

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 34

“We No Longer Have a Czar”

Transcript

[music: fanfare]

With the fall of Port Arthur, and large Japanese forces in Manchuria, the Russian position looked pretty grim by early 1905. But Russia still has a large army, and a new fleet on the way to replace the ships lost at Port Arthur.

The war is creating unrest in Russia, and Japan is going deeply into debt. The end of this war may come down to one simple question: which will break first, the Japanese economy, or the Russian political system?

Welcome to the History of the Twentieth Century.

[music: opening theme]

Episode 34. We No Longer Have a Czar.

Last time, we ended with the fall of Port Arthur on January 2, 1905. I want to continue the story from there this week, but before we move forward, I want to mention a couple other things that happened late in 1904. You may recall that in Manchuria, after the fall of Liaoyang to the Japanese, Kuropatkin has pulled the Russian army back to the city Mukden. In October, Kuropatkin attempted an offensive in the hope of pushing the Japanese back out of Liaoyang, possibly a first step toward relieving the siege of Port Arthur.

But this offensive petered out without accomplishing anything significant. And winters are bitter cold in Manchuria, so after that final Russian offensive both sides hunkered down and prepared for the cold weather. But the failure of this offensive pretty much seals Port Arthur's fate.

Back on the Russian home front, there is considerable political unrest. Emperor Nikolai's insistence on maintaining Russia as an autocracy never went down well with the Russian people. Liberals and progressives in Russia, mostly intellectuals and the middle-class, have been pushing for more civil liberties and a constitutional monarchy.

But Russia isn't looking anything like a constitutional monarchy. Russia has, in fact, been in a state of emergency ever since the assassination of the current emperor's grandfather. This has been going on for decades now, and Russia is much closer to being a police state than it is to

anything like a constitutional monarchy. One fact that stands out in my mind, which I will share with you now, is that the main post office in St. Petersburg had a special room in the back that was reserved for the secret police. They had a very efficient assembly line back there, where they could unseal hundreds of letters an hour, read the contents, and when they were done, seal it up again in a way that made it almost indistinguishable from when they started.

Russian workers, like workers in many industrial countries at this time, as we've seen, labor long hours under dangerous conditions for very little pay, and they are not happy about that, either. The workers are organizing various socialist groups that range from democratic populist to hard-line Marxist. Strikes in Russia were usually met with harsh crackdowns, and the arrest of labor leaders, which in turn led to coalition building between the labor leaders and liberal advocates for greater personal freedoms.

And then we have nationalist groups. Russia contains a lot of ethnic minorities, and there is much discontent among them. First and foremost, the Poles, as we have seen, but also many others. There is much discontent among Jewish Russians, as pogroms, violent massacres of Jews at the very least tolerated by, when not actively encouraged by, the Russian government.

In July of 1904, the Russian interior minister, Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Pleve, was assassinated by a socialist in St. Petersburg. As interior minister, von Pleve was the man most responsible for the crackdowns against liberals and labor organizers, and the assassination was undoubtedly retaliation. The Emperor appointed a more liberal interior minister to replace him, in an attempt to appease the dissidents.

All this political unrest in Russia stands in stark contrast to what was going on in Japan at the same time. The Japanese public was largely supportive of the war, and although the cost of the war led to hefty tax increases, the Japanese dug deep in their pockets and paid up. There are a couple of reasons for this. In sharp contrast with multiethnic Russia, Japan is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world. So the same time rising tides of nationalism are tearing Russia apart, they are binding Japan together. Also remember that it is the Russians who are stationing large land and naval forces close to the home islands of Japan, not the Japanese who are stationing their forces next to the Russian homeland. The Japanese view Russia as an existential threat, while Russian dissidents view the war with Japan as a distraction from the real problems back home.

Ethnic minorities in the Russian Empire—Poles, Finns, Jews—are not keen to fight and die for the glory of an Empire that they don't even want to be part of, and desertion is a serious problem in the Russian military. Russian army units are boarding trains at full strength in Europe, only to discover when they debark in Mukden that they have lost substantial numbers to desertion along the way. Dissident soldiers were also prone to surrender to the Japanese at their first opportunity.

The war was hard on the Russian economy. Russia is still largely an agricultural economy at this time, and very little of the agricultural work was mechanized. The war resulted in the draft of

hundreds of thousands of young Russian men as well as the requisitioning of huge numbers of horses. Young men and horses are what make agriculture happen in Russia, and shortages of both hurt the 1904 harvest and led to knock-on effects through the rest of the Russian economy. And all those soldiers had to be fed and equipped and supplied, and that cost money. Billions of rubles in fact. It's one thing to look at a Russia with a vast population and growing rail network and say, "Wow, they can sure deliver a big army anywhere they want very quickly." But while you're saying that, though, don't forget to ask yourself, "But how are they going to pay for it?"

You may have noticed by now that in contrast to the Russian leadership's seat-of-the-pants *ad hoc* approach to fighting this war, the Japanese leadership have proved to be careful and meticulous planners. This may in fact have been the best planned war ever fought in history up till this time. The Japanese are well aware of the political instability in the Russian Empire, and this is a good place in the narrative to introduce General Akashi Motojiro. Akashi was born in 1864. He served in the Army during the Sino-Japanese war, and by the end he held the rank of major. He served as the Japanese military observer in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, and served in China during the Boxer Uprising, at the end of which he was promoted to lieutenant colonel.

After the Boxer Uprising, Akashi went to Europe, where he served as the Japanese military attaché in various European capitals, ultimately ending up in St. Petersburg. By this time, the Japanese were expecting war with Russia, and Akashi proved masterful at building networks of Russian dissidents, both in the Empire and exile communities across Europe, including Lenin, about whom we will certainly be hearing more.

In the run-up to the war, the Japanese government handed ¥1 million over to Akashi, which he spent brilliantly once the war broke out. He had had to leave St. Petersburg, of course, so he set up a base in nearby Stockholm. He employed Russian dissidents, and Russians willing to hand over information for a price, to collect intelligence on the Russian military. He gave money to Finnish exiles to incite uprisings in Finland, which was part of the Russian Empire at this time. He gave money to Polish revolutionaries to conduct sabotage in Russian Poland. If there was anyone in or near Russia who was an enemy of Emperor Nikolai, Akashi was stuffing their pockets full of money. He operated what was probably the most sophisticated wartime intelligence and sabotage operation the world had ever seen.

One of the beneficiaries of Akashi's largesse was Father Georgiy Apollonovich Gapon. Gapon was a Russian Orthodox priest born in Poltava in what is now Ukraine. He was ordained a deacon in the Orthodox Church in Poltava, and assigned to a small parish, which his modern and informal style of worship quickly turned into a big parish. He looked like a promising priest, so his bishop sent him to seminary in St. Petersburg in 1898. There, Gapon became involved in missionary work among the impoverished urban factory workers. Eventually, he dropped out of seminary and organized "The Assembly of Russian Factory and Mill Workers of St. Petersburg,"

a socialist leaning religious organization intended to advocate for the welfare of the workers of St. Petersburg, in both the spiritual and the secular sense.

And you're probably not surprised that Father Gapon's organization got funding from Colonel Akashi. You probably *will* be surprised when I tell you that he also got funding from the Imperial secret police, but yes, this is also true. The Russian secret police had funny ideas about how to deal with dissenters. Apart from the usual secret police stuff, like arresting them and locking them up, the Russians used to selectively support some dissident organizations financially. The idea here was first, to advance certain dissident groups viewed as helpful or useful at the expense of other dissident groups in competition with them, who were viewed as presenting bigger potential problems. The other idea was that with funding comes control, and that funded dissidents could be kept on a leash and steered away from anything too radical.

In January 1905, four members of the assembly who worked at the Putilov plant in St. Petersburg, which was manufacturing artillery shells for the war, lost their jobs. Management denied it, it was widely believed that these four workers were fired for their involvement with Gapon. When management refused their request to rehire the four workers, the entire plant went on strike. In a matter of days, sympathy strikes broke out across St. Petersburg, and then a general strike. The shops were closed, the newspapers were closed, there was no electricity.

On Thursday, January 19th, which is epiphany in the Orthodox calendar, leaders of the assembly met with Gapon to draft a petition to the Emperor. The idea of presenting a petition to the Emperor was not especially radical, and the petition they drafted was couched in respectful, even subservient language, although what it was asking for was pretty radical, at least by the standards of the Russian Empire. Better working conditions, an eight hour day, a minimum wage of one ruble per day, an end to the war, and the creation of a representative assembly, a Russian parliament, if you will.

This was intended to be a very peaceful and respectful demonstration. In fact, many of the more radical socialist parties in Russia criticized Gapon and his group for undertaking what they saw as an empty exercise. Gapon sent a copy of the petition to the Interior Ministry, and advised them of his plan to present the petition at the Winter Palace on Sunday, January 22nd.

On Saturday the 21st, Emperor Nikolai's ministers met to discuss the matter. Although some members of the Imperial family believed that the best response would be for the Emperor to meet with representatives of the workers and receive the petition, the ministers rejected this idea and told the Emperor to leave town, which he did. The Grand Duchess Olga, the Emperor's sister, volunteered to meet with representatives of the workers, and receive the petition herself, as the Emperor's representative. But the Emperor's advisors didn't like that idea, either. Instead, the Interior Ministry brought in soldiers from outlying areas and deployed them at the Winter Palace and other key positions in the city. These troops were instructed not to permit demonstrators to approach the Winter Palace, but the soldiers were not told exactly how they were supposed to

accomplish this. The fact that the Emperor had left the city was publicized, and many ministers believed that this news alone would be enough to call off the demonstration.

But the demonstration was not called off, and indeed, most of the demonstrators believed that the Emperor was in the Winter Palace. On Sunday morning, they gathered at various points in the city and began to march toward the winter palace. Estimates of the number of people participating in these demonstrations vary wildly, but it seems there were at least 50,000, many of whom were women, children, students, and elders. It was a relatively conservative group; many of them carried religious banners and portraits of the Emperor. They would stop periodically to pray, to sing hymns, and to sing the national anthem.

[music: "God Bless the Czar"]

This day, Sunday, January 22, 1905, will go down in history as "Bloody Sunday." There was no single grand confrontation between the marchers and the soldiers right in front of the Winter Palace, as this event is often depicted. In fact, there were a whole series of confrontations between soldiers and marchers all across the city that would go down in very different ways, as different units interpreted their orders differently. Some soldiers stood at attention and saluted the portraits of the Emperor, as the marchers carried them past. Some soldiers joined in the demonstration. Others ordered the demonstrators to disperse. The demonstrators refused to disperse. In some places, shots were fired in the air. In some places, Cossack cavalry units charged the crowds. And in some places, panicked soldiers fired straight into the crowds, killing demonstrators and passersby.

About one thousand people were killed or wounded that day, and before we leave Bloody Sunday, I'd like to call your attention to one of them. Do you see that teenage boy over there? That one? Handsome, dark hair, lithe, muscular? Oh, he just got hit in the head by a Cossack's saber. But don't worry, his wound is not serious, and he will survive the day. His name is Vaslav Nijinsky, and we will be hearing more about him in a future episode.

Father Gapon himself was not injured, although he witnessed dozens killed or wounded all around him. Like many of the common people in Russia, he was radicalized by this event. Russian autocracy was based on the principle that the Emperor owns and controls all the wealth of the country, that the Empire is like a huge estate, and the Emperor is its lord. Subjects of the Emperor were encouraged to think of him as a father figure, and it was in this spirit that the demonstrators approached the Winter Palace, as children approaching a father, asking for relief from their hardships. And their father's response had been to gun them down. A common refrain among ordinary Russians in the wake of Bloody Sunday was "we no longer have a czar." Gapon himself went into hiding and fled the country. He released an open letter to the Emperor, calling Nikolai the "soul murderer of the Russian Empire." He added, "the innocent blood of workers, their wives and children, lives forever between you and the Russian people...I call upon all the

socialist parties of Russia to come to an immediate agreement among themselves and bring an armed uprising.”

So, yeah, that’s gonna have consequences. But before we get into those consequences, I have one more piece of business from 1904 to bring up, and that is the Second Pacific Squadron. You may recall how Admiral Rozhdestvensky has been assigned the job of selecting a squadron of ships from the Russian Baltic Fleet and steaming all the way around Africa and Asia to link up with the Pacific Squadron at Port Arthur and break the Japanese blockade, a truly daunting task the likes of which has never been attempted before. Rozhdestvensky was hoping to get underway by July 15, and I mentioned in the previous episode that they still hadn’t gotten underway by August. In fact, the fleet would not leave until October 15, 1904.

Rozhdestvensky had wanted a smaller squadron of faster, more modern ships, a lean and mean squadron that could get to Port Arthur as quickly as possible, and would present the biggest threat to the Japanese. The Baltic Fleet had four brand-new battleships of the *Borodino* class that had just come into service: *Borodino* herself, *Emperor Alexander III*, *Oryol*, and *Knyaz Suvorov*, which would become Rozhdestvensky’s flagship. These four ships were so new that they hadn’t had their shakedown yet, so the voyage to Port Arthur would become their shakedowns. Rozhdestvensky also wanted four modern cruisers for support. Unfortunately for him, his superiors favored a larger force and saddled him with some less desirable ships, three older battleships, and three older cruisers. It would turn out that Rozhdestvensky was quite right, and these extra ships made the voyage slower and more complicated while adding little to the ultimate battle.

In addition to the seven battleships and eight cruisers, the second Pacific squadron included nine destroyers and 14 support ships: a hospital ship, a water ship, a repair ship, the ship for carrying refrigerated food, and so on. The logistical challenges in getting this fleet to Port Arthur are enormous. Rozhdestvensky needs so many support ships because whatever the fleet needs along the way it’s going to have to provide for itself, as Russia has no naval bases anywhere along the 18,000 mile route. These are coal-fired ships, and it is going to require something like 340,000 tons of coal to make the voyage. The ships of this squadron can carry something between 500 and 1500 tons of coal each, depending on how heavily you want to load them – and when I speak of loading them heavily I mean doing things like stuffing coal into bathrooms and corridors and the living quarters while making the sailors double up – and even so, these ships are going to have to refuel something like a dozen times over the course of their voyage.

Because these are warships, and they’re heading into battle, international law prohibits neutral nations from doing anything to assist them. But the Russian government has been putting tremendous pressure on her ally, France, to allow the use of port facilities in French colonial holdings. The French were unenthusiastic about supporting the Russian war effort, but the Russian alliance is very important to France, because the French have no other major allies and they are counting on the threat of Russian intervention to keep the Germans at bay. The Japanese

would complain to the French about this, and they would ask their ally Britain to pressure the French, but the British had just recently worked out the Entente Cordiale with the French, and were not willing to push the French very hard, so in the end the French would, albeit reluctantly, assist the Russian effort.

Germany was also supporting the Russians, and much more enthusiastically. Kaiser Wilhelm offered squadrons of colliers to rendezvous with the fleet and refuel the Russian squadron at sea along the way. Characteristically, Wilhelm would claim to Nikolai that the British were, allegedly, pressuring him not to get involved, but he was going to anyway, because he loved and respected his cousin in St. Petersburg just that much. These German colliers would prove to be invaluable to the Russians, and the combination of French ports and German coal ships kept the fleet fueled on schedule all the way to Asia, which is pretty remarkable. But keep in mind how difficult it is to refuel a coal-fired ship at sea. It's much more complicated than refueling with diesel. Sailors have to physically carry the coal from one ship to the other, stash it away, and then feed it into the boilers.

Russia's Baltic ports are only navigable in the warm weather, so Russian sailors in the Baltic are accustomed to living on land six months out of the year. Now they were going on an epic journey around the world, and would be confined to hot, cramped, steam-powered ships, crammed to the gills with coal, the air full of coal dust, and so many rats running around that catching them became a game among the Russian sailors.

Things got ugly almost immediately on departure. You heard about the degree of dissent in Russia at the time. The Baltic Fleet was not exempt, and many of the sailors were political radicals, antiwar, or otherwise disillusioned with the Emperor, and unenthusiastic about this voyage. And you may recall our friend, Colonel Akashi, now in Stockholm, who has been watching the preparations for the departure of the squadron with great interest. One of his little sabotage projects has been to get rumors circulating that the Japanese had some kind of ambush prepared for the Second Pacific Squadron right there in the Baltic Sea. Yes, really. Word of this got to the sailors on the Russian ships, and they were nervous from the day they left port. While the fleet was still in Danish waters, one of the support ships got lost in a fog, and radioed that Japanese destroyers were closing on it. They then signaled again a few minutes later to report that the Japanese destroyers had disappeared, but this made everyone even more jumpy.

On the evening of October 21, in the North Sea, the jumpy Russian squadron now came across a flotilla of British fishing boats out of Hull. The Russians mistook them for Japanese torpedo boats and opened fire. And no, I am not kidding. Two of the fishing boats were sunk, and two English fisherman killed. Britain was officially neutral but the British public were very much pro-Japan, and the attack created a furor. The fact that the Russian ships blithely sailed onward after the shoot up without even stopping to aid the British survivors or contact the Royal Navy only made the British that much angrier. Royal Navy ships began to shadow the Pacific Squadron, and for a few days there was a real possibility that Britain would declare war. The

Russian ships had to lay over at the Spanish port of Vigo for a while, as they waited to find out whether or not they were going to be at war with the British ships that were following them. The Prince of Wales, the future King George V, Emperor Nikolai's cousin, remarked "if they imagined those were Japanese destroyers, all I can say is they must've been drunk or else they must've been in such a state that they are not fit to go to sea."

Kaiser Wilhelm, meanwhile, fanned the flames by suggesting to the Russian Emperor that there really had been torpedo boats lurking among the fishing fleet, and the British had orchestrated the whole thing to embarrass Nikolai. The Russian Emperor was so angry with the British, that he actually agreed in principle with Kaiser Wilhelm to form a new Russian-German alliance. In the end, this idea would go nowhere, because the Russian government would soon be distracted by Bloody Sunday and the uprisings that followed, but it's interesting to contemplate how close we might have come here to a completely different alliance scheme in Europe. Again, it's important to keep in mind that the two power blocs that ultimately went to war in 1914 were by no means fixed and certain, and the great powers might easily have aligned differently.

But the flare-up in tensions between Britain and Russia eased when Emperor Nikolai agreed to submit the dispute to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague. The Russian government would ultimately pay hundreds of thousands of pounds in damages to the British for the property loss, injuries, and loss of life that the Russian squadron had caused.

Meanwhile, the Second Pacific Squadron was back on course for Port Arthur. By early November they had reached Morocco, at which point Rozhdestvensky split off a handful of the older, slower ships and sent them through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. He was not willing to send the entire fleet through the Suez Canal however, and the rest of them went around Africa.

It's not entirely clear to me why Rozhdestvensky didn't send his whole fleet through the Suez Canal. Perhaps the fleet was too large to pass through the canal easily. Perhaps he didn't trust in British goodwill after he'd already sunk some of their fishing boats. Maybe he was afraid of, I don't know, a Japanese ambush in the Red Sea? Or maybe it was just that there were more French and German colonies along the African coast than there were in the Middle East. At any rate, that's what he did.

The two components of the fleet reunited at Madagascar in January, 1905. Morale was low. The ships had traversed tropical waters in ships that were never meant to operate in such hot weather, not to mention the limited experience Russian sailors have with tropical temperatures. The training and gunnery exercises the fleet went through along the way were not going well, and discipline was harsh. And to make everything worse, it was there at Madagascar that Rozhdestvensky and his fleet received the news, first, that Port Arthur had surrendered, and second, of the massacres of Bloody Sunday.

Relieving Port Arthur had been the fleet's main assignment. The Russian admiralty wanted them to go on, but now their goal was Vladivostok, the only Pacific port still in Russian hands. And they would have to run past the Japanese Combined Fleet to get there. Even worse, from a morale point of view, Rozhdestvensky was ordered to wait at Madagascar for a couple more months to rendezvous with another squadron of Russian ships setting off from the Baltic, the Third Pacific Squadron, commanded by Admiral Nabogatov. Imagine Rozhdestvensky's joy upon being told that he's going to have to wait around at Madagascar and ride herd on 12,000 bored and miserable Russian sailors far, far from home in return for the privilege of adding to his fleet a handful of ships he'd already turned down once before.

[music: *Russian Easter Festival Overture*]

And we're going to leave Admiral Rozhdestvensky and his fleet languishing at Madagascar for a while, and shift focus back to Manchuria. Remember Manchuria? The place where the war is?

Yeah. After the fall of Port Arthur, Oyama is finally able to bring Nogi and his Third Army north to face the main Russian army. Oyama is not crazy about Nogi by this time; he thinks Nogi is something close to incompetent and would like to replace him, but now that Nogi is the guy who captured Port Arthur twice, that has become politically impossible. On the upside, Nogi is bringing his army with him, not to mention those nifty Krupp 11-inch artillery pieces. The Russians are going to notice those.

Meanwhile, Kuropatkin and his forces have redeployed to Mukden, about 20 miles north of Liaoyang. Reinforcements are still coming in, and Kuropatkin's command has been reorganized into three armies, the First Manchurian, the Second Manchurian, and the Third Manchurian. This will be the largest military force put under the command of a single officer in history, up to this time.

Kuropatkin knows as well as Oyama does that Nogi and his army and his wonderful artillery pieces are on the way. It is January, 1905. On the advice of some of his subordinates, Kuropatkin decides to take the offensive. There are three good reasons to try this. First, it's the dead of winter, and if there's one thing Russians know, it's winter. The Japanese know a thing or two about winter also, but they are probably not expecting an attack until the weather gets warmer. Second, Nogi and his Third Army and his powerful Krupp artillery pieces are on the way, so better to attack now than wait until the Japanese are even stronger. Third, he's got the nifty Cossack cavalry that haven't had a chance to do anything yet, so maybe he can have them deliver a right hook behind the main Japanese force and cut the Japanese rail line. This will interfere with Japanese supply and slow down the advance of the Third Army.

So the Russians launched an offensive the last week of January, but it just didn't work out. The Cossacks were hampered by a lack of supplies – horses eat a lot, and it is winter you know – and their surprise right hook into the Japanese rail line turned out to be not that much of a surprise, because of the always alert Japanese intelligence. Bad weather hampered the rest of the

offensive, which is why most generals don't like to go on the offensive in winter, as well as the usual Russian problems with coordination. After the offensive, Kuropatkin dismissed one of his corps commanders, and one of the army commanders resigned and gave a newspaper interview in which he labeled Kuropatkin a traitor.

Over the next three weeks, the Third Army finished its redeployment and was now facing Mukden alongside the First, Second, and Fourth armies. Imperial headquarters had also created a Fifth Army and sent it to the front, although this fifth Army was substantially understrength.

The final components of the Third Army arrived on February 19th. Oyama began his attack on Mukden the next day. The goal was the same as Liaoyang; to outflank and surround the Russian army, and deliver the knockout blow that would end the war.

Oyama put the new Fifth Army on his right flank and put the newly arrived Third Army on his left flank. The Fifth Army would attack first. They were attacking through the most mountainous and unpromising terrain with the smallest force, but that's because they were only a diversion. And it worked perfectly. Kuropatkin believed that this was the main Japanese assault and send all of his reserves to his left flank.

Meanwhile, on the Japanese left, the Fourth Army attacked while Nogi's Third Army, farther left, began a flanking maneuver intended to circle around Mukden and cut the Russian rail line to the north. By February 27th, Kuropatkin was aware of the Third Army's attempt to flank him, but he had already deployed his reserves to the opposite side of the line. Attempts to redeploy some of the reserves to face Nogi and his Third Army were hampered by heavy snow and confusion among the Russian units. The snow also interfered with Russian attempts to resupply their front lines, and the Japanese continued their advance. On March 7, the Third Army reached the rail line north of Mukden. It was only a small patrol, and they were driven off, but Kuropatkin had had enough. He sent a telegram to St. Petersburg that read "I am surrounded." Kuropatkin ordered his army stockpiles of supplies, supplies that were carried painstakingly across thousands of miles on the Trans-Siberian railroad, to be burned.

Oyama picked up on the Russian withdrawal immediately and ordered the Japanese armies to pursue aggressively. The Russian withdrawal became disordered, but the Japanese were not quite able to turn it into a rout, partly because a dust storm had kicked up and the combination of dust from the storm plus the smoke and explosions from the burning Russian supply dumps hampered the Japanese pursuit.

The battle of Mukden involved over half a million soldiers on both sides, making it the largest land battle fought in Asia to this time, and depending on how you count, maybe the largest land battle fought anywhere in the world up to this time. The Japanese lost 16,000 dead, the Russians about 40,000 killed or captured. Exact numbers are hard to come by.

While this was a major Japanese victory, and stands to this day as the Japanese army's greatest battle, Kuropatkin would withdraw to the north, and new supplies and replacements would still be coming through the Trans-Siberian railroad to replace what the Russians have lost, and spring is almost here. So Mukden would not be the knockout punch that Oyama was hoping for. But the Russians are on the ropes, and one more solid hit just might give the Japanese a TKO.

But we'll have to stop there for today. I hope you'll join me next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century* as Admiral Rozhdestvensky and his fleet finally reached the Pacific and confront the Japanese Combined Fleet. Will Admiral Togo be able to deliver that final hit that will end the war? Spoiler alert: yes. That's next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. I mentioned the Japanese intelligence officer, Colonel Akashi, who has a ¥1 million slush fund and is in Europe, handing out checks to anyone who opposes the Russian Emperor, and that one of his beneficiaries was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, the Russian socialist revolutionary who writes under the pen name Lenin.

Back in episode 18, we saw how the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party held their second congress in London in 1903. At that Congress, Lenin and his followers, the Bolsheviks, who believed in a centralized party with strong leadership, argued against the Mensheviks, who favored a looser organization that would tolerate dissent. In 1904, Lenin resigned from the editorial board of the party newspaper, which was published in exile in Switzerland, and Colonel Akashi gave him enough money to start up his own newspaper, one with a Bolshevik slant. After Bloody Sunday, Lenin urged workers in Russia to take up arms against the government, and warned socialists against a political alliance with middle class liberals, whom, Lenin predicted, the Emperor would be able to buy off by making a few cosmetic reforms. .

[music: closing theme]