

Thesis
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The Eagle in the Arctic: The Prologue to a Century of American Intervention

Abstract

The American Intervention in the Russian Civil War serves as a prologue to interventions over the next century, all the way to the War in Afghanistan (2001-2021). To forward the historical understanding, it is important to investigate the related literature for how this conflict has been forgotten, how the related works came to conclusions that were rooted in the contexts in which they were written, and how interest in the subject increased or decreased in trends mirroring the temperament of the relations between the United States and Russia, which this paper hopes to address. American foreign policy is best understood through a holistic understanding of the situation at hand which involves the military concerns of involved parties, the political motives of the actors involved, as well as the impacts of history's lasting legacy on the present. It was an undeclared war, one of many the United States would take part in throughout the Twentieth Century. In this Intervention, the Americans were a junior partner, not leading the Intervention like the British were. Nevertheless, this would prove to play a large role in how American actions in the future would be structured, especially as the balance of power in the world shifted towards the United States. Despite this importance, this episode would end up being quickly forgotten by the United States and the Allied Powers as a whole. The Russians, however, would remember, and this would prove to be a sticking point in the decades to come as the Bolshevik victors of the Russian Civil War formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and rose to become one of the two world superpowers with the United States. Over the years, some in the United States would uncover and attempt to

explain the events that transpired in Russia during the Intervention, describing the causes and events, and coming to increasingly similar conclusions as to what occurred and why, and these conclusions were often rooted in the context in which these works were written. Though interest waxed and waned, in trends mirroring the temperament of the relations between the United States and Russia, a more complete picture was formed, though was still largely unknown to the American public and even the American government. Nevertheless, over a century later, there are those who still try to preserve the memory of the Intervention and its significance, though even the literature supports the idea of it being forgotten, and even the literature itself is forgotten. The collective Western amnesia on the topic of the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War underscores how differences in historical contexts and political narratives can influence scholarship on the topic.

Background

The Russian Civil War began in the aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917, in which the Bolsheviks stormed the Winter Palace in Petrograd (now Saint Petersburg) and sought to take control of Russia and all its possessions. The Tsar had abdicated earlier that year in the February Revolution, which saw Russia become a Republic. All of this was occurring in the midst of the First World War, which Russia had been doing poorly in, and continued participation in the conflict became increasingly unpopular with the Russian people. The Russian Republic chose to remain in the war, keeping the Eastern Front open, serving to cause the Central Powers to send large amounts of men and materiel to fight the Russians, instead of sending them over towards regions such as the Western Front. The Bolsheviks, a communist group that was part of the new

government, were vehemently opposed to continuing the war, something that helped greatly increase their popularity.¹

The anti-war policy of the Bolsheviks was a matter of particular concern to the Allies. The Russians had maintained the Eastern Front of the First World War since 1914, and had drawn a great deal of forces and resources from the Central Powers away from other fronts, most notably the Western Front. The Allies had repeatedly tried to find ways to support the Russians in their part of the fight, attempting to open up new fronts or routes for logistics. Large amounts of materiel were delivered via the Arctic Ocean ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk (Archangel), but these ports would be inaccessible in the winter due to Arctic ice. This led to operations such as the Gallipoli Landings, conducted by Commonwealth Forces at the Dardanelles, then part of the Ottoman Empire, as an attempt to take Constantinople and open up a route through the Straits from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, which could be used to supply the Russians throughout the year.² However, these landings, a plan created and championed by one Winston Churchill, failed horribly, like another invasion of his will in the near future. As such, assistance was never able to make it to the Russians in the quantities that were needed. As the war progressed, with Russia remaining effectively alone and cut off from Allied assistance, they could not take the brunt of the Central Powers directed against them. Indeed, poor performance in the war, as well as the Tsar's decision to leave the capital in order to attempt to personally lead and repair the war effort, led to the February Revolution. Then, continued poor performance by the Russian Republic as it continued to

¹ Carley, Michael. *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War 1917-1919*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983., 5

² Wright, Damien. *Churchill's Secret War With Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-20*, 2017., xv

remain in the war was a major cause of the October Revolution. As the situation in Russia deteriorated, the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the German Empire, which ended hostilities on the Eastern Front, and granted Germany a great deal of territory. With the East dealt with, the Germans started moving their resources to the Western Front.³ This proved to be a major cause of concern for the Allies, as it was only thanks to fresh American reinforcements coming in that they were able to hold on in France, and the Germans would be able to use the resources of the East to replenish their depleted stores, prolonging their war effort. As such, operations to try to intervene in Russia and restore order so that the Eastern Front could be reopened and that part of the war could continue were quickly developed.⁴ British forces landed at Murmansk and Archangel in 1918, and would be joined by American forces from the 339th Infantry Regiment, which would become known as the “Polar Bears”.⁵

As the situation in Russia deteriorated, many were caught in the crossfire. Aside from the millions of Russians and various other ethnic groups throughout the collapsing Russian Empire, there were also a number of soldiers and foreign prisoners of war who were attempting to make it back home. The most notable of these were the Czecho-Slovaks, many of whom were previously Austrian prisoners interned in camps in Russia. Groups of these soldiers got together and armed themselves, until they managed to form the Czechoslovak Legion, a force that started rampaging across Russia, sticking mostly to

³ Wright, Damien. *Churchill's Secret War With Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-20*, 2017., 336

⁴ Kinvig, Clifford. *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia 1918-1920*, 2006., 63

⁵ Wright, Damien. *Churchill's Secret War With Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-20*, 2017., 229

the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which ran the length of the Russian Empire.⁶ The Allied powers took note of this, and started making plans to help them return home.

The Japanese had been seeking to increase their influence over mainland Asia for decades, and by this point had had numerous successes, such as its victories in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), as well as its annexation of the Korean Peninsula and ventures into Manchuria. Its victory in the Russo-Japanese War proved especially stunning for the Great Powers of the world, and the shock of it caused a great deal of strife in Russia, leading to the 1905 Revolution, which the Tsar managed to put down. However, the Great Powers had repeatedly curtailed Japanese influence, with incidents such as forcing Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China after the First Sino-Japanese War, and the Japanese felt that they were being denied what they were doing, leading to ever-increasing frustration with the other Great Powers. This surfaced again in the reaction of the Japanese public to the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, which ended the Russo-Japanese War. Despite the Japanese military having difficulty in winning the war, and the war nearly bankrupting the nation, the Japanese believed they were owed more than what they ultimately received.⁷ Nevertheless, Japanese imperial ambitions continued, which led to them declaring war on the German Empire in 1914 in order to take advantage of the situation brought about by the First World War and take German possessions in Asia and the Pacific. After another failed attempt to take over China with the Twenty-One Demands in 1915, again foiled by the Great Powers, Japan looked for other ways to expand further into mainland Asia.⁸

⁶ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 56

⁷ Linkhoeva, Tatiana. *Revolution Goes East*, 2020., 24

⁸ Linkhoeva, Tatiana. *Revolution Goes East*, 2020., 50

The Russian Civil War provided a possibility. The Americans realized that the Japanese could exploit the chaos in the Russian Far East to expand into the area. To this end, the Americans, under the advice of the British and French, invited the Japanese to participate in an intervention operation in the Russian Far East, in hopes of preventing an exclusively Japanese operation from occurring and invading Siberia and Manchuria. This was accepted, and American, British, and Japanese forces landed in Vladivostok in 1918.⁹

For a multitude of reasons, the Intervention would ultimately prove to be a failure. Unclear goals, little support, low morale, fighting between the various participating nations, the deteriorating situation in Russia, the inability to create and support a local Russian force, and a number of other factors led to the Allies pulling out of Russia. By late 1920, all American forces had left Russia.¹⁰ While the Russian Civil War would continue for a few more years, the American participation in the conflict had come to an end.

Initial Records and the Government's Orders

If one wishes to have a better understanding of the secondary literature regarding an event, it helps to not just have a working understanding of the key events and background, but also the primary sources that these secondary works are drawing from. These would be the official correspondences, news reports, and published personal accounts from those involved in the expedition. There are a number of documents from the United States government that are still accessible in one form or another. The "Aide

⁹ House, John M. *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920*, 2016., 25

¹⁰ Melton, Carol. *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1921*, 2001., 207

Memoire” is the most important primary source in ascertaining the motivations of the United States government. Written by President Woodrow Wilson, it was a guideline for American operations in Russia, to assist the Czecho-Slovaks and to assure the Russians of their self determination.¹¹ However, it ultimately proved to be very vague and noncommittal, something that American commanders would have severe difficulty in interpreting.¹²

Other notable primary sources that will be integral to later work come from the soldiers who participated in the fighting. One such record is *The History of the American Expedition Fighting the Bolsheviki: Campaigning in North Russia, 1918-1919*, which was written, collected, and published in 1920 by a group of veterans: Joel Moore, Harry Mead, and Lewis Jahns. This has proved to be a solid primary resource for those investigating the situation on the ground with the Americans who were part of the North Russia campaign in and around Arkhangelsk with the 339th Infantry Regiment, the “Polar Bears”. These men wrote it in the hopes that their deeds and the sacrifices that had been made would be remembered.¹³ Some other soldiers would write more accounts of their own, but they would not see the light of day for decades.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Magazine published a few stories on the postwar experiences of the Polar Bears, most notably the work done to recover the bodies of those who had been lost in the fighting in Northern Russia. In three issues (November

¹¹ Wilson, Woodrow. “Aide Memoire,” 1918.

¹² House, John M. *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920*, 2016., 177

¹³ Moore, Joel, Harry Mead, and Lewis Jahns. *The History of the American Expedition Fighting the Bolsheviki: Campaigning in North Russia, 1918-1919*, 1920., 5

1929¹⁴, January 1930¹⁵, and February 1930¹⁶), they detail the efforts of veterans of the Polar Bears who returned to Russia to locate the remains of their fallen comrades, ten years after the end of the fighting. These already refer to this conflict as having been forgotten about, even though it has been only a decade since the events that transpired.¹⁷

With regards to the forgotten nature of the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War, perhaps the most important record from anyone directly involved in the conflict comes from General William S. Graves of the United States Army. *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, illuminates General Graves's experiences in commanding the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, published in 1930. His record of his involvement in the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War is a damning account on contemporary American foreign policy, highlighting his lack of understanding of the political and military goals of the conflict, exemplified by his statement, "I was in command of the United States troops sent to Siberia and, I must admit, I do not know what the United States was trying to accomplish by military intervention".¹⁸ For the commander of the American forces in Siberia, and the highest-ranking American officer in Russia, to admit to this, proves just how disorganized and disastrous this endeavor truly was. He then speaks on how "the absence of information from the United States and the Allied Governments, about military intervention in Russia, indicates that the various Governments taking part in the intervention take very little pride in this venture. Who can

¹⁴ Shilson, Gilbert T. "From Forlorn Graves in Far Off Russia: Bodies of Eighty-Six Polar Bear Heroes Enroute Home for Final Burial in Native Soil." *Foreign Service*, November 1929.

¹⁵ N/A. "The Polar Bears Are Home: V.F.W. Mission to North Russia Completed As Nation Joins in Final Tribute to Martyred Dead." *Foreign Service*, January 1930.

¹⁶ Bettelheim, Edward S. "From Archangel to America: How the Bodies of 86 American Dead Were Found in Far-off Russia." *Foreign Service*, February 1930.

¹⁷ Shilson, Gilbert T. "From Forlorn Graves in Far Off Russia: Bodies of Eighty-Six Polar Bear Heroes Enroute Home for Final Burial in Native Soil." *Foreign Service*, November 1929.

¹⁸ Graves, William. *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 1930., 354

blame them?”.¹⁹ A decade after the Intervention, General Graves observes that the conflict that he was a part of is already being forgotten, perhaps intentionally. General Graves wrote what he did because he wanted to give his side of the story on everything that happened, and he wanted it to be remembered, as he could tell that others did not. However, he also told his side of the story in order to try to explain why he could not destroy Bolshevism, as his hands were tied by the US government.²⁰

As the participants wished to distance themselves from such a disastrous effort, and hoping to capitalize on their victory in the First World War, the whole Intervention was rather quickly forgotten by the West. The Soviets, however, would take the time to study what had occurred during the war following their victory. While Graves worried about the conflict he participated in being swept under the rug in the West, it was placed on a pillar by the Bolsheviks. They collected their experiences with fighting these industrialized foreign armies and poured over observations as they prepared for what they believed was an inevitable future war against the imperialist capitalist powers who would be eager for another chance to destroy the worker’s state before it could unite the workers of the world in a worldwide revolution. To this end, Soviet military planners put together *The Russian Civil War, 1918-1921: An Operational-Strategic Sketch of the Red Army’s Combat Operations* in three volumes from 1928 to 1930. This included a number of reports on activities by members of the Allied Intervention, including the Americans, as the Soviets prepared for the possibility of a future war against them, which they believed might once again happen on Russian soil, writing “the imperialists were united by a rabid

¹⁹ Graves, William. *America’s Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 1930., 356

²⁰ Melton, Carol. *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1921*, 2001., 207

class hatred for the proletarian state, fear of the socialist revolution, and fear of the influence of the October coup in Russia on the international proletariat. They well understood the international significance of the socialist coup”.²¹ Trotsky also wrote on this in 1922, in *Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention in Russia (1918-1921)*, in which he noted the same, and the need to prepare for future struggle against the imperialists.²² This remembrance by the Soviets, and the context in which they perceived it, will come up again in the future, and will cause a number of incidents when it comes into conflict with the West’s forgetting of the events, especially during the Cold War.

The apparent resilience and even success of the Soviet Union during the Great Depression also proved to be a cause for concern in Western democracies, and it seems they did not want to bring attention to the fact that they had failed to stop this force that now seemed to be flourishing, or was at least doing better than the disastrous situation the capitalist economies were experiencing. This created a context that was not conducive to the production of further works or the publishing of information pertaining to the conflict, except for those of whom the conflict was directly relevant. Much to the dismay of General Graves, the Intervention was swept further into the past, and further under the rug, many were satisfied to leave it to be forgotten, as Graves had noted and feared.

The Era of Soviet Alliance and the Early Cold War

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western nations remained complex. There was constant concern about Moscow supporting communist groups in various nations, as was the case in France and Germany, and other activities conducted by

²¹ Bubnov, A. S., R. P. Eideman, S. S. Kamenev, and M. N. Tukhachevskii. *The Russian Civil War, 1918-1921: An Operational-Strategic Sketch of the Red Army’s Combat Operations*. Translated by Richard Harrison, 2020., 13

²² Trotsky, Leon. *Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention in Russia (1918-1921)*, 1922., 89

Comintern during this time. However, they would ultimately support the Soviet Union in its war against Germany. In this period, there were propaganda efforts to socialize the Soviets and make them appear as allies to be supported by the people of the democratic countries. To this end, material that was critical of the Soviets was suppressed, including anti-Bolshevik texts, with one notable instance of this being the difficulty that British author George Orwell had with publishing *Animal Farm*, an allegorical text he wrote that was critical of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.²³ Keeping this background in mind, the relevant work concerning the Intervention from over two decades prior proves rather notable as a result, with how it seems to focus on non-Bolshevik factors.

American Soldiers in Siberia, written by Sylvian G. Kindall, was published in 1945. It was based on Kindall's personal experiences fighting as part of the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia. Of particular note are his comments on the Japanese and their Cossack allies. Kindall opens his book with the following dedication: "Dedicated to the fighting forces in the Pacific by ones whose only distinction is that he happened to be the first American to qualify for a Purple Heart for a wound received in a fight with the Japanese".²⁴ This was a text written and published while the United States and the Empire of Japan were still at war, and while the United States and the Soviet Union were still nominal allies during the Second World War. The first chapter begins with remarks on how the American Expeditionary Force deployed to Siberia learned firsthand what "Japanese treachery was like" more than twenty years before the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. He establishes a relation between the experiences of the "helpless Russian peasants" and the American soldiers in dealing with the "outrageous brutality" and

²³ Orwell, George. "The Freedom of the Press," 1945

²⁴ Kindall, Sylvian G. *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 1945., 5

sadism of the Japanese.²⁵ By virtue of the political landscape at the time, Kindall acts sympathetic towards the Russians, and frequently makes vicious jabs at the Japanese. Kindall describes fights between American soldiers and Japanese merchants and officers.²⁶ He notes how the Japanese general acted as if he had been appointed the leader of the Allied Forces.²⁷

The interest here existed as it pertained to the Japanese enemy of the time, as that was the most important Asia-related concern in 1945. The war was not yet over when this work was published. Kindall remarks that “after the empire of Japan, as we known know it, has been wiped from the map”, with which he immediately proceeds to express his opinions on Emperor Hirohito, notes how he hopes Admiral Halsey rides Hirohito’s prized white horse down Tokyo’s streets, as the Admiral has promised to do, and then he says “there will then be a time to gather and tell all the horrible facts of the Pacific War. In that day there will be, of course, stories of Japanese bestiality and treachery surpassing anything within the experiences of the Siberian Expeditionary Force of twenty-five years ago”.²⁸ He notes then that he hopes that, in the meantime until such things come to pass, the reader will enjoy hearing about the “earlier encounters of American soldiers with Japanese methods”, as well as other details pertaining to the “strange, bygone odyssey of our ‘forgotten army’ in Siberia”.²⁹ Kindall writes in a context of severe anti-Japanese sentiment, partially due to the Pacific Theater in the Second World War, but also due to lasting cultural attitudes regarding anti-Japanese sentiment and race. Such attitudes are

²⁵ Kindall, Sylvian G. *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 1945., 10

²⁶ Kindall, Sylvian G. *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 1945., 157

²⁷ Kindall, Sylvian G. *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 1945., 16

²⁸ Kindall, Sylvian G. *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 1945., 14

²⁹ Kindall, Sylvian G. *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 1945., 12

notably missing from later works pursuant to the changing cultural attitudes, no longer being at war with the Japanese, and other authors not having the same negative attitudes that Kindall possessed towards the Japanese.

It should be noted that this is yet another “early” remark on the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War being a forgotten effort. Much has happened within the quarter century between 1920 and 1945, but it seems that even the Korean War (1950-1953), which is occasionally referred to as the “Forgotten War” today³⁰, was better remembered in 1978 than the efforts of the Americans in Russia in 1920 were in 1945. Graves had remarked in 1930 how the conflict from ten years prior was being forgotten, and now, fifteen years later, it seems it has effectively been forgotten. This leads to how perceptions of this conflict will continue to evolve in the coming decades, especially as time reaches forty years after the end of the American Intervention.

In the days after the end of the Second World War, tensions between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union quickly rose. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had previously been one of the main figures involved in the Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War, and had a long-running and very vocal hatred of Bolshevism, planned an invasion of Soviet-held areas, continuing the war in Europe after the fall of Germany, aiming to bring about the end of the Soviet Union, in a war plan known as “Operation Unthinkable”.³¹ While this would never come to fruition, nor would Winston Churchill ever be able to act on any other invasions of Russia, the Iron Curtain would fall over half of Europe, and the new alliances of NATO and the Warsaw Pact would stare down each

³⁰ Stack, Liam. “Korean War, a ‘Forgotten’ Conflict That Shaped the Modern World.” *The New York Times*, January 1, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/01/world/asia/korean-war-history.html>.

³¹ Churchill, Winston. “Operation Unthinkable,” 1945. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/cold-war-on-file/operation-unthinkable/>.

other over the barrels of their guns, and later, would prepare to use nuclear weapons against each other. By 1950, it was clear that the period of time known as the “Cold War” had begun. As the European empires that had ruled over world politics for centuries quickly declined as decolonization disassembled them within a matter of decades, the world was divided into a bipolar system between the two superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union.

In 1953 came the death of Stalin, and Nikita Khrushchev ultimately won the ensuing power struggle for control of the USSR. He then undertook major “De-Stalinization” reforms, and sought peace and greater cooperation with the West. To this end, in September of 1959, Khrushchev made a state visit to the United States. In a speech he gave, he stated, “Russian forces have never been on American soil, but American forces have been on Russian soil. Those are the facts”.³² However, none of the American officials present knew what he was talking about. The fears of General Graves had been realized. Many writers after this point remark on this particular episode at least once, as it serves to highlight the disconnect in the perception of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union (and later the Russian Federation). This would prove to be a recurring theme. A few years later came The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, which nearly saw war between the United States and the Soviet Union, and ultimately led to the deposition of Khrushchev and the ascendancy of Leonid Brezhnev to become leader of the USSR.³³ Coupled with the escalation of American involvement in the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, the Cold War entered a new chapter.

³² Carey, Donald. *Fighting the Bolsheviks: The Russian War Memoir of Private First Class Donald E Carey, U.S. Army, 1918-1919*, 1997., x

³³ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881*, 2007., 159

In 1966, George Brinkley published *The Volunteer Army and the Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921: A Study in the Politics and Diplomacy of the Russian Civil War*, which serves as a comprehensive view of events in what is today Southern Russia and Ukraine. This title mostly focuses on the efforts of French and British forces, but includes notes about the American aid and financial efforts, which become important for later works. It should be noted that Brinkley uses some sources that fell out of print not long after this book was published, such as *Always With Honor*, which were the memoirs of General Pyotr Wrangel, who features heavily in the history Brinkley has written, as he was a major player in South Russia during the Russian Civil War.³⁴

In 1968, Richard Ullman published the second volume of his three-volume work on *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921*, with this particular volume pertaining to Britain and the Russian Civil War. While this work does not focus on the Americans in particular, it features notable appearances of Americans and American activities that will be cited in later works. As the Americans were a junior party in this particular conflict³⁵, they are mentioned, but not expanded upon nearly as much as the much more involved British and Commonwealth forces. However, as Americans took a greater role in conflicts all over the world, and in time became the major party in most Interventions (aside from its opponent, the Soviet Union), scholarship would examine sources that are about other parties and pull American stories from those, something that reflects a sort of “changing of the guard”, as the old imperial powers of nations such as France and Britain

³⁴ Brinkley, George, A. *The Volunteer Army and the Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921: A Study in the Politics and Diplomacy of the Russian Civil War*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1966., 400

³⁵ Ullman, James, Ramsey. *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921, Volume 2: Britain and the Russian Civil War*. Princeton University Press, 1968., 7

fell, and the United States took over their previous hegemonic roles, a major change in the context in which works at this time are being written. The two above sources can both be grouped into that category.

The following year, in 1969, Betty Unterberger, a professor of history at Texas A&M University, who had put together the first full-length study of the American Siberian expedition, was supported by the Raytheon Education Company to make a text simply called *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*. It includes background information on the subject, as well as several important primary source documents, and several contemporary scholarly articles on the subject, including one by Unterberger herself, as well as one by George Kennan. Unterberger's collection is perhaps the greatest collection of literature on the subject up to this point, and may be the most useful collection on this subject ever, at least as far as the study of international relations are concerned. The articles are of particular note, as they exhibit the debates that had arisen by this point, a full half century after the events, with regards as to why it even occurred. General Graves had written in 1930 that he did not know what the United States had hoped to achieve in its efforts in Siberia, and decades later, scholars were attempting to find a reason.

George Kennan is a particularly interesting inclusion in this collection. At one point the Ambassador of the United States to the Soviet Union, he was a noted expert on Russian Studies and international relations. Unterberger's collection contains an article he wrote in 1958, titled "American Troops in Russia", published in January 1959 in *Atlantic Monthly*. This is the first article that Unterberger includes, and she has all of the articles in a section titled "Conflicting Interpretations". Kennan is of the opinion that

providing assistance to the Czechoslovaks was the primary motivator for President Wilson authorizing American participation in the Intervention.³⁶ This was the purpose stated in the “Aide Memoire” that Wilson wrote. Kennan also likely has an interest in this, as he wishes to further investigate the Czechs, as they are relevant to his contemporary context, with them being under Soviet domination at this time, with Czechoslovakia now being a member of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet-occupied Europe, in order to compare his current time to concerns of the time he is writing about.

Unterberger’s own article, originally published in 1955, is one where she believes that the main reason for the American Intervention was in order to contain the spread of Japanese influence in East Asia. It was believed that the Japanese planned to intervene in the chaos of the Russian Civil War in order to take swathes of Manchuria and Siberia for itself, and that they would prefer to go in an exclusively Japanese intervention force. The French and British pressured the Americans into extending an invitation to the Japanese to join in the Allied Intervention, which was accepted.³⁷ However, the sheer amount of problems and difficulties that arose in tensions between the Japanese and the Americans in Siberia was also one of the key reasons the American Intervention failed, according to Unterberger. Another major reason was Wilson’s refusal to commit to efforts, especially in helping any sort of Russian government opposed to the Bolsheviks, despite any claims of helping liberalism he may have made. Unterberger sees this as the beginning of contemporary foreign policy in the Twentieth Century, especially with regards to interventions³⁸, which is especially relevant in this time, with the conflict in Vietnam.

³⁶ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 51

³⁷ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 67

³⁸ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 72

Christopher Lasch, writing in 1962, believed that the Intervention was “a deluded effort” that was based on the illusion that the Bolsheviks were actually German agents. Lasch does not believe any of the official statements given or the theories derived from them. He does not believe that it was done to reopen the Eastern Front, or to help the Czecho-Slovaks, or to contain the Japanese, or for economic reasons, or for liberalism or self-determination for the Russian people, or even to fight against Red Bolshevism. He believes the reason the Intervention happened at all was because the Allies believed the Bolsheviks were secretly allied with the reactionary designs of Imperial Germany, “an enemy so subtle, so insidious, and so relentless to conquer the world that it had launched revolutionary movements to subvert free institutions wherever they existed”³⁹. Lasch says that these views are “so manifestly absurd that historians have for a long time simply ignored their existence”. He makes the equation of how many believe that the Soviets are behind the various revolutionary movements in his day, and how contemporary foreign policy was dominated by such assumptions as the one he believed the United States had in 1918.⁴⁰ Lasch was writing at the height of the Cold War, in which the United States was getting involved in conflicts all over the world under the apparent mission of fighting communism, and in a climate where members of government and the military believed that the Soviets were focused on expanding their power all over the world, and this is likely his commentary on this policy.

William Williams, writing in 1964, believes that the Intervention was “strictly anti-Bolshevik”⁴¹, that it was a fight meant to depose the Bolsheviks and other social

³⁹ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 73

⁴⁰ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 82

⁴¹ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 83

radicals in order to crush the revolution and restore a sense of order to the country, preferably a liberal order of the kind which Wilson preferred, to the point where it was Wilson's own anti-Bolshevik stance, along with those of his advisors, that led to him authorizing the Intervention.⁴² Williams notes that, even with concerns about the Japanese and Germans, cooperating with the Bolsheviks on dealing with these issues was never on the table in the decision-making process.⁴³ Williams is writing at the height of the early Cold War, only two years after the Cuban Missile Crisis, when fears of nuclear war and fervent anti-communist attitudes were at their peak in the United States, and "fighting communism" was the main justification for getting involved in the affairs of other nations, such as in Korea and Vietnam, and Williams sees this as a pattern going all the way back to Woodrow Wilson.

N. Gordon Levin Jr., as the latest of these collected authors, writing in 1968, believes that the reason for the American Intervention was "based primarily on the Wilsonian desire to use American influence to support Russian liberal-nationalism against the interrelated threats posed by German imperialism and Russian Bolshevism to Russia's March [February] Revolution".⁴⁴ Wilson, in Levin's characterization, was someone who was using the situation in Russia as an opportunity to advance the creation of the world he wanted. Allying with the Czechs was in order to have someone who would be receptive to the idea of liberal-nationalism in Siberia.⁴⁵ Levin also makes reference to the tarnished reputation Wilson had at this time, as a man who aimed too

⁴² Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 93

⁴³ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 95

⁴⁴ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 97

⁴⁵ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 104

grand to establish a worldwide order of American-inspired liberalism.⁴⁶ Levin writes this in a context in which the United States has continued similar operations, in allying with certain groups that it sees as receptive to its ideals in order to advance its goals in interventions, even though this occasionally fails.

The five different authors and articles listed in this section of the collection establish just how divided scholars had become in the half century following the Intervention. Because it was never truly established what the motivation or goal was for the Intervention, to the point where nobody from the common soldier to the general in charge knew what they were supposed to achieve, there was no real hope for later scholars to arrive at one conclusion. Granted, it appears that after this, the common consensus tends more towards it being a mix of all of these factors listed, rather than any single one of them being the primary motivator and the reason the operation commenced at all. This more nuanced answer is likely much closer to the truth, though, in a sense, it is still just as nebulous as the operation itself was. This text being put together in this fashion is an indicator of an increase in interest in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, in all likelihood due to the Cold War, recent international incidents involving the two parties, and it having finally been fifty years since the events in question. It seems this had led to a renewed interest in the subject, enough to collect primary sources and scholarly debates in such a package.

Renewed Interest and the Cold War

In 1972, President Richard Nixon would visit the Soviet Union, where he would deliver a speech on the 28th of May, with a severe historical inaccuracy that highlights

⁴⁶ Unterberger, Betty, ed. *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, 1969., 110

the concerns of General Graves. In it, he remarks that the United States and the Soviet Union “have never fought one another in war”.⁴⁷ The current President of the United States was stating something that General Graves would have known to be a blatant falsehood, as he had been ordered by his own President to undertake such a mission half a century earlier. In this time period, one of the main texts published was *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention* by Robert Maddox, published in 1977. Maddox refers to the Siberian Intervention as “an event scarcely known outside of scholarly sources”⁴⁸, and he believes that these events can only be understood against the background of American relations with Russia over the years that gave Americans certain perceptions about the Russian people, which greatly influenced American policymakers, such as Wilson. Maddox takes after N. Gordon Levin Jr.’s argument from 1968⁴⁹, as he also believes that liberalism was the primary concern and motivation for the American involvement in the Intervention. Maddox states that the reason the Intervention failed was because the Russian population did not respond in the manner that Wilson believed they would, that Wilson had fundamentally misunderstood the situation.⁵⁰ Maddox does not believe that Wilson’s statements that the Russians are a democratic people at heart are true, and is very critical of Wilson as a result. This is around the middle of the Cold War, in which there was no end in sight, and the communists had ruled over Russia for nearly sixty years at this point. With this context, it is fairly easy to see why Maddox would be critical of Wilson and his failures to enforce the order in the postwar world that he

⁴⁷ Nixon, Richard. “Transcript of Nixon’s Television Address to the Soviet People From the Great Kremlin Palace.” *The New York Times*, May 29, 1972. <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/29/archives/transcript-of-nixons-television-address-to-the-soviet-people-from.html>.

⁴⁸ Maddox, Robert. *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention*, 1977., 3

⁴⁹ Maddox, Robert. *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention*, 1977., 151

⁵⁰ Maddox, Robert. *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention*, 1977., 7

wanted. Maddox does not write disapprovingly of the Russian people, at least not nearly as to the level of which Kindall speaks about the Japanese, but it is clear that he does not share the same optimism about the Russian people as many Wilsonians and liberals did both in the 1910s and 1920s, and after the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. He is also writing in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, in which a large American intervention attempted to defeat a communist state and failed, leading to questions as to the efficacy and justification of such American interventions.

It should be noted that Maddox uses Kindall as a source for a small number of notes⁵¹, and Kindall was already referring to this conflict as having been “forgotten” in 1945, and Maddox backs him up on this. Practically nobody remembers the war at this point, short of academics who specialize in the field of Russian relations. Not even the politicians know about it, and the common person at this time certainly does not know much about it, either. By this point, the Intervention has been well and truly forgotten, as General Graves feared it would be, and Kindall knew it had been.

There would be additional work on the subject of the French with *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War* by Michael Carley in 1983, which contains more details on Franco-American interactions during the conflict. This serves more as an update to Brinkley’s 1966 work than anything else, but in the era of increasing concerns of a war in Europe with the tensions of the 1980s, writings about cooperation between the Americans and Europeans⁵², especially against the Bolsheviks, would find an accepting climate if they were discovered.

⁵¹ Maddox, Robert. *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention*, 1977., 139

⁵² Carley, Michael. *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War 1917-1919*. McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1983., 13

The forgotten nature of the conflict was once again emphasized in 1984, when, during the State of the Union Address, President Ronald Reagan would make the same mistake Richard Nixon did over a decade prior, saying “Tonight, I want to speak to the people of the Soviet Union, to tell them it's true that our governments have had serious differences, but our sons and daughters have never fought each other in war. And if we Americans have our way, they never will”.⁵³ Once again, General Graves was a victim of the ignorance of another American president. Like after the Nixon speech, there was a new text written on the conflict. *The Anglo-American Winter War with Russia, 1918-1919: A Diplomatic and Military Tragicomedy* by Benjamin Rhodes, was published in 1988. It is a text critical of Wilson, but one that also warns about the involvement in intervention and the certainty of becoming increasingly more involved in such an operation as it occurs.⁵⁴ He writes that the operation was “profoundly inept”, and that Wilson’s humanitarian interventions with “moral diplomacy produced a less than moral result”.⁵⁵ This text fits into the historiography as more of a military-related text rather than a diplomatic one, as most of the texts above are. Rhodes is writing in a time where American interventions have not produced the best results. Vietnam went very poorly, as did numerous other actions throughout the Third World, and he is critical of intervention, especially ones undertaken on the grounds of humanitarian action, as they seem to never produce humanitarian results. He also remarks on the comments made by Reagan in his

⁵³ Reagan, Ronald. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union - January 1984,” January 25, 1984. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-joint-session-congress-state-union-january-1984>.

⁵⁴ Rhodes, Benjamin. *The Anglo-American Winter War with Russia, 1918-1919: A Diplomatic and Military Tragicomedy*, 1988., 124

⁵⁵ Rhodes, Benjamin. *The Anglo-American Winter War with Russia, 1918-1919: A Diplomatic and Military Tragicomedy*, 1988., x

1984 State of the Union Address, and notes on the lack of understanding and forgotten nature of the conflict.⁵⁶ By the time Rhodes's book was published in 1988, the Soviet Union was in severe decline. Nearly a decade into a war in Afghanistan, multiple decades of economic stagnation, and seeing increasing public discontent, things would only get worse for the USSR with the coming collapse of the Warsaw Pact the next year. Very soon, the entire order that it had created would come crashing down.

The New World Order

The Soviet Union would be officially dissolved on December 25, 1991. After the flag of the Union was lowered and that of the Russian Federation was raised to replace it at the Kremlin, many sought to review and investigate the events that had led them to this point, as a chapter of history ended, and a new one began. Due to the Iron Curtain and the secretive nature of Soviet society, the Soviet Archives remained closed to all foreign researchers for decades, hiding a great deal of information from the world at large, and even from the Russian people. This, of course, meant that no works before this point were able to write with such perspectives as the information contained in the archives would allow, depriving them of necessary context. During the dismantling of what remained of the Soviet system, the archives were opened, and presented a veritable treasure trove of information that had remained unseen to all but some of the most trusted members of government. While many focused on aspects of Soviet society such as the activities done to spy on the people, as well as various atrocities committed by the Soviet government, others looked further back and dug deeper, looking towards the very beginning of Soviet history. The American author, David Foglesong, was one such individual to do so. He

⁵⁶ Rhodes, Benjamin. *The Anglo-American Winter War with Russia, 1918-1919: A Diplomatic and Military Tragicomedy*, 1988., xi

was the first to go into the Soviet archives for information pertaining to the Russian Civil War for the purposes of investigating the American Intervention. In 1995, he published *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism*. Foglesong makes reference to Khrushchev's 1959 comments, Nixon's and Reagan's speeches, and a 1985 New York Times poll in which only fourteen percent of Americans surveyed were aware that the United States had landed troops in Northern and Eastern Russia.⁵⁷ He then discusses how scholars from the US and USSR heavily disagreed on blame for the state of antagonism between the two powers. The Soviets portrayed the United States as an eager participant in an imperialist crusade, whereas the Americans mostly attempted to refute charges that they had been there to overthrow the Soviet regime. Now, with the end of the Soviet-American rivalry with the end of the Cold War, Foglesong seeks to find a more balanced and nuanced view, as he believes that there is no longer an ideological contest to be had. He discusses how Wilson was hesitant to use military forces, but eagerly used more covert means to achieve his objectives, even though many of those ultimately failed as well. Foglesong remarks that Wilson believed that the Russians were "democratic at heart", and how Wilson wished to make the world "safe for democracy".⁵⁸ Foglesong holds in his conclusion that while Wilson was ultimately split and noncommittal on many decisions, and practically all of his plans for Russia failed in his time, his ideas of American institutions and values, but especially his use of clandestine tactics and operations were picked up by those who came after him, with the CIA in the United States being listed as working to carry out his ideals during the Cold War.⁵⁹ This is

⁵⁷ Foglesong, David S. *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism*, 1995., 7

⁵⁸ Foglesong, David S. *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism*, 1995., 294

⁵⁹ Foglesong, David S. *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism*, 1995., 10

something that can come to light and be discussed more openly by writers such as Foglesong now that the Cold War is finally over. Many formerly classified documents were declassified during this time, and archives were being opened. Foglesong also writes a warning at the very end, that Americans living in the Information Age, as this post-Soviet era was coming to be known with the rise of easily accessible instant communication, to learn from the experiences of the Wilson Era and to treat with dilemmas of intervention and democracy with extreme consideration, and to be aware of how such a system of liberal internationalism could come apart if it was not properly led or executed.⁶⁰ Foglesong sees the time he is writing in as a victory for Wilson, even though Wilson had not won during his own time, but Foglesong also sees it as a victory that was not easily earned, and could potentially be easily lost.

It seems that Wilson had been “redeemed” in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, with the apparent victory of liberal democracy over the communist regime that Wilson had failed to stop in his own time, but had laid the groundwork to combat over the following decades, as Foglesong had described. It had been a war that had lasted a century, but Wilsonian thought had finally triumphed. This mindset can be seen in contemporary works, such as Francis Fukuyama’s *End of History and the Last Man*, published in 1992, which famously, or now, infamously, claimed that history had finally come to an end, with the fall of the Soviet Union and coming ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy.⁶¹ This was the new context in which works around the Turn of the Millenium would be written.

⁶⁰ Foglesong, David S. *America’s Secret War Against Bolshevism*, 1995., 298

⁶¹ Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992., 339

This post-Soviet era was also the time when more personal accounts were being published. Though some members of the Intervention had published their accounts of their actions and the events that transpired in the years following the end of the Russian Civil War, there were those who never did, instead keeping these details secured within their personal diaries and mementos. They went home, had families, and lived their lives as the Intervention faded into memory, as General Graves wrote about, practically completely forgotten by this point, especially since most of those who took part in it were long dead. However, some members of the families of these men sought to keep the memory of their actions alive in any way they could. Some built memorials, some put up plaques, and some published the records of what their ancestors did. *Fighting the Bolsheviks: The Russian War Memoir of Private First Class Donald E Carey, U.S. Army, 1918-1919*, is one such book. Published in 1997, it is, as the title would suggest, the wartime diary of PFC Donald Carey, who was a member of E Company, 339th Infantry, part of the Polar Bear Expedition in North Russia.⁶² It was his son, Neil Carey, who edited it and published it, almost eighty years after the events that had transpired, and fifty years after the death of Donald Carey. As such, it contains the personal thoughts of the original author, but it also has other notes and information inserted into the work. There are numerous entries from *The Detroit Free Press*, Detroit's flagship newspaper in the early Twentieth Century, detailing events that were occurring while Donald Carey was writing in his diary.⁶³ However, it should also be noted that, by this point, most everyone who participated in the Intervention was dead. Carey himself had died in

⁶² Carey, Donald. *Fighting the Bolsheviks: The Russian War Memoir of Private First Class Donald E Carey, U.S. Army, 1918-1919*, 1997., 38

⁶³ Carey, Donald. *Fighting the Bolsheviks: The Russian War Memoir of Private First Class Donald E Carey, U.S. Army, 1918-1919*, 1997., 235

1945.⁶⁴ Graves had died in 1940.⁶⁵ Churchill had died in 1965. The very last member of the Polar Bears would pass in 2001, a mere four years after the publication of Carey's account.⁶⁶ Everyone who led the war was gone. Everyone who had any chance of knowing for sure what it was about and why it happened was gone. Very soon, everyone who had a role in it would be gone. There was no one left to remember the war directly, and all that would be left to go off of was what they had left behind, and the extant work of secondary sources.

As the 1990s progressed, the New Millennium came, and the 2000s began, the world continued on after the end of the Cold War. The United States remained the only world power. Russia had a new president, Vladimir Putin, who pledged to stabilize the country, and bring about an end to the disastrous state Russia had found itself in. Severe poverty, multiple political crises, and the war in Chechnya created a chaotic situation in the country, which would eventually lead to significant developments on the world stage, years down the line.⁶⁷ For now, however, the United States would enjoy its unipolar hegemony over the world, doing what it could to press forward with the victory of liberal democracy over Soviet totalitarianism. Throughout this period, the United States would conduct international policy with little restraint or regard for the concerns of other powers. This was a good time to write about past expeditions, placing American interventions over time into proper context, now that such activities had reached new

⁶⁴ Carey, Donald. *Fighting the Bolsheviks: The Russian War Memoir of Private First Class Donald E Carey, U.S. Army, 1918-1919*, 1997., 240

⁶⁵ House, John M. *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920*, 2016., 177

⁶⁶ Braisie, Jeffrey. "The Michigan Polar Bear Unit." *The Daily Mining Gazette*, May 23, 2023. <https://www.mininggazette.com/news/features/2023/05/the-michigan-polar-bear-unit/>.

⁶⁷ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881*, 2007., 225

heights with the new world order, in which it appeared that Wilson had finally become the victor. As such, there was yet more focus placed on him in particular, though this focus was both critical and sympathetic, seeing Wilson as someone who had high aspirations for a better world, even if he had failed in his own time.

The new millennium would see the publishing of *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1921*, by Carol Melton in 2001. She writes on how Wilson attempted to use the military to restore peace in Russia through neutrality, in order to establish a new diplomatic order. Melton believes that, in fact, the Wilsonian concept of military peacekeeping returned and saw a “renaissance in the years after World War II”, and that military peacekeeping in the modern day of 2001 hearkens back to this sort of intervention that was “neither fully war, yet fully peace”, and how Wilsonian ideals have triumphed, with the League of Nations leading into the United Nations, and the spread of Wilsonian ideals worldwide.⁶⁸ In her epilogue, Melton describes how General Graves was suspected to be a Bolshevik sympathizer for years after he left Siberia, even being investigated by the FBI, and how part of the reason he published his memoirs was in an attempt to exonerate himself.⁶⁹ She is very sympathetic towards him, and she places the blame for his failures ultimately on Wilson, though she also says it was in order for Wilson to properly work by his ideals. Melton is writing in the world in which Wilsonian ideals have certainly triumphed, in the years between the fall of the Soviet Union and 9/11, in which the most recent US intervention, Operation Desert Storm in 1991, was a massive international effort that

⁶⁸ Melton, Carol. *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1921*, 2001., 211

⁶⁹ Melton, Carol. *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1921*, 2001., 207

resulted in a resounding success. There was every reason for Wilsonians to believe that the future was bright and that liberal democracy had truly triumphed.

2001 would prove to be a very eventful year. After the September 11th Attacks, the world changed. Vladimir Putin was the first world leader to give his regards to President George W. Bush in the aftermath, and Russia would assist the United States in hunting down those believed to be responsible, as Russia was still attempting to get closer to the West, and was still fighting an Islamic insurgency of its own.⁷⁰ In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, and now having a sort of shared enemy, this seemed to be a time of reconciliation, in which the East and West would join hands and cooperate to combat those who threatened the peace of the new world order.⁷¹

More literature on the Allied Intervention as a whole continued to be published in this era. *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia 1918-1920*, written by Clifford Kinvig and published in 2006, is a text that focuses on the timeline of British operations throughout the course of the Russian Civil War. Where it comes into the scholarship of the American aspect of the Intervention is discussion of the American activities alongside the British, as the Americans were a junior party in this Intervention led by the British.⁷² It provides valuable information on the intricacies of certain operations in which the Americans were involved in a depth that had, at this point, yet to be seen, even in Rhodes's 1988 text. Kinvig also notes how the Intervention was forgotten in Britain, and how as part of avoiding acknowledgement was by issuing medals to the veterans of the conflict were given medals relating to service in the Great

⁷⁰ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881*, 2007., 219

⁷¹ Malkasian, Carter. *The American War in Afghanistan: A History*, 2021., 110

⁷² Kinvig, Clifford. *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia 1918-1920*, 2006., 52

War, rather than anything for their campaign in Russia, as was done for most other campaigns.⁷³ While obviously being written in a British context rather than in an American context, in a larger Western context, it is yet another discussion of the events in a post-Soviet collapse manner, as well as a remark on American intervention efforts in which Britain was involved in at the time in which Kinvig is writing, with comments such as “‘mission creep’ as the Americans call it”.⁷⁴

Foglesong writes again in 2007, publishing *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*: *The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881*. This is a notable book for the time for its title and themes, as the United States is trying to deal with a newly liberalized Russia, yet cracks in this relationship are already starting to show. It touches on the American Intervention, retreading the same ground Foglesong wrote about previously, but includes more information about the perceptions of Russia by the Americans of this time. This includes a note that by 1920, “many Americans now held that Bolshevik dictatorship was not authentically Russian”, just as how Wilson believed that Romanov autocracy was not Russian, and had people, such as George Kennan, believing that Russia’s true destiny was to be a democracy in the manner of the United States.⁷⁵ This is especially important to include as an analysis of his overall work, and to examine the context of the day, as it is a mention of a prophecy that has persisted throughout the Cold War that has since come true after the fall of the Soviet Union nearly two decades before this work. In his final section, titled “Afterlife of the Crusade”, Foglesong discusses the failure of these efforts, how many tried to “champion the goal of a free Russia”, but

⁷³ Kinvig, Clifford. *Churchill’s Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia 1918-1920*, 2006., 326

⁷⁴ Kinvig, Clifford. *Churchill’s Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia 1918-1920*, 2006., 27

⁷⁵ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*: *The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881*, 2007., 59

ultimately failed, as the efforts of those such as Vladimir Putin were not curtailed.⁷⁶ Growing calls to do something about this led to increased friction between the United States and Russia, especially after events in Ukraine in 2004, and attacks against Putin in the American media. Foglesong believes that the Americans misunderstood the situation, and drove the Russians further away in doing so, with attitudes similar to those Wilson had expressed.⁷⁷ This is also similar to what Maddox wrote in 1977, during another time of conflict between Russia and America, in that Wilson and those like him fundamentally misunderstood the situation in Russia, and only made things worse with their attempts to “fix” things.⁷⁸ This is a notable conclusion when compared to Foglesong’s previous work in 1995, in which he was worried that the work of Wilsonian liberalism would not be completed, as the lessons from the noncommittal nature of the American Intervention would not be learned. The context has certainly changed in the dozen years since 1995. The attempts at liberalism in Russia in the 1990s have effectively come to a halt, as with the start of the 2000s also comes the beginning of the regime of Vladimir Putin, which sees an increase in authoritarian behaviors that reflect the Soviet system far more than the American liberal democratic system. Foglesong believes that the Americans deserve at least some of the blame for this development, due to the treatment Russia received in the 1990s, and the failures of Yeltsin and the perception of Yeltsin as an agent of American power in a society that still had yet to be rehabilitated from the idea of the Americans as

⁷⁶ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881*, 2007., 221

⁷⁷ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881*, 2007., 229

⁷⁸ Maddox, Robert. *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention*, 1977., 7

the enemy of Russia.⁷⁹ These unresolved issues would only increase in severity over the next several years, before exploding. Foglesong's warnings were not heeded, and Wilson's legacy would be in danger.

Returning Tensions

The forward-facing optimism of the liberal democratic West proved to be its undoing. The belief that this liberal unipolar order would last forever led to gaps in judgements that would only increase in severity over the next two decades. Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, in which he criticized the unipolar order of the world led by the United States⁸⁰, followed by Russia suspending the Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty later that same year⁸¹, and the Invasion of Georgia in 2008, were signs that Russia was not content with its state of affairs in the post-Soviet world order, and sought to change things. This had begun to raise alarms in those who had previously dealt with the Soviets, but it was also believed that this could be checked and contained. The last American veteran of the First World War, the last "Doughboy", would pass in 2011⁸², ten years after the last of the Polar Bears, and over a decade ago as of the writing of this paper. Time marches on, and leaves many things further and further in the past. General Graves was long in his grave, as were all of the lessons he had learned that were not passed on or remembered.

⁷⁹ Foglesong, David S. *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881*, 2007., 219

⁸⁰ Putin, Vladimir. "Putin's Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy." *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2007. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200555.html>.

⁸¹ Faulconbridge, Guy, and Lidia Kelly. "Russia Formally Withdraws from Key Post-Cold War European Armed Forces Treaty." *Reuters*, November 7, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-formally-withdraws-key-post-cold-war-european-armed-forces-treaty-2023-11-07/>.

⁸² Goldstein, Richard. "Frank Buckles, Last World War I Doughboy, Is Dead at 110." *The New York Times*, February 28, 2011. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/us/01buckles.html>.

Another work published in this period was *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster* by Carl Richard, published in 2013. This work starts off with a discussion of why Richard wrote this book, from an interaction he had in 1987. That year, there was a television miniseries called *Amerika*, in which the premise was that the Soviets had invaded and taken over the United States. The Soviets had expressed complaints about this show, about how Russian soldiers had never been on American soil, but American soldiers had been on Russian soil, in a similar manner to Khrushchev's comments back in 1959.⁸³ Once again, none of the Americans, including Richard, knew what the Soviets were talking about. This was what prompted Richard to start researching the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War.

Richard notes that "Soviet historians devoted tremendous attention to the Siberian intervention during the Cold War", and that they came to the conclusion that the United States was the sole instigator, bullying its allies in order to devote massive amounts of men and materiel in order to take down the Soviet government.⁸⁴ While this is absolutely false, as the actual historical evidence shows⁸⁵, it goes to show the difference between the West and the USSR in remembering this conflict. The Soviets, the victors, remembered it as a great struggle against foreign enemies, and created a narrative that benefitted them in a later conflict⁸⁶, writing in the context of the Cold War, while the West proved General Graves's concerns by failing to codify and remember the important lessons of the conflict, and instead forgot about what had effectively been a failed side project entirely, as General Graves had both feared and expected.

⁸³ Richard, Carl. *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster*, 2013., 7

⁸⁴ Richard, Carl. *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster*, 2013., 7

⁸⁵ Richard, Carl. *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster*, 2013., 55

⁸⁶ Richard, Carl. *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster*, 2013., 138

More change would come as the Russians would secure Crimea in response to the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine in 2014, and the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk forming in response to fears of Ukrainian attacks on Russian civilians in Ukraine. This created a tense frozen conflict for nearly a decade, a situation that would only change when Russia invaded Ukraine in February of 2022, a conflict which is still ongoing as of the writing of this paper. These developments saw the return of Russia as a world power, and has led to a significant increase in interest in Russia, the highest such concerns have been since the end of the Cold War. Due to how recent the escalation of the war in Ukraine has been, most of the collected works in this section are from the period between 2014 and 2022, when Russia had shown that it was going to prove a problem to the liberal international order, but it was not yet evident just how large of a threat they would prove to be or just how far they were willing to go to reassert themselves on the world stage.

Perhaps the first major work to come out in the post-2014 landscape with the increase in interest in topics relating to Russia and American foreign relations was *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920*, by retired U.S. Army Colonel John M. House, which was published in 2016. Colonel House, being a military man, focuses mainly on the military aspects of the American efforts in Siberia, reading similar to a white paper in some respects. In his conclusion, he heavily criticizes the American government and Woodrow Wilson for being so unclear and indecisive, and even for the mistreatment of the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia.⁸⁷ He praises General Graves, saying that he did the best he could under the

⁸⁷ House, John M. *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920*, 2016., 174

circumstances. Colonel House makes remarks on Wilson's unwillingness and inability to stop Bolshevism, which became a threat that desired to conquer the world⁸⁸, in phrasing that seems to exemplify the perspective of a man who grew up in the midst of the Cold War. Colonel House attempts to use what went wrong in the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War as lessons for the future, and the importance for him in doing so is in the context in which he is writing, in a time in which two large interventions, one in Iraq, one in Afghanistan, have gone terribly wrong. The War in Afghanistan would persist for five more years after the publication of this text, but it had long since become a quagmire that had not achieved any of its goals.⁸⁹ Men like Colonel House were tired of seeing such things, as well as what they perceived to be mistreatment and abandonment by politicians, which had been occurring over the course of their entire careers. Colonel House is using the increase in interest over Russia to speak on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Churchill's Secret War With Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-20, written by Damien Wright and published in 2017, is very similar to Kinvig's work from a decade prior. Wright cites Kinvig often, and it effectively works as an expanded and enhanced version of Kinvig's work, and serves as an incredibly detailed text on operations in North Russia, with long, detailed chapters on events in and around Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. Before the main content of the text has even begun, there are mentions of how, even though there has been plentiful readily available information regarding the most significant events before, during, and

⁸⁸ House, John M. *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920*, 2016., 177

⁸⁹ Malkasian, Carter. *The American War in Afghanistan: A History*, 2021., 128

after the World Wars, the dismal failures that were the Allied attempts to fight communism in Russia were “best left forgotten while concentrating on post-war recovery”, and how there was no official history compiled, nor any campaign medals awarded.⁹⁰ When General Graves spoke about how the involved parties seemed to be intentionally forgetting the Intervention, he was not only talking about the United States, and this serves his point. Wright also makes note of the poorly maintained Commonwealth cemeteries in North Russia, which serve as a physical reminder of the forgotten nature of the conflict.⁹¹ It would appear that the British history was similar to the American one experienced by General Graves and his men. Both Wright and Kinvig conclude their works with somber reflection, but Wright builds upon that into promotion of greater remembrance and further study. With these being the most recent texts on the subject, the next step would likely be the expansion of other operations these two books mentioned in the same manner that Wright did for Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. This has yet to be done in the current body of literature.

This period of time also coincides with the centennial of the First World War and the Intervention in Russia. As such, there is a bump in interest caused by this as well, coinciding with the rising interest in topics relating to Russia and Russian-American relations due to the contemporary situation. This has led to works such as *Always With Honor* by General Pyotr Wrangel, a very important figure in the Russian Civil War, being republished, after previously having been out of print for decades. Republishings of certain works are the only way some of them have proven to be accessible today, such as

⁹⁰ Wright, Damien. *Churchill's Secret War With Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-20*, 2017., xiii

⁹¹ Wright, Damien. *Churchill's Secret War With Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-20*, 2017., 298

occurred with previously mentioned works, such as Ullman's 1968 work, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921: Britain and the Russian Civil War*, which only proved retrievable thanks to a republishing by Princeton Legacy Library in 2019. General Wrangel makes no mention of Americans in his work, so while it is not relevant to the American aspect of the Intervention, it is still related to the overall subject, as well as the forgotten nature of the conflict. General Graves was not the only general to be a victim of this. The aforementioned text, *The Russian Civil War, 1918-1921: An Operational-Strategic Sketch of the Red Army's Combat Operations*, though published in three volumes from 1928 to 1930, it was not collected and translated into English until 2020, a century after the events that took place occurred. The reason this has taken so long to get to is an apparent lack of interest in the subject until the centennial of the conflict, as Richard Harrison, the editor of this English translation, makes note of.⁹²

During this time, there are more publishings of collected personal accounts, similar to those of the aforementioned work of Private First Class Donald Carey. Like Carey's experiences, these tend to focus around the operations in Northern Russia, with the "Polar Bears" of the 339th Infantry Regiment. *The Polar Bear Expedition: The Heroes of America's Forgotten Invasion of Russia, 1918-1919*, was put together by James Nelson and published in 2019, a full century after the cessation of American activities in Northern Russia. This is yet another work that has "forgotten" in its title, as if harking back to works such as Kindall's. Nelson discusses how, just as how "Russia is alleged to have interfered in the American presidential election in 2016, the United States

⁹² Bubnov, A. S., R. P. Eideman, S. S. Kamenev, and M. N. Tukhachevskii. *The Russian Civil War, 1918-1921: An Operational-Strategic Sketch of the Red Army's Combat Operations*. Translated by Richard Harrison, 2020., xi

sought to interfere with Russia one hundred years ago”, and as such, it is very important to understand this “prologue”.⁹³ Nelson effectively outright states the context he is writing in, in a time of rising tensions between the US and Russia after things had cooled down after the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. Another work that released in the same timeframe is *American Polar Bears in Russia: Soldiers of the 339th Infantry and the Archangel Campaign, 1918-1919*, which was put together by William Venner and published in 2023, and is the most recent work included in this collection of works, and is a lot like the works of Carey and Nelson in what it does and what it tries to accomplish. It tells the personal stories of members involved with the Polar Bears in the Intervention in Northern Russia. Venner also speaks a lot on the idea of memory, and he says he writes his book in hopes that these stories will not be forgotten, though he acknowledges that, try as he might, there may be some unintentional distortion, showing how difficult it can be to truly “remember” history.⁹⁴ Now that there is no one left to deliver their stories personally or finally collect their own experiences, what experiences are still able to be collected are compiled in these works in order to give an engaging, ground-level narrative.

In 2020, there was additional expansion of the field with the publishing of *Revolution Goes East: Imperial Japan and Soviet Communism* by Tatiana Linkhoveva. This examines relations between Japan and Russia from the late 1910s to the 1930s, but it also shows an interesting perspective of the American role in the Intervention in Siberia. This work examines the American Intervention from an outside, non-European lens.

⁹³ Nelson, James. *The Polar Bear Expedition: The Heroes of America’s Forgotten Invasion of Russia, 1918-1919*, 2019., viii

⁹⁴ Venner, Thomas. *American Polar Bears in Russia: Soldiers of the 339th Infantry and the Archangel Campaign, 1918-1919*, 2023., 6

Scholarship in English in the early 21st Century has had a greater emphasis on such perspectives, and this goes to show how a subject such as this can be examined through an as-of-yet unexplored viewpoint. This examination from the Japanese point of view shows problems and concerns similar to those the Americans dealt with, with the Japanese having no defined mission nor enemy⁹⁵, but also wanting to curb American influence in the Far East, as while the Americans were concerned about the spread of Japanese influence in Siberia, the Japanese entered Siberia after the Americans extended the invitation to join the Intervention.⁹⁶ New things can still appear in the scholarship decades on from the examination of outside sources, and perhaps there will be new examinations in the future from yet more non-Western sources.

With the coming and going of the centennial, the last potential major source of interest for this conflict, aside from studies of foreign relations pertaining to Russia, has gone. It can be seen how things stand one hundred years from the events that occurred, but the interpretation of the events has changed over time, and continues to change. As an anti-Japanese crusade, a failed episode in American intervention and a black mark on Wilson's legacy, an eventual redemption of Wilson and his ideals, and now a collection of rising concerns over the conflict between the United States and Russia that threatens to tear down Wilson's legacy once more.

Afghanistan and Conclusions

The legacy of the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War has been largely forgotten, and is overshadowed by the larger geopolitical strategies of the time. Comparisons can easily be drawn to later conflicts that the Americans have taken part in,

⁹⁵ Linkhoeva, Tatiana. *Revolution Goes East*, 2020., 65

⁹⁶ Linkhoeva, Tatiana. *Revolution Goes East*, 2020., 56

such as the War in Afghanistan (2001-2021), which was part of the larger Global War on Terror. In Afghanistan, the United States dominated the coalition both politically and strategically, rather than the British. Russia, like Afghanistan, is another story of a poorly defined mission, ignorant and uninformed leadership, and an inability to foster a viable alternative to the opposing force which operated with significant local support. As such, it seems there is a danger that strategies for American intervention have not changed in the last century. One must wonder how the other less-successful conflicts of the United States will be remembered, if they will be remembered at all. Though the cultural contexts used to explain the Intervention, and the resulting conclusions drawn from it, differed over time, the forgotten nature of the conflict was always emphasized. All agreed that it was a disastrous, failed effort, no matter what one believed its primary goals were in actuality. It has since faded into obscure history in the West, only for curiosity to be periodically reignited whenever Russia challenges the United States.

Concerns

There are some works cited in various bibliographies that have been unable to be acquired, or proved difficult to acquire, most notably some of those from earlier in the Twentieth Century. Compared to the relative ease of finding texts relating to the World Wars, the Vietnam War, or other wars the United States has participated in, it has been impossible to accumulate a solid bibliography on the various works of the American Intervention in the Russian Civil War. Ironically enough, this manages to serve the long-running narrative of this particular American intervention being a “forgotten war”, as even the literature written about it for future preservation has been largely forgotten. This paper hopes to address that. Now that the centennial has come and gone, and if interest in

Russian subjects were ever to fall into decline again, as it had in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, then it may forever be merely a footnote, at the same level of other conflicts and incidents from the period, part of the forgotten and misremembered interwar era.

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