

# RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR

## 1918-1922

by Richard B. Spence

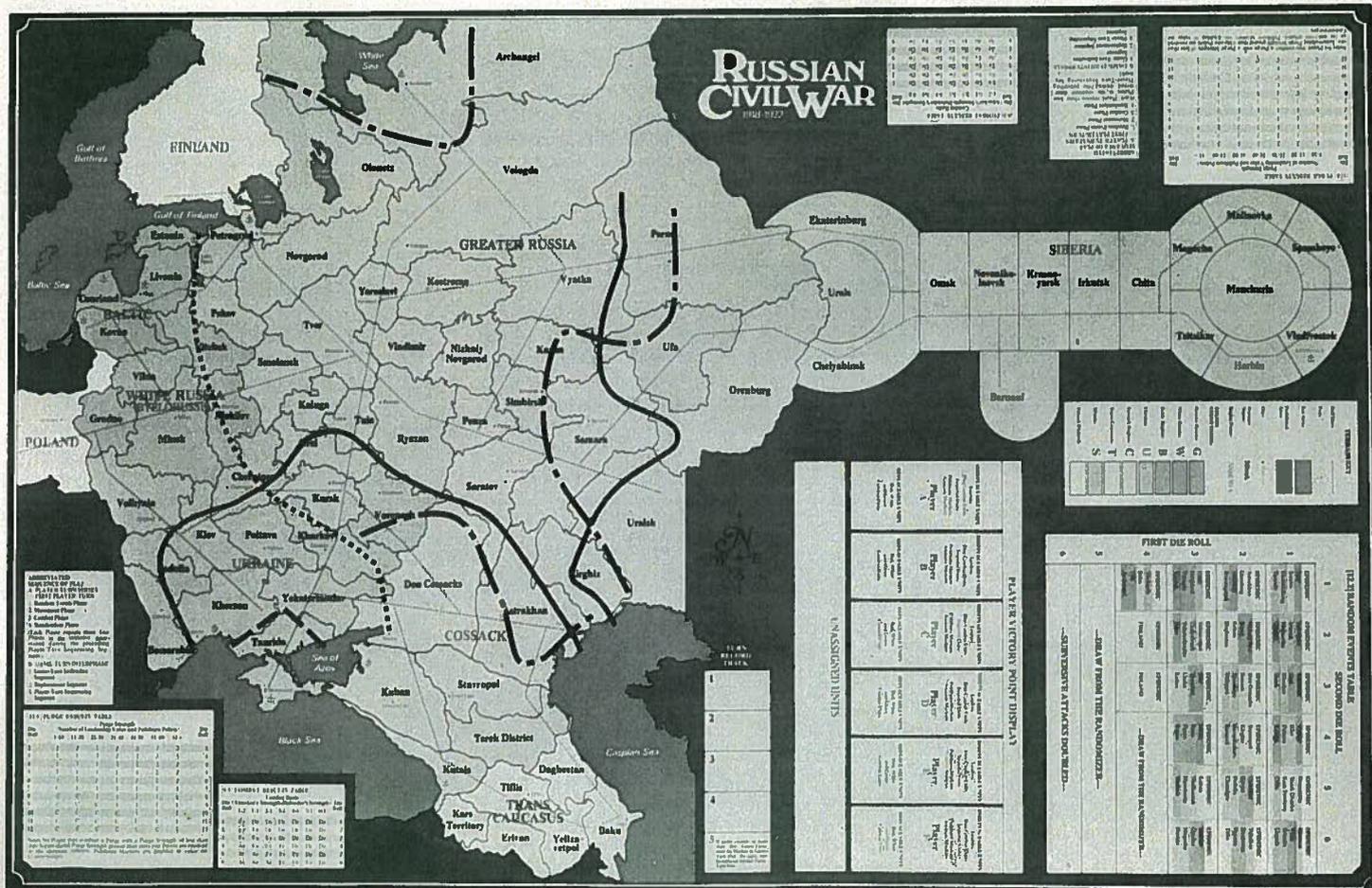
The Russian Civil War was in every sense a unique struggle. Few wars have had such an important effect on the future of a nation and the world. Fewer still have been so complicated or so little understood. The war was a strange combination of old and new. On the political level it pitted the revolutionary concepts of communism against traditional Czarist autocracy with any number of shades of opinion in-between. Militarily, the war was a throwback to earlier ages. "Modern" weapons, such as tanks and aircraft, were employed, but their numbers and overall effect was inconsequential. The use of armored trains and the importance of railways for supply and as lines of strategic advance harken back to our own civil war. The role of cavalry

as an important and often decisive arm was reminiscent of the Napoleonic period. The fanaticism and brutality prevalent on all sides and the wholesale destruction meted out to the civilian population was on a scale unseen since the Thirty Years War.

The actual fighting in the war was characterized more by local engagements and skirmishes than by large-scale battles. Movement was marked by startling advances and precipitous retreats. Betrayal and defection were commonplace.

Basically, the Russian Civil War can be divided into three major phases. The first phase runs from the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917 to the end of 1918. During this

period the Reds sought to consolidate their position and crush the nascent White movements. The Whites organized, built up their forces, and repulsed the Red attacks. The salient feature of this phase was the German occupation, which greatly inhibited the build-up and operations of both sides. The second and most crucial phase was the year 1919. During this year, White forces launched three separate and consecutive attacks against the Reds. All were initially successful, but the Reds were able to concentrate against each one in turn and decisively defeated the White Armies. The last phase, 1920-21, saw the Reds mop up the last pockets of White resistance in the Crimea and Siberia and crush the nationalist separatist movements which had



- ..... = German Occupation Line, 1918
- = Furthest advance of Whites, 1919
- = Furthest advance of Whites, 1918
- = Wrangel's position, 1920

sprung up in various parts of the former Russian Empire. The notable exception to the Bolshevik success was their defeat by the Poles, which ended Red hopes of extending revolution into Germany and Western Europe.

#### THE BELLIGERENTS

The initial stages of the war were fought with small, largely volunteer formations of varying military efficiency. As the fighting progressed, both sides resorted to conscription to build large and, more or less, regular armies. The mass of the conscripts had little interest or understanding of the causes for which they fought. This gave most units a rather low combat effectiveness and made desertion a serious problem. At the end of 1919, for example, the Red Army had some one million men under arms. During the same year, however, nearly two million men deserted from the Soviet ranks. The situation for the Whites was generally no better.

The relatively low morale of most of the troops meant that unusually large numbers of prisoners were taken whenever an army suffered a setback. More often than not, these troops were simply incorporated into the victorious ranks, often as complete units.

The fate of captured officers was another matter, however. Red officers, especially commissars, met distinctly unpleasant ends in the hands of the Whites. Captured White officers fared no better.

Because of the low standards and general unreliability of most troops, all armies formed various elite units for carrying out important tasks. The Reds employed "shock" battalions, often composed of foreign ex-prisoners-of-war. The Whites often formed special units with distinctive names, such as "Death's Head" or "Guards." Even such picked units, however, often left much to be desired in terms of performance. Among the White forces in Siberia was the so-called "Immortal" Regiment. It lived up to its name by fleeing whenever the enemy approached.

#### THE RED ARMY

The first military units formed by the Bolsheviks were the Red Guards. These were improvised detachments recruited largely in the factories from staunch Bolshevik supporters. They were openly armed and drilled on the eve of the November Revolution [all dates are new style], numbering some twenty thousand. It is indicative of the weakness and incompetence of the existing Provisional Government that it could or would do nothing to prevent the formation and maintenance of this potentially dangerous force in its midst. At any rate, these mostly amateur Red Guards were able to topple the Provisional Government, albeit without any real fighting.

In the ensuing months, the Red Guards were expanded to a force of about three-hundred thousand. Perhaps thirty percent of this force was composed of ex-prisoners-of-war, recruited from the camps in Siberia and Central Asia. It also contained a few surviving elements of the old Imperial Army, most notably a brigade of Lettish Rifles. The latter represented the best elements of the Red Guards. Many detachments, particularly those raised by isolated local Soviets, were little better than brigands.

The German invasion and the growing counter-revolutionary threat forced the Bolshevik leadership to give serious thoughts to

forming a regular army in February 1918. Attempts to form a purely volunteer army proved unsuccessful and a decree instituting compulsory recruitment was issued on 22 April 1918.

The task of forming the new army was entrusted to Trotsky, who became the People's Commissar for War. The construction and the ultimate success of the Red Army was due largely to this one man. Even Lenin did not interfere with Trotsky's handling of the situation, except to smooth over the quarrels which developed between Trotsky and opponents of his policies, most notably, Stalin, Voroshilov and Frunze.

Trotsky's most serious problem was finding an adequate number of competent officers to command the forces. Both the quantity and quality of communist officers proved inadequate and he was compelled to call upon the services of former Imperial officers. Initially, some twenty-seven thousand former officers were called to service and thousands more were added in the following years. In 1919, for example, four-fifths of all Red Army officers were formerly Imperial ones. Many of these men served out of patriotic duty, others because there was usually no safe way to refuse.

The fact that Communists made up such a small portion of the officer corps and the rank and file obviously presented a serious problem of loyalty. The problem of the officers was dealt with by the institution of commissars attached to all levels of command with coordinate powers. Their counter signature was required on every military order. A double hold was often placed on especially questionable officers by holding their families in "special custody." In the ranks, Communist Party cells were organized down to the company level. These army Communists were used to stiffen the resolve of doubtful units. They were urged to be examples to the other troops, and, in cases of failure, their punishment was proportionately more severe. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the combat effectiveness of a Red division was proportionate to the number of Communists in its ranks.

Trotsky himself, however, was often the most effective agent of Red morale. He had outfitted a special train on which he rushed about to threatened fronts. Onboard was a special staff and a hundred or so picked troops. There were also stores of tobacco, new boots and uniforms—not enough for everyone, but enough to make an impression on discouraged and war-weary troops. Thus, despite the lack of any practical training, Trotsky proved himself a competent strategist, an excellent administrator, and something of a showman as well.

In terms of organization, the Red Army was initially planned to consist of forty-seven rifle divisions and four cavalry divisions. By 1920, some fifty-seven rifle and sixteen cavalry divisions had been raised, along with an indeterminate number of independent brigades. These units were organized into sixteen regular armies, numbered 1st to 16th and the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Armies.

The organization of the divisions was basically the same as the old Imperial units. The rifle divisions usually consisted of two brigades, each of two regiments of three battalions. An alternate organization was three brigades,

each two regiments of two battalions. These units were characterized, however, by low effective strengths. Battalions seldom disposed of more than two-hundred-fifty to three-hundred rifles. The "average" effective strength of a division was thus around four thousand. In many cases, this dropped as low as two thousand while in units beefed-up for an attack, effectiveness might total seven or eight thousand. The armament of rifle divisions also varied greatly. The number of machine guns might vary from forty to nearly three hundred, while divisional artillery might have as many as seventy guns, or as few as a dozen or less.

The Cavalry Division consisted of three brigades (of two regiments), each of which was given a battery of four guns. Each regiment had four squadrons and two or three supporting machine guns. Total effective strength was about two to three thousand.

#### THE WHITE ARMIES

The White forces were raised by various leaders in such differing locales as Siberia and Estonia. Nevertheless, they maintained very similar characters. Initially, most White formations consisted of bands of ex-Imperial officers and a few troops who stuck with them out of personal loyalty. Their main problem, therefore was one of "too many chiefs and not enough indians." To some extent this was advantageous in that it gave the Whites a high degree of competence and morale. As the armies increased in size and the original cadres were killed off, this qualitative edge disappeared.

It is generally assumed that the White leaders were men of upper class origins and monarchist sympathy. In fact, most were from middle class backgrounds and many had worked their way through the ranks. In political views, they presented a broad spectrum, ranging from the staunch monarchism of Kolchak to the democratic leanings of men such as Alexev and Deniken. These political differences were an important factor in creating suspicion and rivalry among the White factions, which inhibited their attempts to form a centralized command and a viable government.

The principal White Armies were Kolchak's in Siberia and the Volunteer or Deniken's Army operating in South Russia. Smaller forces were formed in Estonia under General Judenich and in the Murmansk-Archangel region under Miller. Deniken's Army was the best-led and equipped of the White Armies, and came the closest to success, while Miller's motley collection was the least effective.

In terms of composition, the White Armies differed most notably from the Red Armies in the amount of cavalry they possessed. In 1919, for example, half of Deniken's Army was composed of mounted troops. Most of the White cavalry was formed from the Cossacks of the Don, the Kuban, and the Urals. The Cossack communities had enjoyed a variety of special privileges under the Czarist regime, which made them hostile to the egalitarian programs of the Bolsheviks. On the whole, the Cossacks were formidable if somewhat erratic fighters on their own turf. Their enthusiasm for fighting waned, however, the further they advanced from their homes. Organizationally, the Whites formed divisions on the same pattern as the Reds with similar, if often smaller, effective strengths. They generally

operated their divisions, however, in corps of two or three divisions.

#### THE INTERVENTIONIST FORCES

The role played by the interventionist forces, while important, was more political than military. This was basically because the various Allied governments were unable to agree upon the nature, the scope or the goal of the intervention. Suspicions as to each others' intents and political unrest at home affected their decision-making and limited their options. In most cases, the troops employed were of low caliber and all were war-weary. This made them susceptible both to Bolshevik propaganda and the debilitating malaise which sets in among sedentary troops.

The most active interventionists were the British. Following the armistice, they established themselves in Transcaucasia, Central Asia and North Russia, and sent military missions and large quantities of supplies to both Deniken and Kolchak. In both North Russia and Siberia, they attempted to form so-called Slavo-British Legions, Russian units commanded by British officers. In neither case was it a success and in North Russia, several British officers were murdered by their Russian troops. British intervention was greatest in North Russia. Of the twenty-one thousand Allied troops there in February 1919, eighteen thousand were British, the remainder being French, American and Serb.

Among the French, the greatest proponents of intervention were the Generals Foch and Berthelot. The latter concocted a grandiose plan for landing some twenty French, Serb, Rumanian and Greek divisions in southern Russia, but the plan fell through because of political disapproval and the lack of troops. French and Greek troops occupied Odessa and Sevastopol from December 1918 to April 1919, but did not give any substantial help to local White contingents.

The Japanese, seeing a chance to extend their influence in Siberia, occupied Vladivostok. Eventually, they advanced as far as Lake Baikal and subsidized a local government under General Semenov. The Japanese remained the longest of any of the interventionists, withdrawing the last of their troops from Russian territory at the close of 1922.

The Japanese venture in Siberia provoked a similar move by the wary Americans, who did not wish to see Japanese influence go unchallenged in Siberia. Small contingents of U.S. troops were also stationed in North Russia and the Black Sea area.

The Germans, who fought in the Baltic in 1919, may also be considered interventionists, as could the Rumanians, who seized Bessarabia, and the Serbs, Chinese, Finns and Poles, who sent detachments to Russian territory. The most important fact about all these troops is that they accomplished absolutely nothing. Rather than help the Whites, the interventionists gave to the Reds the cause of defending the Russian homeland against foreign invasion. It also earned the Bolsheviks considerable sympathy worldwide and tied down a negligible number of Red troops. The intervention must simply be considered one of the most ineffectual and counter-productive fiascos in history.

#### NATIONALISTS AND OTHERS

With the collapse of the Russian Empire, numerous local governments sprang up.

Some such as those in Poland, Finland, the Ukraine, Transcaucasia, and the Baltic States represented the nationalistic desires of subject populations. Others, such as those formed at Vladivostok or Chita, represented the desire of local politicians or strongmen to rule their districts as they saw fit.

The new national states had to form armies to defend their independence from Reds, Whites and sometimes each other. The Finns, Poles and Balts succeeded (with considerable foreign help) while the Caucasian peoples and the Ukrainians were re-absorbed into the new Soviet state.

The local governments in Siberia were neither overthrown nor co-opted by the White movement. The exception was Semenov, who, with his small force of Russians, Mongolians, and Chinese, and the support of the Japanese, was able to go on systematically looting and depopulating the Chita region with relative impunity. There were other "Semenov's" without even the semblance of authority to mask their depredation. These were bands of deserters, freebooters or outright brigands who plundered and murdered at random in the largely lawless countryside.

The most important and interesting member of the "others" category was Nestor Makhno. Makhno was a peasant anarchist leader in the southern Ukraine. He understood the wants and needs of the peasants and they fought for him enthusiastically. He began his operations against the Austrian occupation troops in the spring of 1918. Striking from his base at Gulai Pole, east of Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk), he began with a few hundred ill-armed peasants and, by the end of the year, had fifteen thousand men organized into four infantry and one cavalry brigades and a machine gun regiment of five hundred guns. Makhno's special targets were the landlords and his methods were not tempered by mercy or fair play. Following the Austro-German withdrawal, he aligned himself more or less with the Reds, though, in time, he would fight them as well.

#### STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The methods of fighting employed by the armies in the Russian Civil War were dictated by the peculiarities of the armies and the vast distances over which they fought. The enormous size of the fronts made defense in depth impossible and encouraged the use of such tactics as frontal attacks and outflanking movements. The latter was especially useful because there really was no such thing as a "front" in the conventional sense. Forces generally advanced along the rail lines and the flank or intervening territory was covered by small detachments or patrols. Artillery, including armored trains and shock units, were generally pushed ahead with troops strung out over a long distance. The shattering or envelopment of enemy forward units was apt to lead to a disorderly retreat, which, if properly exploited by cavalry, could be turned into a rout. The importance of rail lines for movement and supply made the capture of rail centers important strategic objectives. Most major battles were over such features.

The poor quality of most riflemen made this weapon of negligible importance. The machine gun was the decisive weapon in combat. Field artillery was relatively ineffective because most of the attacks were carried out over a broad area.

The Reds possessed an important strategic advantage in being able to operate on interior lines. This advantage was limited, however, by the distances involved, the inadequacy of the rail network, and the effects of bad weather. The Whites, in striking toward Moscow, their primary objective, were always moving away from their base of supply while forcing the Reds back on theirs. Thus, it was easier for the Reds to concentrate against a portion of the extended White front.

#### THE FIRST PHASE: NOVEMBER 1917 - DECEMBER 1918

##### Opening Moves

Following the defeat in November of an ineffectual attempt by forces of the Provisional Government to retain Petrograd, the Reds were to enjoy a generally favorable situation until the Germans renewed their advance in February 1918. As yet no sizeable counter-revolutionary movement had come into being. However, a Ukrainian government had declared its independence and the Don Cossacks were making separatist overtones under their *ataman*, General Kaledin.

In December negotiations were opened with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk. Here a Ukrainian delegation arrived and received recognition of their independence by the Central Powers. The Reds decided it would be best to eliminate this potentially dangerous situation in the south. In January 1918, they concentrated between eighty and one-hundred thousand troops for a double-pronged invasion of the Ukraine and the Don Province. The Ukrainian Government, or *Rada*, had only a few thousand ill-armed troops, while the Don Cossacks had about fifteen thousand, almost all of them mounted.

The Red advance was successful and rapid. Kiev was occupied on February 8th and the Don capital of Novocherkassk on the 26th. *Ataman* Kaledin committed suicide and a Red Don government was proclaimed. The Ukrainians, despite the loss of their capital, signed a peace treaty with the Central Powers which guaranteed the latter much needed grain.

The Germans, frustrated by Bolshevik stalling at Brest-Litovsk and threatened with the loss of their newly-acquired bread-basket, renewed their advance on February 19. The Germans and Austrians swept through the Ukraine with only sporadic Red resistance. Kiev was occupied on March 2 and Rostov on March 8. The Bolsheviks, in the meantime, had signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, in which they recognized the independence of the Ukraine and ceded territories encompassing nearly one-third of Russia's population.

In the Don Province, the heavy-handed Red rule provoked a revolt, which, with German aid, drove out the Bolsheviks and a new *ataman*, General Krasnov, was elected in May. Krasnov accepted the patronage of the Germans who supplied him with arms. By this means, the Don Cossack forces were expanded to forty thousand men by the autumn of 1918.

##### The Volunteer Army

In the shadow of the Don Army, a small force developed which was to become the most powerful and durable of the White forces—the Volunteer Army. The Volunteer Army had its origins in a group of officers imprisoned by the Provisional Government. Among these men

were Generals Kornilov, Alekseev, Deniken, Lukomsky and Romanovsky. The first two were ex-commanders-in-chief, while Deniken was the ex-chief-of-staff. The most notorious of the lot was Kornilov, who had led an unsuccessful *putsch* against the Provisional Government in September 1917. The others were imprisoned for lesser degrees of political dissent. They shared a common goal, however, in their desire to continue the war against the Germans and restore Russia to a "place of dignity among nations."

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, the generals escaped from prison and made their way south to the comparative safety of the Don Cossack territory. They set up headquarters in December 1917 at Rostov and began to recruit for a new Russian Army. From all over Russia, small groups of ex-officers and other sympathizers made their way to Rostov, arriving at the rate of about eighty per day. This was hardly an overwhelming response, even considering the difficulties in transportation.

In January 1918, the Volunteer Army was able to field a few small fighting units. These consisted of an officers' regiment, the "Kornilov" Regiment, a Don foot regiment, and a cadet battalion. In addition, there was a cavalry force of one regular and two Cossack regiments, a Czech engineer battalion and an artillery group. In all, this modest force boasted about 4,000 effectives. It was soon put to the test with the Red invasion of the Don. The Volunteers fought well, but were soon forced to abandon Rostov and seek refuge in the Kuban region to the south.

The Kuban was seething with political activity. The Kuban Cossacks had erected a govern-

ment of sorts at Ekaterinodar (Krasnodar) and were talking about independence. In the areas of Novorossk and Stavropol, local Soviets had come into being. The situation was further complicated by the thousands of troops who had abandoned the Caucasian Front.

In March, the Red forces pushed into the Kuban and ejected the Cossacks from Ekaterinodar. The subsequent German invasion and re-establishment of the Don state largely cut off the Kuban from other Red areas. The Red commander in the region, Sorokin, set about to form a large army from the stranded Caucasian troops. By April the Reds had some eighty thousand men.

The plight of the Volunteer Army was seemingly hopeless. Kornilov, however, decided to take the offensive and recapture Ekaterinodar. He was aided by the fact that the Red troops were poorly led and contented with occupying the large towns. On April 8, the Volunteers arrived before Ekaterinodar, which was held by eighteen to twenty thousand Red troops. For several days, the Whites attacked. Their efforts were unsuccessful because Kuban troops failed to carry out their part. As it was, the Whites lost fifteen hundred men and were forced to withdraw. A greater blow was suffered in the death of General Kornilov, the most popular of the White commanders.

Under the command of Deniken, the Volunteers began a long and difficult journey back to Don territory. On the way, they fought over forty battles with Red troops. In Rostov, they set about rebuilding their forces. Offers of arms from the Germans were refused, but sufficient weapons were obtained second-hand from the Don Cossacks. In July, the army was reorganized into three and one-half

infantry and two cavalry divisions, with about fifteen thousand men.

Deniken reinvaded the Kuban in late July. He defeated the Reds at the vital rail junction of Tikhoretskaya and took Ekaterinodar on August 15. A White force under General Wrangel swept south to the Terek and Caucasus where he recruited Moslem troops. The Red Army simply collapsed, with thousands of troops joining the Whites. The remnants retreated towards Tsaritsyn (Stalingrad) which was soon besieged by the Don Cossacks.

At the close of 1918, the Volunteer Army held sway over the whole of the northern Caucasus. With the addition of ex-Red troops and the Kuban Cossacks, the army's numerical strength grew to nearly fifty thousand. Operations came to a halt, however, when the German withdrawal cut the flow of ammunition.

#### *Developments in the East and North*

Early in 1918, fighting broke out in the area between the Volga and the Urals. A number of anti-Bolshevik factions were active in the area, of which the most important was the "Peoples' Government" at Samara. In June, 1918, this body raised a small army and began to extend its control against weak Red resistance. It was assisted by troops of the Czech Legion.

The Czech Legion consisted of ex-Austro-Hungarian prisoners who had been recruited to fight for the Russians before the outbreak of the Revolution. It consisted of about seventy thousand troops organized into two divisions and supporting units. The Bolsheviks had given the Czechs free passage from Russian

## **Allied Intervention**

The Russian Civil War was a primarily Russian affair, but the foreign forces, while small in number, exerted a considerable influence.

There was never any cohesive interventionist policy in the Russian Civil War. The Allied commitment was made piecemeal and gradually, without any definitive end in mind. It resembled the U.S. experience in Vietnam in that the presence of Allied troops gradually "escalated" as some sixteen nations were dragged into intervention of some form. There was, in reality, little talk of massive intervention for the express purpose of defeating the Reds, although some highly placed individuals such as Winston Churchill in Britain and General Berthelot in France, occasionally supported such plans. The policies of the nations that intervened were almost totally devoid of long-range goals. Similarly, they were unable to reconcile their support for the disparate groups fighting the Reds (those who fought for a re-united Greater Russia, as opposed to those fighting for regional autonomy). The only basic policy that was evident was the attempt to keep the Eastern Front open during the First World War. This was the reason for the initial commitment of Allied troops to Archangel and Murmansk; to safeguard the Allied lines of communication to North

Russia in the hopes of supporting resistance. As long as the First World War lasted, ideological conflict became secondary—thus the Allies supported the Finnish Reds over the pro-German, anti-Communist Whites until 1918. Once the First World War ended, the rationale for intervention began to dry up. The Allies were incredibly war-weary, having exhausted their men and money on four years of total war. The troops wanted to go home, and dissatisfaction over demobilization arrangements occurred even in the British and French forces. As the Russian Civil War progressed, Allied intervention became less popular at home. It was a strain on the war-torn economies of these nations (Britain's aid alone to the Whites cost twenty-four million pounds); and the Whites were soon identified with Czarist autocracy. British dockers refused to load munitions for Poland, and as early as late 1919, the British were beginning to wind up their Russian involvement.

While the Allied forces were never numerically strong, they were of considerable military importance. The Czech Legion was the most powerful anti-Red force. British supplied (and often manned) tanks, gunboats and aircraft spearheaded the offensives of Deniken, Wrangel and Judenich. The Allied forces at Archangel and Murmansk were the basis for all

anti-Red action in that area. In the Baltic, the British crippled the Red fleet, while the Royal and French Navies provided support in the Black Sea, eventually evacuating the last, sad remnants of Wrangel's Army. The Siberian intervention was primarily concerned with the Japanese attempt to extend their sway into Siberia and the American attempt to limit them. Here, as elsewhere, the Allies were by no means one with the Whites. There were several clashes between them and Kolchak's and other anti-Red forces. A similar situation was seen in the Baltic in 1919-20, when four different Allied-supported groups (the Whites, the Balts, the German Freikorps, and the Poles) would rather fight each other than the "common enemy." The Allied intervention in Russia was a case of "too little and too late." Intervention lost its rationale after 11 November 1918, unless the Allies were willing to take an active part in defeating the Reds, which they were not prepared to do.

Thus, the inability to formulate a policy or goal to intervention doomed intervention to indecisiveness. While the Communist ideology made friction with the west unavoidable, it remains that Allied intervention did greatly increase mistrust and hostility on both sides, a mistrust that was to linger to 1941.

—David C. Isby

territory via Vladivostok. In May, however, the Reds decided to disarm the Legion. Most of the Legion was strung out from the Volga to Lake Baikal. The 1st Division, about twelve thousand men, was at Samara as a rear guard. The Czechs resisted the Red attempts to disarm them and took the offensive, driving the Red Guards from the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The Czech and Samaran troops took Kazan in August. Czech troops marched on Ekaterinburg, where the local Soviet troops held the Imperial Family. The latter were executed by the Soviets on July 16; the Czechs arrived on the 25th.

The Red situation on the Volga had become critical in July. Their commander, Muraviev, was killed defecting to the Whites. Red fortunes were restored by the arrival of Trotsky and reinforcements. Trotsky purged the command and reorganized the forces into the 1st through 5th Armies, with one-hundred thousand men. In September, these forces counter-attacked, and in October took Samara.

The activities of the Czechs caused the Western Allies to abandon their plans of bringing them West. It was decided to use them as a nucleus of the new anti-German Eastern front. The Reds, it was assumed, would prove a minor obstacle. An Allied staff was sent to Siberia under the French General Janin.

What the Allies needed, however, was a Russian leader to unite and lead the Whites in Siberia. They found this man in Admiral Kolchak, an uninspiring ex-Naval officer. In November 1918, Kolchak reached Omsk, where a government of anti-Bolsheviks had been established. With the support of the Allied missions, Kolchak staged a coup and took control, declaring himself the "Supreme Ruler of all the Russias." Kolchak erected an administration and set about raising an army. In this task, he was supported not only by the Allies, but by the Imperial gold reserve (seven train loads!) as well.

His projects placed a severe burden on the Siberians. Conspiration, expropriation, and an indiscriminate White Terror drove thousands of peasants into the forest, where they formed partisan bands.

In the far north, small Allied contingents occupied Murmansk in March 1918. In the course of the year, these forces were reinforced to nearly twenty thousand men. The original justification for this move was to protect the northern parts against the Germans. The latter had a few thousand troops in Finland assisting the White Finnish leader, Mannerheim, in his struggle against native and Russian Reds.

The presence of the Allied troops emboldened the Murmansk Soviets to break with Moscow and set up an independent North Russian government. A Russian general with the unlikely name of Miller was eventually found to raise an army. The troops available were mostly ex-Red Guards and other dubious elements, whose behavior was anything but reliable.

In August, the Allied forces occupied Archangel and began to advance south along the Murmansk railway and the Dvina River. They encountered spotty, but often stiff resistance from the 6th Red Army. By the end

of the year, they had advanced as far as Kemm on the railway and Shenkursk on the Dvina.

#### THE SECOND PHASE: JANUARY - DECEMBER 1919

##### *Plans and Proposals*

As the year 1919 opened, the White Armies were planning to make an all-out drive on Moscow and Petrograd, and destroy the Bolshevik Regime. Each leader, however, had his own idea of how this was to be accomplished. Despite a good deal of talking, the Whites could agree on no cohesive plan of action.

The Allies were beginning to wonder what they had gotten themselves into. Unwilling to commit further troops to the intervention, an effort was initiated to bring about a solution to the Russian chaos by negotiation. The so-called Prinkipo Proposal was drawn up by Woodrow Wilson, asking the various Russian factions to meet near Istanbul. The Reds initially showed some interest, but the Whites rejected any compromise with the Reds.

##### *The Red Offensive*

The German withdrawal, beginning in December 1918, was followed step-by-step by the Red Army. With the Siberian front temporarily quiet, the Reds initiated a general offensive to overwhelm the various White and Nationalist forces in European Russia.

The Ukraine was invaded by the 12th, 13th and 14th Red Armies, under Gregoriev. They quickly overcame the resistance of the Ukrainian forces under Petliura and captured Kiev on February 6. The Red success in the Ukraine was undercut in May, however, when Gregoriev repudiated the Bolsheviks and proclaimed himself *ataman* in Odessa. The Ukrainian forces were able to recover their balance and regain control over much of the western Ukraine.

The 15th and 16th Red Armies invaded the Baltic Region, whose newly reformed republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia hurriedly formed small armies. Riga and Vilna were taken in January and Red regimes erected. The situation in the Baltic was retrieved by an army of German Volunteers under General von der Goltz. The "Baltic Corps" recaptured Riga at the end of May. Vilna was retaken by German and Lithuanian troops. The political heavy-handedness of the Germans, however, provoked the Latvians and Estonians, whose combined forces defeated the "Baltic Corps" at Cēsis in June.

In the southeast, the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Red Armies drove against the Don Cossacks and the Volunteer Army. The Don forces were overwhelmed in February. Only some fifteen thousand out of forty-five thousand Don troops managed to join forces with the Volunteers. The Volunteers were able to beat off the Red attacks and launch a counter-offensive of their own, which recaptured Novochoerkassk in March.

##### *The White Offensives*

The first of the White thrusts was launched in March by Kolchak's Siberian forces. These consisted of the Siberian Army (thirty-two thousand) in the north, the Western Army (fifty-one thousand) in the center, and the Southern Army (thirty thousand). The Whites were initially successful and in early April again threatened Samara and Kazan.

The Reds dispatched two of their best commanders to the front. Frunze and Tuchachevsky brought the White advance to a halt. In June, Tuchachevsky broke the Whites' center and, in a daring outflanking move, seized several of the key passes in the Urals. The Whites retired into Siberia in disorder. In July, a crucial battle was fought over Chelyabinsk. The Whites were defeated and driven east toward Omsk.

The White debacle was temporarily halted in August, when the best of the Siberian commanders, Kappel, successfully counter-attacked the extended Reds and stabilized the front along the Tobol River. They pushed again in October and the White Army collapsed. Omsk was taken on November 14. The White remnants retreated towards Irkutsk with the whole of Siberia in revolt around them.

Deniken began his offensive in late May. He had three distinct forces under his command: the Volunteer Army (fifty thousand), the refurbished Don Army (fifty-five thousand) and Wrangel's Caucasian Army (thirty thousand). Wrangel wanted to advance on the Volga and link up with the Siberian forces. Deniken insisted on Moscow as the major goal, but allowed Wrangel to pursue the Volga strategy independently. In late June, the Volunteers broke the main Red front at Kharkov and Wrangel captured Tsaritsyn. In August, Kiev and Odessa were taken. On October 14th, Deniken reached the height of his success by capturing Orel only 250 miles from Moscow. The position of his forces was in fact precarious. His armies were stretched out over a large arc from Odessa to the Volga. His rear area was in complete disarray. In the west, Ukrainian forces pressed on Kiev. In the south, Makhno, with some forty thousand guerrillas, defeated a large White force at Peregonovka and threatened the Volunteers' headquarters at Taganrog. On October 20, the Red 1st Cavalry Army, under Budenny, attacked the White front at Voronezh. The White forces collapsed. By December, they were back in the Kuban, the Reds on their heels.

During 1919, a small White Army had been formed in Estonia by General Judenlch, who had commanded the Caucasian front in World War I. By September, he had about twenty thousand men and decided to make a mad dash to seize Petrograd. He was opposed by the 7th Red Army. His drive reached the outskirts of the city, but Red weight of numbers prevailed and he was forced back into Estonia in November, where his forces were interned.

In the far north, the last of the Allied troops withdrew in September. The local Whites quickly collapsed. Most of the troops went over to the Reds.

#### THE LAST PHASE: 1920 - 1921

##### *The End in Siberia*

In January 1920, Kolchak was imprisoned by some of his ex-supporters in Irkutsk. In February, the Reds arrived and executed him. The remnants of the White forces under Kappel struggled eastward, fighting partisans and avoiding towns. Kappel refused to leave his troops and died of gangrene resulting from frostbite. The few thousand survivors were rounded up by the Japanese and evacuated to Manchuria.

Semenov escaped to Siberia. His successor, Baron Ungern-Sternberg led his rabble into

Mongolia and seized Ulan Baator. In early 1921, Red and Mongolian nationalist forces captured and executed him.

#### *Wrangel's Last Stand*

By April 1920, the remnants of the Volunteer forces were holding the Crimea. Deniken had resigned and been replaced by Wrangel. Wrangel was able to scrape together an effective force of about forty thousand. He realized that he could not hope to hold his own against the Reds, but hoped that their ensuing war with the Poles would distract enough Red strength to allow him to hold the Crimea. He even conducted a small offensive and occupied the Taurida.

In August, the Red Armies, under Tuchachevsky, were beaten before Warsaw and, in October, a Russo-Polish peace was concluded. The Reds now concentrated 150,000 men against the Crimea and stormed the Perekop Isthmus on November 11. On the 14th, Wrangel left the Crimea, followed by over 100,000 soldiers and civilians.

The only major force in the field opposing the Reds was Makhno. Throughout the winter of 1920, the Red Armies pursued him westward. In January 1921, Makhno crossed the Rumanian frontier with 250 followers. He later settled in Paris where he lived peacefully for many years.

The Russian Civil War was now technically over. A few bands of Whites roamed about in Siberia and national revolts were still going on in the Caucasus. Everywhere, however, the Reds had been triumphant. To a great extent, their victory was a result of their centralized and determined leadership. Even so, they were helped by the military and political errors of the Whites. Lenin himself later admitted that the Bolshevik victory was due less to Red strength than to the weakness of the Whites.

#### *THE COST*

The toll which the Civil War exacted on Russia is almost beyond comprehension. In human terms, it caused the deaths of an estimated twenty-five million persons. This is probably a low figure. The vast majority of the dead were civilians who perished from disease and starvation. Military deaths were comparatively few and some 85% of those were from disease. The economic structure was in ruins, as were thousands of villages and towns. More importantly, the agricultural situation was in complete chaos. In some areas effective crops had not been raised in years. The stores which did exist had been fed to the armies. The result was a massive famine in which further millions died.

Psychologically, the Civil War left deep scars on the Russian people. Old hatreds were to erupt anew during World War II when such groups as the Cossacks flocked to the Nazi banner.



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#### **INVASION: AMERICA** [cont from page 29]

The PAL takes Portland, but the hovercraft are repulsed at Vancouver. The first PAL mechanized units land and prepare to take Seattle.

The Defenders' main reserve strikes the ESC lodgement, retaking South Carolina and Tallahassee. Air attrition is heavy, with the irreplaceable carriers suffering. An attack in Nicaragua fails, but Portland and Cape Flattery are recaptured. The attacks in Oregon are supported by 60% of the Defender air units. The Defenders are holding fairly well, but attrition is causing a greater reliance on militia to guard the beaches, which could be disastrous.

*May:* The ESC advances steadily, as air support based in the US becomes available. The SAU cracks the line and reaches Yucatan. The PAL retakes Portland, but does not launch a second invasion; the hovercraft re-embark as they will be more useful in a less restricted beachhead. The ESC invasion comes in southern New Jersey and is stopped north of Trenton. The SAU invasion comes at South Texas (1929). American militia crumbles and the SAU armor strikes westward to cut Mexico off from the US. This time aircraft accompany the initial invasion forces.

The Defenders commit the only remaining three armored corps in Mexico, cutting off the westernmost SAU units. Remaining units in Central America pull back to Tehuantepec (0932). In New Jersey, the Defenders do not counter-attack, and attacks against the southern lodgement do little. In Oregon, the massive air support allows the destruction of the PAL beachhead, with heavy losses for both sides. Units entrain for movement to Georgia.

#### *June:*

Atlanta falls to the ESC, as the Defenders fall back to the Appalachians. In New Jersey, the front remains stable, neither side being strong enough for a big push. The SAU pulls back in South Texas and advances steadily on Mexico City. The PAL invades at Los Angeles, taking L.A. and threatening Phoenix.

The Defenders send forces from Oregon to Los Angeles, protecting Phoenix, but lacking time to attack. Militia blocks the path to San Francisco. Airstrikes deplete the PAL carrier force. The Defenders reduce the South Texas beachhead and prepare for a withdrawal north of Mexico City. Minor inroads are made against the southern ESC lodgement, now too big to be wiped out.

#### *July:*

Birmingham falls, but the ESC makes no headway in attacks against the Appalachians. The Defender line is thinning dangerously. The SAU finally takes Mexico City, while the PAL expands its L.A. beachhead, unsuccessfully attacking Phoenix. Small ESC and SAU forces embark for third invasions.

The Defenders assume a defensive posture in Mexico and unsuccessfully strike at Birmingham. The air battle is favoring the Defenders more and more, but ground support is minimal; there are few troops left to support. For the first time, militia is committed to the line against the ESC. In California, the PAL forces are again wiped out under huge air strikes. The PAL amphibious fleet is destroyed, freeing all West Coast forces. Ten corps of armor and infantry entrain for the Southeast, along with several air fleets.

#### *August:*

The ESC lands at Galveston and the SAU at New Orleans; they push in rapidly and link up with the ESC lodgement. The ESC force in New Jersey is wiped out trying to cross the Hudson. The front is stable in Mexico.

The reinforcements arrive from California, and the Galveston and New Orleans beachheads are wiped out in desperate attacks. A strike along the Georgia coast fails. More and more militia is committed, doing more harm than good. Attempts at partisan warfare in the ESC rear are disorganized and harshly dealt with. There are absolutely no Defender reserves left anywhere, and every beach is guarded by militia.

#### *September:*

The ESC tries attacking north, but fails to crack the Appalachians. The SAU makes some progress against a thin screen, but is still four-hundred kilometers from Texas. Very little of economic value has fallen to the SAU, and the failure can be traced to the initial invasion. PAL units land behind SAU lines; they will be useful in the upcoming winter battle for the Sierra Madre. The Defenders marshal what strength they have left to repulse the last attacks before winter.

#### *October:*

The invasions come in Corpus Christi (SAU) and Galveston (ESC). The areas are barely screened and rapid penetration puts invaders in Dallas, Houston and oil and wheat field areas of great importance. The ESC finally takes Memphis and New Orleans; the lodgement front now exceeds two-thousand kilometers in length. Scattered Defender armor faces the units in Texas, while the main front falls back to a line from the Appalachians through the Ozarks and down the Mississippi. Few aircraft are left. The USA and Canada are weak, but so are the ESC and PAL.

None of the weakened economies can support this bloody, inconclusive war. With winter coming on, the invaders are anxious to negotiate; the Defenders are anxious to salvage what they can from a losing war. As snow begins to fall in Washington and Zurich, the four powers come to an agreement. The United States will share its mineral and agricultural wealth with the world. In return, most foreign forces will be withdrawn and the conquered areas returned to American civilian administration. The world pulls together in its hunger, strangely, closer than ever before. At least, it *might* work out like that.

Admittedly, *Invasion: America* postulates a rather improbable set of developments. A Soviet-Chinese-South American alliance seems most unlikely, but stranger things have happened. If the current trend of diminishing American influence in the Third World continues, it is conceivable that the rest of the world would "gang up" on the USA. As the world grows poorer in fossil fuels, in food, in minerals, while its population increases, the enormous wealth of the United States will seem more attractive. Starvation breeds desperation and desperation breeds action. And if the world's economy doesn't improve, there is some chance of an *Invasion: America*.

