the outside world.²⁴

Sugita Gempaku (1733-1817) 杉田玄白, noted physician and student of Dutch and Chinese, stated that there

24. Hokkaidō-chō, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-326; Tokutomi Ichirō 徳富猪一郎 Kinsei Nippon Kokufō-shi 近世日本國民史 (A History of the Japanese People in Modern Times) Tokyo, Meiji Shoin, 1935, XXV, pp. 18-22.

were two courses which Japan might follow towards Russia: (1) Japan might go to war with Russia in the hope that she might destroy the Russian military forces both on land and sea; and (2) she might grant privileges to Russia, thereby gaining her good-will, and establishing friendly relations with her. He cautioned that the military forces of the Shōgun had gone soft after their years of easy living, whereas, the forces of Russia were noted for their military might. He then recommended that Japan follow the same course as had Emperor Kiang-Hsi (1662-1723) of China when he granted the Russians trade privileges in the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689). The profit of the trade and the era of peaceful relations would permit Japan to train and equip her armies in such a way that in a short time she would be able to take the Russians on in combat.²⁵

Not all of the ideas set forth by the writers of this period were as realistic as Sugita's and Kudō's. Kōzō Hirayama 行藏 平山 (1758-1828) proposed training the robbers and cut-throats in Japan in military science, and with himself as leader, to send these men to Ezo and conquer the Russians. Honda Toshiaki 本多 利明 (1744-1821) and Rin Shihei 林子平 (1738-1793) urged Japanese development of Ezo and the Kuriles because they regarded these territories as great sources of gold and silver deposits. They believed that the "inexhaustible" output of these precious metals would make Japan the wealthiest nation in the

25. Tokutomi, *op. cit.*, XXV, pp. 336-349; Yoshino Kuno, Japanese Expansion on the Asiatic Continent, University of California Press, 1940, II, pp. 232-3.

world.²⁶

The Shogunate Investigates

The works of these men served to increase the interest of the Shogunate in their northern territories, and the Russian menace made them realize that some effective steps had to be taken quickly. Thus, all through the 1780's and 1790's the Bakufu was desperately trying to figure out a method of consolidating their position in the North country. They realized that they had mistreated the natives, and that the periodic uprisings on Kunashiri and in northern Hokkaidō had been mainly due to the abuses of the government's charter merchants. Heretofore, the responsibility for the natives and the maintenance of the defenses of the area had laid with the Matsumae clan, but their failure to report the true situation and the many instances of trading with foreigners led the Yedo government to take increasing control.

In 1786 the Yedo government sent out its official census takers into the Ainu country, and on May 5 of this year, Mogami Tokunai 最上徳内 arrived at Sharushamu on the island of Etorofu. Upon his arrival, he was greeted by three Russians. Mogami set about making a shelter for himself, and this done, he invited the Russians to dine with him. After making friends with them and giving them some Japanese food stuffs, medicine and coins, he

26. Kuno, op. cit., pp. 235-37.

interrogated them. When asked why they had come to Etorofu, they replied that they had originally dwelled on Uruppu, but following a quarrel with their comrades, they had fled to Etorofu. Mogami took the Russians to Kunashiri with him and questioned them further, learning much of the Russian activities on Uruppu. After this he returned to Etorofu and thence to Uruppu, where he explored the island and met the Russians there. He then returned to Hokkaidō and ordered the Matsumae samurai to return the Russians to Etorofu, and there the Russians were ordered to leave the island and return to Uruppu. Mogami was the first government official to reach as far as Uruppu. Previously, in 1785, Yamaguchi Tetsugorō 山口 鉄五郎 had been sent to Karafuto and the Kuriles, but he had not gone as far north in the Kuriles.²⁷

In 1789 there occurred a rather serious uprising of the Ainu on Kunashiri and in Akkeshi on northern Hokkaidō. Investigation showed that the trouble resulted from the mistreatment of the natives by the contract merchants who had been in the region since 1774. So, in 1790 the Bakufu decided on a policy of "assisting trade," i.e., trade from which the Ainu would benefit, instead of the harsh methods applied earlier. This, they believed, would win the Ainu over to them, for they were also being mistreated by the Russian traders, and they would assist the Japanese in halting the Russian descent into the southern islands.

27. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

In preparation for this new policy, Mogami was again sent to the Kuriles to investigate conditions there. Upon his arrival in Etorofu, he learned that the Russians he had ordered out of the island three years earlier had left just before his arrival. He also heard more rumors of the Matsumae clansmen trading with the Russians, and that the Russians were infiltrating Karafuto. Furthermore, he heard that the Russians had a plan afoot to return some shipwrecked Japanese and to use this as a pretext for demanding a trade agreement with the Bakafu.²⁸

Meanwhile, more background in Russian activity in Uruppu was gleaned. In 1744 a Japanese named Shozaemon 目券左衛門, from the village of Sai 左井 in Aomori 青森 prefecture, was shipwrecked and rescued by the Russians. He was taken to Irkutsk where he married a Russian and became a minor official in the Siberian service. Some years later, in 1784, his son led an expedition of Russians to the island of Sakhalin (the Russian name for Karafuto) but was driven off by the natives. On their return to Siberia they were shipwrecked on the island of Uruppu and all perished. The Ainu of this island took what valuables that remained in the wreck and burned the remains of the vessel. Soon afterwards, another Russian vessel appeared in Uruppu; and upon hearing of their arrival, the Ainu leader of the Uruppu tribe, fearing reprisals for the looting of the shipwreck, gathered his

28. Ibid., pp. 374-6.

followers in small boats and fled the island. They ran into a storm at sea and all were killed. This story eventually reached the Russians who raided the Ainu off Etorofu and Kunashiri in reprisal for the looting of the Russian shipwreck.²⁹

More Russian Pressure

Meantime, the expedition to Japan about which Mogami heard rumors was forming in Siberia. The castaways which the Russians planned to return were members of the crew of the "Shinshō-maru" 神昌丸, a rice ship from the province of Kii 紀伊 which had run into a storm off Suruga 駿河 in December 1782 and drifted helplessly for seven months, finally washing ashore in Amchitka in the Aleutian Islands in July, 1783. Here they remained for four years, and in 1787 they managed to sail in a small boat to Kamchatka. After a year of travelling about on the continent, they made their way to Irkutsk. In 1791 they were taken by the Russians to St. Petersburg where they had an audience with Catherine II and were returned in the same year to Irkutsk.

These Japanese aroused great interest in Russia, and Erik Laxman, a noted Finnish scientist and a professor at the Academy in St. Petersburg, evolved a plan to use these castaways as a method of opening relations with Japan. He believed that by returning these men, goodwill would be

29. Hokkaidō-Chō, op. cit., pp. 374-6.

established with the Japanese government, and trade relations, as well as a boundary agreement, could be settled. His son, Adam Laxman, was chosen to head the expedition, and a boat, the "Ekaterina" was assigned to him to carry the group to Japan. The crew of this vessel consisted not only of military men, but of cartographers, surveyors, merchants to help in the trade agreements, translators, and the three Japanese castaways, Kōdayu 光太夫, Isokichi 磯吉, and Koichi 小市. All in all, there were thirty-nine Russians plus the three Japanese.

They set sail from Okhotsk and arrived in north Kunashiri in October of 1792. They moved down the coast to the southern tip of the island, and on October 19, 1792, they contacted some of the island's Ainu with whom they traded tobacco for fresh fish. Ashore they found a trading hut established by the Matsumae clan, and on the 20th they met some Japanese who were, at first, afraid of them, but upon seeing Isokichi and the others, entered into conversation with the Russians. They told them that there was a good port at Nemuro, and following their directions, the Russians arrived at Nemuro Bay and were guided into the port by a Japanese boat on October 21, 1792. The three shipwrecked Japanese were sent ashore and were taken into custody by the officials and sent to Yedo where their account of their adventures was set down in a book called the Hokusa Bunryaku 北槎聞略. Laxman related his mission to the Matsumae officials upon his arrival, but no

action was taken by them. On November 11, Laxman sent a letter to the Matsumae officials saying that he intended to go directly to Edo if they did not take some action on his demands.

His letter was forwarded to Edo by the Matsumae officials and after a considerable delay, officials of the Shogunate arrived and directed that the Russians be sent to Hakodate 函館, where they were guided by a Japanese vessel. Here, Laxman entered into lengthy negotiations with the representatives of the central government, but the result was that Laxman was told that he had come to the wrong place to negotiate. He did manage to receive a permit to enter the port of Nagasaki which was to be used by the next Russian expedition. After an exchange of presents, Laxman left Japan on July 16, 1793 and arrived back at Okhotsk in August.³⁰ Although Laxman had not achieved his main objective of opening Japan to trade he did receive from them a permit for one ship a year to enter the port of Hakodate.

This Russian venture had served as further warning to the Shogunate that some action must be taken to consolidate their position in the North, and they decided to take steps which would bring Ezo and the adjacent islands under their control. In 1798 another group of officials was sent out to investigate these areas, and Kunashiri and Etorofu were again visited. Markers were posted on these islands, and

30. Tokutomi, op. cit., XXV, pp. 107-136.

they were declared to be the possession of the Shogunate.³¹

In 1801 observers were sent to Uruppu to investigate the Russians there. They were instructed to find out if the Russians intended to stay or not, and if they had already withdrawn from the island, to take a census of the natives. These investigators arrived on the island in June and soon after their arrival, they carved a statement on a tree which declared Uruppu to be a Japanese possession. Subsequently, they met a lone Russian on the island, and one of the investigators who had been with Laxman earlier and who had learned a little Russian was able to converse with him. The Russian requested some rice and sake and offered the Japanese some pelts in return. The Japanese gave him the foodstuffs requested but refused the pelts saying that according to an ancient law, it was forbidden to trade with foreigners.

In 1802 the Japanese officials heard from the Ainu of Etorofu that the Russians were preparing to leave Uruppu. The Japanese, in the following year, forbade the Ainu of Etorofu to go to the island of Uruppu and informed them that trading with the Russians was absolutely forbidden.

Meanwhile, the Russians had been making preparations for putting the pressure on Japan, again, in order to obtain trading privileges from that country. This time the guiding force behind the operation was the famed Russian-American Company. In 1781 a Siberian fur merchant,

31. Hokkaidō-Chō, op. cit., pp. 459-60.

Shelekhov, formed a company for the exploitation of the Kuriles and Alaska. It was probably his hunters who had been ranging the northern Kuriles, and who had contacted the Japanese in the islands. In 1799 this company merged with another under the direction of Alexander Baranov, and the Russian-American Company was formed.³² The influence of this company spread rapidly throughout Alaska and California, and it became an acknowledged tool of Russian expansion, when Alexander I joined the company as one of its directors. One of the ambitions of the Russian-American Company was to add Japan to its territory of trade, and in order to facilitate this, one of the company's directors, Rezanov, was appointed by Alexander I, Ambassador to Japan. In 1804 Rezanov, aboard the "Nadezhda," commanded by Captain Krusenstern, set sail from Petropavlosk to Nagasaki. Rezanov's orders were to:

(1) broaden the terms of the agreement received by Laxman (one ship a year) and to seek the opening of more ports; (2) if the Japanese government will permit an additional trade post, secure the port of Matsumae for this purpose; (3) if these propositions are refused, attempt to establish trade with Japan through Urupp; (4) investigate whether Sakhalin belongs to Japan or China; (5) question the Japanese about conditions at the mouth of the Amur River; (6) clarify Japan's relations with China and Korea, find out if the Ryukyu Islands are independent or if they belong to Japan, and if they are independent, open trade relations with them.³³

32. A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, Russia and Asia, Macmillan Company, New York, 1933, p. 128.

33. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., p. 539. Russian sources state that Rezanov's orders concerning Sakhalin were to consider it a Russian possession and to annex it in the name of the Russian-American Company.

The Japanese were reluctant to deal with the Russians at all, and when they finally did commence relations with them, they kept them isolated in the same strict manner as they did the Dutch. They allowed them one privilege -- Ambassador Rezanov was allowed to take his body guard ashore with him, and they were allowed to keep their arms. The weapons of the rest of the crew were taken, with the exception of the officer's swords. The Russians were not allowed to have any intercourse with the Dutch except in the presence of Japanese interpreters. As in the previous expedition, the Russians had brought Japanese castaways with them to act as a device for beginning relations, but in this instance, they were probably instrumental in closing relations. One of the returned sailors told the officials of the Shogunate that the Russians were bigoted Christians of the worst sort who had come to Japan to force this forbidden religion upon the Japanese. He said that the treatment that he and his comrades had received at the hands of the Russians had been of the worst sort, and that most of his comrades had been forced to take up Christianity and remain in Russia.³⁴

The truth of the matter was that the Japanese had been given every consideration by the Russians, and a number of the rescued crew had preferred to embrace Christianity and stay in Russia, probably because they feared the consequences of returning from a foreign land which was

34. Krusenstern, VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD, London, 1813, pp. 282-3.

forbidden by law. The fate of those Japanese who returned with the Laxman expedition may have reached their ears, also. These men were forced to live in strict confinement and were always under suspicion of being spies. It was probably to avoid this that the Japanese who returned with Krusenstern spoke so harshly of their benefactors.

Whatever the reasons, the negotiations with the Japanese at Nagasaki not only did not improve conditions, but worsened them. Instead of the one ship a year which was permitted under the terms given to Laxman, no Russian ship was to come to Japan again. All presents from the Russian Emperor, Alexander I, to the Emperor of Japan were refused, including the letter. Should any more Japanese be shipwrecked on the coast of Russia, they were to be turned over to the Dutch who would return them by way of Batavia. The Japanese then supplied the Russians with whatever supplies they needed, and after making the crew a present of silks, they ended their relations with the Russians who set sail from Japan on April 16, 1805.³⁵

Soon after the Russians had left Japan, another incident occurred in the Kuriles which alarmed the Shogunate. In June of 1805, a group of Ainu from Rashowa arrived at Shibetoro in Etorofu and were promptly arrested by the Japanese there. They were sent to Shana in Hokkaido and imprisoned as suspected Russian spies. Upon interrogation, they disclosed that they had been ordered

35. Krusenstern, op. cit., pp. 386-7.

to look over the island of Etorofu and to try and develop trade with the inhabitants of that island. They said they had been sent by their tribal chief. They also told the Japanese officials that the Russians on Uruppu had run out of supplies and had wanted to return to Siberia in the fall of 1804, which bore out the rumor heard earlier by the Ainu of Etorofu, and that they left this same year but were forced by the weather to return to Uruppu. Here they passed the winter in great hardship with some of them dying. Those who survived left the island in the summer of 1805. Acting on this information, a party of Japanese officials led by an Ainu guide, left for Uruppu in 1806, and as a result of their expedition found that the Russians had, indeed, vacated Uruppu.

When Captain Rikord came to free Golovnin in 1813, he was confronted with information about Rashowa Ainu whom the Japanese believed had been sent to try and trade with them. In view of the other suggestions emanating from the Russians in which this very plan was put forth, it is likely that these natives had, indeed, been agents of the Russian traders.

New Policies of the Shogunate

The constantly increasing pressure of the Russians on the northern territories forced the shogunate to formulate official policies on a number of problems which arose with their increasing responsibilities. As early as 1800 an

official body of state counsellors had met to formulate the Japanese policy regarding the treatment of Russians found within the territories of the empire, which, by now, included Uruppu. After much discussion, they decided that the Russians were to be warned that they had broken the laws of Japan by transgressing on her territory, and that they were to leave immediately. If they refused, they were to be killed or taken prisoner.³⁶

The other policy decision made dealt with the problem of guarding the Kuriles from further Russian excursions. The plan accepted by the Shogunate was drawn up by the magistrate of Hakodate in 1806.³⁷ He stated that whereas the rule of Etorofu was still not perfected, and that additional administrative responsibilities were to be avoided, Uruppu should not be left entirely unguarded. As a compromise between a permanent administration on the island and leaving it entirely unguarded, he suggested that every summer, patrols should be sent to the island along with groups of Ainu. The patrols could guard against the coming of the Russians, and the Ainu could hunt and fish. In

36. Hokkaido-chō, op. cit., pp. 481-2.

37. Since 1799 the central government had been assuming increased control over the territories of the Matsumae clan, and in 1802 the Shogunate established the rank of magistrate as their highest official representative in Hokkaido. This rank was roughly that of a military_governor. At first, the official title was Ezo Bugyo 蝦夷奉行 (Magistrate of the Barbarian Ainu). Three months later in the same year the title was changed to Hakodate Bugyo 函館奉行 (Magistrate of Hakodate), Hakodate being the principle city in the region.

the winter when navigation in the Kuriles was almost impossible, the Russians need not be feared, and the patrols and the Ainu could be withdrawn. This plan was accepted and in 1807 thirty light troops of the Tsugaru 津軽 han and thirty Ainu hunters and fishers were dispatched to Uruppu.³⁸

In 1806, after Rezanov's visit, the Shogunate issued another set of instructions regarding the treatment of the Russians. They directed their officials saying, "If Russians arrive, they are to be warned and caused to return; if they meet with unfavorable winds and are shipwrecked, they are to be given food, water and kindling, but they are not to be allowed to land. If they reject the warning and refuse to depart, they are to be driven off by force."³⁹

In 1806-7 something occurred to make the Japanese change their mild orders for the treatment of the Russians, and to substitute much harsher measures. During these two years, two young officers of the Russian American Company, Lieutenants Davydov and Khvostov, chagrined at the manner in which the demands of Rezanov had been refused, decided to teach the Japanese a lesson. In 1806 they appeared with their two small men-of-war off Sakhalin, and after a bombardment, landed at Kushunkotan 久春古丹. After raiding the village, they put up a copper plate

38. Hokkaido-chō, op. cit., 381-5.

39. Ibid., p. 556.

which said that it was unjust for the Japanese to prohibit trade with the Russians, and that if they changed their minds on the subject they were to send a message to Uruppu or Sakhalin. If they did not change their mind, the Russian would ravage the northern parts of Japan.⁴⁰

The first Japanese reaction to the raid was a call to the northern clans of Nambu 南部, Tsugaru, Akita 秋田, and Shouchi 庄内 for reinforcements. The Nambu clan was held responsible for the defense of Nemuro 根室, and the island of Kunashiri while the Tsugaru clan was charged with the defense of Sawara on the island of Hokkaido and of the island of Etorofu. The other clans were to serve under these two. The garrison at Etorofu was increased to three hundred men and the Hakodate garrison to 2,500.

The Japanese settlement in the Kuriles at this time had developed into a rather flourishing community consisting of some 300-350 Japanese and 1,000 Ainu. A brewery had been established to serve the soldiers stationed there. The Ainu engaged in hunting and fishing and traded their catch to the Japanese in Hakodate. The population was gathered into two settlements, one at Shana 紗那 and one at Naihō with the garrison being at Shana.

The raids of Davydov and Khvostov continued, and in 1807 they appeared off the coast of Etorofu and made a

40. W. G. Aston, "Russian Descents on Saghalin and Itorup in the Years 1806 and 1807," Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, series 1, no. 2, 1874, pp. 86-95.

landing at Naiho. After a brief encounter, the Japanese guards were driven off, and after taking clothes and other materials, they left with five Japanese prisoners. They next appeared at Shana and drove off the major Japanese garrison and captured the castle headquarters. They then burned the castle along with the brewery and the Ainu huts. From here, the Russians proceeded to Hakodate. They were afraid to attempt a landing at Hakodate fearing the superior forces of the Japanese, but they did send ashore a note to the officials there stating that unless the Japanese accepted their terms for trade, they would appear again next year in even greater force.⁴¹

Existing records do not make clear the relationship between these two young officers of the Russian-American Company and the official expedition under Rezanov. Golovnin insists that they acted purely on their own.⁴² However, the major part of his argument turned upon the fact that these two men were not in the naval service of Russia, but rather, in that of the Russian-American Company. That of course, is the truth, but what he didn't explain was the fact that the Russian-American Company was the semi-official agency of Russian foreign policy in the Far East, and that its charter gave it the right to call upon Russian troops to protect its annexations.

Whatever the official role of Davydov and Khvostov, the effect on the already suspicious Shogunate was electric.

41. Stanton, op. cit., p. 425.

42. Vasilii M. Golovnin, Memoirs of a Captivity in Japan, London, 1824.

They issued new orders for the treatment of Russians found in Japanese territory. These orders, issued in 1807, stated that because of the acts of violence on the part of the Russians, they were to be attacked on sight, and if they landed, they were to be taken prisoner or killed. Only those who arrived ashore from wrecked vessels were to be received, and these were to be held for final disposition by the central government. There were some officials who felt that this policy was too mild and believed that the Russians could not be kept at a distance by defensive measures, alone, but that strong offensive steps should be taken such as the conquest of the islands north of Etorofu and "depending on the circumstances, the conquest of Kamchatka, itself." The shogunate put these regulations in writing and sent them to their officials in Hokkaidō along with a letter to the Russians stating that the Russian policy of demanding trade by force of arms would never be countenanced, and that they had better improve their conduct and return those Japanese taken in the raids. They had no opportunity to deliver this letter until the arrival of Golovnin in 1811.⁴³

Golovnin had been sent by the Russian government to survey the Kurile Islands and to observe what he could. In search of supplies and information, Golovnin landed on the Island of Kunashiri where he was met by some of the members of the Japanese garrison. Golovnin agreed to

43. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., pp. 556-7.

accompany them to their camp for what he thought would be a friendly parley but while engaged in conversation, he and a number of his men were taken prisoner. The captivity of Golovnin and his fellow prisoners came about directly as a result of the earlier raids by Khvostov and Davydov. The disposition of these prisoners posed a problem to the Japanese which was eventually solved by the return of the Russian vessel "Diana" to Japan under the command of Captain Rikord in 1813 for the purpose of rescuing captives. The Russians were first informed that their comrades were dead and that they, the Japanese, could enter into no negotiations with Russia, but eventually they came forward with the information that the prisoners still lived, and they agreed to return them subject to certain conditions. These conditions were: (1) the Russians must show official papers signed by two district commanders certifying that Khvostov and Davydov had carried out their raids on the Kurile Islands without knowledge or consent of the Russian government. (2) The booty taken by the raiders was to be returned to Japan and signed statements from the district commanders must be brought confirming that no more remained in their districts.⁴⁴

Rikord set sail for Okhotsk in July, 1813 and returned in August of the same year. After much protracted negotiation, Golovnin and his fellows were released, and they returned to Russia in 1813. The account given by Golovnin

44. Golovnin, op. cit., II, pp. 305-11.

contains no reference to any further Japanese communications concerning future relations other than a letter which stated that now since they, the Russians, had lived among the Japanese for some time, they had come to know the laws of Japan and could inform their compatriotes of the same, and thereby prevent further useless trips to Japan. Japanese accounts, however, tell of a last letter given to the Russians just as they departed from Japan and which served to define the boundary between Japan and Russia in the Kuriles, and set forth the procedure for the return of shipwrecked mariners. By the terms of this letter, the Japanese set forth their boundary as the island of Etorofu, and the Russians' southernmost island as Shimushiri. No buildings were to be built in the intervening islands. If the Russians saw fit to return any shipwrecked sailors, they were to be put ashore on Uruppu, and they warned that punitive measure would be taken if they appeared in Etorofu or south of it.⁴⁵

The Decline of Russian Influence

This period of Russian expansion was really guided and inspired by Peter the Great. Catherine II who succeeded him in 1725 and ruled until 1796 was really carrying out the program outlined by Peter before his death. With the death of Catherine in 1796 the program of expansion and exploration in the Far East began to drag to a halt and

45. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., pp. 584-5 and Roy Akagi, Japan's Foreign Relations 1542-1936, Hokuseido Press, Tokyo, 1936, p. 61.

Alexander I's preoccupation with Napoleon Bonaparte in Europe and his predilection for the role of European policeman virtually ended for some thirty years Russian interest in the Far East. It was not until Muraviev was appointed Governor-general of Eastern Siberia in 1847 that Russia again began to loom mightily on the shores of the Pacific.

There were a few attempts on the part of the Russians to contact the Japanese again. In 1815 they attempted to land some shipwrecked Japanese on Etorofu, but they failed to see anyone to turn them over to, and they sailed away. This vessel carried a letter from the Governor of Kamchatka to Japan. Again, in 1816, an attempt was made to land Japanese mariners on Etorofu, but a heavy fog prevented the landing, and they were put ashore on Uruppu. In 1818, Iida Gorotsuke 飯田五郎作 was sent to Uruppu on government business and found a letter from the Russians in a box nailed to a post. It was badly faded from the rain, but it was partially readable and said that in 1814 the Russians had come to the northern part of Japan but had failed to see anyone to whom the letter could be given.⁴⁶

Despite the lull in their relations with the Russians, the shogunate demonstrated clearly that their minds were still not easy over the threat of Russian invasion in the north. In 1822, the shogunate again sent orders to the Magistrate of Matsumae concerning the Russians. The orders

46. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., pp. 586-7.

stated that because of the proximity of Etorofu and Sakhalin to the Russians, and because of the importance of the lands, every effort should be made to see that an adequate defense was established. They added that, as yet, no reply had been received to the Japanese demand for a border delineation at Etorofu and Shimushiri, and that the Russians could be permitted to land on Etorofu. Why this change in the orders to permit the Russians to land on Etorofu is not made clear, but it was probably to allow them to send their reply to the letter sent with Golovnin. The orders went on to state that if the Russians offered anything to the Japanese on the island, it was to be refused, and if they landed claiming that they were shipwrecked, their claim was to be investigated. All foreign vessels which attempted landings in the territory of Matsumae or in the territory controlled by the Nambu or Tsugaru clans were to be driven off. This was to remain the standing order for the treatment of all foreign ships until 1842, when the orders were changed to allow the foreign ships to be given supplies and sent away instead of being attacked.⁴⁷

Russia Returns

With the appearance of Muraviev on the Far Eastern scene in 1847 Russian policy acquired a new dynamism.

47. Ibid., pp. 649-50.

The next contact made with the Japanese was not by Putiatin as has been commonly supposed but by Captain Lindenberg of the Russian-American Company. This expedition was organized by the Russian-Commander of the Colony of Sitka upon hearing of America's intention to open Japan under Commodore Aulick in 1851. Lindenberg arrived in Shimoda in the Russian-American Company's ship, "Prince Menshikov" on July 28, 1852. He had aboard seven Japanese sailors and a letter written in Chinese which he showed to the governor of the port. The governor was much moved by the kindness of the Russians in returning the shipwrecked sailors, but he informed Lindenberg that he could accept neither the return of his countrymen nor the letter. He did, however, take the letter ashore and have it copied, saying that he would have it sent to Yedo where there were persons who could read Chinese. The governor then inquired if the ship was in need of supplies, and after being told that the Russians were short of water and food, he had water and dried fish sent out to the vessel.

The governor of the port first told the Captain that, although none of the others could go ashore, he might. He then asked permission to inspect the ship, and while he was doing so, a number of guard ships drew near and sketched the vessel. He also questioned the shipwrecked Japanese in detail about their stay in Russia and asked questions about Sitka, Okhotsk and the other places they had visited. Lindenberg commented that "It seems that the government of

Japan is becoming afraid of the near neighborhood of the Russians." As these amenities and interrogations were going on, Lindenberg noticed the soldiers were gathering in Shimoda, and that cannon were being brought into place behind tents. On July 31 the Vice-Governor of Odawara arrived and once again interrogated the returned Japanese. On the following day, additional cavalry and foot troops were seen entering the city. On August 2, the Vice-Governor again came aboard and told Lindenberg that he had received orders from Yedo that forbade his accepting the return of the Japanese sailors or the letter, and that it was forbidden to hold intercourse with foreigners in Shimoda. He then asked Lindenberg to withdraw. After a vain attempt to reason with the Japanese, Lindenberg complied, and at the request of the returnees, he put them into a small boat and saw them row ashore undetected.⁴⁸

After the failure of the Lindenberg expedition, the Russian government decided to send a more official group to attempt to open Japan to trade. The expedition was in charge of Admiral Evfrimi Vasilevich Putiatin. Putiatin had been ordered to Japan earlier in 1842, but this expedition was called off when the Russian Minister of Commerce, Kankrin, decided that the finances of Russia could not support such an attempt at that time. The second expedition headed by Putiatin arrived in Nagasaki in August of 1853.

48. Paul E. Eckel, "A Russian Expedition to Japan in 1852," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXIV, pp. 159-67, April, 1943.

Putiatin had under his command four vessels, the frigate "Pallas," the steamer "Vostok," the corvette "Dlivusta," and the transport "Kniaz Menshikov." Putiatin bore a letter for the Shogun from Count Nesselrode, then the foreign minister. The note contained two demands. One was territorial and asked that the border between Japan and Russia be delimited; the other was commercial and asked that Japan open one or two ports to Russian vessels and to commence trade relations. The main point was, however, the establishment of the border in Sakhalin, with the Russians desiring the border to be Aniwa Bay at the Southernmost tip of the island. In detail the demands were as follows:

- (1) all the Kurile Islands north of Etorofu to be Russian;
- (2) all of Sakhalin to be Russian;
- (3) Osaka and Hakodate were to be opened to Russian trade and ships, in addition to which, the Russians were to be accorded freedom of worship in these two cities;
- (4) consuls were to be allowed in the ports opened for Russian trade with extraterritorial jurisdiction over Russian subjects;
- (5) and Russia was to be accorded the most favored nations' clause.⁴⁹

The Shogunate sent two officers to deal with the Russians, Tsuzui Masamori 筒井 政憲, Lord of Hizen; and Kawaji Masanori 川路 聖謨. Their reply to the Russian demands stated that as the Russians had come in friendship, so the Japanese must respond with friendship, - this no doubt, in explanation of their acting against earlier orders which forbade any intercourse with foreigners.

49. Stanton, op. cit., p. 442.

As for the problem of the boundaries, they informed the Russians that the clans to whom the disputed territory nominally belonged had already been instructed to investigate all of the old documents on the problem. As for the rest of the demand, i.e., the opening of ports and the commencement of commercial relations, etc., these were absolutely forbidden by the immutable laws of their ancestors. Even so, they had regarded these demands in the light of the changing universe which seemed to bring scores of persons to Japan begging for commercial relations. Whether or not these wishes for trade were to be granted had been under constant consideration. However, the fact that a new Shogun had only recently succeeded to power, required all of their attention and a decision on the Russian demands would require from three to five years.⁵⁰

The Japanese also took this opportunity to discuss the Russian occupation of Sakhalin which had taken place in September of 1853 following an expedition by Boshniak to the island in 1852. According to the Japanese accounts, the Russians gave as their reason the desire to protect the Japanese interests in the island until Japan could put a sufficient force in garrison to protect the island from prying foreigners. As the Crimean war was in progress at the time, it takes no imagination to discern that the foreign country referred to was England. The Russians admitted that the Japanese authorities had occupied Sakhalin

50. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., pp. 683-4.

first. Russian sources state that the Japanese tried to throw the Russians out of Sakhalin by stirring up the Ainu against Russian forces on the island, but this attempt failed. As for justification for the occupation, they issued a statement to the effect that "In accordance with the Treaty of Nerchinsk concluded between Russia and China, the island of Sakhalin, being a prolongation of the basin of the Amur, incontestably belongs to Russia."⁵¹

Tsutui was loathe to give any ground at all to the Russians on the score of territorial possessions, stating that the Kuriles had always belonged to the Japanese, and as for the claim that Sakhalin was Russian by virtue of proximity to the Amur basin, it was pointed out that the Japanese had frequently gone as far as the Amur River estuary and had established guard posts there. He added that there was no agreement as to the boundary in Sakhalin, even on foreign maps, and that it was a matter which had to be taken up later, but as for the Kuriles, it had already been settled by the agreement with Golovnin. He then told the Russians that if they were in trouble, they could come into any Japanese port but Edo for supplies, but that Japan was closed to commercial relations. On this note, the negotiations ended.

The Russians returned again in March of 1854 and asked that either Tsutui or Kawaji be sent to Aniwa on Sakhalin and there meet with the Russians to decide on the border.

51. Lobanov-Rostovsky, op. cit., p. 139.

If no permanent decision could be reached, a temporary boundary was to be established and laws were to be agreed upon regulating commerce between the two nations on the island. However, the increasing pressure of the Crimean war forced Russia to shorten her borders in the Far East and the Russian forces on Sakhalin were withdrawn to Kamchatka before the Japanese emissaries arrived.⁵² Thus, the first real negotiations had failed to solve the boundary dispute between Russia and Japan. They did make clear the position of the two nations and spelled out the desires of both. The Japanese made it clear that their intention was to hold the Kuriles as far as Etorofu; and, although the Shōgun had forbidden the negotiators to make any definite commitments regarding the boundary of Sakhalin, they had suggested the 55° latitude as the logical boundary. The Japanese were not ignorant of the mineral deposits, mainly coal, in the southern half of the island, and they also wanted to retain it as a fishing base. The Russians, on the other hand, found themselves constantly faced with the spectre of English conquest of the island which was held by such weak Japanese forces. They had just seen the British gain considerable advantages from China in the Opium War of 1841-42, and if they decided to take Sakhalin from the Japanese which they could do at any time, they could seal the Amur River to Russian naval vessels and penetrate it with their own. Thus, it was

52. Hokkaidō-chō, op. cit., pp. 687-689.

Sakhalin which was to become the major bone of contention for the next several decades; and the Kuriles, which had occupied the center of the stage until now, were to drop into the background.

The Boundary Question and Anglo-Russian Rivalry

The next negotiations with Japan were also conducted by Putiatin. This time the Russians appeared on the 18th of September, 1854 off the coast of Ōsaka. They caused great alarm in court circles, and the shogunate instructed Tsuchiya Uneme 土屋采女, Keeper of the castle of Ōsaka, to contact the Russian envoy and inform him that negotiations could not take place at Ōsaka, and that he was to proceed to Shimoda. The Russians complied and left for Shimoda forthwith arriving there on October 14. On this trip Putiatin had brought but one vessel, the "Diana," and the Russians made a great point of this, saying that their good intentions could not be doubted, as they did not place any pressure on the Japanese by arriving with a great fleet. This had very little to do with the success of the Russian venture, however, as the resistance which the Japanese had maintained against increasing western pressure for treaties had already been broken by the American and British treaties of March, 1854 and October, 1854, respectively.

The Russian Ambassador, Putiatin, met again with his old adversaries, Tsutui and Kawaji, this time in a Buddhist

temple at Shimoda. The fact that these men were disposed to deal readily with the Russians was underscored by the fact that during the negotiations the single Russian vessel was destroyed by a tidal wave resulting from an earthquake. Putiatin was allowed to sail in his damaged vessel to the port of Heda, and on the way his ship sank. The Shogunate then permitted the Russians to build a ship for their return to Russia -- the first modern, western ship to be constructed in Japan.⁵³

Putiatin then returned to Shimoda and completed his negotiations, the treaty being signed on February 7, 1855. In its content, this treaty was similar to Perry's first treaty, the only part being of concern in this paper was the boundary settlements in the Kuriles. These arrangements were disposed of in Article II of the treaty which states - "The boundary between Japan and Russia shall be between the islands of Etorofu and Urupp. The island of Etorofu belongs entirely to Japan, and the Island of Urupp and all of the Kurile Islands north of Urupp belong to Russia." The problem of establishing a border in Sakhalin still remained too much for the emissaries to handle, and the rest of Article II settled this by stating - "As for the Island of Karafuto (Sakhaline or Saghalien), it remains as before, a condominium of Russia and Japan."⁵⁴

53. Yosuburo Takekoshi, The Economic Aspects of the History of the Civilization of Japan, London, 1930, III, p. 324.

54. John H. Gubbins, The Progress of Japan 1853-1871, Oxford, 1911, p. 236, and Takekoshi, op. cit., p. 324.

It is interesting to note that this first Russian treaty was the first treaty to introduce the principle of extra-territoriality in full into Japanese foreign relations. Supplementary treaties were signed on October 24, 1857, and August 19, 1858, but neither of these pertained to the boundary settlement and served mainly to clarify arrangements for port facilities and other commercial details.⁵⁵

The next attempt on the part of the Russians to settle the boundary was put in charge of Count Muraviev Amurskii. Muraviev had considerable success in his negotiations with the Chinese over the settlement of the boundary in the Amur River region, and in 1858 the treaties of Aigun and Tientsin gave Russia the left bank of the river and equal rights with the Chinese on the Manchurian sea coast.⁵⁶ He had been increasingly concerned with the British and greatly feared that they might get the Japanese to give them Sakhalin which would largely nullify Russian gains in the Amur region as it would give the British control of the estuary of the river. He arrived in Japan to commence his negotiations

55. Gubbins, op. cit., pp. 239-45. It will be noticed that there is a considerable discrepancy in the dates given for the signing of these treaties between the Japanese, Russian and English language sources. This results from the use of three different calendars -- the Russians, at this time, still adhered to the ancient Julian calendar and the Japanese used the Chinese or Lunar calendar, while the United States and the other Western nations used the Gregorian calendar. Wherever possible, the Gregorian dates have been used, although frequently, Japanese dates have had to be relied upon. Where this has been true, only the month and the year has been given, as the day of the month would be inaccurate to the extent of being entirely useless.

56. Payson J. Treat, Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Japan 1853-1895. Stanford, 1932, I, pp. 90-91.

in August, 1859 with a squadron of seven vessels carrying one hundred and five guns, and a few days later two more ships arrived to join his fleet. With this display of strength, Muraviev intended to persuade the Japanese to relinquish all claims to Sakhalin. He had obtained his title of Count of Amur for his services already rendered in obtaining control of this region; and by getting the Japanese to give up Sakhalin, Russian control would be complete. The entire negotiations were marked by obvious bad feeling on the part of the Japanese populace, and before Muraviev had even established official residence in Yedo, some of his men were stoned by the citizens of the shogunal capital. Muraviev complained and succeeded in having the Japanese officer in charge of the district removed. He then came ashore in state on the 22nd of August, and three days later he began his negotiations. This was marred, however, by the death of a lieutenant and two seamen from his command who were cut down by some samurai.⁵⁷ This threw a damper on the negotiations, and Muraviev departed late in September leaving behind a Russian officer, Captain Ounkovsky, to see to it that the Japanese apologies were carried out satisfactorily. Upon his return to Russia, Muraviev bitterly suggested that Russia should take Sakhalin by force of arms, and Russian sources credit British chicanery with being responsible for the failure of Muraviev's plan.⁵⁸

57. Ibid., p. 91.

58. Stanton, op. cit., p. 467.

During this same year, 1861, another incident occurred to disturb Russo-Japanese relations. The Russians in their anxiety to obtain a warm water port, and to forestall the British from gaining a base off their newly acquired territory along the coast of Manchuria, set out to sieze the Japanese-controlled island of Tsushima. In March, 1861 a Russian corvette, the "Possadnick," under the command of Commander Barilev was sent to the island and ordered to set up a base there. Upon hearing of this latest venture into Japanese territory, Yedo dispatched several officials to investigate, but they succeeded only in getting a statement from the Russians that their ship was in need of repair, and that they had put into the island to effect the said repairs. The fact that this ship had only recently left Nagasaki in good condition, heightened Japanese suspicions, and they demanded further information. The Russians then informed them that they really came to forestall the British who intended to sieze the island, an excuse used earlier to explain the establishment of a base on Sakhalin. The Japanese then appealed to the British Ambassador who dispatched an English ship to the island to determine the intentions of the Russians. The British reported finding a naval establishment, complete with the Russian flag flying over it. They, the British, then informed the Russian government that they could not recognize any occupation of Japanese territory by any foreign power unless formalized by a treaty. The Russians then dispatched

an order to Barilev to withdraw. Later the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg made representations to the Russian government on the affair, and Prince Gorchakov, himself, sent a reply.⁵⁹

From this incident, and the earlier Russian accusations of British interference with Russo-Japanese relations, it is obvious that the main factor in the Russian scramble to settle the boundary question in the North was to forestall any British attempt to gain a base close to the Amur River region.

Japan Loses Sakhalin

The Russian efforts to settle the Sakhalin boundary question by sending in settlers to the island alarmed the Shogunate, and in 1862, the Japanese mission to Europe was authorized to visit St. Petersburg and negotiate a settlement of the boundary, with the dividing line being at the fiftieth parallel, north. The two Japanese representatives, Takenouchi Shimonotsuke 竹内 下野 and Matsudaira 松平, Lord of Iwami, explained to their Russian counterpart, Count Ignatiev, that the fiftieth parallel represented the division between the Ainu, who were considered by the Shogunate to be Japanese subjects, and another tribe, referred to as the Smelenkur. The Russians denied that the Ainu extended as far north as the fiftieth parallel, and Ignatiev suggested a compromise at the forty-

59. E. M. Satow, "Japan," Cambridge Modern History, New York, MacMillan Company, 1909, XI, pp. 843-4.

eighth parallel. In the course of the discussions which followed, the Japanese delegates discovered a map in the Russians' possession which divided Sakhalin into two colors at the fiftieth parallel, the southern half marked as belonging to Japan. With this evidence the Japanese succeeded in winning recognition of the fiftieth parallel, in principle, as the boundary on the condition that a Russo-Japanese commission be appointed to determine a natural boundary. When the Japanese pressed for an immediate settlement, the Russians told them that their earlier suggestion of a line at Aniwa Bay was the only immediate solution acceptable to them. In 1863, the Russian commission came to Hakodate in preparation for the meeting to determine the natural boundary, but the internal state of Japan prevented their participation, and the Russians were sent back, thus ending the first real chance for a solution.⁶⁰

In 1866, the Yedo government was greatly disturbed by the information that the Russians were proceeding at a rapid pace in their colonization of Sakhalin, and decided to again negotiate for a solution. They instructed their emissaries, Koide 小出, Lord of Yamato, the Governor of Hakodate; and Ishikawa 石川, Lord of Kawachi, the Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, to make the dividing

60. E. M. Satow, "Kinse Shiriaku - A History of Japan from the First Visit of Commodore Perry in 1853 to the Capture of Hakodate by the Mikado's Forces in 1869," Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, I, 1873, p. 76, and R. H. Akagi, Japan's Foreign Relations 1542-1936, Tokyo, Hokuseido Press, 1936, p. 62.

line through Kunashiri, the southernmost Kurile Island. But the Russians refused,⁶¹ and the Japanese also refused a Russian suggestion that the Russian Kuriles be exchanged for Japanese claims to southern Sakhalin.⁶²

In 1869, the new Imperial Government established the Board of Exploration of Yezo; and in 1870, the Board for the Exploration of Sakhalin under Kuroda Kiyotaka 黒田清隆, in order to consolidate the northern territories.⁶³ This was followed by an attempt to colonize Sakhalin with Japanese farmers, which was not too successful. As the question of the boundary grew more complex, the other powers became involved; and in 1870, the United States Minister to Japan, Charles De Long, requested a statement from the Japanese on their northern boundaries. A short time later, the Japanese Minister requested the mediation of the American President in the dispute because neither Russia nor Japan had accredited ministers at the capital of the other, and because of the friendly relations between the United States and Russia, and because of the proximity of the area in question to United States possessions. Also, the United States-Japanese Treaty of 1858 carried a clause stating the willingness of the United States to aid Japan

61. Stanton, op. cit., p. 469.

62. U. S. Department of State, Messages and Documents, Part II, 1867-68, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1868, pp. 61-2; and Foreign Office, British Foreign and State Papers 1870-71, London, 1877, LXI, pp. 558-9.

63. Alfred Stead (ed), Japan by the Japanese, London, William Heinemann, 1904, p. 151.

in negotiations with other powers.

De Long told the Japanese that the United States would be willing to offer its services and requested full information including historical documents on the problem. The Japanese presented their claims, saying that they wanted the islands south of the fiftieth parallel because of their early contacts with the island beginning in 650 A. D., and pointed out that a history of the island had been written by a Japanese during the Kyōhō period (1716-35). Also, trading posts had been built on the island as early as 1790, and colonization had begun as early as 1801, while the Russians had no contact with the island before 1806. The Japanese wanted to establish the boundary at the fiftieth parallel, have the port of Aniwa declared an "open" port, extract a promise from the Russians that land cultivated beyond the boundary by either nationals would be respected upon the payment of ground rent. De Long sent this information plus the Japanese request for mediation, along to Hamilton Fish who was then Secretary of State, who in turn sent it on to the American representative to St. Petersburg. The Russian government refused the American offer of mediation, stating that if they accepted, it might lead to other European interference in their relations with Japan.⁶⁴

With the failure of American intervention, the Japanese took up direct negotiations with the Russians;

64. Treat, loc. cit., pp. 364-9; Stanton, op. cit., p. 469; Akagi, op. cit., p. 63.

and in 1871, Soejima Taneomi 副島種臣, a State Councillor, was sent to Siberia to confer with the Russian government there on the problem, but he did not succeed in arriving at any solution. The Iwakura 岩倉 mission, sent abroad to secure treaty revisions with the great powers, went to St. Petersburg during this same period and negotiated for a solution, but they, too, failed. Soejima, however, had come to realize the importance of the Island of Sakhalin to Japan, and when he became Foreign Minister in 1873, he persuaded Count Ōkuma to advance him two million gold yen for the purchase of Russian claims to the northern half of the island. Soejima was inspired to attempt the purchase because of the recent sale of Alaska by the Russians to the United States.

Negotiations were commenced with the Russian Charge d'Affaires in Tōkyō, but the Japanese offer was refused. Thereupon, Soejima offered to cede the whole of Sakhalin to Russia and be satisfied with Uruppu, Kunashiri and Etorofu in the Kuriles if the Russians would permit the Japanese free passage of troops through Russian territory in case of a war with a continental power. One writer notes that Soejima undoubtedly had in view the "invasion of Korea from the north."⁶⁵

The Russians refused both offers, and Soejima was called to China in connection with events in Formosa.*

65. Stead, op. cit., p. 172.

* In 1874 the Japanese sent an expedition to Formosa to secure indemnities for some Japanese nationals who had been slaughtered there by headhunters. Soejima was needed for negotiations with China.

Upon his return, the United States Minister to Tōkyō informed him that the Russians had decided to accept the Japanese offer. Shortly after receiving this information, Soejima got word through Councillor Itagaki that the Cabinet had adopted the view of Kuroda Kiyotaka that the island of Sakhalin was worthless because of the climate and the poor quality of the soil and had decided to drop all claims to it. Furthermore, the Cabinet believed that if they possessed the island, it would remain a source of constant conflict between Japan and Russia, and in view of Kuroda's findings, it was not worth the risk. The Russian Ambassador soon heard of the official change of heart on the part of the Cabinet and sought to obtain the entire island for Russia and informed Soejima that he, alone, stood between a complete and peaceful settlement of the problem by preventing Japanese cession of the island. Soejima continued to press for purchase of the island, but was soon retired, and Terashima Munemori 寺島宗則 succeeded him as Foreign Minister.

Terashima continued the struggle to bring the Sakhalin problem to a peaceful conclusion, and in 1874, he sent Admiral Enomoto Takeaki 榎本武揚 to Russia as Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to negotiate a settlement. His instructions were to attempt to obtain a Russian agreement for a natural boundary in Sakhalin, and if the Russians refused to offer to trade Japanese claims to the island for all of the Russian Kuriles plus

compensation for all roads and other works in Sakhalin, and a guarantee that the Japanese fishing interests in the waters adjacent to the island would be protected. The Russians at first refused to negotiate on these terms, but approaching trouble in the Balkans forced them to give in; and the Russians accepted the Japanese alternate solution of exchanging the Kuriles for Japanese claims to Sakhalin. The treaty, which was signed on May 7, 1875, by Prince Gorchakov for the Russians, and Enotome for Japan, consisted of eight articles. Article I fixed the Russo-Japanese border at the Straits of La Perouse at the southernmost tip of Sakhalin; Article II enumerated the Kurile Islands that went to Japan and set the border in this area between the northernmost Kurile, Shimushu and Kamchatka; Article III stipulated that the transfer of sovereignty was to take place immediately upon exchange of ratification, and that both governments should appoint officers to carry this out; Article IV stated that each nation was to pay for the buildings and installations of the other which they received in the exchange at values set by the appointed officer mentioned in Article III; Article V gave the nationals affected by the transfer the option of choosing their citizenship; Article VI gave Japan fishing rights off Sakhalin and Kamchatka; and Articles VII and VIII concerned Enotomo's powers to negotiate.⁶⁶

66. Stead, op. cit., pp. 172-5; Akagi, op. cit., 63-5; for text of treaty see British and Foreign State Papers, 1874-75, LXVI. pp. 218-23.

The Treaty of 1875 was to settle the fate of the Kurile Islands until World War II. Sakhalin sprang back into historical importance in the Treaty of Portsmouth which resulted from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, and which returned the island of Sakhalin south of the fiftieth parallel to Japan. The Kurile Islands, which served as effective bases in the blockade of the Russian Far Eastern ports, remained unaffected by the treaty, although both nations undoubtedly recognized that their strategic location served to make the Russian ports on the Sea of Okhotsk untenable in time of war and prevented their cooperation with the more southern Russian ports.⁶⁷

The Kuriles in World War II

It wasn't until the global battles of World War II began that the strategic and political importance of the Kuriles became a matter of world-wide interest and concern. The Japanese incursions into the American islands of Attu and Kiska were directed from and based on the Kurile Islands. The first American raids on the island were reported on July 13, 1943, and were aimed at the Island of Paramushiru, which together with the island of Shimushu, formed the platform from which the Japanese launched their invasion of the Aleutians and threatened Alaska.⁶⁸ Kataoka

67. The Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defense, Official History of the Russo-Japanese War, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1912, II, pp. 640-41; III, pp. 724, 742, 798.

68. New York Times, July 14, 1943.

Bay on the Island of Shimushu, which was the cite of a naval base and Kashibara Bay on Paramushiru, an army staging area, were to become the major targets for American raids which lasted up to the end of the war. The islands were also subject to a number of surface strikes by the United States Navy, which began on February of 1944 with a raid on Paramushiru. As a result of this raid and the accompanying movement of American troops in Alaska and the Aleutians, the Japanese radio began to express a grave concern that an American invasion was soon to follow.⁶⁹

The raids continued to harass the Kuriles with the last bombings occurring on August 14, 1945 -- the day on which Japan surrendered. Although subsequent interrogations of Japanese prisoners of war and high Japanese officers who commanded in the area disclosed that the air raids and surface strikes didn't do the damage that was at first reported because of the heavy fog which surrounds the area almost all year around, they did succeed in disorganizing Japanese fishing in the area and in draining off some of the much needed Japanese fighter and anti-aircraft strength to defend the islands.

As the rumor of Russian participation in the war spread throughout the Allied world, the Kuriles again began to enter the public scene. There was some discussion in the press about the Kuriles forming stepping stones for the Russian Army in an invasion of Hokkaidō, and there was

69. Ibid., January 24, 1944.

talk that the Kuriles, as well as the Ryūkyūs, should be taken from Japan at the close of the war and used as United Nations air bases.⁷⁰

The first hint that this idea was to be embodied in official policy came in August of 1945 when the London Sunday Observer published an article saying that a secret meeting between the Big Three (Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin) had taken place at Yalta, and that "some of the northern Kurile Islands are to be leased to Russia to allow direct access to Petropavlosk, the Soviet ice free naval base (sic) with an open outlet to the Pacific." The next source to announce action concerning the Kuriles was the Japanese Imperial Headquarters which sent a message to General Douglas MacArthur charging that "some of your forces" had landed on Shimushu Island in the northern Kuriles on Saturday, August 18, 1945, and they added that the Japanese forces there were obliged to resist in self defense.⁷¹ The alleged American invasion of Shimushu was again brought up by the Japanese as one of the points for immediate discussion at the meeting of the Japanese military surrender mission to Manila with American officers. The mystery of the "American" invasion of the Kuriles was cleared up on August 22 when it was announced that the Russians had occupied the Shimushu with paratroops who had been based in Kamchatka. On the following day, Premier Stalin, in his

70. Ibid., January 10, 1945.

71. Ibid., August 19, 1945.

victory proclamation, announced that his troops were occupying Paramushiru, as well as Shimushu and southern Sakhalin.

On August 26, the Russians announced in a communique that their forces had occupied the Kuriles as far south as the Island of Matsuwa. It also disclosed that the troops used were airborne troops under the command of General Maxim Purkaev. By August 28 the Russians had extended their occupation of the islands to Etorofu leaving only the island of Kunashiri in Japanese hands. By September 1 the Soviet government announced that the entire chain of the Kuriles had been occupied, including Kunashiri and Shikotan. Thus, the Russian Army had completed their almost bloodless occupation of a chain of island 1,350 miles long, and which put Russia in complete control of the Sea of Okhotsk, fourth largest in the world. On September 2, 1945, Stalin announced in another of his victory proclamations that it had been necessary to acquire the Kuriles and Sakhalin in order to provide "a base for the defense of our country against Japanese aggression." The Soviet radio at Kharbarovsk expanded on this statement of the Generalissimo by saying that the Kuriles would be turned into "veritable bastions forming a screen of steel" to protect Russian Pacific waters. It also stressed the fact that Russian troops would remain permanently on the island "to stand guard against any future Japanese aggression, while assuring freedom of the Pacific Ocean for the Soviet Fatherland." These various announcements as to the need

of the Soviet for the Kurile Islands were shortly followed by more concrete action, as they were incorporated along with Sakhalin into the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.⁷² Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the islands were not incorporated into any of the republics bordering the Sea of Okhotsk, but into a central Russian state, itself. This fact should serve to clarify the importance with which the Soviets regard the new North Pacific possessions.

The Kuriles and Yalta

While Russia was moving rapidly to present the world with her fait accompli, the western half of the United Nations was still largely in the dark as to the fate of the Kuriles. On September 4, 1945, shortly after the Russian announcement of eternal occupation of the Kuriles, Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes stated at a press conference that, although the Kuriles had been discussed at Yalta and Russian occupation agreed to, no formal agreement had been reached.⁷³ On January 22, 1946 the Acting Secretary of State, Acheson, stated that so far as he knew, the Yalta Agreement concerning the Kuriles had dealt only with their occupation, and that no decision had been made as to their final disposition. Shortly after this statement, the Moscow radio replied stating that the Yalta

72. Julian Towster, Political Power in the U.S.S.R. - 1917-1947, New York, Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 109.

73. New York Times, September 5, 1945.

Agreement had definitely given the Kurile Islands to Russia. Byrnes again stated, in an effort to clarify the situation, that the Yalta Agreement was not a formal transfer of the islands to Russia, but merely an agreement on the part of the United States and Great Britain to support Russian claims to the islands at the future peace conference. The United States was not alone in misunderstanding the results of the Yalta Agreement, for on January 30, 1946, the British Foreign Office announced that it could not find a copy of the Kurile agreement among its "full records of the Yalta Conference." The Prime Minister's office also stated that it did not have a copy. This was followed by a statement from the British War Department which disclosed that they had made an "exhaustive search" and could testify that they did not have the agreement or a copy of it.⁷⁴ The text of the Yalta Agreement was not made public until February 12, 1946, a year after it had been signed. The language of the agreement is that the Kurile Islands were to be "handed over to Russia" as a consequence of her entering into the war with Japan, within ninety days of the conclusion of the war with Germany. The United States official position has remained, as far as can be determined, that the Yalta Agreement was not, itself, a formal disposition of the islands, but rather, an agreement on the part of the United States and Great Britain to uphold Russian claims to the islands at the future peace conference with

74. Ibid., January 30, 1946.

Japan.⁷⁵ This will, of course, amount to a command that the Japanese approve of the transfer. The Russians, however, by word and deed, have indicated that they regarded the words of the agreement as final, and they will probably refuse to discuss the islands at the conference. Some additional indication of the Russian attitude was gained when in January, 1947, Izvestia stated that the United States had indicated a desire to annex the Kurile Islands in a report of a subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives. Izvestia reminded the United States that the islands were already Russian territory and remonstrated against the "rare appetite for annexation" shown by the report. A published summary of the committee's report disclosed that the Kuriles were not mentioned.⁷⁶

Some indication of the Japanese stand on the Kurile annexation can be gotten from the action of the Hokkaidō Prefectural Assembly which, on July 23, 1947, requested that the Islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri and Shikotan, plus the minor islands off the coast of the Nemuro Peninsula in northern Hokkaidō, be returned to Japan. This request stated that these islands were formerly administered as part of Hokkaidō, and that their return would greatly aid the shaky food situation, as they formed the base of an

75. James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, New York, Harper Brothers, 1947, p. 221.

76. New York Times, January 13, 1947.

important fishing industry.⁷⁷

Strategic Value of the Kuriles

That the islands are of major importance to Russia, there can be little doubt. Before the Russians acquired them, their naval bases on the Sea of Okhotsk and Sea of Japan were practically worthless. The naval force at Vladivostok was prevented from free access to the south by the heavily fortified Straits of Tsushima and the Korean Straits. In the East, they were cut off by the Soya and Tsugaru Straits. In the North, their escape route through the Tartary Straits lay under Japanese guns as far north as the fiftieth parallel and lead only to the Sea of Okhotsk, navigable for only five months of the year. The naval base at Petropavlosk was in no better position, as it could not support itself nor retreat to Vladivostok, as the entire route lay along the Japanese Kuriles. As for the use of the Kuriles, themselves, although they lack protected harbors, the deep water affords excellent submarine bases, and the fog provides an almost unpenetrable protective cover against air attacks, as American experience demonstrated. Their location between the cold and warm currents affords excellent weather observation posts along the strategic air routes between Eastern Siberia and North America. Although the value to Russia is mainly strategic, they are being made use of to the fullest in commercial

77. Ibid., July 24, 1947.

fishing, hunting and farming. The Soviet government has settled the islands with demobilized Red Army soldiers and has sent in hundreds of girls to be their wives.⁷⁸ The Soviet press carries articles telling how well the Soviet fishers in the islands are fulfilling their quotas, and extolls the "socialist competition between the north and south islands." They also told of government loans to the peoples there and of additional colonists (besides soldiers) from the Ukraine and other parts.⁷⁹

As for the Japanese, the loss of the islands not only removes them from control of the Sea of Okhotsk, but places the Island of Hokkaidō under Russian observation. It also represents the loss of their major fishing interests, as they obtained most of their fish from areas around the Kuriles, Sakhalin and off Russian coasts.

The United States has a double interest in the islands. Their possession by Russia does not bring the Soviets any closer to United States territory, but it does free the Russian fleet for operations in the Pacific, as well as supplying flanking bases for the operation of Soviet submarines, grown far more dangerous with the addition of captured German innovations. But, the United States is not only affected by the strategic loss of the Kuriles, but also by the economic loss to Japan, as it has fallen to

78. David J. Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1948, pp. 369-70.

79. Far Eastern Institute, Soviet Press Translations, III, No. 12, June 15, 1948, pp. 378-381.

our lot to put Japan back on her feet. This means that the deficit in Japanese food resulting from the loss of fishing banks in the North is being made up by American dollar purchases of food for Japan, and that Japan will be dependent on United States aid even longer than if the islands had not been lost.

The Future of the Kuriles

A great deal of confusion surrounds the cession of the Kuriles to Russia. No where can a clear statement for this action be found. According to the terms of the Cairo Conference December 1, 1943 Japan was to be "stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the first World War in 1914," as well as all of the territories taken from China such as Manchuria, Formosa and the Pescadores. It is quite evident that the Kuriles do not fall into this category as Japan acquired them in 1875.

The next important statement regarding the disposal of Japanese territory is to be found in the Yalta Agreement signed February 11, 1945. Article II states that "The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz:

- (a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union."

Subparagraphs b and c concern Russian rights on the mainland. This, then, is the reason given for the taking of

Sakhalin from the Japanese. The Kurile Islands are not treated in the same paragraph, which would seem to indicate that they were taken for a different reason, but Article III is silent as to the reason, saying simply that "The Kurile islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union."

It is manifest from the historical evidence presented in the preceding part of this work that the Japanese did not acquire the Kuriles by treachery or violence. They controlled the islands of Kunashiri and Etorofu before the Russians came to these parts, and Russia never advanced any claims to these islands or to the other small groups off the Nemuro Peninsula of Hokkaidō. The Japanese acquired the rest of the chain from Uruppu north to the Kamchatka Peninsula in 1875 when they were pressured into taking what were considered to be worthless islands in exchange for their rights in Sakhalin.

It is obvious from the comments by some of the leading protagonists in these negotiations that this fact was not understood and that the Kuriles were thought to be among those possessions taken from Russia by violence. In a recent magazine article by Sumner Welles he quotes President-Roosevelt as saying that "he thought the Russians should, of course, get back the Kurile Islands and southern Sakhalin, ceded under the Treaty of Portsmouth."⁸⁰

80. Sumner Welles, Harper's Magazine, "Roosevelt and the Far East, II", March, 1951, p. 73.

It is evident that President Roosevelt believed that Russia based her claims then, on the fact that these islands had been wrested from her. No record of any Russian statement at the Yalta Conference is available, but former Secretary of State Byrnes states that "The agreement as to the Kurile Islands was reached in private conversations among the Big Three instead of at the conference table."⁸¹ Thus, if the President was laboring under the illusion that Russia had been the victim of Japanese aggression in the Kuriles, Premier Stalin was careful not to disenchant him.

Mr. Welles and the public at large are still laboring under the impression that the Russians were basing their claims to the Kuriles upon the same basis as Sakhalin. In another quotation in the same article he says, "Russian possession of southern Sakhalin and of the Kuriles is essential if the Soviet government is to obtain security for its Siberian provinces. Both territories were torn from Russia by Japan."⁸² The truth of the matter is that the Kuriles were forced on Japan by Russia, who wants them back because of their strategic importance.

Granting that Russia, as co-victor in World War II, has some rights to eliminate the strategic disadvantage which Japanese possession of the Kuriles placed her in, there was no reason to give them the entire chain with

81. Byrnes, op. cit., p. 43.

82. Welles, op. cit., p. 76. 71²

all the resulting strain on Japanese economy. Possession of the islands down to Shimushiru in the middle of the chain would have eliminated the Russian disadvantage and would have still left Japan with fishing bases in islands traditionally hers. Another blunder in the Yalta conference now making itself felt was the failure to designate those islands belonging to the Kurile group and as a result the Russians have been including such groups as the Habomae and others which were never considered as part of the Kurile Chain.

The Kurile Islands have not passed permanently from the international scene. In conferences regarding a Japanese peace treaty they will undoubtedly spring forth as one of the major bones of Russo-American contention. The Japanese will probably try to obtain a return of the southern islands by playing off American possession of the Ryūkyūs against Russian occupation of the Kuriles. There is a chance that both the United States and Russia will be willing to give up some of the islands that they now hold, but the chance is, indeed, slim, particularly in the case of Russia.

