



## **The Game System**

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I want to keep the players' attention on the situation, on their strategic options, and on the strengths and weaknesses of each side, not on the game mechanics. I chose to accept a certain amount of abstraction at the level of individual units, as long as the results are realistic at the level of divisions, corps, and armies.

Among other features, the Russian Civil War was characterized by:

- Opposing armies with similar tactics, but different proportions of infantry and cavalry, and varying access to ammunition.
- Different units with wide variations in cohesion and morale.
- Aggressive use of river flotillas and armored trains.
- Open spaces and long frontages. Mobile warfare was the norm throughout the Civil War.
- Relatively low casualty rates.
- Relatively high desertion rates.
- High march and advance rates.
- Opposing factions with specific ideological commitments, institutions, and class interests.
- In particular, the Armed Forces of South Russia were responsible to the officers' corps and the landowners: They would not support movements for autonomy or independence from the former Russian Empire. They could not support land reform; leading generals scuttled it in 1919 and allowed too little too late in 1920.

A game of the Russian Civil War should reflect these characteristics.

## **The Sequence of Play**

I chose the sequence of play to allow forces to combine movement and combat as smoothly as possible. I experimented with other sequences, but this worked best. 2 impulses, with combat before movement, allowed the closest approximation of Makhno's advance from Perehoniivka toward Taganrog, and it eliminated the need for special rules for attacks from the march or for advance after combat.

## The Combat System

A typical attack in Tatchanka consists of several flanking and blocking actions. A typical offensive in the Russian Civil War involved simultaneous advances in multiple sectors. In effect, "high-odds" attacks were unusual, and multiple "low-odds" attacks were more common; the combat results table encourages the historical approach.

### Advance Rates

- Between May 16<sup>th</sup> to June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the Volunteer Army fought its way from around Luhansk to Kharkiv and Belgorod, about 270 km in 40 days. After taking Kharkiv, the advance stalled.
- Between August 14<sup>th</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the 8<sup>th</sup> Red Army fought its way from near Liski to Kupyans'k, about 150 km in 12 days. However, the 8<sup>th</sup> Red Army found itself overextended and retreated once Volunteer Army troops attacked its flanks.
- Between October 10<sup>th</sup> and October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the Striking Group of the Southern Front began to outflank Volunteer Army units near Orel. At the same time, the Volunteer Army took Orel. Between October 14<sup>th</sup> and November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Red Armies fought their way from Orel to Kursk, about 130 km in 34 days.

In Tatchanka, opposed attackers can often achieve temporary gains. If the defenders counterattack, the attackers can rarely expect lasting gains at 1:1 odds. They can usually expect to advance an average of about 5 km per day or 1 1/3 hexes per turn at 2:1 odds, and 8 km per day or 2 hexes per turn at 3:1 odds. In Tatchanka, more rapid advances usually require the attackers to outflank the defenders, or to open gaps in the defenders' front.

### Casualty Rates

- Between September 2<sup>nd</sup> and September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Simferopol Officers' Regiment fought several battles, and were routed at Perehonivka, taking extraordinarily heavy losses by Russian Civil War standards. They lost 208 killed, 11 missing, and 416 wounded, some 200 killed or severely wounded each turn.

## The Movement System

Civil War armies could move remarkably quickly. Mobile warfare continued, without noticeably slowing, through the mud seasons and extended into broken terrain, though it slowed in the winter.

- During Kornilov's Icy March of February 21<sup>st</sup> to April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, White Guard infantry of the Volunteer Army marched from Rostov, zig-zagging to avoid the Red Guards and link up with the Kuban Cossack Host, and approached Yekaterinodar on April 11<sup>th</sup>, about 500 km along their route, in 49 days, facing Red Army blocking actions, and the frozen weather.
- After their victory at Perehonivka on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1919, Makhnovist cavalry reached Oleksandrivsk on October 5<sup>th</sup>, Hulyai Pole on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Yuzivka on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and Taganrog on the 16<sup>th</sup>, more than 400 km in 9 days and more than 600 versts in 20 days, despite the rasputitsa.
- During Tukhachevskiy's offensive of July 4<sup>th</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1920, Red Army infantry of the 4<sup>th</sup> Red Army marched from near Drissa on the 4<sup>th</sup> to near Mlava on August 15<sup>th</sup>, more than 600 km in 42 days, despite Polish Army blocking actions. Red Army infantry of the Mozyr Group marched from Pinsk on July 23<sup>rd</sup> to Brest-Litovsk on August 1<sup>st</sup>, more than 160 km in 9 days, despite Polish Army blocking actions, and the rough terrain of the Pripyat Marshes.

In Tatchanka, unopposed infantry can march about 24 km per day in good weather, and unopposed cavalry can ride 32 km per day; they can move 1/2 as fast in frozen weather. Armored trains and river flotillas could move much faster; their movement abilities mainly reflect the planning and logistical delays of rail, river, and naval desanty.

## The Rivers

Tatchanka shows the rivers as transportation lines, but not as barriers. This corresponds with their role in the Civil War and allows the same basic rules for rail and water movement. The rivers were rarely important defensive lines. Attacking forces could almost always find unguarded crossings; for example, during the fighting around Tsaritsyn in 1918, and again in 1919, White forces repeatedly crossed the Volga despite the Red Volga flotilla. Defending forces often established their positions in front of the important rivers; for example, the left-bank group of the 12th Red Army defended in front of the Desna in the fall of 1919.

Tatchanka also shows broken and rough terrain which can impede operations. They had surprisingly little effect on long-distance movement; almost every hex had adequate roads. They could impede combat; the terrain tended to slow the concentration of forces and tended to limit flanking actions. These features generally affected attacks out of them more than attacks into them. Defending forces often based themselves on the dry ground behind swampy areas or the open ground behind other obstacles; the Armed Forces of South Russia defended south of the Sivash and south of the marshes of the Lower Don in the winter of 1919 to 1920.

## **The Armies**

Tatchanka shows 1 combat unit for every 2,000 combat troops, rather than for each regiment or each brigade. Red Army divisions in the 12<sup>th</sup> Army tended to be much stronger than Red Army divisions in the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, and they operated on wider fronts.

Representing the strongest divisions with up to 9 units, and the weakest divisions with only 1 unit, reflects the fact that stronger divisions could attack and defend on wider fronts. An alternative approach, representing each division with 3 units for its brigades, but varying the unit strengths, would have made weak 1-1-3 brigades ideal for screening forces and strong 99-3 brigades ideal for attacks; it would have distorted history.

## **Diplomatic Concerns in Makhno's Return**

Makhno's Return leaves few diplomatic options for either player. The Makhnovists, the Directory, and the Bolsheviks are locked into conflict with the Armed Forces of South Russia; they are suspicious of each other but still somewhat cooperative against their common enemy. The Makhnovists and the Directory are closer to mutual cooperation with each other than with the Bolsheviks.

If the Makhnovist player primarily represents the leadership of the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine, and the White player primarily represents the leadership of the Forces of the Novorossiysk Area and the Internal Front, then neither player controls the key diplomatic events:

- The coup against the Kuban Rada.
- The separate armistice of the West Ukrainian People's Army.

Makhno's Return is a 3-sided 2-player game. A 3-player game would better reflect the Makhnovists' effort to remain an independent force and the Bolsheviks' effort to gain uncontested control over Ukraine, but the Bolshevik player would have to sit out the majority of the game. A 2-player game with specific guidelines for Red Army operations was a workable compromise.

## **Diplomatic Concerns in Fall of the Directory**

Fall of the Directory presents more diplomatic options for the Directory. The Directory, faced with conflicts on two fronts, declared war against Soviet Russia and negotiated with the Entente powers. This decision split the Directory. The Directory has the most diplomatic choices including:

- Whether to declare war on Soviet Russia.
- Where to concentrate their forces.
- Negotiations with the smaller factions, to persuade them to switch sides.
- Negotiations with the Entente powers, to persuade them to withdraw.

Both the Directory and the Bolsheviks may attempt: Fall of the Directory is a true 3-player game. The Directory was still the most powerful faction within Ukraine, and if it concentrates its forces against one enemy, it strongly favors the other. The diplomatic rules make luck more important, so Fall of the Directory may feel balanced than Makhno's Return.

## **Sources for the Movement and Advance Rates**

- Almendinger, *Simferopolskij Oficerskij Polk v Bojakh na Ukraine*.
- Khromov et al., *Entsiklopediya Grazhdanskaya Voina i Voennaya Interventsiya v SSSR*.
- Krivosheev, *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century*.
- Timoshuk, *Anarkho-kommunisticheskie Formirovaniya N. Makhno. Sentyabr 1917 - August 1921 gg.*