

Chapter 16 - A People's War?

Last updated:
26 May 2015

Quotes from this phony history book are in red.

p. 408, 409 - "Just before World War I ended, in 1918, an American force of seven thousand landed at Vladivostok as part of an Allied intervention in Russia, and remained until early 1920. Five thousand more troops were landed at Archangel, another Russian port, also as part of an Allied expeditionary force, and stayed for almost a year. The State Department told Congress: "All these operations were to offset effects of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia."

In short, if the entrance of the United States into World War II was (as so many Americans believed at the time, observing the Nazi invasions) to defend the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of other countries, the nation's record cast doubt on its ability to uphold that principle."

Comment: Zinn wants you to believe the US intervention in the Russian Civil War was an imperialistic adventure. Not true.

Three years after the start of World War One and with millions dead, the Russian government was overthrown by the Bolsheviks (Communists) in November, 1917. The Bolsheviks decided to abandon their allies and quit the war with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On March 3, 1918, the Communists signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany which was a disaster for the Allied war effort. The Bolshevik's surrender drastically changed the military/political situation, putting the western Alliance in near panic. The treaty gave Germany control of agricultural and mineral resources in the Ukraine and oil from the Caucasus - which they quickly began shipping to Germany. Germany had one million men in Russia and they were now free to transfer a large number of its troops to France to fight the British, French and newly arriving American forces. The US declared war on Germany in April 1917 but US forces had only begun arriving. Several German divisions had already been transferred to France by the end of 1917, before the treaty had even been signed. An offensive by Germany in France in March 1918, produced impressive gains - gains blamed on Russia for allowing Germany to shift troops to France.

For the Allies, the Bolsheviks were not even considered the legitimate government of Russia. On Jan 19, 1918, Lenin sent in armed Bolshevik troops and forcibly dispersed the popularly elected Constituent Assembly after communist candidates won less than 25% of the seats. A month later the Bolsheviks informed the rest of the world they would not pay back the money loaned to Russia. They owed the US \$187 million and other countries millions more. In July, 1918, the last independent newspaper was shut down by Lenin.(1) From here on, only propaganda from the Bolsheviks was allowed to be printed. The Bolsheviks then turned on their faithful allies, the Czech Legion. This 60,000 man Army was made up of Czech and Slovak nationals who were fighting the Germans and Austro-Hungarian Empire alongside the Russian Army. The Russian government had promised that they would support the creation of a national homeland for them out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire when the allies won the war. After Russia surrendered, the Czech Legion was promised safe passage out of Russia, but Leon Trotsky, under pressure from the Germans, ordered the disarming and arrest of the Czech Legion. The Czechs vowed to resist all attempts to arrest them. Stalin then agreed to allow the Czechs to leave Russia via Vladivostok. In May 1918 the Bolsheviks initiated a confrontation with the Czechs which turned into full scale war. The Czech Army quickly conquered all major cities in Siberia east of the Ural Mountains all the way to Vladivostok, often with the help of thousands of Russians who feared Communism.

The success of the Czech Legion energized the Allies and allowed them to consider new strategies to defeat Germany. The Bolsheviks were now considered the enemy of the allies and intervention in Russia was now considered necessary for 2 reasons: 1) Help the Czech Legion and other anti-communist forces to overthrow the Bolsheviks and rebuild the Russian Front. This would keep one MILLION German troops tied down in Russia long enough so the US Army could get 4 million soldiers to France and win the war for the Allies. 2) Prevent huge quantities of war material stockpiled in Russian ports from falling into German or Bolshevik hands. Since Russia surrendered, they no longer needed these supplies. The allies feared the Bolsheviks would use this material against their own people or else the Germans would end up getting it. This had to be prevented at all costs.

The Allies landed in Russia at three locations: Siberia (Vladivostok) and North Russia - Archangel and Murmansk. **This was a multinational deployment.** In North Russia, Britain landed 18,400 troops, the US 5,100, Canada and France about 1,000 each with small units from Australia and Serbia. All forces were under British command. Allied forces began landing in Siberia in August 1918. Japan was to send 12,000 troops, but sent 72,000 while the US sent 8,000. There were also about 2,000 British, French, Italian and Chinese troops there. Thanks to the US Army, Germany was forced to surrender on November 11,



Soldiers of the Czech Legion killed by Communist forces while fighting their way out of Russia.

1918, and there was no longer a need to be in Russia. The US withdrew its troops from Siberia by April, 1920. The US and Britain evacuated about 60,000 Czech soldiers and civilians between February and September 1920. Japan refused to leave until 1922. The Far Eastern Republic, a communist buffer state controlled by the Soviet government, publicly thanked the US for its efforts to force Japan's withdrawal.(4)

The US withdrew its troops from North Russia by the end of June 1919. Hundreds of Russians wept and said "God bless You" in Russian as the troop transports pulled away.(2) The British withdrew on Sep 20, 1919. About 17,000 Russian civilians - fearful of communism - were also evacuated on British ships.

Sources:

1. Eyewitness to History by Isaac Don Levine, Hawthorn Books, pub. 1973, p. 62, 63
2. Fighting Without a War, Harcourt, Brace and Howe Publisher - 1920, by Ralph Albertson, page 47-57 Download this book at: <https://ia700302.us.archive.org/2/items/fightingwithoutw00albe/fightingwithoutw00albe.pdf>
3. When the United States invaded Russia, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers - 2012, Carl J. Richard, page 78
4. When the United States invaded Russia, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers - 2012, Carl J. Richard, page 165

Other sources:

<http://www.czechlegion.com/TheCzechLegion/TimeLine.html>

Encyclopedia Britannica, Fourteenth Edition, Copyright 1937, pages 727-739, 744-745

For more detailed information, go to:

<http://americanaction.us/index.php/american-history/1918-1920-us-in-russian-civil-war/>