Constructive Efforts: The American Red Cross and YMCA in Revolutionary and Civil War Russia, 1917–24

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about American Red Cross and YMCA work in revolutionary and civil war Russia. It focuses on the most significant phases of these organizations' efforts in terms of the numbers of personnel involved and the funds expended: Moscow and Petrograd, 1917–18; northern Russia during the Allied military intervention, 1918–19; and Siberia and the Russian Far East, from 1918 through the early 1920s. By drawing on dozens of often underused archival collections this study is able to discuss these "constructive efforts" in much fuller detail than have existing works.

The activities of the Americans who worked in Russia, rather than those who made policy from afar, are of primary interest. The concern here, beyond the what, where, and who, is why: Why did American relief or social service work occur? The answers, of which there are several, include a desire to provide assistance to suffering populations. But the humanitarian impulse was often not the one that carried the day when decisions about policy and practice were taken. Military concerns were important, especially while the Great War still raged on the western front, and while Allied and American soldiers fought Russian

Bolsheviks. American relief workers also saw themselves as contributing directly to relations between Russia and Russians on the one hand, and the United States, the Allies, and the American people on the other. They were moved to carry out their work because they saw the importance of it for the present and future of relations between the two countries. Americans in Russia also took advantage of the presence of soldiers, civilian refugees, and former prisoners of war from a variety of European countries to spread the good word about all things American.

Ultimately, Americans viewed revolutionary Russia through the lens of modernization. With American help, the future could be bright. With the right leadership in place to oversee their education, honest, hardworking, and intellectually curious peasants (as they were described by contemporary observers) could be turned into modern citizens. The Russian project failed to achieve its promise, but for a time Americans retained their optimism about Russia's future.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEF	American Expeditionary Force
ANRC	American National Red Cross
ARC	American Red Cross
ARCMR	ARC Mission to Russia
BA	Columbia University, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Bakhmeteff Archive
C	Correspondence
C & C	Committees & Conferences
C & R	Correspondence & Reports
CP	Consular Posts
CPI	Committee on Public Information
DP	Diplomatic Posts
ExCom	Executive Committee
FRUS	*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* series
GC	General Correspondence
HIA	Hoover Institution Archives
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
LOC	Library of Congress
NA	National Archives (UK)
NACP	National Archives at College Park, MD
PA	Personal Accounts
POW	Prisoner of War
RG	Record Group
RS	Record Series
SC	Siberian Commission
UVA	University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library
WPA	War Prisoners' Aid
WBT	William Boyce Thompson
WR	Weekly Reports
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

"America and Russia understand each other better than any other two nations." This was the judgment of Boris Bakhmeteff, as told to American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) secretary George M. Day in an interview in Paris in March 1919. Bakhmeteff was the Russian ambassador to the United States. He had once been accredited to the defunct 1917 Provisional Government but by then he was representing the anti-Bolshevik regime in Siberia. Bakhmeteff believed world peace would come as "a result of the vindication of those principles which America has set forth in" the First World War—democracy, freedom, justice—and "depends greatly on the close friendship and cooperation between America and Russia." "They could be the big brothers of the world," he told Day.[1] These ideas, that the two countries were natural partners as the world entered the modern, postwar age, and that their accord would determine the future course of international history, motivated most Americans who took an interest in Russia at this time. They believed that the United States was perfectly placed to offer advice and encouragement, and to show Russians the way to the future. Doing so was both an opportunity to advance American interests as well as a duty of a wartime ally. Such beliefs were shared by members of the various humanitarian aid or relief organizations based in revolutionary and civil war Russia. The outlook, intentions, and efforts of the men (and some women) who represented the largest of these groups are the subjects of this study.

[1]Interview with Bakhmeteff, included in Appendix 3 to George M. Day's Annual Report, 25 Mar 1919, in Kautz Family YMCA Archives (hereafter YMCA archives), YMCA Russia, box 3, Annual Report & Appendix 1919. Russian proper names and other terms are generally written in English in this dissertation following the Library of Congress system, diacritical marks included. Some exceptions have been made to conform with standard practices, and spellings preferred by the individuals mentioned: Bakhmeteff, Nicholas II, Kerensky, Trotsky, but L'vov, Tumen', Breshkovskaia, etc.

This dissertation is about the American Red Cross and the American YMCA in Russia. It focuses on the most significant phases of their work in terms of the numbers of personnel involved and the funds expended: Moscow and Petrograd in 1917–18; northern Russia during the Allied military intervention in 1918–19; and Siberia and the Russian Far East, from 1918 through the early 1920s. The activities of the Americans who worked in Russia, rather than those of the men who made policy from afar, are of primary interest. The concern here, beyond the what, where, and who, is why: Why did American relief or social service work—broad terms used here to encompass the variety of activities undertaken by representatives of the American Red Cross and the YMCA—occur in Russia during the revolution and civil war years? The answers, of which there are several, include a desire to provide assistance to suffering populations. But they hoped to accomplish a great deal beyond the immediate beneficial effect of their activities. The humanitarian impulse was often not the one that carried the day when decisions about policy and practice were taken. Military concerns were important, especially while the Great War still raged on the western front, and while Allied and American soldiers fought Russian Bolsheviks. Political considerations most often won out. American relief workers saw themselves as contributing directly to relations between Russia and Russians on the one hand, and the United States, the Allies, and the American people on the other. They were moved to carry out their work because they saw the importance of it for the present and future of relations between the two countries. In the end, this dissertation is about a neglected aspect of American–Russian relations, not only because the protagonists were American citizens in Russia but because they were motivated by particularly American concerns.

It is important to point out what this dissertation does not cover, but which some

readers may expect it to, namely, the extensive aid work undertaken by American relief organizations during the famine in Soviet Russia in the early 1920s. That subject was recently very fully covered by Bertrand Patenaude.[2] This dissertation traces the history of Red Cross missions and YMCA work during the revolution and civil war, up to (and not including) the incorporation of the Russian Far East into Soviet Russia; the famine took place in an area of Russia firmly under Soviet control. The vast majority of the present work covers activities which occurred prior to the entrance of Herbert Hoover's famine fighters, and ends in the region of Russia furthest away from where they were stationed, and not yet under Soviet rule. The political context the famine relief occurred in is thus rather different than the one that existed in the Russian Far East, and most of the other places Red Cross and YMCA representatives were located in earlier years.

There are many historical studies of American activity in and policy toward Russia through the vicissitudes of war, revolution, civil war, and foreign intervention.[3] They shed light on the multitude of interests Americans had in Russia, including political, military, economic, socio-cultural, and ideological, and at the levels of government policy down to individual Russia-watchers such as journalists and academics. The existing literature includes books and articles that provide a rich, complex, and sympathetic understanding of American–Russian relations. These provided a starting point, and were crucial guides and continual inspirations. This study is in accord with works that emphasize American excitement about

[2]Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). An earlier scholarly study is Benjamin M. Weissman's *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia: 1921–1923* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974).

[3]A recent historiographical overview of western and Russian literature (as well as archival sources) may be found in Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, "An Essay on Notes and Sources," 207–32, in *The First Cold War: The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson in U.S.–Soviet Relations* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002).

the Russian revolution, worries about or enthusiasm for the Bolshevik takeover, and faith that Russia would soon emerge from this "Time of Troubles"[4] more developed than ever.

Similar to existing works by scholars such as Leo Bacino, David Foglesong, and Norman Saul, this is a study of the attempted "Americanization" of Russia—that is, the American urge to make others in their own image, referred to by Foglesong as "the American mission."[5] Though the specific nature of their work sometimes put them at odds with American officialdom and their colleagues in the United States, Red Cross and YMCA workers shared prevailing American opinions about the state of Russian affairs, which ranged from support for Bolshevik reform efforts to strong public opposition to the Soviet regime. This dissertation also shows how Americans in Russia took advantage of the presence of soldiers, civilian refugees, and former prisoners of war from a variety of European countries to spread the good word about all things American. Many Americans had a stake in Russian events, including military planners, political and social reformers, evangelicals, and businessmen eager to exploit the vast Siberian frontier and expand their trade networks.

"Americanization" may imply that there is one, unchanging notion of what "America" meant, and that all Americans were its boosters. Neither is true, not in general and not of the individuals studied here. Although Americans working for the Red Cross and YMCA shared certain cultural outlooks, it is too simple to claim they thus all interpreted Russians in the same way, or that they all held the same vision of their own country. There

[4]Jonathan D. Smele, *Civil War in Siberia: The Anti-Bolshevik Government of Admiral Kolchak 1918–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.

[5]Leo J. Bacino, *Reconstructing Russia: U.S. Policy in Revolutionary Russia, 1917–1922* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999); David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia, 1914–1921* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

was a range of attitudes present. Still, these tended to be paternalistic; comments about the feminine, childlike nature of Russians were common. So was the assumption that Russians were passive victims of tsarist autocracy and its long history of poor social and economic policies. "Strange, beautiful, sadly misgoverned Russia!" lamented one Red Cross representative.[6] But with American help, the future could be bright. With the right leadership in place to oversee their education, honest, hardworking, and intellectually curious peasants (as they were described by contemporary observers) could be turned into modern citizens.

Americans viewed revolutionary Russia through the lens of modernization, rather than simply of Americanization. The conclusions drawn about American attitudes here also coincide with those of David Engerman in his *Modernization from the Other Shore*.[7] For a time almost all Americans retained their optimism about Russia's future.[8] It was a future deemed to be similar to America's present, but also one that held the hope of improving upon it in exciting ways. In this way, contemporary Americans imposed their own hopes and fears on Russia, as well as on the other peoples they associated with.

Comments about culture do not make up the bulk of this dissertation. The following chapters present a history of American Red Cross and YMCA work, one in which the ideas and attitudes of those organizations' representatives are discussed. What historians already know about these activities and the people who carried them out is limited. The present study

[6]Benjamin B. Davis, "From the Notes of a Member of the American Red Cross in Siberia during the Months of 1919," 4, comp. Lynette Davis, in Stanford University, Hoover Institution Archives (hereafter HIA), Benjamin Davis papers, box 1, folder 3.

[7]David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[8]For an earlier look at American attitudes toward Russia after the (first) 1917 revolution which emphasizes American arrogance, paternalism, and optimism (as the present dissertation does), see Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), chapters 1 and 2.

has drawn on dozens of often underused archival collections and is therefore able to discuss them in much fuller detail than have existing works. The political activities of Raymond Robins, a Red Cross agent and crucial diplomatic go-between relied on by both the American ambassador to Russia and high officials of the new Soviet government during the first few months of Bolshevik rule, have been well-covered. The same is true of the efforts of Robins's Red Cross boss, William Boyce Thompson.[9] Otherwise, the work of the first Red Cross mission to Russia has not received focused attention. The origin, purpose, and activities of the Red Cross groups that operated in northern Russia and Siberia have received even less attention. Only the major outlines of the work of the Siberian commission, and minimal discussion of its anti-Bolshevik nature, may be found.[10] This dissertation does not take up Norman Saul's recent call for a full telling of the saga of the Petrograd Children's

[9]William Appleman Williams's unpublished PhD dissertation from 1950, which focused on Robins's Russian career, is excellent: "Raymond Robins and Russian–American Relations 1917–1938," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1950). See also another dissertation written 35 years later, which narrated in detail the activities of Robins and others involved in Russian–Soviet relations, and particularly those of the men in Petrograd: Joan Doverspike Davison, "Raymond Robins and United States Foreign Policy toward Revolutionary Russia" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1984), chapters 5–6, and 7, which covered "Robins' Recommendations to [Secretary of State] Lansing" once he was back in the United States. Williams's later published study puts Robins's work into a wider context: William Appleman Williams, *American–Russian Relations, 1781–1947* (New York: Rinehart, 1952). Robins is the subject of a biography: Neil V. Salzman, *Reform and Revolution: The Life and Times of Raymond Robins* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1991). Hermann Hagedorn's biography of Thompson is dated but still useful: *The Magnate: William Boyce Thompson and His Time (1869–1930)* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1935). For more on Robins, Thompson, and the political side of the mission, see George F. Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations, 1917–1920*, vol. 1, *Russia Leaves the War*; vol. 2, *The Decision to Intervene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956 and 1958); Claude E. Fike, "The Influence of the Creel Committee and the American Red Cross on Russian–American Relations, 1917–1919," *Journal of Modern History* 31, no. 2 (Jun 1959): 93–109; David W. McFadden, *Alternative Paths: Soviets and Americans, 1917–1920* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); McFadden, "Hiram Johnson, Raymond Robins, and the Struggle for an Alternative American Policy toward Bolshevik Russia, 1918," *Peace & Change* 18, no. 1 (Jan 1993): 50–77; and Saul, *War and Revolution*, 167–69, 209–10, 219, 224–26, 239, 250–51, 254–57, 272–73, 301n258. See also this study of Robins's translator and collaborator: James K. Libbey, *Alexander Gumberg and Soviet–American Relations 1917–1933* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1977).

[10]Foster Rhea Dulles, *The American Red Cross: A History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 192, 210–12; Saul, *War and Revolution*, 330, 366, 395, 400–1, 440–42.

Colony[11]—there is much more to be written about this fascinating project, especially during years 1919 to 1921—but fills in much more of the details of that and other Siberian relief ventures. Ultimately, the accusation made of the Red Cross by one American military commander, namely, that it "was acting as a supply agent for [Siberian dictator] Kolchak,"[12] has remained largely unexplained until now. This dissertation adds significantly to scholarly knowledge about the various Red Cross commissions sent to Russia in 1917 and 1918, and of their activities thereafter.

The efforts of the American YMCA in revolutionary Russia have not received much scholarly attention either.[13] The association's welfare and service programs shed light on contemporary America and Americans' foreign outlooks. There is much more yet to be written about the wide-ranging activities undertaken by YMCA representatives in Russia (not to mention those of the Young Women's Christian Association [YWCA]). This dissertation provides an entrance point for future research. The archival and other primary materials relied upon remain largely untapped or underexplored. Much more use may be made of them.

Secondary literature on a variety of related subjects was consulted during the writing of this dissertation. Beyond works on American–Russian relations, and the Red Cross and YMCA (discussed below), relevant studies include discussions of American "cultural

[11]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 442n245.

[12]William S. Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure 1918–1920* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 205.

[13]The main points are covered by Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani in "The American YMCA and the Russian Revolution," *Slavic Review* 33, no. 3 (Sep 1974): 469–91. See also their "An American in Russia: Russell M. Story and the Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1919," *Historian* 36, no. 4 (Aug 1974): 704–21. More details are provided in Saul, *War and Revolution* (Central Russia: 170–72, 203; Siberia: 327–29, 395, 402–3, 408). Matthew Lee Miller's doctoral dissertation is an overview of YMCA work in Russia and among Russians, but it hardly touches on the specific subjects discussed in the present study: "American Philanthropy among Russians: The Work of the YMCA, 1900–1940," 2 vols (University of Minnesota, 2006).

imperialism" or "cultural transfer";[14] the Progressive Era; society and politics during the Russian revolution, civil war, and early Soviet rule; the ideology and practices of American and Russian leaders; Allied involvement in Russia, and Allied–Russian relations, 1917–19; and biographies of individuals who worked in Russia. This dissertation also contributes to the burgeoning fields of the study of international humanitarian aid and the history of humanitarian interventions.[15] Historical scholarship on American philanthropy, missionaries, and US foreign relations in general also helped shape its contents.

The decision to focus on the Red Cross and the YMCA, organizations usually studied separately from each other, posed challenges. It has meant that this is not a straightforward study of international humanitarianism or cultural evangelism. The comparisons made between these two seemingly disparate organizations allowed for much greater insight into the American mindset when it came to Russia. It has turned this study from an organizational history into one which speaks more broadly about American foreign activities during a crucial time in the country's domestic and international history. The approach is narrative and broadly chronological, a method which underscores the importance of events and

[14]"Cultural imperialism" has been used by scholars to characterize all those aspects of American foreign relations that come out of a desire to export American values, ideas, goods, and practices throughout the world. For a discussion of this and related concepts, see Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, "Cultural Transfer," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 2d ed., ed. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 257–78.

[15]See Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (2008; repr., New York: Vintage, 2009); Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Rodogno, "Réflexions liminaires à propos des interventions humanitaires des Puissances européennes au XIXe siècle," *Relations internationals* 131 (2007, no. 3): 9–25; Brendan Simms and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). See also, of course, the literature on the Red Cross, noted below, and the discussion in John F. Hutchinson, "Disasters and the International Order: Earthquakes, Humanitarians, and the Ciraolo Project," *International History Review* 22, no. 1 (Mar 2000): 1–36. For a discussion of "the formulation of modern humanitarianism in the wake of the Great War," see Keith David Watenpaugh, "The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927," *American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (Dec 2010): 1315–39, quote from 1322. A broader history of humanitarianism was attempted by Michael Barnett: *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

reactions to the changing cultural, diplomatic, ideological, military, and political context Americans both reflected and had to respond to in Russia. A few key individuals are discussed in greater detail as examples of American thinking, and how this played out in policy and practice. Before delving into their Russian work during and in the aftermath of revolution, brief discussions of the history of the (international and American) YMCA and Red Cross are called for.

The first Young Men's Christian Association was established in London in 1844 by an evangelical named George Williams, a born-again member of the Church of England. His association was dedicated to improving the spiritual welfare of its members, who toiled, as Williams did, at the city's commercial enterprises. They aimed to help themselves have better (spiritual) lives during the height of England's Industrial Revolution. The YMCA caught the attention of Europeans and North Americans as no other organization had succeeded in doing. Soon the YMCA was a full-fledged movement; by the early 1850s there were already a handful of local associations in Canada and the United States, and many more in Britain, continental Europe, and elsewhere. In 1855, during the first World's Conference of YMCAs, delegates agreed to a list of general principles, collectively known as the Paris Basis. Most importantly, they agreed upon the organization's evangelism: "The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom

amongst young men."[16]

YMCA programs spread through the United States. The International Committee of YMCAs, responsible for overseeing US (and Canadian) associations, adopted a red triangle as its central symbol. The triangle's three sides were meant to represent the pillars of the movement: soundness in spirit, mind, and body. Individual branches had considerable autonomy. As such, a wide variety of programs was offered by YMCAs and associated institutions. (One related organization was the YWCA, which was formed on the heels of the YMCA.) Clubs for young men working on the railways, studying at universities, or living in urban areas grew in number and membership. In addition to the indirect evangelism of these clubs, which offered Bible study as well as practical training and general interest activities, YMCA missionaries actively sought to convert heathens at home and abroad.

Initially, the impetus for this growth came from conservative church-going, middle-class men and captains of industry worried about the perceived perils of urban life. They wished to create a Christian safe-haven for young single men living and working in cities. These men did not have their families around them to instil moral values and ensure they lead morally-responsible lives, onlookers believed. Drinking, promiscuity, and gambling were among the habits activists wished to curtail. They believed a place was needed for men to gather and socialize that was not the saloon[17]—there were strong links between the temperance movement and other progressive reform agendas—and to provide activities and resources considered healthy, educational, moral, and ultimately uplifting in spiritual and

[16]Quoted in Clarence Prouty Shedd, *History of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations* (London: World's Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1955), 133.

[17]On the attractions of saloons for working-class men during the Progressive Era, see Thomas R. Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800–1933* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 104, as well as the rest of ch. 5.

socio-economic ways. By establishing YMCAs in urban centres and other places where groups of young men were found, proponents believed they could help men avoid temptations and provide them with spiritual guidance and an alcohol-free space for camaraderie with like-minded individuals. The men who supported the establishment of clubs had in mind, too, that they could help calm tensions between employees and their employers. Happy, healthy workers would not strike; pious Christian clerks would be more efficient; new immigrants who learned English in YMCA classes would Americanize more quickly. The YMCA project was both progressive and profoundly conservative, and it brought middle- and upper-class Americans, wealthy industrialists, and pious philanthropists together to lead young men down what they believed was the right path.[18]

The association's appeal grew in tandem with the progressive reform movement in the United States. Progressivism, actually a series of diverse movements dedicated to changing various aspects of post-Civil War American life, most characterized society and politics in the twenty-five or so years prior to the outbreak of the First World War. It

[18]For more on the YMCA in the United States, see Rebecca I. Elfenbein, *The Making of a Modern City: Philanthropy, Civic Culture, and the Baltimore YMCA* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, the YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Nina Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness: African Americans and the YMCA, 1852–1946* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, eds., *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York: NYU Press, 1997); Justin H. Pettegrew, "Onward Christian Soldiers: The Transformation of Religion, Masculinity, and Class in the Chicago YMCA, 1857–1933" (PhD diss. Loyola University Chicago, 2006); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); David P. Setran, *The College "Y": Student Religion in the Era of Secularization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Thomas Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

For an overview of the army and navy work, see Richard C. Lancaster, *Serving the U.S. Armed Forces 1861–1986: The Story of the YMCA's Ministry to Military Personnel for 125 Years* (Schaumburg, IL: Armed Services YMCA of the USA, 1987). On another aspect of YMCA work, see Elmer L. Johnson, *The History of YMCA Physical Education* (Chicago: Association Press, 1979).

emphasized "efficiency, morality, and/or social justice,"[19] and "was inspired by two bodies of belief and knowledge—evangelical Protestantism and the natural and social sciences."[20] Evangelical Protestants were concerned with individual salvation and spreading the word of Christ as presented in the Bible; the sciences rejected superstition and embraced technological advancement and improved living conditions. Progressives hailed from many different constituencies, and included "physicians, businessmen, scientists, engineers, and social workers," as well as muckraking journalists and Protestant ministers. "They were determined to use their knowledge and skills to solve the problems caused by industrialization and to impose order upon a nearly chaotic society."[21] Progressives accepted the tenets of industrial capitalism, but were appalled at its excesses.[22] Social justice advocates wanted to better conditions of life, especially in urban slums; trained professionals "were genuinely convinced that their methods offered the key to social harmony and justice."[23] "The essence of progressivism," according to historians Arthur Link and Richard McCormick, "lay in the hopefulness and optimism which the reformers brought to the tasks of applying science and administration to the high moral purposes in which they believed."[24] This was as true of YMCA and Red Cross representatives in revolutionary and civil war Russia as it was of reformers anywhere in the United States. Most of them came from the middle and upper classes, many were engaged in professional (white-collar) work, and had received university education.

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[19]Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering during the Great War* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1996), 11.

[20]Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1983), 22.

[21]Ibid., 6, 19.

[22]Ibid., 21.

[23]Ibid., 84–85.

[24]Ibid., 118.

Progressivism at home was accompanied by US overseas expansion, from outright imperial conquest to the export of American culture abroad. Concurrent with the urge to reform life in the United States was a desire to modernize (usually by way of Americanization) the way people lived and worked the world over. In fact, reformers and philanthropists with broad vision often found it "easier to export modernizing ideas abroad (or accept failure) than to operate" at home. Jim Crow in the South and entrenched interests throughout the United States were obstacles to change.[25] Moreover, the religious and scientific ethos of the age held that progress and salvation were available to all humankind. Emily Rosenberg's comment about "the evangelistic fervor of the early twentieth-century missionary movement" applies as well to the impulses behind American foreign activities in general. Americans identified their "nation with Protestant Christianity, but also with a universalistic future toward which all humankind would progress. . . . Affirmations of universalistic internationalism [were] mixed together with assumptions of American exceptionalism." Missionaries and others "envisioned a particular Anglo-Saxon-based Protestantism as setting the ultimate cultural pattern for a common future."[26] Their universalism was part of their evangelical Protestantism, and they aimed, as historians Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo have recently written, at establishing an "American Protestant empire."[27] Missionaries, including representatives of the YMCA, "became some of the most zealous and conspicuous overseas carriers of the

[25]Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 11.

[26]Emily S. Rosenberg, "Missions to the World: Philanthropy Abroad," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence J. Freidman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 243.

[27]Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, introduction to *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960*, ed. Reeves-Ellington, Sklar, and Shemo (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.

American Dream," Rosenberg judged in her book, *Spreading the American Dream*. "They provided Americans' first substantial personal contacts with people of many nations."[28]

That it was an American who brought the YMCA movement to young Russians of the Eastern Orthodox religion thus made perfect sense.[29] James Stokes, a "missionary minded" American philanthropist and association leader, was behind the project.[30] An American-style club formally opened in St. Petersburg in September 1900 after the requisite government permissions were secured. It was under the management of Stokes's personal appointee, Franklin A. Gaylord, an experienced association man.[31] Gaylord's club largely followed the program of North American YMCAs but because of government suspicion of the association and of international contacts in general, it was known as the Mayak, the Russian word for lighthouse.[32] Its official name made no attempt to obfuscate its purpose: "Society for Co-operating with St. Petersburg Young Men in the Attainment of Moral and Physical Development."[33] The "lighthouse" moniker perfectly presented the American association's domestic and international agenda. By spreading the YMCA's Christian and moral teachings

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[28]Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), 28. On the American YMCA's overseas operations see also Jon Thares Davidann, *A World of Crisis and Progress: The American YMCA in Japan, 1890–1930* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1998); Jun Xing, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution: The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China, 1919–1937* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996). For the YWCA, see Nancy Boyd, *Emissaries: The Overseas Work of the American YWCA, 1895–1970* (New York: Woman's Press, 1986).

[29]In the Russian empire there were clubs for young German-speaking Christian men as early as 1868, and in the late-nineteenth century several dozen of them existed in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Mitau (now Jelgava, Latvia), Reval (Tallinn), Riga, and Warsaw. They were connected to local German Lutheran and Reformed congregations and modelled on the German *Jünglingsvereine* in Paris. The German *Jünglingsverein*'s origins date to 1787. These German-speaking evangelical Christian youth clubs had grown independently of, and much earlier than, the London-inspired YMCA movement. See Shedd, *World's Alliance*, 57, 118, 253–54, 394; Kenneth Scott Latourette, *World Service: A History of the Foreign Work and World Service of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada* (New York: Association Press, 1957), 369.

[30]Shedd, *World's Alliance*, 283, 298.

[31]Shedd, *World's Alliance*, 364. Gaylord retained this position for the next 17 years. Franklin A. Gaylord, "Breaking into Russia," in *James Stokes: Pioneer of Young Men's Christian Associations*, ed. Frank W. Ober (New York: Association Press, 1921), 112.

[32]Latourette, *World Service*, 369.

[33]Ethan T. Colton, *Forty Years with Russians* (New York: Association Press, 1940), 14.

to another country and extending American friendship to Russia, the Mayak could serve as a tool of enlightenment, safely guiding Russians toward modernity. The project was quickly considered a success. Over a thousand men took out memberships during the first year of the club's existence,[34] primarily "young employees from the lower middle class."[35]

Because of tsarist strictures, the Mayak was technically independent of other Russian institutions and the YMCA, though it did take its cues from the movement, and especially from the United States. It also put off adopting the Paris Basis. A Russian committee ultimately directed the Mayak's operations, but American secretaries were important players, managing a number of activities for boys and young men.[36] (In YMCA lexicon, "secretaries" were the association's professional staff members. They planned and directed the work of local personnel and volunteers, and generally also undertook a variety of hands-on tasks.) This American YMCA-inspired and partly American-funded young men's club in St. Petersburg grew over the years. Its members—there were more than sixteen hundred in 1908—were overwhelmingly Orthodox, but included a handful of young men of other faiths.[37] After the February Revolution of 1917, when government restrictions were lessened, the Mayak adopted the Paris Basis and became an official YMCA organization.[38]

The Mayak offered a variety of classes, equipment and facilities for creative projects, lectures on a wide range of topics delivered by well-known academics and other specialists, walking tours, and out-of-town excursions. It did not have Bible study classes, as associations in the United States did. In the summer of 1905 it moved from rented quarters to

[34]Gaylord, "Breaking into Russia," 112.
[35]Latourette, *World Service*, 370.
[36]Ibid.
[37]Lyubov Ginzburg, "Confronting the Cold War Legacy: The Forgotten History of the American Colony in St Petersburg, A Case Study of Reconciliation" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2010), 212, 214.
[38]Miller, "American Philanthropy among Russians," 1:234–35.

its own building, purchased by James Stokes. An important feature of the YMCA and other similar institutions was an emphasis on physical fitness. This was no less true of the Mayak. Local authorities provided it with land on the shores of the Gulf of Finland in a community north of St. Petersburg, and here the club built a camp for fishing, rowing, and swimming. Soon a facility that could host track and field activities, athletics, and outdoor games was established on Krestovskii Island. A few years after its founding, the Mayak opened its own gymnasium in St. Petersburg; it became the best facility of its kind in the country. Perhaps it was there that the association introduced basketball to Russia.[39] In 1909 Mayak players defeated an American team in the world's first international basketball match.[40] In contemporary parlance, Russia was a promising field for association activities. American secretaries and keen Russian collaborators agreed on this. The Mayak was a small, but important, beginning. Later, a separate YMCA program in Russia, unrelated to the Mayak, was organized by American secretaries for Russian students.[41] The future looked bright.

The Red Cross movement followed the YMCA by only a few years. It came out of a similar spirit of internationalist Christian evangelism and scientific philanthropy that gave birth to so many nineteenth century institutions.[42] In the aftermath of the battle of Solferino (1859), a key campaign in the Italian fight for independence, a Genevan named Henri Dunant inspired the creation of a private relief agency soon known as the International Committee of the Red

[39]Gaylord, "Breaking into Russia," 112–17; E. C. Jenkins, "Memorandum of an interview with Mr. Ralph Hollinger, May 16, 1917," in YMCA Russia, box 19, Russia—General—1917–34.

[40]James Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society: Development of Sport and Physical Education in Russia and the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 20.

[41]Latourette, *World Service*, 370–71.

[42]On the latter, Robert H. Bremner, "'Scientific Philanthropy,' 1873–93," *Social Service Review* 30, no. 2 (Jun 1956): 168–73.

Cross (ICRC). (Dunant was also the head of the Geneva YMCA.) The idea behind the group—to provide greater care and protection to sick and wounded soldiers in times of war—gained traction beyond Swiss borders, and shortly thereafter the Geneva Convention was signed and ratified by many countries. It set up rules covering the treatment of captured enemy combatants and safeguarding the facilities and personnel who provided medical assistance to wounded soldiers. The convention also established the Red Cross symbol as a battlefield medical marker so that hospitals, dressing stations, and staff members could be easily identified—and kept safe from attack and theft. National Red Cross societies were formed in many places to carry out duties associated with the agreement. These societies were independent of the ICRC and each other.[43] Beginning with John Hutchinson's 1994 book about the Red Cross movement, *Champions of Charity*, historians have shown how many of them grew from private institutions inspired by humanitarian impulses, to patriotic organizations that worked closely with governments and militaries to prepare for and help ameliorate some of the suffering associated with war.[44] They became "quasi-public" bodies.[45]

An American Red Cross society was founded by Clara Barton in 1877. Unlike Red Cross organizations in central Europe and Japan, Barton's society did not receive official patronage for some time. The organization focused on disaster relief at home, and had few

[43]In addition to Hutchinson's book, noted below, see these works on the history of the ICRC in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century: Pierre Boissier, *History of the International Committee of the Red Cross: From Solferino to Tsushima* (1963; English trans., Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1985); André Durand, *History of the International Committee of the Red Cross: From Sarajevo to Hiroshima* (1978; English trans., Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1984); and Caroline Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1999).

[44]John F. Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity: War and the Rise of the Red Cross* (Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996).

[45]David P. Forsythe, *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21.

resources for international work.[46] It was not in the business of Americanization in the same way as was the missionary-minded YMCA. Still, the organization sent aid to foreign lands in the aftermaths of major disasters, including the 1891–92 Russian famine.[47]

The American National Red Cross finally received a charter from the government in 1900. This made the Red Cross responsible for fulfilling some of the provisions of the 1864 Geneva Convention, and conferred on it the status of official disaster relief organization. The charter also required the American society to serve as the "medium of communication between the people of the United States of America and their armies." The organization had to submit annual reports to Congress on its expenditures and operations. The 1905 charter brought the organization even closer to the government. The US president became the president of the Red Cross, and he was put in charge of appointing the chairman of the executive body (the Central Committee) and another five of its eighteen members, to represent the federal departments of justice, state, treasury, war, and the navy.[48] In the years leading up to the First World War, the Red Cross became an integral part of the armed forces. Its representatives were seen as civilian members of the military.[49] Both on paper and in practice, it was—and is—neither a private nor public entity; it is, rather, semi-official.[50]

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[46]Histories of the American Red Cross's many domestic activities in this early period mostly remain to be written. For a study of the organization's peacetime disaster relief efforts, see Marion Moser Jones's excellent PhD dissertation, "Confronting Calamity: The American Red Cross and the Politics of Disaster Relief, 1881–1939" (Columbia University, 2008).

[47]Dulles, *American Red Cross*, 35–36, ch. 7. That famine, in fact, "touched off the first national-scale campaign to relieve foreign suffering." Rosenberg, "Missions to the World," 248. For comments on Barton's famine relief efforts, see Shannon Smith, "From Relief to Revolution: American Women and the Russian–American Relationship, 1890–1917," *Diplomatic History* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1995): 604–6.

[48]US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *The Congressional Charter of the American National Red Cross: Overview, History, and Analysis*, by Kevin R. Kosar (RL33314; Washington: The Service, 15 Mar 2006), 3, 5, 7, 9. Available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/ RL33314.pdf; accessed 26 Jul 2011.

[49]Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*, 224, 231–32, 236.

[50]Kosar, *Congressional Charter*, 6–7; Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 75.

By 1914 almost all Red Cross societies were official wartime auxiliaries of their respective national armed forces. They were mostly concerned with war; only a few were also peacetime disaster relief organizations, including the American society. But all were increasingly militaristic in their internal organization and external appearances, in addition to their wartime raison d'être.[51] This was no less true of the American Red Cross, with its close ties to the military establishment, the administration, Wall Street (and the J. P. Morgan firm in particular), and the conflation of support for its efforts with American patriotism.[52] When America entered the war in 1917, the Red Cross's independence was further diminished when its executives joined forces with the government to back the war effort. The War Council was established in April after a conference between President Wilson and leading American businessmen and financiers. In return for setting up this War Council (which replaced the Central Committee), the businessmen "promised the Red Cross increased support from the business community." War council chairman, Henry P. Davison, of J. P. Morgan and Company, named "other leading bankers, corporation executives, and, inevitably, a public relations expert, to top positions in the organization." Davison himself brought "daring and vision" to the Red Cross and, along with the help of "seventy-five experienced YMCA secretaries," succeeded in bringing in more than US$100 million for the Red Cross in a June 1917 fundraising drive.[53]

During the war, American Red Cross representatives were sent throughout Europe and Asia. They undertook duties directly related to ameliorating medical and sanitary

[51]Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*, 176–82.
[52]Ibid., 235–36, 268.
[53]Robert H. Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 123–24. Dollar amounts in this dissertation refer to contemporary US dollars.

conditions in the US armed forces, but also took up a host of activities intended to benefit civilians, refugees, prisoners of war, and enemy soldiers. Studies of the Red Cross's foreign endeavours during and in the immediate aftermath of the Great War highlight its role as "a major political instrument of U.S. postwar influence in Europe," and as an exporter of "the American political message" more broadly. A particularly American cultural project underlay its activities.[54] In the words of Julia Irwin, the American Red Cross was "an archetypal progressive association, a coalition of private citizens who volunteered out of a spirit of civic obligation and enjoyed their government's full support."[55]

"Gripped by the passions of patriotism," concluded Hutchinson, Red Cross societies instead "undertook to perform whatever repair work the armies required of them."[56] The same was true of all "major philanthropic efforts," including the YMCA, according to Rosenberg. They were "wedded to governmental policy during the war. The Y, for example, diminished its evangelical religious emphasis and became a service organization working closely with the military to provide canteens for servicemen. The distribution of food, relief, and technical assistance, made more efficient under the influence of progressivism and brought into closer alignment with government policy during the war, helped to spread American influence."[57] Although not directly connected to the US government, the YMCA

[54]Dimitra Giannuli, "American Philanthropy in Action: The American Red Cross in Greece, 1918–1923," *East European Politics and Societies* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1996), 108; Daniela Rossini, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Myth in Italy: Culture, Diplomacy, and War Propaganda*, trans. Antony Shugaar (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 83; Julia F. Irwin, "Nation Building and Rebuilding: The American Red Cross in Italy during the Great War," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 8, no. 3 (Jul 2009): 411–13. See also chapter 3 of Branden Little's "Band of Crusaders: American Humanitarians, the Great War, and the Remaking of the World" (PhD diss., University Of California, Berkeley, 2009).

[55]Julia F. Irwin, "Humanitarian Occupations: Foreign Relief and Assistance in the Formation of American International Identities, 1898–1928" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2009), 8.

[56]Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*, 276.

[57]Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 79.

willingly accepted a patriotic, militarized role during American belligerency.

The United States was heavily involved in the First World War years before it joined the Allied side in April 1917. There were a large number of philanthropic endeavours directed at neutral countries and members of the Triple Entente (Britain, France, Russia), from assistance to wounded soldiers to civilian food relief. Or particular relevance here is the humanitarian aid sent to German-occupied Belgium. The American press was nearly unanimous in promoting relief to starving residents of war-torn Europe. Newspaper and magazine articles and accompanying photographs, as well as motion picture reels, portrayed conditions in Europe in stark terms. These words and images succeeded in moving members of the public, private institutions, and government agencies to action.[58] Herbert Hoover's Committee for the Relief of Belgium was one of many related projects taken up. It was a marvel of modern (scientific, efficient) humanitarianism modelled on contemporary American mores and practices. It positively affected the lives of many millions of people. According to Branden Little, its officials and those of other American humanitarian organizations operating during and in the years after the Great War constituted a "band of crusaders." Their "work represented and remains the largest and most concerted humanitarian service in world history."[59] But, as Little concluded of the Red Cross, the "unsettling combination of benevolent, self-interested, and nationalistic motivations bequeathed a mixed legacy for American humanitarian relief."[60]

[58]For more details about American overseas charity during the war, see Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963), ch. 9.
[59]Little, "Band of Crusaders," 4–5.
[60]Ibid., 206.

The chapters that follow trace the efforts of two American humanitarian and social service organizations, the Red Cross and YMCA, in Russia through revolution, civil war, foreign intervention, and the transition to Soviet rule in the Russian Far East. Chapter 1 begins with the March 1917 revolution in Russia and the US entrance into the First World War soon thereafter. The chapter deals with the activities of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia and of American YMCA secretaries through early November 1917. In this period a proto-democratic provisional government had nominal control over formerly tsarist Russia, and Americans viewed the coming of democracy to the great empire with no small amount of excitement.

The second chapter moves the narrative forward, beginning with the Bolshevik takeover of power and ending in the spring of 1918. During this time, official American policy toward the new government was in flux at best and utterly confused at worst. Red Cross and YMCA representatives on the ground in Russia were in general agreement with each other in believing that an accord with the Bolsheviks was possible and militarily expedient given the ongoing war against the Central powers. The efforts of Raymond Robins, already well known to those conversant with the existing historical literature on this period in American–Russian relations, are put into both their political and relief contexts.

The next chapter, the third, takes a closer look at one significant beneficiary of American aid and interest, namely, the Czechoslovak military force in Russia. It begins in late 1917, when YMCA secretaries first began work for these men at their base camps in and around Kiev, and coverage continues through the fall of 1918, when large-scale association programs and Red Cross medical efforts were underway to assist them. In the meantime, the Czechoslovaks had travelled from one end of the old imperial Russia to the other. Along the

way, and with the help of local anti-Bolshevik Social Revolutionaries and others, they affected a major shift in the nascent Russian civil war. White Russian governments—those opposed to Soviet power under Vladimir Lenin—sprung up everywhere beyond the European Russian heartland in the wake of Czechoslovak military victories against Bolshevik authorities. The Bolsheviks had made the mistake of hampering their passage through Russia.

Chapter 4 moves the story back to European Russia. It picks up where chapter 2 ended, discussing the end of Red Cross and YMCA activities in Soviet Russia that the Allied military intervention in the North eventually made impossible. These were strange days. American and other foreign soldiers fought and won battles against the Red Army while American relief workers continued their efforts in Bolshevik Russia mostly unimpeded for over a month. Until they were forced out of Soviet Russia, and even for a time thereafter, the relief workers were convinced it was their proper place. They believed they had made a promising start and enjoyed mostly positive interactions with Soviet officials. There was still much work to be done, on the humanitarian aid as well as the modernization front.

The fifth chapter discusses the northern theatre of the Allied military intervention, 1918–19. It explains how the American Red Cross and, to a much more limited extent, the YMCA, attempted to include some civilian relief in their work. Military aid was the priority. Even had all their efforts been focused on Allied soldiers, serious challenges upset plans and created discord. Northern Russia may have been "a splendid field," as one Red Cross man put it, but it was also among the most difficult for the two wartime auxiliaries to operate in.

Chapter 6 takes the reader east and back in time, to White Russia in the fall of 1918. The Czechoslovaks and their Russian friends were in at least nominal control of the Volga

region, the Urals, all of Siberia, northern Manchuria, and the Russian Far East. In mid-November a new Russian leader, Admiral Kolchak, took over the reins of power in Omsk, a city in central Siberia. Kolchak's supposedly "All-Russian" government was in dire need of foreign assistance. The American Red Cross's Siberian commission, headquartered in Vladivostok, established a close relationship with the regime, providing it with all manner of medical aid. The reactionary elements among Kolchak's military command were not keen on hands-on American interference in military matters. The YMCA therefore faced significant difficulties. Still, with the support and encouragement of lower-ranking Russian military and civilian officials, secretaries managed to begin so-called "demonstration" work in several spots. The opportunity to establish the YMCA firmly in Russia and spread American practices and values was eagerly grasped by association men.

In the spring of 1919, Kolchak launched a military offensive against the Red Army. Thus begins chapter 7. At first, there was success upon success, and the Allies in Paris for the Peace Conference considered granting his government official recognition. The work of the two American relief agencies grew apace. Both could boast of their presence over several thousand miles of railroad track. Their work reached soldiers of more than two dozen nationalities, former German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, refugees from Eastern Europe and throughout Russia, civilian residents, and even a group of displaced Russian children, 1,000-strong. Hopes in Kolchak ran high until, before much time passed, his forces started to lose more battles than they won. The retreat across Siberia ahead of the rapidly approaching Red Army is a tragic epic of modern history. In mid-November, almost exactly a year after Kolchak came to power in Omsk, that city fell to the Bolsheviks.

In short succession the rest of Siberia turned Red until only the presence of the

Japanese and their vassal in the region east of Lake Baikal kept Russia from uniting under Lenin's rule. Thus begins the eighth chapter, which covers the early 1920s in the Russian Far East. By the start of 1920, the Red Cross's Washington headquarters ordered the Siberian commission closed. Since its personnel had evacuated Siberia along with tens of thousands of others, there was little more it could do. The American YMCA, whose secretaries were equally ordered to retreat by American officials, found itself operating only in Vladivostok and Harbin, the latter a largely Russian city in Manchuria. The end was nigh. The Red Cross wound down its activities and in July 1920 put its young Russian charges on a boat that took them nearly around the world. The YMCA persevered under the leadership of a small number of American secretaries and Russians trained by Americans who were committed to the association's cause. Finally, in late 1922, Vladivostok was incorporated into Soviet Russia. A year later, the last remaining American secretary in the city returned to the United States. Over the course of 1924 the American consulate was finally closed, and Soviet officials put an end to a small American Red Cross chapter still operating in Vladivostok.

Throughout the revolutionary and civil war period, Americans in Russia acted in what they considered to be the best interests of their country, the Allied military cause, and Russian development. They took different approaches and came to different conclusions about what they should do. The following pages illuminate their stories and explain why relief and welfare workers made the choices they did. Their struggles to carry out their work in the face of shifting political and military realities, their interactions with American and Russian officials, and their changing attitudes and ideas are all discussed. Genuine humanitarian impulses, strong Americanization tendencies, and patriotic allegiances were present in the

minds of Red Cross and YMCA representatives, often all three at the same time.

In addition to being diplomatic, political, and military allies and meddlers, many Americans were, above all, beneficent cultural imperialists.[61] They were active participants in what they thought of as a beneficial project of modernization, or the American global mission as scholars have termed it. Not all embraced the role of cultural ambassador for themselves, but they saw Russia and Russians as being able to gain from American-style education, economic development, and a plethora of minor and major alterations to the way things were. Most remained optimistic that such changes could take place. Americans took the opportunity their duties gave them to spread the good word about their own society, including their religious outlook and their economic and political system. In this, some found ready partners in individual Russians and their institutions; however, this cooperation was not necessary in determining the correctness of a chosen path. Rather, it provided evidence that Russians were excellent candidates for American tutelage. "Constructive efforts" (to use a contemporary term) were seen as crucial to bringing Russia into the modern age. In addition to imperialist outlooks, personal ambitions and particular political sympathies had their place in shaping policies and actions. Americans held onto the view, as expressed by Bakhmeteff, that the United States and a post-tsarist Russia could indeed be "the big brothers of the world." But they generally believed that their own country was the older brother, and Russia the younger sister, and that the United States had more to teach his younger sibling than Russia did her big brother.

[61]"Beneficent imperialism" is a term coined by Carol Chin to describe the outlook and activities of female missionaries in China, but it is equally useful here. See Carol C. Chin, "Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 3 (Jun 2003): 327–52.

CHAPTER 1

"From Free America to Free Russia"[1]
The Provisional Government, 1917

> Just now America, as no other nation, holds the key to the situation. Her prompt recognition of the Revolutionary Government and her genuine and expressed desire to do anything in her power to help Russia, make the Russian people peculiarly hospitable to American ideas and workers.[2]

> I see no reason why a system of relief and distribution should not be devised which would make the name of America and Americans known in Petrograd in the same way that it is in Belgium. Any such line of activity will have three results: First, relieve human necessity; second, enormously increase the probability of keeping Russia in the war; and, third, be the most effective form of American propaganda which can be devised.[3]

> . . . the American, who leaving the wife and babes, has come round the world, a tangible, pulsating chunk of democracy from our land, the life and example of which has done so much to end the centuries long tyranny under which [the Russians] have agonized and their loved ones perished.[4]

Russia was unprepared for war in 1914. The length and nature of the conflict exacerbated existing problems and created more. Severe food supply and distribution problems plagued cities in European Russia and authorities were unable to adequately feed and equip the armed forces. The transportation system, made up of fair-weather roads and a relatively new network of railways, was overburdened. In 1916, political, social, and economic strife and dislocation rose steadily after early, widespread support for the government across most of the political spectrum. The situation was complex, and, by the next year, the government's solutions were too little, too late. Incompetent junior officers, general war weariness, and concern for the worsening situation on the home front combined to lower military morale. In the recently-renamed (to be less German sounding) Petrograd, the seat of government,

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[1]"Milk for Russian babies," *New York Times* (2 Nov 1917): 8.

[2]Mott to Wilson, on behalf of Root Mission, quoted in Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 39–40.

[3]Washburn to Root, n.d., in box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports.

[4]This is how one YMCA secretary described a colleague of his. "Report Letter of C. H. Robertson," 16 Feb 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

industrial strikes grew in number through February, demonstrators were emboldened, and troops mutinied. Ultimately, food shortages in Petrograd and the refusal of police and soldiers to clamp down on protesters, plus the loss of support for the tsar among the military high command, led to the overturn of the autocratic government. In mid-March[5] 1917 the growing unrest in Petrograd resulted in Tsar Nicholas II abdicating his throne. He named his brother his successor, but Mikhail refused to accept the position. The Romanov dynasty, which had ruled Russia for the last three centuries, came to an inglorious end.

A dozen members of the now-dissolved Fourth Duma, or parliament, filled the political void by assuming power. They formed the Provisional Government, and vowed to govern until such time as democratic elections could be held to choose representatives for a Constituent Assembly. That body would then lead the country into the future. The men who promised to watch over the transition included, among others, President Georgii Evgen'evich L'vov; Justice Minister Aleksandr Fedorovich Kerensky; Foreign Minister Pavel Ivanovich Miliukov; and Finance Minister Mikhail Tereshchenko. On 22 March, the American ambassador, after receiving approval from the US State Department, informed the Provisional Government that his country had extended formal recognition.[6] The creation of the Provisional Government was backed by members of the newly established Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. This soviet, or council, brought together

[5]The western (new style) calendar is used in this dissertation. Up to 1 Feb 1918, Russia used the Gregorian (old style) calendar, which put the country thirteen days behind the west. The March revolution occurred during February according to the Russian calendar.

[6]See Harper Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano: The Life and Times of David Rowland Francis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press in association with the Francis Press, 2001), 228–33 for more details about the recognition. For a shorter scholarly piece on Francis which provides a good counterpoint to the prevailing (negative) view of in the historical literature, see David S. Foglesong, "A Missouri Democrat in Revolutionary Russia: Ambassador David R. Francis and the American Confrontation with Russian Radicalism, 1917," *Gateway Heritage* 13, no. 3 (Winter 1992): 22–43.

representatives from the city's factories and garrisons, and would prove an important power centre during the next few months. It was one of many soviets formed by socialists after the revolution. Before long, hundreds existed all over Russia, representing peasants, soldiers, and workers. The Petrograd soviet was the most politically significant of them all.

Americans, more than most others, embraced what they saw as the coming of freedom and democracy to the Russian people. The overthrow of the tsar was enthusiastically welcomed by Americans of all political stripes. It was an important factor in the US decision to join the Allied war effort against Germany in the spring of 1917. In his war message to Congress on 2 April, President Woodrow Wilson declared Russia now "a fit partner for a league of honour." But that partner was, in fact, not at all fit to keep fighting against Germany and the rest of the Central powers. The United States put a great deal of importance on the Russian situation, and pressure on itself to solve Russian problems. Americans worried that failure to do so would result in the downfall of the Provisional Government and possibly the end of the Russian war effort. Keeping the Germans busy in the East was important. The United States wanted to keep the western front secure until its own forces could reinforce Allied troops.

This chapter considers the period of American involvement in Russia during the initial months of the revolution, up to November 1917. It focuses on the American Red Cross Mission to Russia and the work of YMCA secretaries. The latter group included John R. Mott, who travelled to Russia as a member of the diplomatic mission headed by Elihu Root, as well as War Prisoners' Aid secretaries who gradually transformed their efforts from assisting prisoners of war (POWs) to providing services to members of the Russian armed

forces.[7] Several motivators were present in the minds of these Americans, including a commitment to helping guide Russians through their democratic revolution; keeping the eastern front alive to hasten the defeat of Germany; and strengthening the bonds between America and Russia through goodwill and good works. The lines between diplomacy and unofficial contacts were often blurred. In this period, the Red Cross mission's William Boyce Thompson most exemplified this. His efforts, and those of other members of the American "colony" in Petrograd, are the subject of this chapter.

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The ongoing military campaign was a significant factor in the March revolution. But, recognizing the importance of good relations with the other members of the Triple Entente, the leaders of Russia's new government assured their allies that they had no intention of signing a separate peace.[8] Still, help was needed to keep Russia a viable fighting force in the war. Soon, a variety of American measures were in place to bolster the military effort. Between March and November 1917 several million dollars in credits were arranged so that

[7]Beginning in 1915, YMCA secretaries operated a War Prisoners' Aid (WPA) committee in Russia. Twenty-two secretaries, most of them Americans, eventually worked for the WPA, which was a project of the World's Committee (not the International Committee). They established a mail system, and promoted camp programs and services that required minimal equipment and financing, including industrial-educational programs which taught prisoners useful skills and contributed to local economies. Though the YMCA inspections were an honest attempt to ensure Russian authorities were making good on their promises, secretaries visited only a small percentage of POW camps: fifty-two of nearly one thousand. The YMCA was only allowed to visit sixty-eight camps; "meager personnel" and the difficulties of travelling in Russia meant secretaries reached fewer than this number. The WPA section also operated in England, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Bulgaria, and national YMCAs set up their own versions in a number of other countries. Shedd, *World's Alliance*, 547–52; William Howard Taft et al., eds. *Service with Fighting Men: An Account of the Work of the American Young Men's Christian Associations in the World War* (New York: Association Press, 1922), 2:272.

[8]Although the United States was technically an "associated power" of the Triple Entente from April 1917, the term "Allies" will be used in this dissertation to refer to both the Entente members and the United States.

Russia could purchase war supplies from the United States.[9] In the spring President Wilson sent two special missions to Russia as evidence of his country's friendship for and support of the new democracy—and struggling wartime ally. These were the Stevens Railway mission, named for its chief, John F. Stevens, whose members collected information about Russia's grossly overburdened railway system, and a high-powered, bipartisan diplomatic mission, headed by Elihu Root. Both groups of men arrived in Petrograd in mid-June via Siberia and the Pacific Ocean.

The Root mission's arrival especially annoyed the ambassador, David Rowland Francis. A former governor of Missouri and one-time secretary of the interior, Francis was first and foremost a successful businessman. He had gone to Russia in 1916 with the intention of negotiating a commercial treaty between the United States and Russia. Tsarist authorities had little interest in undertaking negotiations during the war, and Francis was left with little to do that held any particular interest for him. He did not understand the purpose of the Root mission, and bristled at the usurpation of diplomatic authority it implied. He had the situation well enough in hand, Francis thought. President Wilson naively hoped these missions would boost Russian military morale and thus make a significant difference to the country's war effort. They did nothing of the sort. Neither group accomplished much.[10]

Official representatives were not the only Americans who took an interest in the Russian situation. YMCA men were already in the country, engaged in War Prisoners' Aid work, Mayak programs, and related endeavours for young men in Petrograd. Many of them

[9]"Between March and November, 1917, the United States advanced 325 million dollars in credits to the Provisional Government, of which almost $188 million was used prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. The [Russian] embassy [in Washington] in addition controlled funds and assets realized through the sale of Russian bonds before the tsarist government's collapse." Robert J. Maddox, *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson's Siberian Intervention* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio, 1977), 33.

[10] Saul, *War and Revolution*, 124–38, 142–47.

had a long-term vision for Russia even while targeted, war-related activities remained the association's priority. The YMCA, in addition to its genuine evangelical purpose, was also an exporter of American culture and values more generally. This agenda manifested itself in many ways, and the war offered the association an excellent opportunity to provide spiritual and religious guidance, supplies, and practical skills training to a large number of young men. Short term work was important, but the YMCA was keen to establish itself on a permanent, peacetime basis all across the former Russian empire. The Mayak was a good start, but it had a limited reach. The Mayak's membership reached a high of 3,775 men in mid-May 1917.[11] American secretaries were pleased with its growth, even though these numbers put the Russian Mayak nowhere near the size of US city associations, which by this time had much larger memberships.

Significantly expanded Russian work became an active goal of the American YMCA after the March revolution. Two weeks after the tsar's abdication, War Prisoners' Aid secretary Archibald C. Harte announced plans to immediately begin programs for workmen and soldiers. At first, the Duma was supportive, but within two days of the announcement, Harte gave up these plans (for the moment) after hearing that factories were "hot-beds of socialist and German agitation," and anti-government revolutionary feeling. YMCA work was impossible for the moment.[12]

The downfall of the imperial regime was an important turning point for the Mayak. It

[11]By early 1918 the Petrograd association had only 2,875 members, down nearly 25 percent from the previous spring. E. C. Jenkins, "Memorandum of an interview with Mr. Ralph Hollinger, May 16, 1917," in YMCA Russia, box 20, Personal Accounts (hereafter PA), Crawford Wheeler; Hollinger to Woodruff, 7 Feb 1918, in YMCA archives, James Stokes Society, box 176, C 1918–19; Latourette, *World Service*, 371. These numbers do not include the 301 members of the new boys' division.

[12]Edward T. Heald to wife, 27 Mar 1917, in Heald, "Documents: Petrograd, March–July 1917; the Letters of Edward T. Heald," ed. Warren B. Walsh, *American Slavic and East European Review* 6 (May 1947): 137. See also Heald to wife, 12 Apr 1917, in ibid.

inspired heady thoughts among Americans about the rebirth of Russia as a democratic nation that would follow in America's revolutionary footsteps. The YMCA could help out, Americans and Russians believed. In early 1917 the Mayak and the James Stokes Society collaborated on a three-and-a-half-year expansion plan for the club. Several proposed initiatives saw the light of day later that year: a boys' division in Petrograd, a Moscow branch, a new building in Petrograd, and permission to work with soldiers. Other plans included expansion of the educational curriculum to include many more technical and special subjects; increased work for students; and living quarters for young men in Petrograd. The extensions required the services of additional personnel from America, as well as visits of Russian Mayak secretaries to the United States to study the operations and programs of American associations. Updated, American-style Mayaks should, the plan's authors thought, spread across Russia over the coming years, to Kiev, Odessa, other cities, and towns and districts outside the major urban centres. Work would be, it was hoped, among boys, students, railroad employees, soldiers and sailors, country dwellers, and industrial workers. It would be financed by the state—the imperial government had provided funding for the Mayak since 1903—as well as by donations from municipal groups, businesses, unions, wealthy individuals, and by membership dues.[13] These changes would bring the offerings of Russian Mayaks into line with some of the extensive work done by YMCAs in the United States.

There remained much to do, both within and especially outside the big cities. Written recommendations from YMCA men stationed in Russia concerning future work in that

[13]The James Stokes Society-The Society Mayak project and future plans proposal, n.d., ca. Mar–Apr 1917, in YMCA Russia, box 19, Russia—General—1917–34. On earlier funding, see Mikhail D. Guskov, "'YMCA' v Rossii: istoriia I nastoiashchee," *Religiia I pravo*, no. 3 (12) 1999, 25–27.

country were penned as early as the summer, in time for Mott's arrival as part of the Root Mission. They all emphasized the importance of military work, but agreed that new services and programs in cities, industrial centres, rural locales, and among new groups of people should start soon.[14] Later that summer, George Day, in recommending five hundred men be sent to Russia for YMCA service, reckoned that the positive reception the association had received in Russia thus far augured well for future work.[15]

The ambitious plans were drawn up in the spirit of Russian–American friendship that existed once the United States entered the war on the Allied side in April. After the United States declared its belligerency, the German government demanded the departure of American War Prisoners' Aid secretaries from Germany. It also demanded their withdrawal from POW camps in Allied states "on the basis that it would be humiliating for their officers to receive kindnesses from" their new enemies. After initially allowing Americans to keep serving, Austria-Hungary also requested their withdrawal. Only a small number of Americans were permitted to carry on working at central offices in Vienna and Berlin. The others were replaced by representatives from neutral countries.[16] In Russia, American War Prisoners' Aid secretaries were recalled to Petrograd in June, and most left their posts in July. As elsewhere, they were gradually replaced by secretaries from Denmark and Norway over the next few months.[17] In explaining the YMCA's commitment to serving prisoners of war

[14]Anderson, Day, and Hollinger, "Recommendations for Association Work in Russia," n.d., and "An Outline Program for Association Work in Russia," n.d., in University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (hereafter UIUC), Paul B. Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [4]; "Conference of Messrs. Mott, Gaylord and Lowrie . . . ," 17 Jun 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[15]Day to Mott, 30 Jul 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[16]Harte to Billings, 13 Aug 1917, in Columbia University, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Bakhmeteff Archive (hereafter BA), Thomas Day Thacher papers, box 2, GC.

[17]Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:422, 424, 281–82; Anderson, Report, 15 Nov 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA WPA in Russia 1917–20. Sometimes the transition took several months. For

despite US belligerency, Harte wrote in mid-August that "it behoves us to demonstrate that we are fighting this war for principles." As such, by employing secretaries from neutral states, the association planned "to continue to serve war prisoners in the Allied countries, for we covet for them as well as for ourselves, not only a military victory but also a moral victory."[18] Ameliorating the conditions in which POWs lived was important in its own right, but was also in keeping with the YMCA's international agenda of promoting American-style, Progressive-Era Christian manhood. These "strangely pathetic figure[s]" were "dead with little glory." Growing listlessness, lethargy, and depression was their fate. The YMCA, knowing they would be released come the end of the war, considered POWs important recipients of its efforts.[19] Members of a new group of POWs were also assisted in the spring and summer: returned Russians who had escaped from German and Austrian camps. The YMCA set up a canteen and club for them in Petrograd.[20]

The entrance of the United States into the First World War thus brought important changes to the work of American YMCA men engaged in prisoner of war service. But some of these changes also predated April 1917. By then, secretary Jerome Davis and a colleague were already serving Russian soldiers in garrisons adjacent to POW camps in the Turkestan military district. They had received permission in January from the region's governor general to put on a limited program.[21] Davis was a veteran YMCA man in Russia. He had been specifically recruited for Russian service by Mott, who convinced him to leave his studies at

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example, see material in Anderson papers, box 5, WPA—Mort Waldo.

[18]Harte to Billings, 13 Aug 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, GC.

[19]Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:217 and the rest of ch. 44.

[20]Wheeler to Mott and Colton, "Report on War Time Activities in Russia," 22 Nov 1919, 15, in YMCA archives, Ethan T. Colton papers, vol. 2.

[21]Kuropatkin agreed to this as long as no books, papers, or magazines were distributed. Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 38; Jerome Davis, "Association History in the Making in Russia," 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2]; Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:421–22.

Oberlin College for a few months' wartime work. Davis arrived in the country in 1916 for prisoner of war work.[22] After he helped organize programs and services for soldiers in Turkestan, members of the Second Siberian Regiment were able to visit a large barracks to take in films, lectures, and other entertainments, and a "small club for reading, writing, games, tea, music, and school." Local committees carried out most of the work. Davis and his associates were also given permission to assist the members of the First Siberian Regiment, who were stationed in an isolated spot.[23]

Following the March revolution, the association was permitted to expand its efforts to all soldiers in Turkestan. The new, post-revolution military governor placed no limits on what secretaries could do. The YMCA helped start athletic and educational programming, showed films, organized an orchestra, facilitated the staging of theatrical performances, and provided other diversions for soldiers destined for the front. April saw the opening of a reading and tea room that welcomed several hundred soldiers a day. The YMCA also distributed writing materials, books, and musical instruments among the men. According to the association, the new soldiers' committees that had come into existence since March to replace traditional officer authority fully supported its activities, as did the general public.[24] YMCA programs and services aimed to boost soldier morale and keep restless, armed young men from causing or getting into various kinds of trouble. The Russian soldier spent his afternoons, Jerome Davis told Mott, "smoking (when he can secure cigarets), sleeping or engaging in gambling or other harmful amusements"— the latter no doubt a reference to

[22]Jerome Davis, *A Life Adventure for Peace: An Autobiography* (New York: Citadel, 1967), 24–41; Miller, "American Philanthropy among Russians," 277.

[23]Jerome Davis, "The First Association Work with the Russian Army," in *For the Millions of Men Now Under Arms*, no. 12 (1917): 10 (quote), 11.

[24]Davis, "Association History in the Making in Russia," 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2]; Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:422.

sexual relations with prostitutes, drinking, and perhaps also political activism.[25] He believed that the association could render "a great service" by "increas[ing] the loyalty of the soldiers to their officers and to their nation." He thanked front-bound soldiers on behalf of the United States: "I impressed on them the fact that they were serving not only Russia but America and the entire world." A YMCA compilation boasted that association efforts had resulted in Turkestan having the highest levels of military discipline in all revolutionary Russia.[26] That they had a potentially important impact on the Russian ability to successfully wage war against the Central powers was something Americans were proud of. The military significance of YMCA programming would make it all the more appealing to Russian authorities, secretaries believed.

Russian authorities beyond Turkestan slowly started to recognize the value of YMCA programs for soldiers. At the same time as the association expanded its efforts in Turkestan, it received permission to start "specimen work" for the garrison at the Peter and Paul fortress in Petrograd. Soon, a tea room and library with several thousand books were open, and lectures and classes made available. Other than indicating, as the YMCA's wartime history does, that "lectures on agricultural subjects were well attended," the sources do not detail the types of classes offered. There must have been a wide assortment. In Petrograd in May sixty-nine of them were in session "meeting three times a week for two hours each." These programs and services survived the American withdrawal from Petrograd in the fall of 1918 (see chapter 4). In the spring and summer of 1917, with successful programs running in Turkestan and Petrograd, American secretaries attempted to conduct work for Russian

[25]Davis to Mott, 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].
[26]Davis, "First Association Work with the Russian Army," 10, 11.

soldiers in Kazan, Orenburg, Tomsk, Irkutsk, Krasnoiarsk, and Chita. They found the most success organizing sports and other athletic pursuits. In military centres near Irkutsk, soldiers set up YMCA-inspired schools and clubs for themselves.[27]

The YMCA's work in Russia for soldiers in the first half of 1917 came about because of the initiative of individual secretaries. The revolution made such moves possible. Changes in government and military control opened up opportunities for association activities. With Americans and Russians now fighting on the same side in the war, and their work for POWs slowly taken over by others, American secretaries increasingly sought out service for soldiers. In part because of these early ventures in military work, and after reading reports and hearing from secretaries stationed in Russia, the association embraced this new direction as official policy that summer during Mott's visit to Russia.

John Mott was "the most prominent missionary statesman of the early twentieth century."[28] He was also a trusted friend of and advisor to President Wilson, and went to Russia as a key member of the Root Mission. Mott had recent experience serving on diplomatic missions: He represented the United States as part of the Mexican Commission in 1916. In Russia he intended to promote YMCA work among prisoners of war. He had been general secretary of the International Committee, the body that oversaw YMCA activities in North America, and upon the entrance of the United States into the war, he become head of the association's coordinating body for all wartime endeavours. On his journey across Siberia

[27]Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR; Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:422–24; C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865–1955: A Biography* (Geneva and Grand Rapids, MI: World Council of Churches & William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 495; Lowrie to Mott, 24 Jun 1917, in UIUC, Donald A. Lowrie papers, box 1, 1917; Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 2. See also material in *For the Millions...*, no. 12 (1917): 12–15.

[28]Rosenberg, "Missions to the World," 241.

in the summer of 1917, Mott decided his organization should send more American secretaries to Russia for service among soldiers. He believed there was a great opportunity for YMCA work, and that efforts for soldiers would lead to permanent work after the war.[29] In Petrograd and Moscow, where he was between 13 June and 9 July, he met with Russian leaders, including Prime Minister L'vov, Minister of War Kerensky, and Foreign Minister Tereshchenko, a close friend of Ambassador Francis. What the association could offer the Russian war effort was an important subject of discussion. And no wonder: The Russians launched an offensive at the beginning of July.[30]

On 1 July Russian troops surged forward along the southwestern front. The offensive was their first major drive since the revolution, and the only significant Russian advance of the year thus far. It was intended to boost army morale and the country's standing in the Allied camp; unfortunately, it was an utter failure, both militarily and politically, and resulted in a "disastrous collapse of morale." Some units refused orders to attack, while others took the field only to bolt at the last minute. The only saving grace, if there was one, was that the offensive did not last long. Afterward, Russian soldiers participated in no organized forward movement. Politically, the consequences of the military action were dire. The Provisional Government's continued failure to heed the demands for peace of Russians across the country was primary among the reasons for the rise of the radical Left. News of defeats at the front led to mid-month strikes in Petrograd. These few days of large-scale demonstrations, known as the July Days, reflected a "genuine outburst of popular discontent." They signalled

[29]Mott speech, New York City, 14 Jan 1918, in John R. Mott, *Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott: Selected Papers and Addresses on Evangelical, Spiritual, and Ecumenical Subjects, and the Outreach of Life and Influence* (New York: Association Press, 1947), 294; Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, 485.

[30]Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 38–39; Saul, *War and Revolution*, 122; Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, ch. 9.

a shift in power away from the moderate government toward more radical elements in the Petrograd Soviet. Crime and general unrest increased, public distrust of officials reached new heights, and waves of strikes and protests became regular features of life in the Russian capital city.[31]

Earlier in July, after Mott's many meetings and consultations with a wide variety of Russian leaders, officers, soldiers, and YMCA secretaries based in Russia, the association decided to "throw every available resource" into work for the armed forces. Secretaries jumped at the chance to introduce YMCA programming to (potentially) millions of Russian soldiers. It would go a long way to fulfilling the organization's missionary-like agenda, namely, to bring Protestant morality and American ideas to other parts of the globe. Mott and War Prisoners' Aid head Harte called on the Russian chief of staff, General Aleksei Brusilov, to request permission from the government to start large-scale work for soldiers.[32] They were backed by Brusilov's American counterpart, General Hugh L. Scott, also part of the Root mission, who wrote Brusilov a letter in support of the YMCA's plan. Scott remarked that the association's work among American soldiers always improved troop morale.[33] Mott himself believed his organization had an important role to play in "insur[ing] that these millions of men in the garrison towns and cities, in the reserve camps, and behind the fighting lines, spend the five or more leisure hours which they have each day in healthful recreation, in

[31]Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914–1917* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), 282; Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 175, 179–96 (quote 2 from 186); Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Road to Soviet Power and Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 91–94 (quote 1 from 94).

[32]Mott, address to the Boston City Club, 11 Oct 1917, quoted in Davis and Trani, "American YMCA and the Russian Revolution," 473; Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:428; Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[33]Scott to Brusilov, 9 Jul 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].

growth in knowledge, in developing increased efficiency, and in unselfish ministry to one another." The association's wartime experience showed "conclusively," he believed, that the YMCA was "peculiarly well-adapted to promote the right solution" to the "critical problem" of "idleness" among millions of Russian soldiers.[34] Root and other members of the mission supported his plan to set up YMCA outposts along the Russian front. Before he left the country, Mott assigned ten secretaries to take up army work.[35]

These discussions and appeals happened with the approval and at the urging of the US government. President Wilson was kept informed of YMCA policies and activities in Russia by Mott. "It would be difficult to overstate the urgency of this extraordinary situation," Mott told Wilson. Conditions would only worsen in the coming fall and winter months. "If these men can be assured pleasant and profitable occupation during this trying time," Mott argued, "it will insure conservation of probably the greatest single asset of the Allied cause."[36] By highlighting assistance to the war effort, he provided both an important rationale for YMCA expansion—one he undoubtedly believed true, given testimonials to the value of association programming on the western front[37]—and an excuse to spread association teachings among Russians. To facilitate the association's new commitments, additional secretaries were recruited in the United States and Britain. The new workers started to arrive in early October, and the final group arrived in November, just prior to the

[34]"Outline of the Activities of John R. Mott in Connection with the Work of the Special Diplomatic Mission of the United States of America to Russia," in Library of Congress (hereafter LOC), Elihu Root papers, box 192, Mission to Russia.

[35]Alton Earl Ingram, "The Root Mission to Russia, 1917" (PhD diss., The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1970), 270.

[36]Quoted in Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 39–40.

[37]See, for example, the quotation from Marshal Foch, supreme Allied commander, included in Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 1:viii–ix.

Bolshevik takeover.[38]

Other efforts to bolster Russian military effectiveness were in place before Mott arranged to begin YMCA work for Russian soldiers. The war effort left much to be desired by Allied leaders and military officials who hoped that the Russians, so crucial in the first years of the war against the Central powers, would soon recommit to campaigns on the eastern front in full fighting spirit. With this outcome in mind, a special Red Cross mission was organized. The American Red Cross Mission to Russia, as it was officially known, was set up by the Red Cross War Council in late May 1917 "in accordance with [Red Cross] policy of making a thorough survey and careful investigation in each country where Red Cross Aid would be likely to be needed."[39] Henry Davison, the chairman of the War Council, believed that "probably nothing that can be done immediately will do more to win this war than to strengthen Russia. . . . Our Red Cross is the one agency which can exert itself effectively in this terrible emergency."[40]

Even before the Russian commission was publicly announced, Davison was on record in saying that "the way to hearten and encourage Russia is for the American Red Cross to

[38]Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:429.

[39]Date from Libbey, *Alexander Gumberg*, 6; Davison quoted in Minutes, ANRC War Council, May–Sep 1917, 159–61, excerpted in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [4]. The American Red Cross despatched medical teams and supplies to Russia prior to 1917. Two hospital units served for a time in Kiev before being withdrawn, and an ambulance corps, aiming to aid POWs, sat inactive for several months waiting for government permissions which never came. See "Russia: Early Russian Red Cross Work," Oct 1917, in National Archives at College Park (hereafter NACP), Record Group (hereafter RG) 200, Records of the American National Red Cross (hereafter ANRC papers), box 866, Russia—General; Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, 119; and Elsa Brandström, *Among Prisoners of War in Russia and Siberia* (London: Hutchinson, 1929), 194–95.

[40]Henry P. Davison, "Our Armies of Mercy," *National Geographic Magazine* 31, no. 5 (May 1917): 427. For more on the War Council, see Little, "Band of Crusaders," 178–79.

extend to her, without delay, a practical helping hand."[41] (In a later publication, he referred to Russia as a "virgin," not only feminizing the country but implying the need for careful guidance as "she" matured.[42]) The organization planned "to make the Russian people know that the American people are behind them not only in words but in real measures to alleviate their sufferings and share with them the burden of caring for their sick, wounded, and starving people."[43] That the Red Cross considered itself the appropriate body to play such a role is explained by the close relationship it formed with the US government over the past few years, and especially since April.

Theis relationship between the organization and the state during the war was explicit. In early July 1917 the US secretary of war authorized "the militarization of Red Cross workers on duty in foreign theaters of war." This gave Red Cross representatives military rank but did not confer any authority on them.[44] The two men who would take charge of the Russia commission, Dr. Frank Billings and William Boyce Thompson, had earlier urged such a move to avoid embarrassment or difficulties in their dealings with Russian and American officials. "Thompson and I," claimed Billings, "personally do not care for rank excepting as it may be necessary to accomplish purpose for which commission is to go abroad."[45] The experience of the YMCA in Siberia, discussed later in this dissertation, is evidence that he was very likely correct in this assessment. The seeming—and actual—legitimacy conferred on the Red Cross by its official standing with the American government opened doors that

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[41]Quoted in "Steel Declares Extra Dividend to Aid Red Cross," *New York Times* (13 Jun 1917): 11.

[42]Henry Pomeroy Davison, *The American Red Cross in the Great War* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 268.

[43]"Red Cross Experts Will Go to Russia," *New York Times* (2 Jul 1917): 8.

[44]This was General Orders No. 82, dated 5 Jul 1917. See American National Red Cross (hereafter ANRC), *Annual Report for the Year Ended June 30, 1918* (Washington, DC: 1919), 102. The text of the order is printed in "Gives Taft Title of Major General," *New York Times* (8 Aug 1917): 4.

[45]Billings to Davison, 29 Jun 1917, in Thacher papers, box 3, Preparation 1.

might otherwise have remained shut. Before they left the United States, Thompson purchased military uniforms for himself and the other mission members.[46]

The Russian mission's genesis owed as much to personal ambition and financial concerns as to the government's commitment to supporting its new ally. Thompson, a wealthy copper magnate and then director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, was a major funder of the Red Cross War Council.[47] He was associated with at least two of the council's members, namely, Davison, a banker in his private life, and Edward N. Hurley, soon appointed chair of the US Shipping Board. Thompson was also connected to other Wall Street financiers closely involved in America's war effort including fellow J. P. Morgan partners Thomas W. Lamont and Dwight W. Morrow. They were all motivated by "the white heat of eagerness to be of service which animated the American public in 1917 and 1918."[48] They shared, as historian William Appleman Williams has suggested, an interest in strengthening the Provisional Government to ensure its ability to pay back substantial US loans, a significant amount of which were financed by Morgan or its British affiliate. To this end, Davison, Hurley, and Thompson met in early April to discuss what could to be done. "Their concern was understandable," Williams judged. "Morgan interests held the lion's share of pre-war Russian bonds. And it was highly probable that any future loans—private or official—would involve them further."[49] At the time, Davison had not yet been chosen to head the Red Cross War Council; he soon was, "as a consequence of Wilson's tendency to

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[46]Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 1:54.

[47]William M. Calder, *Russia's Democracy: 'It Has Mud on its Boots, Hair on its Face, and the Love of Freedom in its Heart'* (Washington, 1918), 3.

[48]A reference to volunteers and funds raised. Thomas W. Lamont, *Henry P. Davison: The Record of a Useful Life* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1933), 290.

[49]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 41. J. P. Morgan had already loaned Russia $96 million to purchase war material. Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 183.

choose Wall Street figures for wartime leadership in Washington."[50]

Other sources tell the tale of the mission's creation differently. They indicate that Davison and Hurley approached Thompson about joining the Russian mission. Thompson's contributions to the war effort thus far were significant—in addition to his donation to the Red Cross, he raised $20 million for the first American Liberty Loan, including giving $1.5 million from his own personal fortune. Still, though Thompson had raised funds for various war-related causes, he was not directly involved in patriotic service as were several of his friends and associates in the business world. Davison decided he could do more.[51] Thompson was "in great distress that [the United States] did not join the war earlier," according to Dr. William Sydney Thayer, one of his future colleagues on the Russian mission.[52] This interpretation may well be correct. Supporting the Red Cross was "a kind of patriotic obsession" in the contemporary United States.[53] Thompson and Davison worked closely together in organizing the Russian endeavour, and Thompson covered the bulk of the mission's expenses.[54] Whatever the exact reason for the creation of the mission, or the explanation behind Thompson's appointment, it is clear that political and economic considerations were part of the mission's raison d'être from the beginning. Thompson, moreover, may have believed he was going to Russia as an unofficial ambassador.[55]

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[50]Williams, *American–Russian Relations*, 88.

[51]R. Plate, 19 Jun 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 22, Unidentified [1]; figures from Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 180.

[52]William Sydney Thayer, typescript, 18, in University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library (hereafter UVA), American Red Cross Mission to Russia (hereafter ARCMR) papers, box 1, "Notes Made in Russia...." Some of the material in this folder was reproduced in Edith Gittings Reid, *The Life and Convictions of William Sydney Thayer, Physician* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936).

[53]Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*, 256.

[54]"Red Cross Experts Will Go to Russia," *New York Times* (2 Jul 1917): 8; Minutes, ANRC War Council, Jul–Sep 1918, 1272–73, excerpted in Hagedorn papers, box 22, Russia [2].

[55]His biographer implies that the Wilson administration sent Thompson to Russia as a potential replacement for the current American ambassador. Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 184.

President Wilson approved the establishment of the Red Cross mission in mid-June. Billings, a prominent Chicago physician, professor of medicine at the University of Chicago, and president of the American Medical Association, was picked to chair it. He had visited Russia twice in the past, and was recommended for the post by Russophiles Samuel N. Harper and Charles R. Crane, both of whom were close to the Wilson administration.[56] Among the commission's others members were scientific experts, medical doctors, and technical and administrative staff. Although it was not officially appointed until the end of the month, its members came together for the first time in Washington on 18 June. They decided then that medical and surgical supplies for the Russian army were the "probable immediate need."[57] In addition to bringing medical supplies, the commission was tasked with determining how it could be of use to Russia's wounded soldiers, and what it could do to help suffering civilians.[58]

That Thompson, in charge of the day-to-day management of the mission's affairs, had no scientific, medical, or other technical expertise to draw upon in Russia was irrelevant. His role, as he understood it, required him to do more than strictly commission work. Davison and Hurley "both made it plain to me," Thompson later claimed, "that, apart from my Red Cross work, I was expected as the representative of the United States to undertake any work which in my judgment was necessary or advisable in the effort to prevent the disintegration of the Russian forces."[59] Thompson thereafter "felt justified in undertaking work on very

[56]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 42; George C. Whipple, "Russia, — An Opportunity for American Engineers," *Journal of the Boston Society of Engineers* 4, no. 10 (Dec 1917): 395.

[57]A Message of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia to the Russian People, n.d., in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports.

[58]"Red Cross Experts Will Go to Russia," *New York Times* (2 Jul 1917): 8.

[59]Thompson, memo, undated, in Hagedorn papers, box 22, Unidentified [1].

broad lines."[60] He may also have received, through Hurley, a letter from President Wilson giving him "carte blanche" during the mission.[61]

All the members of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia came together during a train trip to Vancouver. They kept busy while on board organizing committees, making lists of necessary supplies, and thinking about specialized units that might join them in Russia.[62] In early July they set sail across the Pacific. A group of Philadelphia Quakers destined to do refugee work in southern Russia was aboard the same ship, as were many Russian émigrés returning to their homeland excited about the revolution, their heads filled, to quote Thayer, "with all manner of fanciful ideas."[63] The ship's first stop was Japan, where the Red Cross men spent several days socializing and gathering information. They arrived in Vladivostok on 26 July. Here they were welcomed by local civilian officials, members of the local soviet, a delegation from the Vladivostok Red Cross, and representatives of the Russian Red Cross, who promised the Americans their organization's cooperation and assistance.[64]

The newcomers missed the departing Root mission members by only a few days, but advice and information was waiting for them in Vladivostok. The American consul, John K. Caldwell, gave Billings letters and memoranda written by Root, Cyrus H. McCormick, Stanley Washburn, and the embassy's Basil Miles, who had headed up the Second (POW)

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[60]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports.

[61]Thompson's daughter remembered being present when this letter was given to her father. H. A. Gray to Hagedorn, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Thompson family.

[62]"The History of the Organization of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia," n.d., in LOC, D. Heywood Hardy papers, box 2, folder 7.

[63]Thayer, typescript, 11, 34. The quotation refers specifically to Russians on board the steamer which took them and the mission members from Japan to Vladivostok. While the mission travelled through Manchuria Thayer commented that the United States had "done a far from friendly service to Russia in allowing a mass of worthless anarchists to come over on every boat. . . . We are cutting our own throats." Ibid., 43–44.

[64]Henry S. Brown, narrative, Thacher papers, box 3, Reports; "A Message of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia to the Russian People," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports.

Division. They all urged the Red Cross to look into Russia's food supply situation, stressing the importance of ensuring Petrograd, Moscow, and other cities had adequate food stocks come winter. Supplying cities was crucial to keeping Russia in the war and strengthening the Provisional Government, they believed. Washburn, who had spent years in Russia as a correspondent for the London *Times* and was most recently attached to the Root mission, pointed to three groups of people requiring foreign help, namely, prisoners of war, refugees, and civilians. It was up to "those who come to assist to pick out where effort, money and supplies will give the greatest human return, and at the same time to the greatest extent benefit the political situation." Finding the optimal balance between humanitarianism and political benefit was the task at hand. Washburn believed "relief and distribution" could "make the name of America and Americans known in Petrograd in the same way that it is in Belgium." Providing aid would "first, relieve human necessity; second, enormously increase the probability of keeping Russia in the war; and, third, be the most effective form of American propaganda which can be devised."[65] Washburn found a ready audience for his views in the leading members of the Red Cross mission.

After reading Miles's and Washburn's reports, Billings wrote to Davison. He argued that the United States could not expect the Russian army to fight or its soldiers to "remain at the front without food, and the civil population will be in revolution unless we can furnish them with food also." If the situation did not improve, the country could be out of the war by

[65]Root to Billings, 21 Jul 1917; McCormick to Billings, 21 Jul 1917; quotes from Washburn to Root, n.d.; and Basil Miles, Memorandum on Conditions in Russia, n.d., all in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports. Billings received these reports in Vladivostok; see Billings to Davison, 27 Jul 1917, in ibid. Washburn remembered his time in Russia with the Root mission in *On the Russian Front in World War I: Memoirs of an American War Correspondent* (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1982), 289, 295–309.

winter.[66] Only a day after his arrival in Russia, Thompson sent a letter to Dwight Morrow, providing him with an estimate of costs: "It looks to me that if our mission is to be a successful one, the situation as a whole must involve the expenditure not merely of a few millions of dollars but of fifty millions or even a hundred millions or more, and should Dr. Billings find use for, and should cable for large sums, I hope they will be available." Thompson saw the Red Cross mission as one part of US efforts to prevent Russians "from consummating an inglorious peace within the next six months."[67] For him, this was the mission's ultimate goal. That aim, on its face one that seemingly went against the supposedly neutral, humanitarian character of a Red Cross commission, would lead to clashes with American officials in Russia, the State Department, and even with President Wilson himself. In the beginning, though, Thompson's military and political agenda was perfectly in keeping with the organization's quasi-public role and the close relationship between its leaders in Washington and the men who oversaw the financial aspects of the country's war effort.

From Vladivostok, the eastern terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the mission members boarded a train and started for Petrograd, a continent away. The train, which had brought the Root mission members to Vladivostok three days earlier, included several luxuriously decorated and generously apportioned cars formerly used by Tsar Nicholas II. The tsar had signed away his throne in the dining car.[68] (A few weeks later the same train cars apparently carried Nicholas and his family to Siberia. The Russian-language posters in

[66]Billings to Davison, 27 Jul 1917, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports.

[67]Thompson to Morrow, 27 Jul 1917, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports.

[68]Thompson to Morrow, 27 Jul 1917, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports; Robins to Margaret Dreier Robins (hereafter wife), 2 Aug 1917, in Wisconsin Historical Society, Raymond Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.

the windows announcing the arrival of the "American Red Cross Mission to Russia" were kept up for the protection of its passengers.[69]) On the trip, mission members collected information about food supplies, transportation infrastructure, and other pertinent subjects.[70] On 2 August, during the first official meeting of the trip, the men agreed, in the words of physician Orrin Sage Wightman, that "the Russian people must be helped to help themselves." They decided to work on improving the country's food distribution infrastructure rather than bring in supplies from elsewhere. Their primary task was to provide "medical and sanitary relief."[71] Thayer believed that they had come to revolutionary Russia "on a great mission and we are going to do our part whatever comes."[72]

The appearance of the imperial train carrying yet another American mission across Siberia caused some excitement at stops along the way. The most enthusiastic reception was at the Irkutsk station. Here, as at some other places the train stopped—it made many, most of them for inexplicable reasons, as far as its passengers were concerned[73]—the Americans addressed the people who had gathered. Soon after the train arrived at the station, "the wide platform was a dense mass of soldiers and civilians, men and women." Billings was brought inside the station building, where he spoke to members of the local soldiers' committee. He informed them that the Red Cross commission had been sent "to see what it could do to assist and encourage the Russian soldiers and the Russian people in their efforts to retain the liberty which they had achieved." Then, when he returned to the train, members of the crowd demanded he address them. Billings agreed. His speech, delivered through an interpreter,

[69]Thayer, typescript, 75.

[70]Brown, narrative, in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports.

[71]Orrin Sage Wightman, *The Diary of An American Physician in the Russian Revolution 1917* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Daily Eagle Commercial Printing Department, 1928), 26–27.

[72]Thayer, typescript, 51.

[73]Thompson to wife, 6 Aug 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife.

stressed the need to keep waging war to ensure the success of the revolution. He claimed his was the first foreign mission organized by the American Red Cross, chosen as such "because of the deep impression your struggles have made on the American People. The oldest Republic of the western hemisphere," Billings declared, "sends greetings to this youngest Republic. . . . since you found your liberty, you must continue to fight for that liberty until the arrogant foe which is upon your frontier is beaten back and defeated utterly." His words were greeted by cheers, and a few onlookers gave impromptu speeches of their own.[74]

Another of the mission's members was singled out by the crowd. His reputation preceded him, and, once discovered, he was urged to speak. This was Raymond Robins, a wealthy "social economist," labour activist, and lay evangelist from Chicago, who was included in the mission at the insistence of Theodore Roosevelt. Although his social justice politics set him apart from the rest of the Red Cross mission members, Robins had earned the respect of his colleagues on the trip across the ocean. One evening, he had addressed them and other passengers "on the duties of labor and capital" during the war.[75] According to Thompson, Robins's talk was "very eloquent and stirring." The financier was impressed:

> His doctrines are sound, for besides his efforts to secure a square deal for the working-man and his children he is fair and just in his attitude towards capital and the employer. Many of the ideals I have thought of and preached I find are also his ideals. I know he is a man of high character, and he has great force of speech, and adds much to the strength of the commission for his constitutes the connecting link between the laboring man of America and the laboring man of Russia.[76]

On another occasion, Robins held the group "spellbound as he related the story of his life and

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[74]Brown, narrative, in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports. This report does not detail the rest of Billings's remarks. In reality, the Russian mission was the second Red Cross mission. The first was the one sent to France. Dulles, *American Red Cross*, 154.

[75]Brown, narrative, in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports; Theodore Roosevelt to Robins, 10 Jun 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2. "Social Economist" was how Robins's vocation was described in a list of mission members, included in Thacher papers, box 3, Preparation [1].

[76]Thompson to wife, 16 Jul 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife.

his work in the Klondike," where he had made his fortune during the Gold Rush.[77]

By all accounts Robins was a marvellous, inspiring public speaker. He was striking in appearance, with black hair, broad shoulders, and an intense gaze. As a British friend later put it, "he was an Indian chief with a Bible for his tomahawk."[78] Even before his arrival with the Red Cross mission, Robins was known in Russia because of his work to prevent the extradition of Christian Rudowitz, a Russian political refugee in the United States.[79] Like Billings, he agreed to speak at Irkutsk. Henry J. Brown, the mission's publicist, noted his remarks. They stressed the necessity of defeating Germany:

> 'Fellow Democrats,' said Mr. Robins, 'I bring you greeting[s] from the working men of America. We are free in America, and you are at last free in Russia, but you must remember one thing: Your freedom is not going to last—your liberty is not going to continue. Our freedom is not going to continue unless this war is decided in favor of humanity and human justice. Your interests and ours are constantly menaced by the Kaiser and the German General Staff. Militarism threatens you on your frontier, and until that spirit of autocracy, the only remaining autocracy in the whole world, is crushed, your liberty of action, your right to live as you chose, is in serious danger. If the greeting which you have given our honoured chairman to-day is any criterion of what is in your hearts, you are alive to this situation. I bring you good cheer and good wishes from the American laboring men, but I speak to you in all seriousness, when I say that you must not think for one moment that your liberty will last unless this war is decided in favor of Russia and the countries fighting the autocracy of the Kaiser and the German General Staff.'

There were similar scenes at other stations. The trip was not without incident: One of the Americans had his passport stolen by a pick-pocket, and armed guards were called in to protect the train at several stations to prevent possible violence.[80] Though they were sheltered from it, mission members early got a taste of the political unrest gripping the country.

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[77]Whipple, "Russia," 397.

[78]R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent: Being An Account of the Author's Early Life in Many Lands and of His Official Mission to Moscow in 1918* (1932; repr., London: Macmillan, 1974), 222. See also the wonderful anecdote about Robins told on pp. 224–26.

[79]On the Rudowitz case, see Frederick C. Giffin, "The Rudowitz Extradition Case," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 75, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 61–72.

[80]Brown, narrative, in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports; Wightman, *Diary of An American Physician*, 25; circular letter, 5 Aug 1917, in HIA, Malcolm Pirnie Papers, box 1, ARCMR; Robins to wife, 2 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2. One mission member's account of the journey through Russia was published: "Across Siberia to Petrograd," *Red Cross Magazine* 12, no. 11 (Nov 1917): 568–71.

The Red Cross commission arrived in Petrograd on 7 August. At first, its members were put up in the second-rate Hotel France, a far cry from the much grander Hotel l'Europe to which they would soon be moved or the Winter Palace the members of the Root Mission had been quartered in. The initial living arrangements—"disgustingly dirty and buggy," "a more forlorn dingy place could hardly be imagined," recorded Thayer—irked the Americans who were eager for a bath and some stationary comfort.[81] As the men would soon discover, many of the residents of the city around them had much more to complain about.

The American Red Cross representatives were greeted upon their arrival in Petrograd by Ambassador Francis; Grosvenor Hutchins, the vice-president of the local branch of the New York Bank of Commerce; Samuel Harper; and other members of the American "colony."[82] This sizeable community included civilians and officials such as embassy staffers, YMCA secretaries, journalists, bankers, and businessmen. Many of these individuals, whether official representatives of the US government or not, played minor but important roles in relations between revolutionary Russia and their home country during the revolutionary period.[83] The Red Cross mission fit right in. It included some distinguished specialists in military medicine, health, sanitation, business, and politics, and able administrators. Several of its members hailed from elite American families or were widely known because of their professional work in the United States. Ivy League educations, social ties back home, and impressive political connections brought the American colony together. The embassy's counsellor, J. Butler Wright, was even "old friends" with several of the Red

[81]Thayer, typescript, 63 and 53. Thayer noted on 9 Aug that it had been two weeks since he had a bath. Ibid., 57.

[82]Thompson to wife, 6 and 9 Aug 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife.

[83]For more about the American colony in Petrograd, see Ginzburg, "Confronting the Cold War Legacy."

Cross men.[84]

A new coalition government was formed the same day that the Red Cross mission pulled into Petrograd. At its head was Kerensky. He was a moderate socialist and member of the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) party—the peasants' party—which was then supported by the majority of the Russian people. He had been an important political figure in prerevolutionary Russia, and had served in the Duma. After the March revolution, Kerensky was elected vice-chairman of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. His popularity and the respect he commanded uniquely allowed him to serve in the Soviet and the Provisional Government concurrently; he held the posts of minister of justice and minister of war in the latter before assuming the premiership. As such, Kerensky backed the Russian army offensive launched in July believing it important to keeping his country in good stead with the Allies. The charismatic Kerensky replaced L'vov as prime minister on 20 July, and, except for a brief period in early August, remained atop the government until November.[85]

Kerensky was among those Russian officials mission members made contact with shortly after their arrival in the capital city. During an early afternoon meeting with Billings and Thompson on 8 August, the prime minister expressed his enthusiasm for Red Cross plans "and promised cordial co-operation in their execution."[86] In addition to holding discussions with the prime minister and other civilian and military leaders, the Red Cross men spoke with American officials and other members of the American colony. Robins described the first

[84]J. Butler Wright, *Witness to Revolution: The Russian Revolution Diary and Letters of J. Butler Wright*, ed. William Thomas Allison (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2002), 111.

[85]For more on Kerensky in 1917, see Richard Abraham, *Alexander Kerensky: The First Love of the Revolution* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1992).

[86]Bulletin no. 4, 9 Aug 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Bulletins; Thompson to wife, 6 and 9 Aug 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife.

week in Petrograd in a letter to his wife: "We are seeing government officials and making plans and then changing the plans we have made, and seeing more government officials and making more plans." By the next day, though, he could see that some headway had been made, admitting that "our plans begin to take form."[87] Commission members worked closely with Kerensky's cabinet ministers, army officers, government department heads, and a variety of local institutions, both public and private, over the next few months.[88]

In his quest "to go the distance to help Russia to be free,"[89] Thompson wasted little time. Kerensky's government offered liberty bonds for sale to the public beginning 8 August,[90] and Thompson promptly purchased five hundred thousand roubles' worth as a show of good faith. A large man "of large ideas and large associations," Thompson tried (unsuccessfully) to interest his Wall Street friends in the bonds, which he recommended as "the best war investment I know of."[91] He also contributed $20,000 for publicity work in Petrograd organized by Frederick Corse. This was only one American publicity project underway in Russia's capital. The other was under the auspices of Arthur Bullard of the Committee on Public Information, a war-time agency of the US government. Bullard had arrived in Russia at around the same time that the Red Cross men did. Very little was accomplished by him or members of his staff; the State Department refused to support large-

[87]Robins to wife, 13 and 14 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.
[88]Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, Russia [3]; Whipple, "Russia," 410–1.
[89]Thompson quoted in Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 185.
[90]Whipple, "Russia," 403.
[91]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," Thacher papers, box 3, reports. The description of Thompson is from Thayer, typescript, 60. Thompson described himself as a man with "portentous proportions": Thompson to wife, 9 Sep 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife. Even Russians did not back the liberty loan in great numbers: Peter Gatrell, "The Economy and the War," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution*, ed. Harold Shukman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 119.

scale plans and at times simply ignored requests for financing.[92]

Root mission members also promoted US government financing of publicity work in Russia. They had been doing so since June, perhaps agreeing with the paternalistic viewpoint of the YMCA's Harte that "you could do anything with the Russian people by propaganda; they are simply and easily swayed." After only a week in Petrograd, Root requested $5 million from Secretary of State Robert Lansing for a publicity campaign to counter the German propaganda machine in Russia. The funds were not approved. When Root was asked to print and distribute copies of Wilson's War Message to Congress, he raised the necessary funds from within his mission, and hired the British Publicity Bureau to carry out the task.[93] Once back in the United States, mission members reported their findings to Lansing and other members of the Wilson administration. The just-returned men recommended that an extensive publicity program be established to sway Russian public opinion, and that the YMCA head up a campaign to boost army morale. They were optimistic about the Provisional Government's staying power; however, Lansing was not.[94] He "determined to abandon Russia . . . until the 'normal process' of revolt had run its course and order had been reestablished 'by arbitrary military power.'"[95] During August, several of Wilson's closest confidants, political allies, and top American Russia-watchers all urged the president "to at least open a publicity campaign in Russia." These included Colonel Edward M. House, Samuel R. Bertron, Vance McCormick, Stanley Washburn, Ambassador Francis, the

[92]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 167, 162–63.

[93]Washburn, *On the Russian Front*, 299, 301; Saul, *War and Revolution*, 162; Harte quoted in Thayer, typescript, 56.

[94]Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 1:22–23, 25–26; Libbey, *Alexander Gumberg*, 8.

[95]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 45. Quotations within the quotation are from Lansing's memo, 9 Aug 1917.

Committee on Public Information's George Creel, and Wilson's secretary of the interior.[96]

A week after their initial presentation, members of the Root mission followed up with a more detailed request. The new proposal outlined news and film services and other propaganda work, salaries for five hundred Russian lecturers, and $3.3 million—by far the largest amount requested in the proposed budget—to cover the expenses of seven hundred YMCA secretaries and the building and maintenance of two hundred "huts," i. e., association facilities. It is not surprising that the YMCA was included in some of these publicity plans given the work the organization was already doing in Russia. If implemented, the plan would have resulted in an enormous increase in the association's presence in Russia. It never was, not least because Creel disagreed with the inclusion of the YMCA. He knew the plans would take months to come to fruition even if implemented. Wilson himself, during a private meeting with Root and Mott at the end of August, decided against funding a propaganda campaign, preferring instead to gain "the same result . . . in some round-about way." At the end of September, after continued lobbying by Root and others, Washington agreed to allocate $1 million for publicity work. But less than a fortnight later the State Department ordered the work put on hold.[97]

Thompson's $20,000 financial contribution to Corse's publicity work was only the beginning of his interest in such efforts. In fact, he quickly set up his own version of it, spearheading a publicity campaign aimed at bolstering Kerensky's government and diminishing public support for radical elements, especially the Bolsheviks. On 31 August Thompson, with Billings's blessing, drew $1 million from a personal account to support the

[96]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 54.
[97]William Phillips quoted in Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*, 49; Saul, *War and Revolution*, 163–64.

cause. The money went to the Committee on Civic Education in Free Russia, newly formed by Kerensky's private secretary, David Soskice, and also including prominent socialists such as Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia, "the grandmother of the revolution," and its "grandfather," veteran activist Nikolai Vasil'ievsh Chaikovskii. With the financial infusion, the committee established and subsidized dozens of newspapers that proceeded to print committee-approved or -prepared material that supported Kerensky and heaped praise on Russia's allies. Soldiers' clubs were also set up and lectures were organized.[98] On 9 September, Thompson boasted to his wife—perhaps partly to justify his lengthy absence from her and his desire to remain in Russia longer—that "my situation here becomes more and more important as the days go by, and I now feel confident that I will be able to do some good for our country."[99] Thompson hoped that by funding an extensive propaganda campaign, especially among soldiers, he could help prop up the Russian government and avert a premature end to the country's participation in the war.

Grosvenor Hutchins, a friend of Thompson's from before his time in Russia, left Petrograd on 31 August "to lay the Russian situation before the Administration" and purchase printing presses, type, and paper for Thompson's publicity campaign. Once back in the United States, Hutchins "felt that . . . he had the fate of the world in his hands." He met with Dwight Morrow in New York, and together they went to see Davison in Washington. The Red Cross head, thrilled with Thompson's plan, attempted to arrange a meeting for them

[98]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," Thacher papers, box 3, reports; Edgar G. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days: A Personal Chronicle of the Bolshevik Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1931), 50. For more on Breshkovskaia, see Jane E. Good and David R. Jones, *Babushka: The Life of the Russian Revolutionary Ekaterina K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia (1844–1934)* (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1991).

[99]Thompson to wife, 9 Sep 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife.

with Wilson.[100] Despite the support of members of the War Industries Board, the president refused to meet with either of them or other men on the board until more than a month after Hutchins's arrival in Washington.[101] Wilson, a stubborn man who tended not to seek out advice or weigh different options, was not particularly concerned about Russian developments. He hoped the country would solve its own problems.[102] Wilson no doubt saw little reason to entertain yet another American just returned from Russia with expensive ideas about what his government's policy should be.

While Thompson was struggling to have his plans supported, the YMCA saw its work expand, slowly but surely. In the summer of 1917 military work was the focus of the YMCA's Russian efforts. With some confidence that required permissions were forthcoming, in the weeks after the departure of the Root mission from Petrograd, the ten American secretaries who had been assisting POWs turned their attention to soldiers. Most of these men went off to Minsk, Moscow, Odessa, Kazan, Irkutsk, and Petrograd.[103] Getting work started was not easy, they found. It was some months before the YMCA was established in all these locations. Although Kerensky and Mott had seen eye to eye, the YMCA had no official support from the Provisional Government. Each secretary "had to convince the local commanders and soldier committees of his own district." The Kerensky government, local soviets, and military leaders offered their support to the Americans in fits and starts. At first,

[100]Thompson to Margaret (daughter), 30 Aug 1917, and Thompson to Gertrude (wife), 9 Sep 1917, both in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife; Hagedorn, notes on interview with Grosvenor Hutchins, 11 May 1932, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [4].

[101]Williams, *American–Russian Relations*, 100–2.

[102]Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910–1917* (1954; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 32; Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*, 152, 157.

[103]Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 40; Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:424.

the association was limited to doing work for soldiers behind the front lines. In mid-July the YMCA received permission to set up a soldiers' club in Moscow. A month later, Kerensky gave the association the go-ahead to work in central Russian cities, but not at the front.[104]

In August association secretaries opened the first YMCA hut in the country. It was in the Khodynka military camp on the sea shore outside Moscow that was home to eighteen thousand soldiers. Before the month was over, the hut was serving over a thousand soldiers a day.[105] The building included leisure, recreational, sport, and educational facilities, equipment, and supplies. Later, the surrounding fields were prepared for games of soccer, volleyball, and basketball, and an open-air theatre was set up for film screenings and live performances. Soon thousands of men were visiting the club every day.[106] The hut was neat, the reading and writing rooms crowded, and tea was sold for three kopeks a glass. Classes in math, writing, spelling, and English were offered.[107] The Red Cross mission's Wightman visited this "a shack in the suburbs" and found moving pictures being shown at night for audiences of thousands.[108] Russian soldiers were delighted with the films, which included dramas, "detective stories," comedies, and nonfiction titles about "distant countr[ies]" and "agricultural process[es]."[109] Secretary Donald Lowrie described the soldiers in the audiences as being "just like a bunch of big children." They were enthralled with more than the films. All the rooms were "jammed," according to Lowrie, from the time the building opened "until

[104]Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[105]Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 40. Colton got the wrong month. Lowrie to folks, 26 Aug 1917, in Lowrie papers, box 1, 1917.

[106]Crawford Wheeler, "The Red Triangle at Moscow," in *For the Millions...*, no. 12 (1917): 16.

[107]Wightman, "What the Young Mens Christian Association is Doing in Russia," n.d., in Wightman collection, box 29, Publicity and Lectures 1918.

[108]Orrin S. Wightman, "What the Young Mens Christian Association is Doing in Russia," n.d., in New York Historical Society, Wightman collection, box 29, Publicity and Lectures 1918.

[109]Wheeler, "The Red Triangle at Moscow," 17.

we have to chase the men out, at night."[110]

In addition to keeping the men too busy for vices, the building served another, less obvious purpose: It aimed to introduce "order and discipline" into the lives of soldiers. According to Lowrie the YMCA

> insisted upon cleanliness and order . . . . On the front door is a poster with a huge pair of soldiers' boots pictured, and a request to wipe off their feet. When the Commander in Chief of this military district was here, the other day, he spoke of the "Paralyzing cleanliness." All unconsciously, these men are learning just the lessons of order and discipline which they must have, if the Russian army is ever to amount to anything, again.[111]

Given the pervasiveness of war weariness, exacerbated by the revolution and the continual flow of anti-war propaganda that reached soldiers, the army could use all the help it could get. In August and September this hut catered to recruits passing through the camp on their way to the front, offering gifts and messages of "encouragement and friendship from America."[112] In recognition of these and other YMCA activities, the military governor of the Moscow region publicly testified in late August to the (in Davis's words) "high value" of the association's services, and urged other authorities to assist the Americans.[113]

September was a busy month for the YMCA. Davis finally received permission for his group "to start the regular association activities along all the fronts of the Russian army."[114] The secretaries and their Russian assistants "rushed into the work." They began service for soldiers on the Russian western and southwestern fronts. In October a general on the western front gave the YMCA forty buildings for its work. A building was also secured

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[110]Lowrie to Folks, 26 Aug 1917, in UIUC, Lowrie papers, box 1, 1917.

[111]Lowrie to Folks, 26 Aug 1917, in Lowrie papers, box 1, 1917.

[112]Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:425. The hut survived until the Russian army itself ceased to exist.

[113]Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[114]Ibid.

in Petrograd, and a national office was established in a centrally-located Moscow building requisitioned for the association by the Russian government.[115] When additional foreign personnel started to arrive in early October, some of them immediately went off to the military fronts.[116] In mid-October the Provisional Government's political department issued a document requesting that the association be granted railway privileges, and that "all organizations" assist the YMCA.[117]

Finally, later in October, the association received the guarantees and privileges that it had sought all along from Kerensky. These included free railway transportation of goods, priority rail travel for YMCA employees, exemption from paying customs fees and duty on supplies shipped in from abroad, guaranteed free delivery of soldiers' letters written in YMCA facilities, workers to help the secretaries, and permission to use public buildings requisitioned for it by local authorities. In addition to these "extraordinary privileges," which were, according to Ethan Colton, "the broadest concessions given the Association by any government during the war," the Russian government asked it to assist its soldiers in France and Salonika.[118] Kerensky also promised the association a million and a half roubles' worth of "take down huts" for YMCA work at the front.[119] Russian military authorities wanted the association to man hundreds of huts along the war's fronts. Secretaries were already at work in Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, Odessa, Petrograd, Kazan, Irkutsk, and at the front near Sarni (in

[115]Davis, "Association History in the Making in Russia," 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].

[116]Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 42.

[117]Taft et al., *Service with Fighting Men*, 2:428.

[118]Davis, "Association History in the Making in Russia," 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2]; E. T. Colton, letter, *New Republic* (8 March 1919): 185.

[119]Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

present-day Ukraine).[120] On 10 November, the army's (Provisional Government-appointed) commander in chief granted the YMCA the same privileges Russian organizations enjoyed for work at the front.[121]

Just days shy of the Bolshevik power grab in Petrograd, acting YMCA Russia head Jerome Davis prepared an outline of present and suggested future work for Mott. It emphasized military service, but stressed that this should go hand-in-hand with work of a more permanent sort. He believed a "colossal opportunity" existed for the Allies in Russia, and that every man sent to Russia would save American lives. Davis thought the association should have a presence in most Russian cities come the end of the war, with secretaries ready to "step into the breach the minute the war is over and help rebuild Russia." He wanted $3 million to fund activities along all military fronts in Russia, in the cities among reserve troops, for workers in munitions factories, and to plan for future work in cities and rural areas. Davis's plan was for YMCA military centres to be established for each army division, requiring an initial commitment of six hundred Americans in Russia by January. He told Mott this was "of vital importance" to the US government and its allies. Ambassador Francis, not one for wild schemes, endorsed Davis's requests.[122]

For the moment, the American Red Cross Mission to Russia had less grand ambitions. It arrived in Petrograd with ambulances, seventy tons of drugs, and medical and surgical

[120]Davis, "Russia," n.d., ca. 25 Oct 1917, in *For the Millions...*, no. 13 (1918): 17.

[121]This was General Nikolai Nikolaevich Dukhonin, who remained in his post for a couple weeks after the Bolshevik takeover, up until he refused an order to contact the Germans to start truce negotiations. Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[122]Davis, "Association History in the Making in Russia," 4 Nov 1917, and Davis to Mott, 4 Nov 1917, both in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].

supplies for Russian hospitals.[123] Red Cross shipments to Russia continued over the next weeks and months.[124] Over the course of the mission's existence, medical and surgical supplies valued over $400,000 were shipped to and distributed in Russia, and 125 fully-equipped ambulance cars were sent, at a cost of just under $85,000.[125] Russian authorities and organizations responsible for military medicine appreciated the material assistance. After all, ambulances were in desperately short supply and so too were all manner of necessary medical supplies. The Red Cross mission was welcomed by the main Russian relief organizations, and early on established good relations with them. The supplies brought from America were handled by a distribution committee that brought together the four public institutions involved in military relief: the Provisional Government, the Russian army's sanitation department, the Russian Red Cross, and the Zemstvo Union, the entity that oversaw all the various representative local and regional governing bodies across the country.[126]

The mission's experts embarked on various projects meant to improve medical and sanitary conditions in the army, make the transportation system more effective, and better the lives of Russian civilians. They travelled to numerous cities, towns, and military areas to assess the situation, gather statistics, and come up with plans for American military assistance. They also served on Russian committees that investigated relief requirements,

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[123]Davison, *American Red Cross in the Great War*, 271; "A Message of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia to the Russian People," n.d., ca. Aug 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports; Billings, "For the Relief of Russia," 71.

[124]"Ambulances for Russia," *New York Times* (11 Sep 1917): 11; Margaret Akers Trott, "Soviet Medicine and Western Medical Charity, 1917–1927," (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1996), 124.

[125]*The Work of the American Red Cross: Financial Statement of Red Cross War Fund, March 1st, 1918, with Details of the Various Activities through Which this Fund is Distributed* (Washington, DC: American Red Cross, n.d., ca. 1918), 76, 73.

[126]Ibid., 72.

including "the hospital and ambulance situation, food situation, sanitation in the army and child welfare work."[127] For example, mission member Malcolm Pirnie, a sanitary engineer, met with Russian Red Cross representatives, municipal officials, and medical personnel in Petrograd and at the Minsk front during his three month stay in Russia. Less than a month after the mission's arrival in Petrograd, he boasted that positive changes in Russian medical military administration "deserve[d] credit for the Mission."[128] Through the fall Pirnie worked on a plan that called for American military men to be brought in to improve roads at the front and combine the sanitation and ambulance services.[129] Pirnie's colleagues discovered that in many instances Russian administrators were working effectively, and that the primary difficulty was obtaining supplies.[130] Russian specialists were well versed in the latest techniques, and, going forward, scientific exchange rather than American tutelage was considered to be fruitful.[131]

In addition to their concern with the military's medical and sanitation needs, civilian and army morale, and Russia's food distribution system, the American Red Cross men took a special interest in the welfare of Petrograd's children. That they would be interested in the well-being of youngsters is not surprising given the contemporaneous popularity in the United States of Herbert Hoover's European food programs aimed at children.[132] Thompson

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[127]Ibid., 72.

[128]Diary, entry for 9 Sep 1917, in Pirnie papers, ARCMR.

[129]Diary, entry for 10 Sep 1917, in Pirnie papers, ARCMR. His final report, "American Combination Motor Ambulance and Engineering Service for the Russian Front," dated 10 Jan 1918, can be found in Thacher papers, box 2, Ambulance folder.

[130]Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [3].

[131]See, for example, C.-E. A. Winslow, "Notes on Sanitation in Russia and Japan," *Papers and Transactions for 1917 and Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting* (New Haven: Connecticut Society of Engineers, 1918), 26.

[132]Dominique Marshall, "Humanitarian Sympathy for Children in Times of War and the History of Children's Rights, 1919–1959," in James Marten, ed., *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2002), 85.

himself had personally donated $100,000 to Hoover's project in January 1917.[133] The Red Cross experts knew child welfare was a pressing issue in Petrograd. In 1915, one-quarter of the city's newborns died before their first birthdays; the number in New York City was one-tenth. In the estimation of physician Charles-Edward Amory Winslow, mission member and professor of bacteriology and hygiene at Yale Medical School, city facilities and programs were doing what they could to ameliorate the situation, but their efforts were seriously hampered by milk shortages.[134] Because the German army blocked access to the city's regular sources of milk supply—Finland and the Baltic provinces—shipments of dried or condensed milk from abroad were key.[135] Condensed milk was a major American export during the First World War, rising from sixteen million pounds annually between 1910 and 1914 to nearly 260 million pounds in 1917 and 350 million pounds in 1918.[136] The product was considered to be an inexpensive source of nutrients, especially for children, and could be transported long distances without spoiling.

Statistics painted a sad picture of public health in one of the great cities of Europe. Serious shortages of foodstuffs, especially ones available at affordable prices, were an unfortunate feature of wartime Petrograd. The Red Cross team did not need facts and comparative analysis to see—quite literally—what one important part of the problem was. Pirnie, out for a walk at 7:00 a.m. one day, saw a food line already several hundred people long. A woman near the front had been there for four hours, and the store was not even open

[133]He also organized to turn over to Hoover funds collected by the Rocky Mountain Club of New York to build a new facility. Calder, *Russia's Democracy*, 4. See also Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 178–79.

[134]C.-E. A. Winslow, "Public Health Administration in Russia in 1917," *Public Health Reports* 32, no. 52 (28 Dec 1917): 2205.

[135]Henry C. Sherman, "The Food Supply of Russia," *Political Science Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (Jun 1918): 226.

[136]Benjamin H. Hibbard, *Effects of the Great War upon Agriculture in the United States and Great Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1919), 62.

yet.[137] Months later, when food stocks were even lower, those further back of a line might wait several hours until supplies ran out, and then join a different queue in hopes of taking home something to eat.[138] Robins was also "giving attention to the bread, meat, milk and sugar lines," he told his wife. "They last all day and far into the night. Some old women sit on the sidewalk and knit the long way through." And, as Robins knew, the queues were a "fine breeding ground for revolt."[139] Food shortages weakened Kerensky's hold on power.

To facilitate information sharing and determine what assistance it could offer, a committee on child welfare was set up within the Red Cross mission. Its members included Dr. D. J. McCarthy, a specialist in tuberculosis from the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Henry C. Sherman, professor of food chemistry at Columbia University; Dr. Winslow; and Robins.[140] The committee members gathered data and met with representatives of several organizations and individuals interested in the welfare of Petrograd's children.[141] Soon after the mission's arrival in Petrograd, they conferred with Minister of Welfare Ivan Nikolaevich Efremov and representatives of private organizations to discuss child welfare.[142] The committee's chairman reported that the ministry wanted Russian bureaucrats to have "the benefit of American experience and American organizing ability." The committee members "believe[d] that active participation in this work [was] of the utmost importance for the salvation of the homeless and destitute children of Petrograd and for its indirect effect upon the spirit and endurance of the Russian people and upon the future relations of the two great

[137]Dairy, entry for 18 Aug 1917, in Pirnie papers, box 1, ARCMR.

[138]William G. Shepherd, "Russia in Anguish: A Glimpse through the German Fog," *Red Cross Magazine* 13, no. 12 (Dec 1918): 8.

[139]Robins to wife, 18 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.

[140]The details of these men's civilian careers are taken from the lists of mission members prepared in advance of the trip. See Thacher papers, box 3, Preparation—Jun–Jul 1917.

[141]"Report of the Committee on Child Welfare," 10 Sep 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.

[142]Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [3].

Republics."[143] In mentioning "the spirit and endurance" of Russians, the statement made reference to both the political and military situations. It was a reminder of the Red Cross's desire that the country remain in the war and that support for Kerensky continue.

At the meeting, the Americans were told about plans to move children to other, better supplied regions of the country—a project that would later come to fruition (see chapter 6)—and how distributions of needed items were being organized to assist destitute city residents and their children. Efremov invited them to help prepare the program for an upcoming conference, and suggested creating a joint committee of Americans and Russians to further relief activities.[144] The conference, the First All-Russian Congress on Child Welfare, was held later that month (August). Members of the Red Cross civilian relief committee were invited to attend, and Winslow delivered a detailed report that outlined the European welfare work of the Red Cross and other organizations. The report instructed the assembled delegates on the feeding of and caring for children and infants during wartime, and included recommendations for the distribution of necessary goods. The Americans' long presentation ended with a hyperbolic statement of encouragement and a promise of help. It emphasized the close relationship between the two countries as wartime partners and fellow republics:

> Russia and America are Allies in the war for liberty abroad. Russia and America are companions in the task of working out at home the ideal combination of individual freedom and social responsibility which must characterize the Democracy of the future in Europe or across the seas. If as brothers and sisters there is anything that the People of America can do for the People of Russia in the world crisis, let us know it and we will work with you to the utmost of our power, that it may be done.

The older American brother was only looking out for the best interest of its younger Russian sister, the report claimed, as they worked together to achieve freedom and justice for their

[143]"Report of the Committee on Child Welfare," 10 Sep 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.

[144]See "Memorandum of Conference with Local Ministry of Social Help," 12 Aug 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare. The food, clothing, and shoe supply situation was discussed in meetings of the ARCMR on 10 and 11 August. See Wightman, *Diary of An American Physician*, 42–44.

peoples.[145]

Russian authorities from the ministry of welfare kept the Americans informed of their plans and actions. It seems unlikely they really needed outside advice given the depth of knowledge and talent in the Russian scientific community. The hope of needed supplies coming from America perhaps persuaded Russians to entertain the advice of these well-intentioned, if paternalistic, foreigners. The Americans were seen as having a role to play in the ministry's task, which was "not only to fulfill the immediate needs of the children but also to create for the future good citizens, who will know the meaning of social duty, labor and knowledge." To help the poor and homeless children of Petrograd, the ministry, with the cooperation of the city and district governments, planned to provide hot meals and lunches to all poor children, and to distribute milk for infants. The ministry also wanted to assist nursing mothers and provide overnight shelter for homeless children. There were, it judged, half a million children under eighteen years of age in the city, including sixty thousand infants and one hundred fifty thousand children younger than six years old. Of these, five thousand were orphaned, homeless children; one hundred fifty thousand were partly destitute children whose fathers served in the army and mothers worked. The ministry wished to provide for them all. Food shortages and transportation remained key problems—insurmountable ones, it turned out. To ensure the success of its plans, the government needed clothes, boots, shoes, kitchen equipment and supplies, condensed milk, and other milk and food products. The American relief workers told the ministry that they would help secure supplies from the United States. The Russian response was commensurate with the spirit of friendship that

[145]"Report of Committee of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia on Child Welfare Work in War Time," in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare. See also other material in this folder.

marked official dealings between the Russian government and do-gooder Americans at this time. It read (in translation): "The readiness of the Great Democracy of America to offer this friendly aid to our young Republic will not only be a material help but also of great moral assistance and value in this grave and difficult hour."[146] In reality, Russian problems were much too extensive and pervasive to be solved by a dozen well-meaning American experts and a healthy influx of supplies and equipment.[147] But Winslow, optimistic after meetings with Russian officials, bureaucrats, and representatives of public and private institutions, held that Russians had "the organizing ability and the social spirit to conquer her foes within and without and emerge as the greatest free people the world has ever known."[148]

The committee's report on its findings emphasized what steps should be taken to ameliorate the welfare of Petrograd's children. The committee was especially concerned about the high level of infant mortality in the city and the country at large. Municipal authorities, district governments, and private organizations ran "milk stations" and "baby clinics" that provided care and support for children in Petrograd.[149] The American experts worked with ministry officials to prepare "plans for fourteen district feeding points in Petrograd with night refuges for the homeless."[150] Although between five and six thousand children already benefited from these stations, the committee believed that number should be doubled or tripled; however, the lack of milk seriously undermined what could be done. That "condensed milk in as large quantities as are obtainable" was needed was "obvious," and the

[146]"Communication from the Ministry of Social Help," included as an appendix to the "Report of the Committee on Child Welfare," 10 Sep 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.

[147]For more on the Russian food-supply crisis and related problems, see Lars T. Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[148]C.-E. A. Winslow, "Problems of Social Relief in Russia," *Survey* 39, no. 9 (1 Dec 1917): 249.

[149]Petrograd Special Supply Committee, Bulletin no. 20, 30 Oct 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.

[150]C.-E. A. Winslow, "Public Health Problems in Russia," *American Museum Journal* 8 (1918): 37.

committee's report urged that "every effort be made in America to supply this need and such others as may be presented from time to time." Significantly less milk was being supplied to the capital than during the prewar years, and the city's population had increased, resulting in "the disastrous state of the Petrograd milk-market." The chairman promised that upon their return to the United States, committee members would "make every effort to secure special foods for this particular purpose, if it should seem wise." Finally, the committee recommended that the Red Cross secure food, clothing, and other needed items on a monthly basis, all of which would be distributed through the government. The report recommended that Robins, the only member who was staying on in Russia (see below), be given the job of cooperating with and advising the ministry of welfare, and of finding out what the mission could do.[151]

As winter neared in Petrograd, the American Red Cross was approached by city officials in the hopes that the Americans would become directly involved in municipal efforts to supply milk to the city's most vulnerable residents. The city was interested in acquiring milk from the United States.[152] The mission "concluded that the very serious lack of milk supplies in Petrograd justified extensive shipments for the relief of small children absolutely dependent upon such supplies."[153] If the Red Cross furnished condensed milk it would "stir the imagination of all Russia and" put the organization in a "commanding position," one cable home read.[154] The milk was already on its way. By then, Billings had cabled the Red Cross War Council. He asked the civilian relief plans to be approved, and for four and a half

[151]"Report of the Committee on Child Welfare," 10 Sep 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.
[152]P. Svanoff [?], Section of Milk Supply, Petrograd's Central Food Supply Department, to Thayer, 27 Oct 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.
[153]ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 124.
[154]Cable, 4 Sep 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.

million cans of condensed milk to be shipped to Petrograd as soon as possible. All mission members believed "that the civilian relief proposed will be far reaching in its results aside from the charity and life-saving which it will insure. The fact that the American Red Cross will be the chief instrument in the relief will endear America to Russia, will hearten her soldiers to fight and will make the government more stable."[155]

The Red Cross decided to ship fifty thousand cases of condensed milk to Russia,[156] with an additional million pounds of it each following month. The cans of condensed milk were to be labelled (in Russian), "FROM FREE AMERICA TO FREE RUSSIA."[157] Although city officials had already ordered at least three million cans of condensed milk from the United States some months previously,[158] this time the Red Cross supplied the cans free of charge.[159] Red Cross men in Russia followed the food supply situation throughout the fall.

Raymond Robins, though neither engineer, doctor, or specialist in wartime financing and supplies, was an important member of the commission. Like Thompson, Robins had a broad vision when it came to its work in Russia. His primary concern at the moment was keeping Russia in the war, or at least free of German domination. Robins and Thompson—the social reformer and the Wall Street financier—bonded on the train through Siberia. "Colonel

[155]Plus clothing and shoes for children over the winter. Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [3].

[156]*Work of the American Red Cross*, 74.

[157]Billings, "For the Relief of Russia," 73; "Milk for Russian babies," *New York Times* (2 Nov 1917): 8. The *NYT* article noted that "the money for this milk was appropriated from William B. Thompson . . . and Dr. Frank Billings."

[158]"Memorandum of C. E. A. Winslow in Regard to Problem of Infant Welfare in Petrograd," n.d., ca. 10–15 Aug 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare.

[159]"Red Cross reports 5,000,000 members," *New York Times* (3 Dec 1917): 15. According to the news report, 2 million pounds were shipped in the end.

Thompson and I are good friends," Robins reported to his wife in early August.[160] The one thing they had in common, in Robins's words, was "an outdoor mind." By this he meant "a mind that does not take chatter; that constantly reaches out for facts; that has had to do that to be successful in business."[161] Robins had a long-term outlook as well, and for that reason was thrilled to be part of the mission. He told a YMCA secretary in August that "he would rather spend the next three years in [sic] trying to help Russia thru to the right kind of social order and government, than to be anywhere else on the globe."[162] Although not a socialist himself, Robins saw an opportunity in Russia to effect what he hoped to achieve in the United States, namely, a more just society. The tsar's overthrow and the seeming advance of democracy opened the doors to reforms that were never undertaken by imperial authorities. Since the turn of the century Robins had been determined "to implement the social gospel [in the United States] through trade unionism and political action."[163] He "envisioned a society of individual initiative, incentive, hard work, and creativity, all equitably rewarded."[164]

Robins's early hopes for the mission were dashed when an ambitious plan was vetoed by Billings and Thompson. "The Commission has chosen the 'safety first' program!" Robins complained. "Personal security, a bit of charitable relief, and then home as fast as we can go. . . . The big door was closed by us after conference this morning. I was in a minority when it came to the real adventure."[165] (Robins need not have despaired. After the Bolshevik

[160]Robins to wife, 6 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.
[161]Robins's testimony in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 774.
[162]Lowrie to Folks, 21 Aug 1917, in Lowrie papers, box 1, 1917.
[163]Williams, *American–Russian Relations*, 81.
[164]Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 92–93.
[165]Robins to wife, 17 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2. The proposal, by Alexandra Lebedev (i. e., Prince Kropotkin's daughter) "opened the way for our Mission to serve Russia in the most supreme fashion in the organization and distribution of the food and clothing resources of the empire." According to Robins, who presented the idea to Billings and Thompson, the "two Colonels" were "manifestly

takeover he would have one of the most exciting, challenging tasks of any American in Russia.) Still, he was given an important task: to publicize "the attitude of American workingmen toward the war." This was important, it was believed, to counter the popular impression that the United States was beholden to the interests of capital, and that Wilson was "a servant of Wall Street."[166]

In late August Thompson had another job for Robins. He sent him south to Ukraine to report on the condition of hundreds of thousands of refugees and gather information about the food supply situation. Thompson wanted Robins to figure out what relief supplies were needed, and to gauge the mood of the armed forces. On his way south, Robins stopped in Moscow for meetings, arriving in the aftermath of an important state conference called by the government. Kerensky had hoped the gathering would strengthen his position, and allow him to go ahead with planned programs. It did not; instead, the conference only showed the depth of divisions between the different revolutionary parties. Despite judging Kerensky's performance "spectacular," Robins was "certain" he could not remain at the helm. A few days later, Robins continued on his journey. His experiences in Moscow and during the trip, which included stops in Ekaterinoslav and Kharkov, confirmed earlier impressions he had of the importance of soviets in contemporary Russian political life. Though "his pockets were full of Kerensky credentials," the only way he could secure trains and wagons was by requesting them from the local soviet.[167]

In Petrograd, the political situation had by then taken a turn for the worse. As much as

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frightened by the magnitude and danger of the program." Robins to wife, 16 Aug 1917, in ibid.

[166]Robins to wife, 22 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.

[167]Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 191; Robins to wife, 1 Sep 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2; Robins's testimony, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 765–68; William Hard, *Raymond Robins' Own Story* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 13. For more on the Moscow State Conference (23–26 Aug), see Wade, *Russian Revolution*, 202–3.

Russian military defeats and the July Days bolstered support for radical elements among soldiers and workers, it also strengthened the political Right. One result was the emergence of army chief General Lavr Georgievich Kornilov as the darling of the Right at the Moscow conference in late August. A fortnight later, relations between the socialist Kerensky and the conservative Kornilov came to a head. On 9 September Kerensky, fearful that Kornilov was plotting against him, fired the general from his post. In response, an enraged Kornilov ordered two military units to take Petrograd. After a few tense days, it was clear his support was much thinner than he had imagined, and the matter came to an end. The Kornilov affair, though it did not result in the downfall of Kerensky, was a terrible setback for the Provisional Government and a boon for the Bolsheviks.[168] The publicity work undertaken by the Free Russia committee was ramped up in its aftermath.[169]

Allied representatives in Petrograd, military and civilian alike, had awaited Kornilov's success with an eagerness unbecoming supposed democrats.[170] Given the political turbulence increasingly gripping Petrograd, and the military chaos ruining the war effort, they wanted to see, as Thayer once put it, "a strong hand to direct, to command" the country lest all be lost. "The people are children, lost in their intoxication at the thought of liberty and far from realizing its significance." As drunken youngsters, in Thayer's understanding, Russians needed benevolent coercion to ensure they did not stray from the democratic path.[171] Thompson and Robins believed Kerensky was up to the challenge. They did not

[168]Wade, *Russian Revolution*, 188, 202–7.

[169]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 63.

[170]Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations, 1917–1921*, vol. 1, *Intervention and the War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 11–12.

[171]Thayer, typescript, 51 and 77. See also what Thayer wrote on 8 Aug 1917: "As a whole the country needs a strong dictator, needs him badly and will have him." Ibid., 56. "The close link between constructive and coercive work [was] characteristic of many progressive programs": Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 45.

relish the thought of his ousting.[172] "So long as the provisional government endures," Robins believed, "there will be no separate peace."[173]After this incident Thompson stepped up efforts to get more support from Washington for the premier.[174] Political developments in Petrograd continued to disappoint them. Robins "had the distinct sense as he spoke to great crowds of workers and soldiers that the people were slipping away from Kerensky and were responding to the Bolsheviks' slogan of 'Peace, Land, and Bread.'" As the Bolsheviks gained supporters in the Petrograd Soviet and elsewhere, the two Red Cross men had to significantly cut down their attempts at propaganda efforts.[175] There was simply not enough funding.

Once Robins returned to Petrograd (during the Kornilov affair) he gave a series of speeches. In Russia, Thompson sent him to speak to soldiers about American politics, education, and the reasons the country entered the war. He spoke in front of thousands of them.[176] Such talks were part of Thompson's and Robins's plans to boost military morale and convince Russians to support the Kerensky government. Robins also addressed a small group in Petrograd, where he shared the stage with Soskice and Breshkovskaia. The American lay preacher spoke "with great fervour," reported Thayer, who had to wipe tears from his eyes "again and again." "It was an occasion of real interest and one to remember," he wrote after the event. "We were all rather carried away and dear Thompson's eyes were very full; and

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[172]Hagedorn, notes on interview with Robins, 31 Jan 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [4]; Bessie Beatty, "Gold and Fool's Gold: Colonel Thompson Stakes His Faith on the Russian People" *Asia* 18, no. 8 (Aug 1918): 666.

[173]Robins to wife, 16 Aug 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.

[174]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 86.

[175]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 87. Robins, according to his testimony before the Overman committee, also had "secret agents scattered about in the different regiments and barracks" as the Bolsheviks were gearing up for their assault on the capital. United States Senate, 65th Congress, 3rd session, *Bolshevik Propaganda: Hearings before A Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), 779. See also Judson's diary entry for 27 Nov 1917, in Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution*, 150.

[176]Robins's testimony, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 771.

when in the hotel I put my hands on his shoulders and told him I was sorry I had doubted him he hugged me and rubbed his face against mine. It's strange," he continued:

> Think of it! Robins, a labor-unionist, a fellow-progressive, a social worker and a politician; Thompson a pure representative of the finance of Wall Street, his life given to the making of money and I a teacher and practitioner of medicine who has never taken part in public life, here in Petrograd in this tragic and moving and dangerous hour, shoulder to shoulder, moved by but one idea, the triumph of the cause of liberty and justice and humanity against all Germany stands for today—for the triumph of that cause for which at heart this great people is struggling.[177]

Thayer found himself bonding with fellow Americans from different social and economic backgrounds over a shared vision of Russia's future. His experience was not unique.

On 11 September, in the midst of the Kornilov threat, Billings left Russia. He took with him ten other mission members, including most of the scientific and medical experts.[178] After five weeks spent gathering materials and learning what they could about conditions in the country, their work was done. Not only that, but it was decided to keep the mission's American staff to a minimum given the potential dangers of working in Russia. As Thayer put it in early September, "The prospect here is of famine & riots—and chaos."[179] Thompson was put in full command of the remaining group, with Robins in charge of field work, and medical work was left in Dr. Thayer's hands.[180] (The physician earned the deep sympathy of his colleagues when word came a week earlier that his wife had passed away. Despite the

[177]Thayer, typescript, 100–1. For a commentary on Robins's oratory style, see William Hard, "Raymond Robins," *New Republic* (10 Aug 1918): 39. A photocopy of this article is in Hardy papers, box 2, Newspapers etc.

[178]Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [3]. On their way out, two of the men arrived in China to find a large flood in Tientsin. Billings and Reinsch—the US ambassador to China—cabled Washington to get aid for the million people left homeless. The ARC sent funds. See Whipple, "Russia," 398.

[179]Thayer to Sally, 3 Sep 1917, in Medical Archives of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, William S. Thayer papers, box 1, folder 34. Thayer was made chairman of this part of the commission by Billings. See Thayer, typescript, 49.

[180]Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [3].

tragedy, he agreed to stay on and recommitted himself to his work.[181])

The departure of the Billings's group, and that of a few other men who left soon after, did not mean the end of their work on the mission's behalf. They wished to see much more Red Cross aid to Russia. By then the medical supplies brought by the mission from the United States had been distributed, and Billings returned home with recommendations and plans for continued work in Russia.[182] According to Pirnie, Billings was "not discouraged and" intended "to devote his full strength to working out" solutions to Russia's supply problems.[183] In addition, he was fully on board with Thompson's publicity plans.[184] Indeed, Billings fully grasped the political significance of the commission's efforts. He commented later that "it did not take much investigation to show that if our mission did help in the food problem it would not be as a Red Cross mission, but as a diplomatic body."[185] Although there is evidence that Billings and Thompson did not always see eye to eye, the doctor publicly backed the financier's pet project to the full.[186]

Moreover, Billings was optimistic about Russia's future. The Russians, "this great people," were victims of autocracy, but had taught themselves democracy through the zemstvos. They also had "the most wonderful" military auxiliary organizations he had "ever seen anywhere," he told an audience of Chicago physicians on 1 November. Billings believed that Kerensky had learned important lessons over the past months, and that the

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[181]Thompson to wife, 9 Sep 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife; Reid, *Life and Convictions*, 103–6.

[182]ANRC, *Annual Report for the Year Ended 30 June 1918* (Washington, DC, 1919), 124.

[183]Letter, 5 Sep 1917, in Pirnie papers, box 1, ARCMR.

[184]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," Thacher papers, box 3, reports.

[185]Frank Billings, "The Work of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 69, no. 20 (17 Nov 1917): 1690.

[186]Some historians have concluded that Thompson's activities caused a split in the mission and led to Billings's departure from Russia. This does not seem to have been the case. But see Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations* 1:59; McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 83.

government was stronger than ever. With "the education of the people through bitter experience," disorder was being overcome. "The real substantial hope in Russia," he proclaimed, "is the character of her people. In spite of the fact that the Russian people as a whole are illiterate, they possess characteristics that are so admirable, that it sets them apart from all other people that we have ever known. They are orderly, good natured, good hearted and industrious. They are the most wonderful technicians the world has ever known." Their character, in fact, compared favourably with that of Americans. Since early July "there has been less disorder [in Russia] . . . than there is in America today," Billings argued. "A great democracy should help a sister republic in its infancy"; Russia "looks on us as her best friend." One important way to help, beyond financial aid, was to send news about the United States to Russia. "Great good will be accomplished" should that happen. He concluded:

> I want to repeat: I have come back full of optimism about Russia. She is doing a great work. She has a large army that must be properly cared for. She has a lot of fine men; even though they are socialists they are intensely patriotic, and they are learning to be rational through the responsibility that has come to them as members of the government. We owe to them our help to form a stable democracy, and we can do it. If we do that, we shall save American lives in France; if we do that, we shall finally cement the friendship of Russia, which is already ours.[187]

He and other mission members back in the United States all worked to get the funding Thompson desired and to move forward other projects planned to assist the Russia war effort and, ultimately, ensure that the transition from autocracy to democracy was successful.[188]

Mission members remaining in Russia were engaged in a variety of activities, including duties at Petrograd headquarters; filming civilian and military scenes in the Volga region and at the front; purchasing supplies in Japan; administering a warehouse in Moscow;

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[187]Billings, "Work of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia," 1688, 1690–94.

[188]Billings to Thayer, 31 Oct, and Billings to Thacher, 5 Nov 1917, both in Thacher papers, box 2, GC; Thompson to Wightman, 26 Oct 1917, in New-York Historical Society, Orrin Sage Wightman collection, box 29, C.

and studying transportation facilities and other technical requirements should more American military and civilian aid be sent to the country.[189] Russian organizations were doing good work, but there were shortages of drugs and surgical instruments. Ambulances were also needed.[190]

The Free Russia committee's work continued as well, but would not be able to much longer without an infusion of cash. Breshkovskaia wrote directly to President Wilson on 23 September in a bid to secure his support.[191] She was well-known in the United States and presumably expected to receive a fair hearing. Wilson's reply, which only came three weeks later, was pleasant but offered no direct response to her requests.[192] And Wilson continued to ignore news from and advice about Russia.[193] In late September, Thompson asked for $1 million within ten days, plus $3 million more each month beginning in October. In early October other mission members including Robins, Thomas D. Thacher, Thayer, and Allen W. Wardwell cabled relatives, friends, and acquaintances in the United States asking them to back Thompson's work.[194] General William V. Judson, the US military attaché in Petrograd, did too, in a cable addressed to Davison.[195]

There was no immediate action in response to these requests for funds. Despite official Washington's slowness to answer, Thompson did not give up on Wilson, and kept the president and Davison informed of developments. He and the other Red Cross men believed

[189]Billings to Davison, 22 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [3].
[190]Frank Billings, "For the Relief of Russia," *Red Cross Magazine* 13, no. 1 (Jan 1918): 71–74.
[191]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," Thacher papers, box 3, reports
[192]Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 216.
[193]Williams, *American–Russian Relations*, 101.
[194]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," Thacher papers, box 3, reports.
[195]Judson to Davison, 6 Oct 1917, in William V. Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution: General William V. Judson's Accounts from Petrograd, 1917–1918*, ed. Neil V. Salzman (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1998), 93–94.

firmly that anything they could do to keep Russia from signing a separate peace with the Central powers would, as Robins put it "save thousands of American lives and hundreds of millions of American money, by lessening the possible duration of the war."[196]

Woodrow Wilson did not embrace Robins's reasoning. The president did not entertain any advice along such lines until the latter part of October. It was then that Hutchins, after successfully impressing upon Creel the importance of the publicity work, finally secured a meeting with Wilson. In the meantime, Thompson had become anxious, cabling Hutchins that the delay was "very embarrassing and holding up the work." Billings was granted time with the president a few days later; Wilson declared that he appreciated and "most heartily approve[d]" everything Thompson was doing in Russia. In fact, he had already decided to send Edgar Sisson to Russia as a special envoy. He would bring credit for $250,000 for the publicity program, and Wilson told Billings that more money would follow.[197] Thompson was thrilled with the news. He believed the efforts to receive substantial financial backing from Washington had finally borne fruit. At the end of October, Thompson informed his wife that "it looks as though I might have to stay here for many months yet." His work was "daily becoming more important," he wrote. "It looks [as] though I am going to be backed up splendidly in the United States and that we are going to be a real factor here."[198] He could not have known that this would not come to pass.

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During the war years, the successful conclusion of the conflict in the Allies' favour was

[196][Robins,] "Some Observations of the Present Conditions in Russia," [10 Sep 1917], in Hardy papers, box 2, folder 6.

[197]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," Thacher papers, box 3, reports; Billings to Thayer, 31 Oct 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, GC; Billings to Thacher, 5 Nov 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, GC. Sisson met Wilson on 23 October: Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 8–9.

[198]Thompson to wife, 30 Oct 1917, in Hagedorn papers, box 19, WBT—C—Bill to wife.

foremost in the minds of Americans working in Russia. Of secondary but longer-term importance was the future of American–Russian relations, including excitement over the possibilities for closer accord because of Russia's new democratic credentials. As far as Americans in 1917 were concerned, their country had a special relationship with Russia. At the very least, Russians could look to America as an example of a successful modern democracy born of revolution. The men of the Red Cross and YMCA, and American officials who supported their work, were caught up in the possibilities.

Americans connected with the Red Cross and YMCA did not fully grasp the disastrous state of the Russian food supply system, the challenges facing the severely overburdened transportation infrastructure, or the deep demoralization so pervasive in the armed forces and in civilian society. They believed strongly that Kerensky would prevail, or, failing that, that a strong leader would step in to salvage the situation. The Russian excitement about the overthrow of the brutal monarchy did not match in virulence American enthusiasm about the potential coming of democracy and freedom to Russia. There were too many other problems for Russians to worry about, and the reality was that while Kerensky tried to keep the Allies happy, he alienated his own people who wanted peace above all.

Both American Red Cross and YMCA work was intended to keep the war effort alive. From efforts to raise morale among soldiers and civilians, to concrete assistance, and providing free technical advice from American experts, the two organizations were focused on winning the war. This made sense given their wartime roles in the United States, where they were connected to the Wilson administration and the armed forces. That bolstering Russian military effectiveness was hardly what Russians needed most was lost on Americans. They were convinced, after all, that defeating Germany was vital to the peace of

the world and the democratic development of Russia. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, moreover, for any American to grasp the extent of Russian war weariness. Instead, Thompson and others genuinely believed that American propaganda, the resultant improved morale, and greater military discipline, combined with generous humanitarian aid to alleviate specific problems, would make a positive difference to the worsening social crisis engulfing revolutionary Russia. But Russia was neither like wartime Belgium being starved by a German blockade or a mythical America during the revolutionary war. Its problems were exponentially greater and its people unprepared for a long political struggle. There was only so much clean huts, basketball games, ambulances, planted newspaper articles, and the bestowal of American know-how could do. This remained to be seen. American optimism continued, as did efforts to bolster Russian military resolve. As the next chapter makes clear, even the fall of the Provisional Government and its replacement by a soviet government dominated by Bolsheviks did not dampen American enthusiasm or end attempts to ameliorate the Russian (and Allied) situation.

CHAPTER 2

"Cooperating with the Commissars"[1]
Soviet Russia, November 1917–Spring 1918

> Remember that every day we keep these [Russian] soldiers on the front or less dissatisfied with their lot means many thousand American lives saved.[2]

> The little Red Cross group from the United States saw the soviet as an unpleasant but a necessary evil, and began to co-operate with it. The Red Cross weathered attack after attack. Diplomats and militarists alike condemned the overtures to the soviet government.
>
> . . . To-day it is the only allied institution in Russia that the soviet really trusts.[3]

For most of 1917, America and Russia were allies. In the months after the November (Bolshevik) revolution, American policy toward Russia's new rulers was unclear. Officials on the ground had no choice but to feel their way around as best they could with few instructions from Washington. The Wilson administration followed a "watch-and-wait" policy.[4] The confusion extended to the two organizations under consideration. Both worked hard after the Bolshevik revolution to cooperate with the new regime. Unlike Ambassador Francis, but in concert with lower ranking American representatives, relief workers found it impossible to ignore Bolshevik officials. The change in government did not end diplomacy, or the efforts of a variety of individuals to improve economic and political relations between the two countries. Nor did it impede attempts to ensure continued Russian participation in the First World War, or the need to respond to minor crises that arose from the vicissitudes of war and revolution.

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[1]Jerome Davis, "Cooperating with the Commissars: Can We Help the Russian People under the Bolsheviki?" *Survey* 41, no. 19 (8 Feb 1919): 655–57.

[2]Wheeler to Lowrie, 19 Nov 1917, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

[3]Louis Edgar Browne, "American Red Cross Wins Russia's Trust," *Chicago Daily News* (13 Apr 1918?), reprinted in *New Russia in the Balance* (Chicago Daily News, n.d., ca. 1918), 17.

[4]See Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*.

William Boyce Thompson and Raymond Robins were determined to keep Russia in the war; the change in regime only strengthened their resolve. They and other Red Cross men were among the American voices clamouring for the United States to come to terms with the Bolshevik government. Robins features prominently in this chapter because of his dual role as acting chief of the Red Cross mission and Francis's unofficial go-between with the Bolsheviks. In addition to Robins's own activities, the Red Cross commission was involved in a milk distribution program for infants and children in Petrograd during the most difficult months for the city's inhabitants. Both genuine humanitarian impulses and strategic aims help explain the program's genesis, as was true of its other ventures.

YMCA secretaries were initially cool to the Bolsheviks, but most of them quickly established a *modus vivendi* with local military and civilian authorities in the places where they were stationed. The first few months after 7 November were turbulent ones for association representatives in Russia. The disintegration of the army begged questions about what the YMCA was doing in the country, and contradictory signals from Bolshevik officials made the association's place insecure. Many secretaries wished to leave Russia and take up work where they could be of direct use to the Allied military effort. A conference in Moscow in December brought many issues to light, but it was not until a larger gathering in Samara in March, after the signing and ratification of the Brest-Litovsk peace between Russia and the Central powers, that the YMCA settled on a program of action in Russia.

This chapter shows how members of the American Red Cross and YMCA in Bolshevik Russia dealt with Lenin's government during its first six months in power. It emphasizes their willingness to continue their work and begin new projects in full accord with Soviet authorities. From the Red Cross milk distribution program in Petrograd to the

YMCA's multifaceted work in many parts of the country, relief workers kept their focus on the wider war effort and future peacetime programs in Russia. That the current government was not to their liking proved much less important to them than achieving other goals: a successful conclusion to the war against Germany, improving American–Russian relations, and spreading American practices, ideas, and values throughout post-tsarist Russia.

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Through the summer and fall of 1917, the Far Left revolutionary Bolshevik party led by Vladimir Il'ich Lenin won increasing support among the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and other Russian cities. Its call for "all power to the soviets"—that state authority reside with the nation-wide network of soviets instead of with the traditional organs of government—was an attractive one. So too was the popular Bolshevik slogan, "peace, bread, and land." The party's other policies appealed to a range of constituents and grew its base of support. As winter approached, conditions in Petrograd worsened. The spectre of starvation hung over the city. Workers and soldiers turned toward the Bolsheviks and other radical groups when the government failed to offer solutions to this and other significant problems. Breshkovskaia's party, the once dominant SRs, lost support, and soon trailed the Bolsheviks in the capital city and other urban areas. The broadening appeal of Lenin's party was reflected in the distribution of power in the Petrograd soviet. On 8 October the party won a majority in the presidium, and Lenin's Bolshevik comrade Leon Trotsky became its chairman. At around the same time the Bolsheviks also took control of the Moscow Soviet and other victories followed.[5] The Provisional Government's days were numbered.

A month later, the situation in Petrograd came to a head. A government attack on the

[5]Wade, *Russian Revolution*, ch. 8.

Bolshevik press gave rise to fears that a widespread crackdown was coming. Worried about "counterrevolutionary" forces, some Bolshevik leaders and other radical leftists decided it was time to transfer power to the Second Congress of Soviets, which would soon be in session in Petrograd. So-called "Red Guards" and soldiers opposed to the government had thought ahead and were already in control of key buildings. They had the Winter Palace, the seat of the Provisional Government, under siege. Lenin and his followers took advantage of this fortuitous situation, and within hours a new government was in place, made up entirely of Bolsheviks and ruling in the name of the Petrograd Soviet. The next day, 8 November, Lenin introduced decrees on peace, the abolishment of land ownership, and the formation of a new government called the Council of People's Commissars. He himself was made president.[6] Kerensky had received word of an attack and managed to escape. Some of his ministers were not quick enough, and were arrested and held in the Peter and Paul Fortress, Petrograd's notorious jail for political prisoners. David Soskice, Kerensky's personal secretary and Free Russia committee member, took refuge in Thompson's room for a few days before fleeing the country.[7]

The revolution in Petrograd spurred upheavals elsewhere. Bolshevik power spread quickly through the Urals and the heavy industrialized regions to the north and east of Moscow. There was little bloodshed in those centres and in Petrograd, but other, more diverse cities saw fierce street battles. This was true in Moscow as well as in some of the larger industrialized areas nearby, and in the central Volga region. In Moscow, where the fighting resulted in a number of deaths, the Bolsheviks emerged victorious by mid-

[6]Wade, *Russian Revolution*, ch. 9.
[7]Hagedorn, notes on interview with Thacher, 13 Mar 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [1].

November.[8] Dr. Thayer, in Moscow between 2 and 18 November, cared for some of the wounded.[9] Davis, Crawford Wheeler, and another YMCA secretary in Moscow served as *sanitar*s (i. e., hospital attendants) in Russian hospitals.[10] One of the Russian Mayak secretaries was shot on the first day of fighting, while an American secretary was nearly killed when a shell struck the house he was living in. One week later the building was "almost a wreck" after being hit by more shells, bullets, and withstanding several fires.[11] Elsewhere in Russia, Bolshevik power spread more slowly. Still, as Thayer travelled across Siberia in the latter part of November, he found that the mood was significantly changed. The men who had cheered the Red Cross mission months earlier now shook their fists at Americans, "their allies and friends, and curse us as we go out."[12]

It took another month or two beyond the Moscow victory for Bolshevik-held local soviets to successfully proclaim themselves in charge of the provinces south of Moscow, eastern Ukraine, and part of the front. By early 1918 the Bolsheviks could claim at least nominal authority over the vast majority of the former Russian empire. In Petrograd, meanwhile, the new government had followed up Lenin's first moves by introducing a "dizzying array of economic and social decrees and proclamations during its first few weeks." Taken as a whole they aimed to fundamentally restructure Russian society along socialist lines. The Bolsheviks did not intend to let anything get in the way of them carrying out their plans. When representatives of the Constituent Assembly, elected before the

[8]Wade, *Russian Revolution*, 251–57.

[9]On Thayer's time in Moscow see his "A Week in Moscow during the Revolution," in ARCMR papers, box 1, "A Week in Moscow...." See also Reid, *Life and Convictions*, ch. 7.

[10]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 8; Jerome Davis, *A Life Adventure for Peace: An Autobiography* (New York: Citadel, 1967), 45.

[11]Benjamin W. Van Riper, "City Life under the Bolsheviks," *Atlantic* 123, no. 2 (Feb 1919): 177, 183.

[12]Thayer, typescript, 131.

November revolution, gathered for their first session in mid-January, the government ordered Red Guards to disperse them after only one day.[13] Several of the assembly's erstwhile members later formed the nuclei of anti-Bolshevik groupings throughout the country.

Back in November, when the strength of the new regime was as yet untested, the Allied diplomatic community had been loath to accept Bolshevik rule. Many foreigners exhibited a deep lack of appreciation for the Bolsheviks' appeal. Ambassador Francis, who had been so quick to welcome the Provisional Government, was not eager to accept the changeover. He told the just-arrived Edgar Sisson two weeks later that he "never would talk to a damned Bolshevik."[14] In Washington, the official attitude was similar. The US government continued to treat Boris Bakhmeteff, the Russian ambassador appointed by the Provisional Government but shunned by the Bolsheviks, as an official envoy.[15] Most American representatives in Russia, involved in projects and having duties that required dealing with government authorities—whatever their political allegiances—did not have the luxury of simply ignoring the Soviet leadership. Members of the Red Cross mission exemplified this attitude.

The Bolshevik revolution was a worrisome turn of events for the Red Cross mission. Because of its close relationship with the Kerensky government and Thompson's propaganda efforts against radical elements and the Bolsheviks in particular, mission members were concerned about their own safety. As a precautionary measure, they took turns staying up nights to keep

[13]Wade, *Russian Revolution*, 260–70 (quotes from 270), 278–86. For much more on the Constituent Assembly, see Oliver H. Radkey, *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).

[14]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 29.

[15]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 434.

watch during the turmoil.[16] On the insistence of the head of the American military mission, General Judson, some of the Americans spent two nights in his apartment.[17] The Red Cross men had "a case of nerves" and were "impatient to get out of the sound of guns," according to the Committee on Public Information's Arthur Bullard.[18] Nervous or not, Thompson grasped the significance of the power change. He abandoned his support of the deposed Kerensky shortly after the Bolshevik coup. Robins believed it was best to reach out to Lenin's government as quickly as possible. Thompson agreed that this was wise for safety reasons and to ensure the continued distribution of relief supplies. And there remained, of course, the matter of the war. Robins and Thompson still hoped to use their positions to put pressure on Russia's leaders to reject a separate peace.[19] Putting ideology aside for the moment was necessary. The Americans knew there were still Allied interests at stake in Russian developments.

With these aims in mind, Thompson sent Robins to see the new foreign minister, Trotsky, on 10 November. Trotsky had his office in the Smolny Institute, Bolshevik headquarters and the new seat of government. He was a latecomer to the Bolshevik party, having only joined in the summer, but he had quickly become one of its key figures. One of the leaders of the November insurrection, Trotsky was an eloquent, persuasive speaker, and now ruled by Lenin's side. Robins's new interpreter, Alexander Gumberg, arranged their meeting. Gumberg was a Russian–American expatriate from New York who returned to Russia with the Root mission. His familiarity with Trotsky, and the respect he was afforded

[16]Until 17 Nov. See 1917 diary, in Hardy papers, box 1, folder 12.

[17]Judson to wife, 15 Nov 1917, in Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution*, 128. This was at Judson's insistence. Thompson apparently took his temporary stay as a joke, and returned to his quarters in the Hotel de l'Europe. Thacher to Hagedorn, 1 Jun 1932, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [1].

[18]Bullard to Creel, 17 Nov 1917, quoted in Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 277.

[19]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 210; McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 88.

because he had a brother in the Bolshevik guard, made him extremely useful to Americans. Robins was Gumberg's primary employer, but he also worked for Sisson and American journalists from time to time.[20] Robins was more than willing to sit down with the Bolsheviks, unlike the ambassador. "I would have dealt with the devil in an hour like that if we could save the situation for the allied cause and keep raw materials out of Germany," he later commented. He was honest with Trotsky during their meeting. Robins confessed that although he personally preferred Kerensky, he recognized the new regime for what it was and would deal with the government in power. Robins explained to Trotsky that he had two goals for the near future: for the Red Cross to remain in Russia, and for Russia to stay in the war. Trotsky responded that he was willing to have Red Cross work continue. Although not all that Robins had hoped for, the meeting augured well for more positive encounters in the future.[21]

Even with the mission's place in Russia assured, Robins still believed Thompson should leave the country. Thompson agreed, judging his usefulness to be at an end.[22] His Wall Street background, reported on in the Bolshevik press, likely meant he would get nowhere with the new regime.[23] By mid-month it was decided that Thompson would soon leave along with most of the remaining Red Cross men.[24] (Robins may also have been

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[20]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 88–89. Trotsky's life, role in 1917, and subsequent participation in ruling Russia have been the subjects of numerous studies, in addition to several volumes of autobiography. The most recently scholarly study is by Robert Service: *Trotsky: A Biography*, first published in 2009 by Macmillan. For more on Gumberg, see Libbey, *Alexander Gumberg*.

[21]Robins, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 783–84.

[22]Robins claimed he insisted Thompson leave (Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 250; US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 1024); Sisson claimed Thompson left because he believed his usefulness in Petrograd was at an end (*One Hundred Red Days*, 36).

[23]Robins, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 801. Information about the Red Cross mission's involvement in funding a pro-war propaganda campaign appeared in the Russian press only later, in early December. Translations of newspaper articles appear in Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 44–48.

[24]1917 diary, in Hardy papers, box 1, folder 12.

concerned about his own position vis-à-vis the new regime. On 22 November he told a colleague he expected to leave the country himself about 1 January.[25])

Thompson's departure did not mark the end of his efforts to keep Russia in the war and out of German hands. He was convinced that "there was still work of great importance to be done in Russia for the United States and the Allied nations." The Bolsheviks still might recommit to the war; the Russian situation could still be salvaged. For his ideas to receive a proper hearing and to ensure his plans were carried out, Thompson considered it vital that he speak with "important persons in America" and in the other Allied powers.[26] In the meantime, Wilson's envoy Sisson reached Petrograd in the early morning hours of 25 November. He spent that evening with the Red Cross chief, who was sorely disappointed that Sisson had been authorized to spend only one quarter of a million dollars. Thompson was determined to raise more funds so the propaganda efforts could be continued.[27] Sisson agreed that Thompson should make a personal appeal to western leaders. Doing so would "perhaps aid in preventing the exploitation of that great country [Russia] by Germany."[28] Thompson considered the Russian situation too pressing to leave in other men's hands.[29] He knew that two of Wilson's closest confidants, Colonel House and Vance McCormick, were in London, and he planned on meeting with them there.[30] Thompson left Petrograd on 28 November. Just

[25]Diary, entry for 22 Nov 1917, in Pirnie papers, box 1.

[26]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," n.d., in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports. For more on Sisson and the other Committee on Public Information (CPI) officials and their work in Russia, see James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917–1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1939), ch. 14; and Fike, "Russian–American Relations."

[27]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 35–37; William Wallace to Hagedorn, 21 Aug 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 18, WBT—C—T–Z.

[28]"An Effort to Prevent German Domination in Russia," n.d., in Thacher papers, box 3, Reports.

[29]Hagedorn, notes on interview with Lewis Perry, 1 Apr 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [1].

[30]Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 250.

before he did, the former head of the Russian general staff conferred the Order of St. Nicholas on him. It had been authorized by the Kerensky government shortly before the Bolshevik takeover.[31]

Before departing Russia, Thompson also cabled his old friend Thomas Lamont to ask him to meet him in London. Lamont, well-connected because of his wartime finance activities, agreed to help Thompson lobby the British government. Once in London, the two men met with ambassadors, politicians, and senior bureaucrats. Unfortunately, House and McCormick were no longer in the city, though they had received an urgent cable requesting that they remain long enough to see Thompson. It was an inauspicious beginning, but shortly there was reason for cautious optimism. On 14 December, Lamont and Thompson had breakfast with British Prime Minister David Lloyd George. Thompson told him that the Bolsheviks were "nobodies" who were "fumbling around and need[ed] guidance." "Let us make them our Bolsheviks!" he urged, to prevent Germany from using Russia against the Allies. The prime minister responded with enthusiasm, and proposed sending a joint Anglo-American mission to Petrograd. He told Lamont and Thompson to see President Wilson and House as quickly as possible. Lloyd George promised to appoint a British representative empowered to communicate with the Soviet government. A week later, R. H. Bruce Lockhart, a former vice-consul in Moscow who had been urging his government to open channels of communication with the Bolsheviks for some time, was given the job.[32]

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[31]Thompson, Nov 1923, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [1]. At around the same time, Thayer received the Russian Red Cross's Badge of Distinction. See Reid, *Life and Convictions*, 163–64.

[32]Thomas W. Lamont, *Across World Frontiers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), 85–89; Hagedorn, *Magnate*, 252–58; Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, 196–201. See also Edward M. Lamont, *The Ambassador from Wall Street: The Story of Thomas W. Lamont, J.P. Morgan's Chief Executive: A Biography* (Boston: Madison, 1994), 97–98. The British Foreign Office had already been considering ways to avoid driving the Bolsheviks into enemy hands: McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 93–94.

Lamont and Thompson arrived in Washington in late December.[33] Early meetings with politicians and other individuals of influence were encouraging; on 10 January Thompson cabled Robins that "all [were] very sympathetic with Russia" and that he expected "best cooperation [in] RedCross relief" plans.[34] In fact, although Wilson's 8 January speech to Congress—the Fourteen Points speech—seemed to indicate that he supported "the independent determination of [Russia's] own political development and national policy" and "a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing," American actions hinted that this was not the case.[35] The United States joined the British economic blockade of Russia at about that time, and the American Red Cross ordered a hold on all pending Russian orders. Shipments to Russia were stopped.[36] And, although the two Wall Street men were given a warm welcome by many, there remained a significant problem: Wilson would not see either of them. The State Department's Basil Miles was opposed to any dealings with the Bolsheviks, and Wilson, following his lead, begged off meeting Thompson. The financier was informed the president had a "cold."[37] Wilson wanted nothing to do with Thompson's propaganda work, and had even wondered about the copper magnate's sanity when the request for several million dollars had come in a few months earlier.[38] He excused his disinterest to Lamont by arguing that "the changes taking place in Russia are so

[33]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 100.

[34]Thompson to Robins, 10 Jan 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, Telegrams (Nov 1917–Jun 1918). Several US senators were supportive, to the point of including one of Thompson's recent speeches in the *Record*. The senatorial exchange and speech (31 Jan 1918) were reproduced in pamphlet form: Calder, *Russia's Democracy*.

[35]The speech, delivered 8 Jan 1918, is reproduced in United States, Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918: Supplement 1, The World War*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933), 12–17 (quote taken from p. 15). Volumes in the Foreign Relations series will hereafter appear in notes as *FRUS*.

[36]Williams, *American–Russian Relations*, 127.

[37]Williams, *American–Russian Relations*, 128.

[38]Wilson apparently asked Davison if Thompson had gone crazy. William Wallace to Hagedorn, 21 Aug 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [4].

kaleidoscopic that I feel that information and advice are futile until there is something definite to plan with as well as for." In other words, Wilson was waiting for the Bolshevik government to collapse.[39]

The Department of State remained intransigent. Thompson and Bakhmeteff met with Lansing's top assistant, Frank Polk, on 30 January, but to no avail.[40] Lamont believed the president "had imbibed Lansing's prejudice" toward Thompson, in the words of mission secretary Harry Brown. The secretary of state apparently thought Thompson had bad judgment because he "talked of such an enormous sum as three million dollars a month for propaganda!"[41] Lansing was also annoyed with Thompson because of Robins's visits to the Smolny Institute, for which he blamed Thompson.[42] "To this has been added the prejudice of Francis with his petty jealousy," Brown surmised. According to him, Charles Crane, Wilson's closest advisor on Russian matters, may also have been a stumbling block.[43] It should not have surprised Thompson that he encountered resistance from the Wilson administration. After his October meeting with Lansing, Dr. Billings had concluded that "the diagnosis which has been made of members of the State Department, that their circulating fluid is ice water[,] is borne out by [Lansing's] attitude" toward the publicity work.[44] Lansing did not think pouring money into Russia would pay off for the United States or the Allies.

Thompson was getting nowhere with Wilson. So he took his campaign public. He gave speeches, talked to reporters, and wrote a series of articles about Russia that was

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[39]Quoted in Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*, 111.
[40]"Thompson Denies Gift to Bolsheviki," *New York Times* (31 Jan 1918): 2.
[41]H. S. Brown to Thompson, 19 Feb 1918, in Hagedorn papers, box 23, Unidentified.
[42]Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 214.
[43]Brown to Thompson, 19 Feb 1918, in Hagedorn papers, box 23, Unidentified.
[44]Billings to Thayer, 31 Oct 1917, in Thacher papers, box 2, GC.

published in the New York *Evening Post* in February.[45] (Lamont had family connections to the *Post*, and later purchased it.[46]) In his *Post* pieces, Thompson urged his fellow Americans to lend their support to Russia despite their distaste for Bolshevism. Lamont also continued his lobbying efforts on behalf of Thompson's plan for several weeks. In mid-February he met with George Creel, who declared his commitment to bringing Wilson and Thompson together.[47] At about the same time, Dr. Winslow, the public health expert formerly with the mission, publicly praised the ongoing civilian relief work being done by Robins and the other mission members still in Russia. It was, he said, "cementing the bonds of friendship between our Republic and the next Democracy to the west of us."[48]

Wilson was unmoved by such statements. He never did meet with Thompson, who apparently "received the good-natured title of 'the Bolshevik of Wall Street'" upon his return to New York.[49] Anything to do with the Bolsheviks was a hard sell, after all. Despite their patriotic and business credentials, Lamont and Thompson had to battle a fairly firmly held view among American businessmen—not to mention large swathes of the US public—that the Bolsheviks were the ruin of international capitalism. Ultimately, their efforts came to naught, and instead of coming to terms with the Bolsheviks, Allied leaders and many American officials began urging a military intervention in Russia. Not only did this come to pass, but within a short few months the United States was caught up in a terrible Red Scare. In May of 1919, Lamont, who was clearly still interested in the Russian situation more than a

[45]Some newspaper articles about Thompson and one of his New York speeches were reprinted in a pamphlet entitled "Russia as a Democracy: Why and How We Should Help. Views of Colonel William Boyce Thompson, An American Business Man Who Spent Four Months in Russia." A copy is in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [2]. Thompson's *New York Evening Post* articles appeared between 16–21 February 1918.

[46]"T. W. Lamont Buys the Evening Post," *New York Times* (2 Aug 1918).

[47]Brown to Thompson, 19 Feb 1918, in Hagedorn papers, box 23, Unidentified.

[48]Winslow, "Notes on Sanitation in Russia and Japan," 7.

[49]"Bolsheviki Will Not Make Separate Peace," *New York Times* (27 Jan 1918).

year later, judged that "there is no use in attempting now to adopt any fresh policy towards Russia. Whatever might have been done a year or eighteen months ago, it is impossible to do now. Cruel as it may sound, perhaps it will be best to let Russia soak in her own juice for sometime to come."[50]

In spite of Thompson's failed campaign, Judson, for one, believed the Red Cross commissioner had performed a significant service for his country and the Allies. The former military attaché, along with his British and French counterparts, had supported the publicity program, and believed it had "set back the advent of Bolshevism from one month to six weeks" at a critical time in Kerensky's tenure. "It was almost incomprehensible, except to those who knew about Thompson's $1,000,000," wrote Judson, "why the Bolsheviks did not come in about October 1, instead of, as actually happened, about November 7, 1917." The Breshkovskaia committee's work, he argued, "if it set back everything that followed, including the Brest-Litovsk treaty, for a similar period of time, as it seems fair to assume, was of incalculable value."[51] In June 1918, Judson recommended to the secretary of war that Robins—of whom much more later in this chapter—and Thompson be awarded distinguished service medals for being "essential elements in the winning of the war."[52] Historians of Russia know that the Bolsheviks were not ready to make a move before early November, and only did so when they did because of a series of fortuitous events. But in 1918, Judson was convinced of the efficacy of the propaganda program, a sureness that stands out all the more given Wilson's and Lansing's attitudes.

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[50]Lamont to Thompson and Wardwell, 8 May 1919, in Thacher Papers, box 1, Wardwell.

[51]Judson to Davison, 6 Oct 1917, and Judson, monthly resume, 10 Oct 1917, both in Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution*, 93–94, 100; Judson to Thacher, 19 Mar 1920, in Thacher papers, box 5, C—1920–21 (incoming).

[52]Judson to Secretary of War, 18 June 1918, in Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution*, 270.

Thompson's departure from Petrograd did not signal the end of the mission's work, political or otherwise. Once Thompson was gone from Russia, Robins took over as head of the mission. A handful of other Red Cross officers remained behind with him. James W. Andrews, an auditor with Liggett & Myers Tobacco, was the mission's treasurer. The new secretary—to replace Harry Brown, who left with Thompson—was a lawyer by the name of Thomas Day Thacher, a partner in his father's New York City firm, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett. The deputy commissioner was Allen Wardwell, another lawyer who would lend his name after the war to his firm, Davis Polk & Wardwell. In Russia, he earned the nickname "the Grand Duke" for his physique (tall), countenance (graceful, pleasant), and manner ("lording"). Finally, the commission included D. Heywood Hardy, a young law school graduate and former Department of Justice secretary; and William B. Webster, who had joined the mission staff from the embassy's POW division in central Siberia.[53] Robins was at the helm until spring.

Robins, following Thompson, had a broad interpretation of what Red Cross work entailed. He believed it was his duty to do what he could to limit German influence in Russia and show continued support for the country during this difficult time. The Russian armed forces had long since been disintegrating. Soldiers, disillusioned by the war and conditions at the front, and their hopes for a better future raised by revolutionary slogans, were abandoning their units. Even so, Robins campaigned for Russia's continued participation in World War I

[53]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 88; Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 216; Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 37; Reid, *Life and Convictions*, 86; diary, entry for 20 Nov 1917, in Hardy papers, box 1, folder 12. This list does not include men such as Herbert A. Magnuson, who joined the mission on 20 November, and George A. Pollatts, both of whom were important members of the mission though they were not commissioners. Thayer, in charge of medical work, was ordered home about this time because his work "had become so restricted." Thayer to Sally, 3 Dec 1917, in Thayer papers, box 1, folder 36.

and the establishment of at least cordial relations between the United States and Soviet Russia. Robins's attitude and the desire of the new Bolshevik leaders for good relations with the Allied states made it relatively easy for him to establish friendly ties with Russia's new rulers, whose policies he opposed. The Bolsheviks, for their part, hoped for diplomatic relations with the Allies.[54] As soon as the Soviet leadership decided to end the war, the government needed their support to balance German pressure to sign a punitive peace accord.[55] "It was a bizarre situation," historian Robert Service has judged. If an armistice should fail, "the Bolsheviks wanted to be able to turn to Britain, France and America for military assistance."[56] Beyond this, the Bolsheviks believed the United States was more sympathetic to their regime than were the other powers.[57]

Francis remained opposed to an accord with the Bolsheviks in November and through most of December. His views put him increasingly at odds with his own embassy staffers and other Americans in Russia. As Thompson and Robins did, Judson accepted the reality of Bolshevik rule, and sent two of his men to see Trotsky on 12 November.[58] Contact with the Bolsheviks was required to protect Allied interests. Of central importance was whether Russia would come to terms with Germany, and what this would mean for the Entente's war effort. As they promised they would, Russia's new rulers initiated armistice talks with the Germans two weeks after taking power. Judson, judging the situation needed his personal intervention, went to see Trotsky in early December with the ambassador's approval. He tried to convince the foreign minister to delay peace negotiations with the German high

[54]Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed, Trotsky: 1879–1921* (New York: Vintage, 1965), 348.
[55]Richard K. Debo, *Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917–18* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 34.
[56]Robert Service, *Trotsky: A Biography* (London: Pan, 2010), 196.
[57]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 25–26.
[58]Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution*, 120.

command. Embassy counsellor J. Butler Wright also saw Trotsky with Francis's knowledge.[59] By the start of the month most embassy officials as well as Sisson, Consul General Maddin Summers in Moscow, Bullard, and Robins were all in favour of routine contact with Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders. They believed it was crucial to their work and that it could occur without signalling official American recognition of the new regime. Only Francis remained unconvinced.

But the ambassador quickly realized the difficulty of avoiding the issue. Francis, known to many in Russia as the "Stuffed Shirt,"[60] could not ignore the Bolsheviks. At the same time, he began to see the potential diplomatic usefulness of Robins's visits to Smolny. On 12 December he cabled the State Department to ask if an earlier prohibition against American officials meeting with Soviet representatives included Red Cross men. Three days later an armistice was signed between Soviet officials and the German high command. The following day, with no word from Lansing, Francis went ahead and approved a Robins–Trotsky meeting about the ceasefire. For the Allies, the truce was a horrifying prospect. If the German military shifted its forces from the eastern front to the western front it could spell disaster for the Allies. The cessation of hostilities did not necessarily mean there was no more point in currying favour with the Russians. The country could still be of use to the Allied military cause. Allied officials wanted to keep German hands off the Allied military supplies in Russian ports, away from Russian raw materials, and unable to make military use

[59]William Allison, *American Diplomats in Russia: Case Studies in Orphan Diplomacy, 1916–1919* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 29; Judson, *Russia in War and Revolution*, 156.

[60]Robins to Hagedorn, 24 Nov 1931, in Hagedorn papers, box 18, WBT—C—Robins; Thayer, typescript, 77. See also Hagedorn, notes on interview with Wightman, 8 May 1931 (where Francis is also described as a "dumb head"). See also Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, 305, which includes an anecdote about one Bolshevik commissar (Radek) wiring another (Chicherin) that "Ambassador Francis is a stuffed shirt-front." Lockhart's comment: "It was only too true." American journalist John Reed referred to Francis as "the Stuffed Shirt" in a letter to Robins, 11 Jan 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 3.

of the thousands of German prisoners of war behind Russian lines. Finally, on 20 December, Lansing cabled an answer. Yes, he wrote, Red Cross men were included in the restriction. The message was too late to change the direction of American actions in Petrograd. The situation on the ground did not allow for strict adherence to orders from afar.[61]

Robins continued his activities, and by late December was meeting almost daily with Trotsky. These meetings were held at the behest and with the full support of Ambassador Francis, to whom Robins always reported. Even after 30 December, when Lansing agreed that Robins could discuss Red Cross matters with Bolshevik officials—but not embassy or government business—Francis continued to rely on Robins.[62] At this point, he had discovered that being in communication with the government of the day was imperative. That Francis was able to entrust relations with the Bolsheviks to Robins was not something he would have done without difficulty and personal pride-swallowing. In early December, there was a rumour going around Petrograd that Robins would replace Francis as ambassador. According to one member of the American colony, whose views were certainly shared by others, Francis's "claim to fame" was that he was

> one of the most successful grocery merchants in St. Louis, and that he managed the St. Louis World's Fair! Current opinion has it that his ambassadorial qualifications are nil. On the other hand Raymond Robins is an American Bolshevik. [But] . . . he is at the same time blessed with reason and much common sense, so that his approaches would not be so powerful as to lead him to indiscretion.[63] His appointment would demonstrate to the Russian proletariat that America is in sympathy with its cause but not with its extremes and impracticalities. A self made man with vision, and a fighter, Raymond

[61]"Robins is to understand explicitly that he is acting for and representing the Red Cross and not the Embassy, the Red Cross being the organization which is not maintained by the United States Government but by private subscription." Lansing to AmEmb, received 1 Jan 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, Red Cross Mission—Telegrams (Nov 1917–Jun 1918). See also Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 283–84. On the armistice talks, see Debo, *Revolution and Survival*, 21–32.

[62]Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*, 287–89. The Francis–Robins relationship has received good treatment in many studies, beginning with Kennan's *Soviet–American Relations*, vol. 1.

[63]This is perhaps an indirect reference to Francis's ill-advised consorting with an alleged female German spy.

> Robins is a man I would gladly trust with the fair name of the United States of America in Russia.[64]

One senior Bolshevik apparently referred to the Red Cross mission as "the Unofficial American Embassy."[65] If all this talk disturbed Francis, he kept his feelings under wraps for the moment.

By the start of the New Year, Francis and Trotsky had both come to rely on Robins as a crucial go-between. His position was "most extraordinary,"[66] he told his wife, and he was able to visit Bolshevik headquarters whenever he wished, a privilege rarely granted outsiders. The friendly relationship Robins enjoyed with Trotsky was unique among American representatives, official or semi-official. Through May, Francis used him to find solutions to a variety of minor problems that affected the embassy and consulates.[67] Robins's relationship with Trotsky grew to be one of mutual trust and admiration. The two men, despite their political differences, had much in common. Both were powerful, fiery orators committed to the betterment of the human condition. Though Trotsky had dismissed the Red Cross in early 1917 as a "government militarist organization"[68]—a judgment that was essentially correct if one-sided—he had clearly come to see its value. "On numerous occasions since the establishment of the Soviet Government," wrote Thacher once he was back in the United States, "the American Red Cross was asked to actively co-operate in various departments of the Government." It was even suggested that the organization "take charge of the entire food administration in Petrograd; that it take charge of shipments of food from Siberia and that it handle the purchase of supplies for the Soviet Government in China, and handle the

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[64]Diary, entry for 6 Dec 1917, in LOC, Leighton W. Rogers papers, box 1, folder 6.

[65]This was Feliks Dzershinskii, the head of the Bolshevik secret police. Andrew Kalpaschnikoff, *A Prisoner of Trotsky's* (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1920), 19.

[66]Robins to wife, 21 Jan 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 3.

[67]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 97; Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 228.

[68]Service, *Trotsky*, 155.

shipments of these supplies through Siberia."[69]

The Bolshevik assumption of power in Petrograd did not negatively impact the work of the Red Cross, nor did it that of the YMCA. The Bolshevik takeover happened as the YMCA was in the process of expanding its work in Russia, and there was no service interruption in most places. The revolutionary upheavals in Petrograd and elsewhere did not put a halt to association work, but they did adversely affect working conditions and secretary morale. There were several dozen secretaries in Russia at the time of the Bolshevik uprising, including a substantial number who arrived in October and early November. There were, in fact, more association secretaries in the country than American embassy staffers, consular officials, military men, and Red Cross representatives combined. No matter each man's particular politics, the secretaries followed instructions to continue with their work after the change in government. YMCA secretaries decided to keep doing their part for the Russian war effort. They hoped "some good might be done" and that Russia would rejoin the Allied side in full fighting force.[70] "Remember," Moscow's Crawford Wheeler argued, "that every day we keep these [Russian] soldiers on the front or less dissatisfied with their lot means many thousand American lives saved."[71] His optimism aside, for many American secretaries the Bolsheviks' success and the crumbling of the Russian armed forces meant confusion and plummeting morale.

There was no immediate change in the Russian government's attitude toward the

[69]Thomas D. Thacher, *Russia and the War* (New York, 4 Jun 1918), 10–11. A copy of this pamphlet may be found in Hardy papers, box 2, folder 5.

[70]Wheeler to Hibbard, 6 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

[71]Wheeler to Lowrie, 19 Nov 1917, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

American organization after 7 November. Two weeks later, the new Bolshevik chief of staff in Moscow re-endorsed the charter the association had been given by the previous military governor.[72] In general, secretaries reported good relations between themselves, soldiers' committees, local political and military authorities, and Petrograd officialdom.[73] Even so, the association did not jump to support the new leaders of Russia. It was more than two months after the takeover before Jerome Davis, who headed up Russian work, sought out official approval from the Bolshevik government. This was, Davis explained, because of his own "prejudice . . . against the new Bolshevik government and because of the request of our American Ambassador."[74] Davis's coolness to coming to terms with Bolshevik authority was not something other secretaries could emulate. As one of them explained, it was difficult for secretaries "to keep astride of the fence politically . . . and still do any work, for the Bolsheviks control[led] finances and permits absolutely."[75] After Francis changed his mind, Davis met with the "people's commissar" (i. e., minister) of education, Anatolii Vasil'ievich Lunacharskii, who agreed to uphold the extensive permissions granted the association in late October by the Kerensky regime.[76] The Soviet government's desire for good relations with the United States extended to welcoming the work of the YMCA, it seems.

In the meantime, work for soldiers continued. In the fall and early winter of 1917–18, the YMCA built and oversaw service centres for garrisoned forces and soldiers just back from the front lines. The purpose of these soldiers' clubs was to offer enlisted men and

[72]Jerome Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[73]Wheeler to Hibbard, 6 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

[74]Jerome Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[75]Wheeler? to Hibbard, 6 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

[76]Jerome Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

officers a place of rest, entertainment, and learning—and one where they could access additional goods, services, and programs not otherwise provided them. As Davis noted, the importance of the YMCA for soldiers was that it kept them from trouble during their off hours. Instead of smoking, sleeping late, gambling, "or other harmful amusements," soldiers would be treated to film screenings, concerts, and lectures, and could take advantage of writing, reading, tea, music, and game rooms.[77] The club in Zalissia, Ukraine, for example, open from noon to 10:30pm, showed films three times a week, hosted occasional concerts, and had buffet meals. There was a gramophone and harmonium in use most of the time, as well as board games, a writing room with volunteers to assist the illiterate, reading rooms, a library, a barber shop, sports equipment, and athletic facilities. A school offered classes for soldiers—including English language instruction—and opened its doors to local children in the mornings. The American secretary in Zalissia, Richard O. Atkinson, was optimistic about the value of the programs and services, commenting that he and his Russian assistants "have had many things to encourage us."[78]

In addition to these soldiers' clubs, the YMCA made its presence known to Russian soldiers through lectures and pamphlets. The association sponsored lecture tours aimed at soldiers and civilians in Moscow and all along the western and northern parts of the Russian–German front.[79] The YMCA education department translated various texts, and distributed Russian-language books and pamphlets. Among the titles were *The Social Principles of Jesus*; Max Exner's *Friend or Enemy*—"a wonderful little classic on clean living . . . of

[77]Jerome Davis, "Association History in the Making in Russia," 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files─Russian Work [2].

[78]"Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[79]"Report Letter of C. H. Robertson," 16 Feb 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918; [Clarence Hovey Robertson] to Mott, 11 Dec 1917, in YMCA archives, Clarence Hovey Robertson papers.

inestimable value in combatting the evil of prostitution in the Allied armies"; an illustrated pamphlet "that will tell the common soldier what the Association does for the soldier in Russia"; and another pamphlet with "terse and authoritative information" about the YMCA. In addition, thousands of testaments were available for shipment to wherever secretaries thought they would be useful, as well as other books and equipment for libraries.[80]

YMCA secretaries were also involved in the distribution of print materials outside their association duties. Sisson, who had no staff of his own, recruited association men to gather information ahead of his planned propaganda distribution program. This was an important part of Sisson's work: to publicize US war aims and American views of the Russian situation. He believed he could help put off a separate peace by spreading this information among Russian soldiers. At the same time, he hoped the propaganda would turn German soldiers and civilians against their own government. YMCA men helped Sisson distribute it. In December Sisson had copies of Wilson's recent Peace with Victory speech printed and put up all over Petrograd. The next month, the president's Fourteen Points speech replaced it.[81] To find out if it was possible to have handbills and placards pass through enemy lines and into German-held territory, he called on YMCA secretaries with experience working at the front. In early January Davis prepared a report for Sisson on conditions. Davis found that getting printed matter through the lines would not be a problem. On an inspection trip to the northern front he was able, "dressed as a Russian soldier and in the company of Russians . . . to penetrate the German lines without difficulty." Soldiers from both sides

[80]"Association Activities," 9 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[81]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 141–42; Sisson to Creel, 13 Jan 1918, in C. I. Cumming and Walter Pettit, eds., *Russian–American Relations, March 1917–March 1920, Documents and Papers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920), 74. The Peace with Victory speech is reproduced in *FRUS, with the Address of the President to Congress, December 4, 1917* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), ix–xvi.

could cross over, and German prisoners of war passed through. Regimental representatives were willing "to aid in the distribution of American printed material attacking the German rulers and appealing to the German people," David told Sisson.[82]

That month, Davis and other American secretaries, in cooperation with Russian POWs who had escaped from camps in central Europe, brought copies of Wilson's Fourteen Points speech into Russian cities and distributed it at the fronts with the permission of government and military authorities. One million Russian-language and one hundred thousand German-language copies were distributed.[83] There was disagreement in YMCA ranks about the appropriateness of association men participating in such work. Secretary Paul B. Anderson believed the material constituted "political propaganda" and thus its distribution was off-limits to secretaries; Davis and Ralph W. Hollinger disagreed with this assessment. Their reasoning was based on the Russian government's approval of the speech.[84] Shortly thereafter the distribution work was handed over to POW "package-men," and several carloads filled with copies of Wilson's Fourteen Points address were sent to the border.[85]

The cooperation of association men with Sisson in this and other ways caused friction within secretarial ranks. When letters addressed to Sisson and marked "personal" arrived from Minsk via YMCA courier—YMCA correspondence was sent by courier because of fears that letters might not otherwise reach their destinations—secretary Mort Waldo sounded the alarm to Wheeler: "After the experience the Red Cross has had here it seems to me, we are taking big chances with the reputation of the Y. in sending materials in to a

[82]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 204.
[83]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 14–15.
[84]Paul B. Anderson, diary extracts, entry for 2 Jan 1918 (OS), in Anderson papers, box 5, Personal Diary Moscow.
[85]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 271.

propaganda agent or in communicating with him in any way whatever. Anything more I might say on that score, would be rather unchristian and better unsaid."[86] Davis, less concerned than Wheeler about separating association business from official matters, invited Ambassador Francis to make use of his men as needed. "I trust you will feel free to call on any of our Association men at any time we can render service."[87] Davis's replacement, Ethan T. Colton, soon decided association representatives could no longer volunteer their time for other agencies.[88] The change in policy did not sit well with US officials. When the Moscow consul general's request for men to help with code work was denied that summer, he complained indignantly to Francis:

> They have plenty of available men who would be glad to serve their country in this way. I am sorry to add however that Colton has evinced a narrow unwillingness to co-operate with the Consulate General which has been in sharp contrast to the attitude of all the other members of the Association including Dr. Mott. I understand that it is the desire of Dr. Mott that if the Y.M.C.A. men can serve the Government to better purpose outside the field of their usual endeavour they should be at once assigned to such work.
>
> Were it not for Mr. Colton's uncompromising attitude with Summers on subjects of this kind I would endeavour to obtain the two men for you, but, the situation being as it is, I think it would be well for you to exercise your higher authority.[89]

But, in the words of C. V. Hibbard from the New York office, "the value of our service depends on the fact that it is unofficial and ungovernmental."[90] Francis did not get involved.

Between December and February, Russian officials from various levels of government, the military, and unions continued to show their support for YMCA work. This was true of Bolshevik commissars as well as former tsarist and Kerensky regime officials who endorsed the Americans' efforts even now. In Odessa, for example, the association was

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[86]Waldo to Wheeler, 24 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, 5, YMCA Russia Work 1918–20.

[87]Davis to Francis, 7 Mar 1918, in NACP, RG 84, Diplomatic Posts (hereafter DP), American Embassy—Russia (hereafter Russian Embassy papers), C 1918, vol. 330.

[88]Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.

[89]Poole to Francis, 24 Jun 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Misc. C etc., box 2, Misc. C 2.

[90]Hibbard to Colton, 29 July 1918, in Colton papers, box 2, Russia "F" file.

backed through three changes of government.[91] Although the YMCA had the stated support of various Russian organizations, secretaries found that official documentation was not necessary for the success of their operations. "At any time since the revolution it was perfectly possible to start work without any permit whatever provided the secretary was not interfered with by the local authorities," recalled Davis. "Far more necessary than permissions is a sympathetic attitude toward the common Russian worker and peasant and a genuine expression of the spirit of Christ in our work."[92] (This was an exaggeration.) The State Department gave the go ahead for continued service and the association's work grew and expanded at the front.[93] And yet, in late December Mort Waldo complained to Wheeler that "it is impressed on me more and more that as yet we have no real Y.M.C.A. work, Army or otherwise, started here in Russia that amounts to very much. That sounds rather sour and I hope you will forgive me for saying it, but I feel that it is the truth."[94]

As the collapse of the Russian army continued apace, secretary morale reached its lowest point. Some YMCA secretaries were deeply discouraged by the new political reality, and what Bolshevik rule meant for their work in Russia. The Bolsheviks, they knew, did not support the continuation of the war against the Central powers. Upon taking power, they quickly set about ending Russian belligerency. And it was clear to secretaries that soldiers were on board with the government's peace policy. In early December Davis reported that

[91]The secretary stationed there, Donald Lowrie, reported in late December that his work "has been most successful." Lowrie to folks, 24 Dec 1917, in Lowrie papers, box 1, 1917.

[92]Jerome Davis, "Relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association to the Russian Government from January 1917 to March 1918," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[93]Report of the "District Conference of Y.M.C.A. Secretaries at Minsk, Russia Dec. 25, 1917," in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[94]Waldo to Crawford, 24 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA Russia Work 1918–20. See also Waldo to Wheeler, 24 Dec 1917, in YMCA archives, YMCA Biographical Files, Paul B. Anderson papers, Louis Penningroth—History—YMCA Russia 1918–19.

troops on Russia's northern and western fronts wanted peace immediately. He believed it unlikely soldiers would fight any longer, even if just to defend their positions. Desertions, mutinies, and anti-war demonstrations were, in fact, most marked after 7–8 November. The YMCA secretaries at the front were "very discouraged with the disorganization and lack of discipline in the army" and questioned whether they should continue helping "such men." And indeed, two secretaries abandoned the field and returned to Petrograd, leaving their work unfinished.[95] They were not alone in their frustrations at being unable to conduct relief work that had direct bearing on the Allied war effort. A desire to be of military service was uppermost in the minds of some secretaries. This was especially true of recent arrivals specifically recruited for war work.[96]

A restructuring of YMCA work appeared to secretaries to be the solution to morale woes caused by political difficulties and the end of active Russian participation in the Great War. Plans for long-term Russian work had been penned months earlier, as an outgrowth of the Mayak's efforts and building on service for POWs and soldiers. Secretaries involved in war work had ideas for what the association could do to maintain its relevance in the country. From early December onward, association reports and letters to superiors often included comments on how the organization could adapt to the changed circumstances in which secretaries found themselves.

A complete overhaul of Russian work was the most common recommendation. The

[95]Jerome Davis, "Report to Association Activities in Russia For December 5th, 1917," 7 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3]; Michael Perrins, "The Imperial Army in War and Revolution," in Shukman, *Blackwell Encyclopedia*, 41.

[96]Telegram sent from Secretaries' Conference in Moscow, 10 Dec 1917, in Robertson papers, file 9.

association could provide aid to demobilized soldiers returning to their villages;[97] expand city work to new centres and establish more Mayak clubs;[98] set up "folk-school houses all over the country";[99] or provide general relief, what Davis called "pure help work" and "humanitarian and Christian service." By remaining in the country, Davis believed the YMCA could "prove to Russia that the U.S. is backing by her deeds the principles of equality, democracy and brotherhood, which President Wilson maintains are the ideals for which we are fighting."[100] Secretaries wanted the association to "encourage the government to undertake broad and widespread constructive efforts to assist Russia in restoring order, transportation, trade and industry, and to counteract what is destructive."[101] They also wished to lay a foundation for future YMCA work and presence in the country.[102] Secretaries were not alone in supporting the continuation of association work. Davis noted in early December that Ambassador Francis, Consul General Summers, and almost "all other responsible and experienced American men in Russian affairs believe[d]" they could "render just as great a service to America as at any time since" work for soldiers began.[103] Summers thought the association was doing "splendid work."[104]

There were several potential snags in all these plans: transportation woes within

[97]James H. Lewis to Mott, 26 February 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. This is also in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[98]Jerome Davis, "Report to Association Activities in Russia For December 5th, 1917," 7 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3]; Colton to Mott, 27 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[99]James H. Lewis to Raymond Reitzel, 26 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[100]Jerome Davis, "Report to Association Activities in Russia For December 5th, 1917," 7 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[101]Heald in Kiev, "Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[102]Gott to Hibbard, 23 Jan 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[103]Jerome Davis, "Report to Association Activities in Russia For December 5th, 1917," 7 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[104]Summers to Francis, 24 Nov 1917, quoted in David R. Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy: April 1916–November 1918* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 193.

Russia and limited shipping capability to bring supplies and equipment into the country; the unsettled political situation; and the fact that many secretaries, and especially ones who had come to Russia in the fall, had no interest in doing work not directly related to the American war effort.[105] One other important problem was Jerome Davis himself. A replacement, Colton, was in transit, but it would be some time before he arrived. Viewing the situation from outside the country, Colton was unhappy with association efforts. He believed Davis was largely to blame for the waste of resources poured into military work.[106]

Secretary morale issues were tackled at a conference in Moscow in December attended by forty secretaries. The strains brought on by the political situation and problems with Davis's leadership were the main issues discussed. By then it was clear that the association could do nothing of "direct military value" for the Allied war effort. At the meeting it was made clear to Davis that many of the new recruits and some of the veteran YMCA men wanted to do war work, and preferred to serve in France or elsewhere where they could be of use to soldiers, rather than stay in Russia doing civilian work.[107] This was a common feeling among the men, but some secretaries decided to carry on even though they doubted the military value of their efforts.[108] The meeting cleared the air between secretaries

[105]James H. Lewis to Mott, 26 February 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec. 1917, Jan 1918–Apr 1918. This is also in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3]. Wheeler? to Hibbard, 6 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

[106]Colton to Mott, 27 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. Colton later changed his mind somewhat, realizing that it was Davis who had earned the "confidence of the powers that be" and made army work on a large scale happen. See Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.

[107][Robertson] to Mott, 11 Dec 1917, in Robertson papers; (quote from) Telegram sent from Secretaries' Conference in Moscow, 10 Dec 1917, in Robertson papers, file 9; Jerome Davis, "Report to Association Activities in Russia For December 5th, 1917," 7 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[108]"Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia [3].

based in different parts of the country.[109]

Military leaders and soldiers understood the value of YMCA programming, which aimed to boost soldier morale and provided important supplementary (and even basic) goods and services to a large number of restless young men. But not all Russians were equally keen on the organization: some saw it as a tool of foreign capitalism. Despite the various permissions and concessions granted the association, there was no love between the YMCA and the Bolshevik leadership. According to Colton, the "openly anti-religious" Bolshevik leaders "would not give it any encouragement." They frequently assigned Jewish men to assist the YMCA, a practice Colton believed was deliberate and "done in irony."[110] (Possibly, but it was true that Jews "had a higher than average rate of literacy and numeracy than the rest of [Russian] society and therefore found it easy to gain employment in the Soviet administration."[111]) In Moscow, where the local Soviet was "boiling about things generally and foreign affairs in particular," Crawford Wheeler reported that the YMCA had come in "for its share of the knocks at a recent meeting." A Russian man who had lived in the United States but returned in 1917 characterized the YMCA "as imperialistic, capitalistic, and bourgeois." A friendly contact in the Moscow Soviet told Wheeler that the association was "now to be controlled, boycotted, and later closed up and requisitioned." Wheeler did not fear the worst, but planned "to answer every attack and to issue a booklet on the nature of our work immediately."[112] The Red Cross's Wightman believed that "the very fact that the Y. M. C. A. come here and give all and ask nothing [was] viewed by the Russian people with

[109][Robertson] to Mott, 11 Dec 1917, in Robertson papers.
[110]Colton to Mott, 27 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.
[111]Service, *Trotsky*, 205.
[112]Wheeler to Reitzel, 30 Dec 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3]. Such attacks were not new. See Heald to wife, 29 Apr 1917, in Heald, "Letters," 142.

suspicion. They [did] not see how anybody could be so unselfish unless he was inspired by personal gain."[113]

Later, members of the Moscow government spearheaded vigorous attacks on the association "on the ground of capitalistic interest and propaganda."[114] Such accusations were not without foundation; rather, they omitted reference to the useful work Americans were doing with the cooperation and support of a variety of Russian institutions and individuals. In response to difficulties encountered in Irkutsk, one experienced secretary "strongly advise[d] that all YMCA work be carried on in Russia in the name of the Worlds YMCA and that it be absolutely non-political and non-war, without the U.S. uniform and with no talk of increasing army efficiency. In this way all parties will have no grounds for opposition to the movement."[115] Hibbard, at the New York office, agreed, writing to Colton months later that the State Department insisted secretaries keep "entirely clear of all political propaganda." If men did enter the consular service, Hibbard continued, they should sever all ties to the association.[116] The close relationship between the association and government officials did not end, but outright propagandizing, such as that done for Sisson, did. "As loyal Americans," Wheeler later explained, "YMCA secretaries were interested in seeing that their Government representatives had access to every bit of information from the various centers which might help them in carrying on their own affairs or in advising our Government concerning conditions and events."[117] And that was not all. On at least one occasion, YMCA

[113]Wightman, *Diary of An American Physician*, 113.

[114]Unsigned letter to Halsey, Feb 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. See also Colton to Mott, 27 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918; and Summers to Francis, 18 Jan 1918, in NACP, RG 84, Consular Posts (hereafter CP), Moscow, box 4, 360.

[115]Gott to Hibbard, 23 Jan 1918, in Anderson papers, 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].

[116]Hibbard to Colton, 29 Jul 1918, in Colton papers, 562, box 2, Russia "F" file.

[117]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 29.

secretary Jesse Halsey filled in for American military and civil officials during their absences from Murmansk. In the spring Halsey "acted as American representative and carried on business for the Government with Allied and Russian authorities."[118] Members of the Red Cross mission—Robins, of course, but also others—freely shared information with American officialdom.[119] There is no evidence they ever thought not to. During the 1920s and 1930s, representatives of American relief organizations based in Soviet Russia would also provide the US government and private firms with information.[120]

The challenges secretaries faced on the field only increased. In some of the northern posts work continued without interruption, but political upheavals in Minsk and Kiev limited what the association could accomplish.[121] The most difficult place for the YMCA to establish itself was in the highly politically charged city of Petrograd. Secretary Mort Waldo confessed in late January "that things are getting rather too complicated for me. I'll do my best, but can make no promises."[122] Other than a lecture series and regular movie nights, association staff members in Petrograd were severely hampered in what they could accomplish because they

[118]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 53. See also ibid., 29–32.

[119]For some examples from Thacher and Webster, see Asgar M. Asgarov, "Reporting from the Frontlines of the First Cold War: American Diplomatic Despatches about the Internal Conditions in the Soviet Union, 1917–1933" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2007), 53–54. Webster was also sent by Robins on a fact-finding mission to Siberia with the aim of discovering the truth about the military use of prisoners of war by the Bolsheviks. He and British representative Captain W. L. Hicks, Lockhart's assistant, concluded that there was "no danger to the Allied cause." Hicks and Webster, "Report of English and American Officers in Regard to - Arming of Prisoners of War in Siberia," 26 Apr 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 324. For more on the expedition and the activities of Webster and Hicks, see Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 2:75–82.

[120]Jonathan Dekel-Chen, "An Unlikely Triangle: Philanthropists, Commissars, and American Statesmanship Meet in Soviet Crimea, 1922–37," *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 3 (Jun 2003): 370–71.

[121]Report of the "District Conference of Y.M.C.A. Secretaries at Minsk, Russia Dec. 25, 1917," in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3]; "Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[122]Waldo, 29 Jan 1918, in "Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

never were able occupy the building they were promised.[123] Waldo did not develop a relationship with the local soviet, and he soon gave up and joined the consular service in Helsingfors, Finland.[124] "It is obvious," Colton concluded in late January, that "our movement has not found itself." The volume of service rendered was "very small, the most successful posts having flourished for only a little while. Many of the efforts were short-lived and many attempts never came to realization."[125] This was all true.

What military work was being done was rapidly coming to an end in February. Paul Anderson recorded in his diary on 12 February that "the work for soldiers at the front is not so rosy, and even Jerome [Davis] is a bit stuck with the fact that soldier work is no longer possible."[126] Three days earlier Davis had written as much to Mott, explaining that in some parts of the northern front there were no soldiers to serve. He had concluded that "Association work [was] increasingly difficult."[127] YMCA leaders in the United States, with much less information about the realities of Russian life, sent word that they and the "highest authorities" in the US government strongly supported continued service for Russians soldiers and civilians.[128] Secretaries found it impossible to comply: there were fewer and fewer soldiers around.

By mid-February negotiations between the German high command and Soviet

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[123]Brackett Lewis, "Retrospect and Prospect of the Petrograd Young Men's Christian Association," 20 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 13, Petersburg (Petrograd) Mayak, 1917–1918.

[124]Anderson to Mott, 15 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. Also in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6]. Several of his association colleagues also joined the consular service, and one man joined the CPI: Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.

[125]Colton to Mott, 27 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[126]Diary, entry for 12 Feb 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, Personal Diary Moscow.

[127]Jerome Davis to Mott, 9 Feb 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 20.

[128]Mott to Davis, 4 Feb 1918; Hibbard to Davis, 13 Feb 1918, both included in "Cables to Russia Concerning Draft Status of Secretaries," 18 Nov 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Oct–Dec 1918.

officials broke down, and the Germans breached an earlier armistice agreement by renewing their offensive. They wished to compel the Bolsheviks to accept their peace terms, or else simply remove the Soviet government from power.[129] For the most part, secretaries stayed where they were and strove to work for as long as they were able and as long as there were soldiers to serve, until they were forced to leave by invading German forces or the disintegration of the army. Americans stationed further away from the front lines had mostly concluded that their work was done. They closed their clubs and left (or planned to leave) for Moscow, now home to the YMCA's Russian headquarters.[130] Several secretaries escaped within a few hours of the arrival of German troops, and some Russian employees were captured as they were taking down YMCA huts.[131] In other places, huts were left to town and village authorities to convert to schools.[132] (Seventeen huts had been in operation.) The Americans went to Moscow, Samara, Harbin, Vladivostok, and elsewhere to await further instructions. Military work in Russia was all but over. The association could still celebrate a job well done. An internal report boasted that, according to "army experts," "wherever [YMCA] huts were in operation, those parts of the line were the last to give way before the German advance."[133] Accurate or not, the claim portrayed the commitment of secretaries as both militarily significant and patriotic.

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[129]Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 586–87.

[130]"Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918; Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 47; "Association Activities," 9 Jan 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[131]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 16.

[132]Hedden from Block Post, "Notes from the Field," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918; "Report of Minsk District Russian War Work," 20 Mar 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6]. The Germans apparently captured and destroyed these huts at the front when they advanced. See Davis to Mott, 24 Feb 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 1.

[133]Phelps to Mott, "Report of Work of the American YMCA in Siberia," 15 Jul 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].

The renewed German offensive raised the spectre, once again, of an attack on Petrograd. Fearing a hostile military invasion, the Allied community made a quick exit from the city in late February. All but one of the YMCA men still left in Petrograd—including all Mayak, War Prisoners' Aid, and Russian work secretaries—departed at the ambassador's insistence on 24 February.[134] Robins and Francis left on 27 February, leaving behind some two dozen Americans, mostly private citizens. The ambassador set up shop in Vologda, a city east of Petrograd and north of Moscow. The new locale made communication between the various centres of American officialdom in Russia more difficult than before. It also caused problems for Robins's precarious position because, as historian Norman Saul has explained, it "gave Maddin Summers and the consul general's office more responsibility and authority but also blurred the lines between the ambassador, the consul general, and Robins's quasi-official diplomatic role."[135]

One reason why Robins was crucial to the conduct of American diplomacy was the information he provided and the potential influence he brought to bear with respect to the negotiations between the Bolsheviks and the Germans. The Germans continued their military advance in late February and into March even while talks were ongoing, to the point of dropping bombs on Petrograd.[136] On 3 March a treaty was signed. It only needed official ratification by the Council of People's Commissars to come into force. Robins launched a last-ditch campaign to keep Lenin from presenting the treaty to the council. True to form, the

[134]Hollinger to Gaylord, 17 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[135]The men who remained in Petrograd included four YMCA secretaries, six men working for the CPI, twelve National City Bank employees, and some Red Cross personnel. Saul, *War and Revolution*, 239, 234–35.

[136]Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 593–94.

State Department did not reply to his urgent cables.[137] Robins believed Allied support would have averted the ratification, even up to the last moment before the vote in mid-March.[138] But on 15 March the Soviet government, then established in the Moscow Kremlin, ratified the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. It officially ended hostilities between Russia and the Central powers. By its terms, the Bolsheviks gave up the Russian empire's western borderlands, including Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania, all of which were given independence.[139] In this and in other ways, the treaty was extremely onerous, but Lenin never intended to respect its terms.[140] One thing was certain, though: Russia was out of the war, and stayed out.

The ratification of the separate peace did not put an end to YMCA attempts at cooperation with Lenin's government. Even after the treaty was signed, the association did not shy away from using its resources when Russian authorities called for its assistance. Russian military leaders in 1917 had seen the value of the YMCA's services and supplies for boosting soldier morale, and the Bolshevik army chief felt the same way, endorsing the association's work. Anderson was asked by the Russian government "to take charge of the feeding points for soldiers returning from the front." Although he knew that to do the job effectively he would need the help of hundreds of men, he told Mott that "we will do the best we can[,] putting on a small work at the cities in the south and two good demonstration pieces of work in Moscow and Petrograd."[141] Representatives of the YMCA remained firmly

[137]For more on Robins's efforts up to and after the ratification of the treaty, see McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 104–22.

[138]Robins, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 807.

[139]The treaty's provisions were nullified in early November 1918 when Germany renounced it and ended diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

[140]Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 595–97, 599–600.

[141]Anderson to Mott, 15 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918 (also in

opposed to Bolshevism—or, more precisely, what they understood it to be. But they "endeavored to maintain a ministry of unselfish service to all classes and parties of the Russian people."[142] Secretaries also believed their organization had a place in Russia now and long into the (postwar) future. Because of their work at the front and in cities, they were well positioned to take an understanding view of the separate peace. They knew Soviet leaders signed, and then ratified, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk under duress. Even Lenin himself had called it "an obscene peace." Anderson, who had met with Lenin and many other leading Bolsheviks the night before the vote, "at once saw that separate peace was inevitable as [they] felt that they were in such a terrible situation that peace was the only way out." And, as he wrote to Mott after witnessing the vote, "we hope America is sympathetic."[143] Two days later and far away from central Russia, Hollinger wrote to Gaylord: "I hope you in the States do not ask us to come home, for I think there is still a great deal we can do in Russia."[144] American optimism remained intact despite the official Russian withdrawal from the war.

In the period between the breakdown of the armistice and the signing of the treaty, the YMCA provided assistance to the new Red Army, created in late January. In cooperation with the war department, a YMCA man directed a food and sanitary train that served over twenty thousand soldiers. This was not intended as a sign of support for the Bolshevik regime; rather, it was a means of backing the war against Germany.[145] According to Wheeler,

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Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6]).

[142]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 35. The report is unclear about what specifically "the more or less intense personal convictions about the political situation then existing in the country" consisted of.

[143]Anderson to Mott, 15 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918 (also in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6]; Service, *Trotsky*, 216.

[144]Hollinger to Gaylord, 17 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[145]Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 47. It "resulted directly in the Y.M.C.A.'s receiving many future

"testimonials of praise were given the YMCA by the Bolshevik War Minister [i. e., Trotsky], and as a result of this act the way was opened for the YMCA to receive many future concessions in carrying out its program."[146] In a separate project, from 7 March to 4 April, the YMCA set up a "Travelling-Feeding Organization" in Pskov. This helped soldiers and returning Russian POWs, and fed an average of over three hundred men a day. The man in charge considered the work "very successful and useful in supporting the spirit of the fighters, who have defended our frontier." Based on this experience, he believed there was a good chance the association could set up feeding points for POWs returning from Germany. The work ended when it was no longer needed, and not because of any ideological objection to providing assistance to Russian (now Red Army) soldiers.[147] In the summer, a club for Red Army men was operated in Moscow.[148] This cooperation between the YMCA and the Red Army came at the same time that the Soviet government was seeking French help to improve the organization of its armed forces. Despite the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, relations between Germany and Soviet Russia were poor and the Bolsheviks feared a renewal of the German offensive; however, a rapprochement was reached in late May. It put an end to Trotsky's overtures to the Allies.[149]

Colton, Davis's replacement, finally made it to Russia in March, a few days before the treaty

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concessions for carrying out a developing program that followed the German-Soviet peace."

[146]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 17.

[147]E. Prick, "The Activity of the Y.M.C.A.'s Travelling-Feeding Organization," n.d., ca. Apr 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. See also Wheeler? to Hibbard, 6 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

[148]Lowrie to Colton, 19 Jul 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.

[149]Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 612–15.

was ratified.[150] His arrival came much later than anticipated. He and his group had been "baffled at every turn." Professor of political science turned wartime YMCA secretary Russell McCullogh Story, who travelled with Colton, even started to gray, a shocking (to him) turn of events caused, he told his wife, by his worrying about their "failures to get into Russia."[151] They arrived in Petrograd after the Allied evacuation. Story found the city to be "like a tomb in which the mourners and the spirits too are in a wild scramble to get out. . . . Apathy, dejection, hopelessness, seemed to be everywhere the prevailing elements."[152] Gray hairs, ghosts, and depression aside, the new senior Russian work secretary faced an unenviable task in Russia: to take charge of a group of demoralized secretaries scattered across thousands of kilometres and come up with a new direction for their work. In an attempt to ameliorate the situation, Colton's first order of business was to call all YMCA secretaries in Russia to a conference in Samara, a city on the Volga River. A third of his men were there already, having left their posts in the field and abandoned Moscow and Petrograd ahead of feared German invasions.[153]

During the Samara conference, held 20–22 March, secretaries voiced their opinions on Russian work, past, present, and future. Reports on activities in Petrograd, Odessa, and Minsk (and presumably elsewhere) were prepared and delivered. More importantly, the association men were asked whether or not they wanted to stay in Russia. Though many had

[150]Ethan T. Colton, "With the Y.M.C.A. in Revolutionary Russia," *Russian Review* 14, no. 2 (April 1955): 129.

[151]Russell M. Story to Gertrude, 4 Mar 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters. For more on Story, see Davis and Trani, "An American in Russia."

[152]Story to Gertrude, 20 Apr 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters.

[153]Colton to Mott (extract), 21 Mar 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6] (also in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918). Summers advised the YMCA to move its office and secretaries from Moscow to Samara because of the threat. Wheeler? to Hibbard, 6 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Crawford Wheeler.

several months left on their YMCA contracts, Colton believed that the radically changed military situation called for a reassessment, including an opportunity for secretaries to end their Russian service early if they so wished. After all, most of them had sailed for Russia expecting to work for Allied soldiers, and when Colton got to Russia many of them were already planning their trips back to the United States.[154] This was in spite of Davis's urging to the contrary. He wanted secretaries to think carefully before making their decisions. "America has enough men for the ranks in France," he wrote to them in late February. His own view was that if he remained, he had "a big chance to help." Borrowing a phrase from President Wilson's April 1917 war speech, Davis claimed that he was "helping in a feeble way to make a nation or a part of a nation safe for democracy."[155]

The secretaries did not make their decisions about whether to stay or go in haste. The choice was a difficult, emotional one. Those men who wished to return to the United States and join the armed forces, or take up YMCA work for Allied soldiers on the western front, knew it would be, at minimum, several months before they would make it to France.[156] In the meantime there remained a need for "emergency" work in Russia, and beyond that there were many possibilities for permanent association activities. In the end, the decision was a personal one for each secretary based on how best he thought he could contribute to whatever end he believed most important: a successful conclusion to the war or the establishment of

[154]Colton to Mott (extract), 21 Mar 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6] (also in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918). Surviving reports include Brackett Lewis on work in Petrograd, 20 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 13, Petersburg (Petrograd) Mayak 1917–18; Donald A. Lowrie on Odessa, 20 Mar 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6]; and the Minsk report, 20 Mar 1918, in ibid.

[155]Jerome Davis to fellow secretaries, 28 Feb 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[156]Men of military age could not be transferred to France for association work. See diary entry for 12 Feb 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, Personal Diary Moscow.

permanent YMCA work (and American presence) in Russia.[157] Fifty-six of the seventy-three secretaries present decided to stay. This was an impressive number given the serious morale troubles over the past several months, uncertain and chaotic conditions, and no likelihood of early improvement.

As Davis had all along, Colton supported the maintenance of the association in Russia. At the conference he decided upon four areas of activity for secretaries to concentrate their efforts on. These included Russian language training for those who needed it and intended to stay in the country; the establishment of "permanent work" in cities free of German occupation; "emergency" relief "calculated to serve Russia and make friends for America and the Association"; and "to get into position and watch for the best opportunity that may come in some form or other to serve America and the Kingdom [of God] on a large scale as conditions change from bad to worse."[158] Colton sent secretaries to Moscow, Kazan', Nizhnii Novgorod, Petrograd, Arkhangel'sk, Murmansk, Vladivostok, and other places to undertake a variety of activities.[159] Active work in Bolshevik Russia—the vast majority of the country was by then under Soviet rule—was not considered especially problematic. Colton wrote to Mott requesting more secretaries to carry out the planned work. He stressed that "you cannot overstate favorable position chief American representatives here take respecting continuance America's help through association."[160]

There was official American unanimity about the desirability of continued YMCA work in Russia. Service there was considered to be, as Mott put it, "an essentially American

[157]"Statements Made By Men of the Russian Staff . . . ," 21 Mar 1918. See also Jerome Davis to fellow secretaries, 28 Feb 1918, both in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[158]Colton to Mott, 21 Mar 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. This letter is also in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6].

[159]Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 53.

[160]Colton to Mott (Nielsen to SecState), 26 Mar 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Moscow, box 4, 360.

patriotic service to Russia,"[161] and secretaries were granted release from military duties. Individuals not subject to the draft upon their departures from the United States were encouraged to remain in Russia, even if the under current draft rules they were now subject to it. By the early spring of 1918 most of the Americans who had served in Russia during the period of revolutionary turmoil in 1917 were back in the United States. Their views were much sought after by the political establishment and Russia-watchers. To a man, according to Mott, the members of the Root mission, the Red Cross group, the railway mission, and Judson all supported the association's continued presence and work in Russia. In April, Mott reported to Colton that Wilson "recognized the great desirability of our country being in evidence among the Russian people in such a fruitful and unselfish ministry. He agreed with me as to the wisdom of our men not participating in politics, but devoting themselves exclusively and impartially to serving the men of all classes and parties." Members of the cabinet and other federal department heads were in agreement as well, according to Mott. "From the point of view of accomplishing the purpose of the Allies in this war," he wrote, "what could be more important than through our work to give the Russian people such unmistakable evidence that America has not forgotten or deserted them, but is more deeply interested than ever in their welfare and destiny?"[162] The president apparently wanted

[161]The full passage: "I do hope that increasingly each man may be led to realize with conviction that he is rendering an essentially American patriotic service to Russia for all the coming years and likewise to the Kingdom of our Lord, in giving himself with undiscourageable enthusiasm and patience to promoting the regular Association program, with necessary adaptations and greatly changed and constantly changing conditions." Mott to Colton, 22 May 1918, quoted in Ethan T. Colton, *Memoirs of Ethan T. Colton, Sr.* (New York: National Board of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1969), 87.

[162]Mott to Colton, 9 Apr 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. Mott received the same encouragement from British leaders. The State Department considered the work important enough that it asked the secretary of war to put off calling up for military service secretaries of draft age. Hibbard to Colton, 16 Apr 1918, included in "Cables to Russia Concerning Draft Status of Secretaries," 18 Nov 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Oct–Dec 1918.

association men to remain in Russia "to [in Story's words] promote American friendship and demonstrate the sincerity of our interest in Russia during this period of struggle for democracy."[163] Clearly, American officials and others interested in Russia were thinking ahead to a point when the war would be over and Russia back firmly on the road to lasting democracy.

After the Samara conference, the secretaries who elected to remain in Russia were sent to various posts. Sixteen men went to Moscow, where seven of them were to work for returning Russian prisoners of war, three to continue civilian programs, and six were assigned to administrative and executive duties. Five men remained in Samara; four went to Kazan'; two to Nizhnii Novgorod; one went to Petrograd; two travelled to Arkhangel'sk and Murmansk. In the south, the two secretaries in Erevan continued their efforts, and three secretaries went to the Far East to work in Vladivostok. The Czechoslovak regiments were assigned six men; two joined a group of Serbian refugees travelling across Siberia; and one secretary joined a battalion of Serbian soldiers. Three rural specialists investigated possibilities for work among peasants in the Volga River region. Finally, six secretaries resigned from the association to enter the American consular service.[164]

The Red Cross's most significant project was well underway as YMCA secretaries scattered across Russia. This was the Petrograd milk distribution project. By January the Red Cross commission had several hundred thousand cans of condensed milk available to distribute,

[163]Story to Gertrude, 9 May 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters.

[164]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 21–22. The Serbian soldiers first went to Murmansk, and then left for Siberia in the fall of 1919. The secretary assigned to them "was always on duty with this battalion of Serbs. Small wonder that they wanted to take him back to Serbia with them to establish a Red Triangle hut in Belgrade." Ibid., 58.

with more set to come.[165] This was enough to supply twenty-five thousand children for three months.[166] The milk had been shipped to Russia from the United States before the Bolshevik revolution, and after it there was no change in the mission's plan to give the milk to needy children in Petrograd. It was still sorely needed. On 11 January, during Robins's first meeting with Lenin, distribution plans were discussed. Sisson was also present at the meeting, and he found Lenin to be "agreeably attentive and approving."[167] Soon members of the Red Cross mission were included in a Petrograd milk distribution committee,[168] also comprised of representatives from the People's Commissariat for Social Welfare, the district soviets, and the Central Petrograd Food Supply Board. The Red Cross donated its stock of cans to feed the poorest children between 6 months and 3 years of age. The committee decided on priority levels for which children would receive milk, the quantities to be handed out, and the method of distribution. For the program to be successful, the committee would need to work closely with the district soviets and other government bodies. The distribution program began on 1 February.[169]

American officials in Russia supported the program, and the State Department wanted it and other relief measures to move forward.[170] Ambassador Francis also backed the venture, it seems.[171] Wright, the embassy's second-in-command, made a rare positive comment about

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[165]*The Work of the American Red Cross*, 74; ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 125.

[166]Robins to Davison, 22 Jan 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to Russia (First)—Reports; Thacher to Kollontai, 22 Jan 1918, in Thacher papers, box 1, Kollontai.

[167]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 213.

[168]Referred to as "The Committee for the Distribution of Milk Donated by the American Red Cross" by Thacher. See his letter to Stevens, 15 Feb 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File Feb 1918.

[169]Translation of article from *Izvestiia*, 9 Feb 1918, in Thacher papers, box 2, Child Welfare. See also a record of the meeting of the Commission for the Distribution of Milk, 21 Jan/3 Feb 1918, in ibid.

[170]Lansing to AmEmb, received 1 Jan 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 330; Polk to AmEmb, received 28 Jan 1918 and forwarded to Robins on 29 Jan, in ibid.

[171]He had nothing negative to report about it to his superiors in Washington. See Francis to SecyState, 1 Feb 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 330.

the Red Cross mission in his personal diary in early February. The milk distribution program was less than a week old, but it was already having an effect: "We are the most popular of all foreigners here—which is not saying very much! . . . The Red Cross condensed milk has been most excellent American propaganda and we are tolerated."[172] Clearly aware of the publicity value of the program, the mission ensured that the cans were distributed only after special labels were pasted on and a cross etched onto the tin underneath.[173] The Red Cross employed twenty warehouse workers to do this and other tasks for the duration of the program.[174] Genuine relief and publicity went hand in hand in this case, as usual. American Red Cross involvement in the program lasted from February until 19 April when its milk supply was all used up.[175]

Seventeen local soviets managed the distribution.[176] Sisson, who checked in on preparations in late January, believed People's Commissar for Social Welfare Alexandra Kollontai aimed only to feed children of Bolshevik parents or who were living in institutions. When he asked Robins about this, the Red Cross commissioner denied the charge. Sisson judged that Thacher, who was in charge of the program for the Red Cross mission, "made sincere effort to have the milk divided among all hungry children, regardless of class, but [Sisson] could not see that [Thacher] had the power to carry out his desire." The publicity

[172]Entry of 6 February 1918, in Wright, *Witness to Revolution*, 179. Wright had initially been enthusiastic about the Red Cross mission, but at the end of October he complained that the embassy had to "nurse" it and other commissions. Ibid., 141.

[173]Thacher to Stevens, 25 Feb 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File Feb 1918. The labels informed recipients, in Russian, that the milk had been donated by the ARC. See ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 125.

[174]Thacher to Stevens, 25 Feb 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File Feb 1918; Frederick H. Hazel, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 924. The labels informed recipients, in Russian, that the milk had been donated by the ARC. See ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 125.

[175]Shepherd, "Russia in Anguish," 6.

[176]Davis, "Cooperating with the Commissars," 655; Frederick H. Hazel, in US Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, 924.

man believed "the regulations were so drawn as to deter, if not prevent, middle-class and anti-Bolshevik parents from applying for milk for their children."[177] Thacher later firmly declared that "the milk was not consumed by bolsheviks; it was distributed to children under the age of three."[178]

Surviving documentation is not clear on the specific recipients of aid. There were, to be sure, very many needy recipients who could not find milk (or other foodstuffs) in sufficient quantities to feed themselves or their families. In the end, 103 institutions were supplied with 77,476 cans of milk, and 368,824 cans were delivered "for general distribution," making a total of 446,300 cans given out from Red Cross stores.[179] The Americans wished to extend the program, but the organization was unable to replenish its stocks when quantities ran low.[180] The Red Cross's involvement in the distribution program came to an end. "In thus terminating, to our great regret, our mutual pleasant relation," Wardwell wrote to the milk distribution committee, "I desire to express on behalf of the American Red Cross, our sincere appreciation of your earnest and helpful efforts to make this gift, of real benefit to the destitute children of your city. May our mutual efforts be a lasting evidence of the cordial relations between the peoples of our nations."[181]

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[177]Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 284–86.

[178]Thomas D. Thacher, "Economic Force and the Russian Problem," in "International Reconstruction," ed. Carl Kelsey, special issue, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 84 (Jul 1919): 125.

[179]Thacher papers, box 2, Milk Distribution, 3. Statistics per month: February saw 8,390 cards issued, and 23,846 cans distributed; March, 25,700 and 174,580; April, 30,000 and 223,074; and May saw no cards issued, and 24,800 cans of milk distributed. Districts that received milk included Vyborg, Spassky, Petrograd, Rozhdestevensky, Narva, Vassilevsky, Peterhoff, 1st and 2nd Cities, Nevsky, New Village, Porkhovskoi, Lesnoi, Admiralteisky, Okhtensky. According to Hardy to Thacher, 24 July 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, C—July–Dec 1918 (incoming), these figures cover the period 14 February through 1 May.

[180]On problems with shipments of supplies, see, for example, Hardy to Thacher, 24 July 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, C—July–Dec 1918 (incoming).

[181]Wardwell to Committee for Distribution of the Milk, 23 Apr 1918, in Thacher papers, box 2, Milk Distribution, 7.

After the program ended, the Red Cross mission's work in Petrograd was quickly wound down. The mission distributed food to Americans living in Petrograd at the end of April and into May, "at the time when scarcity of food was very great, and [this] relieved much suffering in the American colony." The War Council sent $20,000 to assist destitute families of Russian officers, soldiers, and workmen. Wardwell spent a few weeks "on the 'clean-up' job,"[182] and the work in Petrograd was done by early May.[183] The mission moved its main offices to Moscow, and Wardwell—and their much-relied upon local staff members Herbert A. Magnuson and George Pollatts—left Petrograd for Moscow on 9 May. Webster, it seems, remained in Petrograd. The supplies that mission members did not remove from their warehouse were taken over by a military supply committee; the Americans believed it was better goods went to the Red Army than end up in German hands.[184] As had consistently remained the case up until this point, Germany was seen as the main threat to Allied interests. This threat guided Red Cross actions.

During March and April, while the milk program was ongoing, Robins continued to meet regularly with Soviet leaders. A number of issues came up that made him useful to both Francis and the Soviet government. Both had come to rely on him as an intermediary. But as Francis's and Robins's views of the situation in Russia developed, the two men found themselves increasingly at odds. They were already uncomfortable with their need for each other, and tension between them grew apace. Their relationship remained superficially pleasant and mutually-supportive, but Robins's continued belief in the honesty and patriotism

[182]ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 126; Wardwell to Robins, 20 Apr 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Robins; *The Work of the American Red Cross*, 76.

[183]Wardwell to Robins, 3 May 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Robins.

[184]See material in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File May 1918. Nearly 250,000 lbs of salted beef in the same warehouse had earlier been turned over to the Red Army. Hardy to Thacher, 24 July 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, C—July–Dec 1918 (incoming).

of Bolshevik leaders and his urging for the regime's official recognition by the US government, drove him and Francis apart. The waters were muddied further by the presence of Sisson, who fancied himself the personal representative of President Wilson. At first on-side with Robins, Judson, Wright, and other embassy staffers, Sisson was taken in by false documents that purported to prove top Bolsheviks were German agents. By mid-February he and Robins were no longer on speaking terms, and Sisson departed Russia in March to publish his documents.[185] His falling out with Robins and the departure of Judson in the latter part of January meant the Red Cross men were increasingly isolated in their approach to the Bolsheviks.

Apart from his difficulties with American officials in Russia, Robins had trouble convincing Washington officials and Red Cross headquarters of the importance of his continued presence in Russia. The members of the War Council considered asking him to go to Paris for a meeting. Judson, just arrived in the United States, believed Robins was better positioned, and doing more important work, than any other American in Russia. He advised Davison not to recall Robins, even temporarily, because the Soviet leadership would interpret it as evidence of the lack of American sympathy for Russia. Judson thought it better to stop supply shipments and leave Robins in place. Upon hearing Davison's report of his meeting with Judson, Acting Secretary of State Frank Polk agreed that Robins should remain where he was. Wilson accepted Judson's advice.[186] In his place, Davison requested that Thacher go to London to meet with American Red Cross representatives. He duly left Petrograd at the

[185]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 224; McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 87; Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, 308.

[186]Davison to Wilson, 21 Feb, and Wilson to Davison, 22 Feb 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, Russia—General.

end of February.[187] (Thacher was delayed at least a month in Murmansk, and in the end proved "totally ineffective" in Thompson's continuing Washington campaign.[188]) Judson's view was likely the correct one. Robins had established a singular relationship with Lenin and, together with British agent Bruce Lockhart, "enjoyed a privileged position" in Moscow.[189] To squander it would have been detrimental to American interests.

Yet Robins's frequent meetings with Lenin, Trotsky, and other Bolshevik commissars were not taken full advantage of by his government. By spring, he was nearly alone among American representatives in Russia then promoting recognition. After Sisson's departure, tension remained between Robins, Bullard, and Consul Summers.[190] Robins's belief that economic relations with the Bolsheviks should be established and recognition extended did not go over well, especially with Summers, whose conservative politics made him especially unwilling to come around to Robins's point of view. The consul, who had been unimpressed with the Red Cross mission for some time, even thought Robins was a Bolshevik agent.[191] His unexpected death in early May, which came on the heels of a fight between the two men, discredited Robins even further. There was talk that Summers had been poisoned by the Bolsheviks—untrue—and the slanderers "looked askance at Robins."[192]

Robins had good relations with the Bolsheviks and his Red Cross colleagues but he could not depend on support and backing from Francis, the War Council in Washington, or the State Department. Still, in the early spring of 1918, Robins received word from headquarters that it was "important [he] remain in Russia in the interest of Red Cross work"

[187]Robins to Thacher, 26 Feb 1918, in Thacher papers, box 1, Robins.
[188]See correspondence in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 4; Williams, "Raymond Robins," 154–55.
[189]Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, 254, 256–57.
[190]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 254.
[191]Allison, *American Diplomats*, 91–92; Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy*, 192.
[192]Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, 273.

as long as there was "no personal risk involved."[193] Francis conferred with him on a daily basis, but their relationship was a "Peace of Necessity." As Robins told Wardwell, "I know that if [Francis] held me over a cliff and could afford to let go he would do so with a sigh of genuine relief."[194] Robins's high profile led one French embassy official to ask Francis who the American ambassador was: himself or the Red Cross man.[195]

Robins's usefulness had significantly declined since the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty. By now, the Allied leaders, including most of their representatives in Russia, supported some sort of military intervention. Robins was opposed, as were his former colleagues then back in the United States: Thacher and Thompson.[196] With Allied thinking moving further away from an accord with the Bolsheviks, Robins's role as a go-between in negotiations was increasingly not needed. His position suffered even more in early April after the Japanese military landing in Vladivostok (see chapter 3). The Soviet leadership was understandably angered by the move, even though it did not signal the start of a full-scale invasion. It was then that Robins decided it would be best to leave Russia. There was little use for his services in Moscow.[197]

Lansing informed Francis that "Red Cross work is regarded [by the Department of State] as very important and admirably done but Robins does not represent this Government or its views."[198] The State Department wanted Robins to go to London, Paris, or New York

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[193]Davison to Robins, 21 Mar 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 12, folder 5.

[194]Robins to Wardwell, 3 Apr 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Robins. Robins later expressed similar views about Thompson's initial attitude toward him. See Hagedorn, notes on interview with Robins, 5 Dec 1930, in Hagedorn papers, box 21, Russia [4].

[195]Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, 273.

[196]Thacher's pamphlet, *Russia and the War*, appeared in early June, and its distribution was financed by Thompson. See Saul, *War and Revolution*, 285.

[197]Robins to Wardwell, 9 Apr 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 4.

[198]Lansing to AmEmb (Vologda), sent 30 Apr / received 23 May 1918, in Russian Embassy papers,

for meetings, and directed the Red Cross to order his recall (but not the closure of the commission). Robins had already decided that it was time for him to go.[199] In early May Robins was, in effect, recalled. Davison cabled Robins that it was "desirable" that he "come home for consultation." Even so, the War Council and the State Department were apparently "very reluctant however to withdraw entire Red Cross Commission anticipating that there will be many opportunities to help distribution food and other Red Cross relief measures next two months." Although the decision on what to do about the other mission personnel was left up to Robins, Davison told the mission chief that "all here feel that Red Cross will find much valuable relief work to do." The War Council asked Robins to "arrange for sufficient personnel" to remain in Russia to maintain "Red Cross efforts." The commission's "position in Russia" was "founded on [a] fine basis already" and Davison did not want to see it simply end.[200] This cable was followed by another similar one several days later. Davison again indicated that he hoped the mission would be able to stay in Russia.[201]

The Soviet government agreed, and requested American Red Cross units for the Red Army's hospital service.[202] The Soviet leadership believed the mission's presence, with Robins at its head, was "absolutely essential."[203] It seems likely the sentiment was genuinely meant. Robins was an important link for Trotsky and Lenin between themselves and the

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Telegrams Received, box 12, folder 2.

[199]Case to Davison, 30 Apr 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 First Russian Commission; Libbey, *Alexander Gumberg*, 50.

[200]Davison to Robins, 7 May 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, Telegrams (Nov 1917–Jun 1918).

[201]Davison to Robins, 20 May 1918, in Thacher papers, box 4, Telegrams (Nov 1917–Jun 1918). See also Davison cable, forwarded by Francis to Caldwell, 24 May 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 7, folder 1. The cable was forwarded by Francis to Vladivostok and to Wardwell in Moscow the day it was received by the embassy.

[202]Robins to Davison, 26 Mar 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 4. The ARC apparently wired its approval of the hospital service plan. See Thompson to Robins, 3 Apr 1918, in ibid.

[203]Lenin and Chicherin to Robins, 29 May 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 4.

United States. The Russian government may even have given serious consideration to asking "the Red Cross to take over the entire food administration in Petrograd, and also to request that Robins 'be appointed political advisor on economic questions from the government of the United States to the Soviet of People's Commissars.'"[204] These thoughts came in the context of the Bolsheviks' inability to curb severe food shortages in the capital cities. The situation undermined popular support for the Soviet government "and played a key role in the Menshevik political resurgence of spring 1918."[205]

Robins, according to Francis, was surprised by the recall. He was, it seems, under the impression that his responsibilities would be expanded. At the end of a lengthy telegram to Lansing explaining the Robins's situation, Francis suggested that the Red Cross and YMCA be asked "to instruct their representatives to confine their activities strictly to the line of their work."[206] (The State Department's Basil Miles was already on the case. He asked association headquarters to tell its secretaries to "refrain from politics in Russia." A warning message was duly sent.[207]) It was rather hypocritical of Francis given his use of Robins during the crucial last few months, but in light of the ambassador's history of disavowing his own words to save face later, perhaps not all that surprising. In reality, Francis had little reason to be upset with Robins. The Red Cross chief had worked tirelessly for what he believed was in the

[204]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 121.

[205]Mauricio Borrero, *Hungry Moscow: Scarcity and Urban Society in the Russian Civil War, 1917–1921* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 19.

[206]Francis telegram, 16 May 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 1. The cable continues: "Permit me moreover to say that if Department would refuse Russian passports to Socialistic fanatics and sensational news mongers [i. e., Albert Rhys Williams and Louis Edgar Browne] it would diminish difficulties and lessen embarrassment of this Embassy." Robins blamed his recall on Summers.

[207]Minutes of the Committee on Work for Allied Armies and Prisoners of War, 3 May 1918, in YMCA archives, Armed Services: World War I, box 3, Minutes—Committee on Allied Armies and Prisoners of War (of the International Committee)—Apr 1918–Dec 1919.

best interests of his country and the Allied cause.[208] His efforts, in conjunction with those of Lockhart and a French colleague, "were extremely successful." According to Williams, they "produc[ed] tangible gains both for the special interests of the United States and for the stated interests of the Allies."[209]

Robins wrapped up his work and arranged for the remaining medical supplies on hand to be distributed. He asked Wardwell to join him for a series of meetings with Bolshevik leaders.[210] Robins left Moscow on 14 May with Gumberg and Hardy, leaving Magnuson, Pollatts, Wardwell, and Webster behind.[211] He put Wardwell in charge and urged him to work closely with foreign minister Georgii Vasil'evich Chicherin. American officialdom was pleased to see Robins go; the Soviet leadership was not. "Trotsky wrote him a long and fulsome letter of farewell, saying 'you were one of the few who cared to and could impartially comprehend those immense difficulties under which the Soviet power had to labor.'"[212] Radical journalist Louise Bryant, wife of John Reed, was also impressed:

> He never spared himself any difficult task to further friendship between Russia and America. . . . I think every correspondent will agree with me that, according to their best observation, Colonel Robins did more to offset unfavourable impressions, was more valuable and actually accomplished more than any other man or group of men sent to Russia by the United States Government.
>
> When Colonel Robins left Russia he was given a special train through Siberia and accorded every honour from the Soviet government. Nothing proves better, to my mind, the common ground for friendship than this confidence of the Russian masses in Colonel Robins.[213]

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[208]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 97. Most historians have reached this conclusion about Francis, including Harper Barnes in his good, if somewhat sympathetic, recent biography. Barnes, *Standing on a Volcano*.

[209]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 123.

[210]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 123.

[211]Various cables to and from Robins, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 12, folder 5; Francis to SecState, 16 May 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 1.

[212]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 124. See also Salzman's account of Robins's departure, *Reform and Revolution*, 270–80.

[213]Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (1918; repr., New York: Arno, 1970), 248–49. For a very different conclusion, see Kalpaschnikoff, *A Prisoner of Trotsky's*, 32. Kalpaschnikoff blamed Robins and the Red Cross mission for his months'-long imprisonment in Petrograd in 1918. After the book was published, with a damning introduction by Francis, some of its claims were vigorously denied by Robins and Wardwell. See correspondence between Keppel and Wardwell in ANRC papers, box 866, Russia—General.

Like Thompson before him, Robins thought he would be better able to convince his government to extend support to the Bolsheviks from Washington.[214] He apparently believed "that if he could get one hour with President Wilson he would persuade the President to recognize the Bolshevik government."[215] But Robins was not warmly received in the United States. Miles asked Lansing to arrange for Robins's baggage to be thoroughly checked upon his landing at Seattle, and the returning commissioner was duly harassed. Robins was unable to make much headway with the administration, and never met with President Wilson. During the growing Red Scare, even the Red Cross abandoned him.[216] He joined Thompson, Thacher, Judson, Lamont, and other non-radical Americans who urged US–Soviet accord, but all to no end.

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This chapter has shown how representatives of the American Red Cross and YMCA dealt with the Bolshevik revolution and the initial months of Soviet rule. Because of the new government's eagerness for good relations with the Allies, and especially with the United States, the advent of Bolshevik rule did not bring serious disturbances to the relief workers' activities. The significant disruptions that occurred—the end of work for Russian soldiers by February stands out in this regard—came only as an indirect consequence of Bolshevik rule. Red Cross and YMCA men quickly recognized that there was still much to be gained from continuing their work in Russia, despite their initial reluctance to accept Lenin's victory over Kerensky.

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[214]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 272. This was perhaps a naive belief, given Robins's history with President Wilson. See McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 83–84, and Salzman, *Reform and Revolution*, 176.

[215]Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy*, 302.

[216]Williams, "Raymond Robins," 155–57; McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 298–99.

The relationship between the Bolshevik government and the Americans—and indeed the other Allies—was a complex one in the months between the November revolution and the spring of 1918. Individual representatives of western countries, including Ambassador Francis, were often left to decide for themselves just how to deal with the new regime. Communication with Washington was difficult, and news about happenings elsewhere was rumour-filled and thus unreliable. After some initial hesitation, the Allied representatives decided that they had better have dealings with the Bolsheviks, even though they strenuously objected to their policies. By the time Robins left central Russia the Bolsheviks had been in power for more than six months. Lenin was no mere flash in the pan.

Some aspects of the work of the Red Cross mission to Russia are well-known to specialists of American–Russian relations in this period. Primarily, it is the top-level political efforts of Robins and Thompson that scholars have researched. These were, at the time, and for later historians, the most significant part of Red Cross activity in Russia. Robins was a key go-between for the ambassador and the Bolshevik leadership in the early days of Soviet rule. Impressed with his own access to the Soviet leadership and overconfident in his diplomatic talents, Robins spent a great deal of time and energy attempting to bring the Russians back on the Allied side. He did so at the request of Ambassador Francis, who shied away from direct dealings with Lenin's government. He continued to meet frequently with Trotsky and had numerous meetings with other Soviet officials, including Lenin, in the early months of 1918. That Robins was relied upon by both American representatives and top Bolshevik officials speaks to the confusion of the Russian situation and of American policy vis-à-vis the revolutionary regime in the early months of its existence. Lest Robins's quasi-diplomatic role seem highly unusual, it is worth noting that in later years, representatives of

American philanthropic agencies acted similarly. Prior to American recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933, leaders of the Joint Jewish Distribution Committee "relayed the Kremlin's overtures to Washington," according to Jonathan Dekel-Chen. "Even if the State Department disagreed, the Soviets considered JDC officials to be conduits to the highest levels of American government." Furthermore, the Americans accepted this task. They "firmly believed that improved relations between Moscow and Washington benefited" their cause.[217] The same can be said of Robins. Acting as a political go-between helped him achieve Red Cross goals which were, in any case, one and the same with official US aims.

Both Robins and Thompson were determined to convince the American government and Red Cross War Council to continue to send relief supplies and otherwise aid Russia. Robins used his standing with the Bolsheviks to further relations between their two countries; Thompson assumed his prominence on Wall Street would make him heard in Washington. Both men were opposed to the Bolshevik revolutionary agenda, but believed there was no point ignoring the people in power. They accepted the reality of Soviet rule, and devoted most of their time to American–Russian accord. The United States, they believed, would do well to recognize the new regime, a not uncommon view among Americans working in Russia at this time. Robins's work was marked by a spirit of make-do-ness.[218] He and Thompson supported recognition of and cooperation with the Bolsheviks because of the necessity of doing so to keep Russia out of German hands and friendly with the Allies.

YMCA work in Russia at this time was hampered by disorder caused by jurisdictional uncertainties. More so than the Red Cross, with its limited reach outside the two main central

[217]Dekel-Chen, "Unlikely Triangle," 374.

[218]Even while he courted Trotsky, Robins continued to support one of the pro-Kerensky individuals he and Thompson had worked closely with. Saul, *War and Revolution,* 212.

Russian cities, the association and its American secretaries experienced the breakdown of the armed forces and the continuing revolution in all its complexity. The political confusion may have given the association some leeway because it took time for Russia's new leaders to decide they did not want the association spreading its gospel all over the country. While the war continued and soldier morale and well-being remained a concern, the YMCA found itself in accord with the Bolsheviks, military authorities, and those whom it welcomed into its soldiers' clubs and Mayaks. In the spring, American relief workers had little idea that the situation, and their position in Soviet Russia, would soon drastically change.

The key point here is that Red Cross and YMCA efforts continued despite the many challenges present. Stopping work was never seriously considered. The political situation had not changed the reality of Russia's military and strategic importance, and even after Brest-Litovsk there remained reasons for continued Allied activity in Russia. The Americans could not have known what the future would hold—that the Bolsheviks would attack organized religion, expel foreign workers and take their property, and bring about their international isolation for the next two decades. The removal of the tsarist system was the most significant political event in recent Russian history; the advent of Bolshevik rule, while unfortunate, was interpreted by Americans as just part of Russia's working out its own post-autocratic reality. American optimism remained strong. Although Robins's political efforts had suffered a blow, this was, he hoped, only a temporary setback. All over the country YMCA secretaries were setting up a variety of programs and reaching out to new groups of people. Red Cross representatives had new projects to keep them busy, too. Very soon, though, Allied–Soviet relations took a turn for the worse. The Czechoslovaks were partly to blame.

CHAPTER 3

"Sweetness and Light into the Heart of Siberia"[1]
The Czechoslovaks, 1918

> These American "uncles" as they were called, coming in daily contact with hundreds of Czech soldiers in almost isolated areas, brought to these Bohemian soldiers the encouragement and inspiration which they so much needed in their bitter and discouraging struggle to hold the line for the Allies against Bolshevik and German aggression during the summer and fall of 1918.[2]

> Those days with these wonderful Czechs when under fire, on forced marches on scant rations and all that goes to make war of that kind shall long be treasured by me as days when I beheld the gold of human nobility coming to the top refined by the suffering through which it passed.[3]

During most of 1918 the efforts of some American relief workers in Russia were focused on Czechoslovak soldiers. The YMCA in particular took up their cause. The association's involvement with them began with a few men travelling with scattered regiments that winter and spring. Once the Czechoslovaks rose against local Soviet administrations blocking their way out of Russia, American secretaries became more heavily involved. Soon the Red Cross was also playing a support role, and by early fall it was running nearly all Czechoslovak medical facilities in Russia. As an outgrowth of these activities, Red Cross and YMCA personnel provided medical and auxiliary services to members of the various anti-Bolshevik Russian forces. The decision to do so had less to do with politics than with proximity, but it set the stage for outright anti-Bolshevism within relief society ranks. In the summer, as American secretaries were running programs for Czechoslovaks in Vladivostok, fighting broke out in Siberia between the foreigners and forces loyal to the Bolshevik regime. Very quickly the YMCA and soon the American Red Cross became embroiled in this mini-war.

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[1]Gleason, Siberian Report Letter No. 9, 26 Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—George Gleason—1918.

[2]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 39.

[3]Duncan to Fleming, 25 Nov 1918, in HIA, William Young Duncan papers, box 1.

The Allied military intervention in Siberia followed not long after. With the arrival of Allied troops in August, both organizations expanded the scope of their work yet again, but the Czechoslovaks remained the primary target of American relief efforts through the fall.

This chapter discusses American assistance to Czechoslovaks in the context of the looming—and then actual—Allied intervention in Russia. It presents a case study of American interest in one specific group of men, a group whose members compared favourably to their less modern Slav brothers, the Russians. The chapter also explains how efforts to work with the Bolsheviks turned into assistance to anti-Bolsheviks in the Russian East. The switch was not automatic but was made definite with the start of the Allied military intervention.

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The first two chapters of this dissertation argued that although the majority of Americans were opposed to Bolshevik philosophy and Soviet policy, they found ways to cooperate with the new Soviet regime and local authorities in Moscow, Petrograd, and elsewhere. During the winter of 1917–18 when Russia was technically still on the Allied side, YMCA secretaries kept up their work for the country's soldiers. Red Cross representatives, for their part, saw civilian suffering in Petrograd and put their displeasure with the current Russian government aside to arrange for the distribution of milk to infants and children. Based as they were in Bolshevik-controlled parts of the former Russian empire, and at times cut off from the outside world by nearby German forces, it made practical sense to make do with the situation at hand. Many Americans worked with the Soviet leadership even while they looked forward to the day when the Bolsheviks would be out of power or their policies substantially modified.

Americans were far from unique in this practice. British and French officials also hoped the revolution would fail but hedged their bets in the meantime. All three main Allied leaders and their representatives flirted with the Soviet leadership on and off after November 1917. They had little inkling that Russia's current rulers would be in power much longer. They believed rather the opposite, convinced the revolutionary period would end with the defeat of the Bolsheviks. But with the First World War still on—with no signs of letting up—there was little time to waste simply waiting for the government to change. For reasons of military expediency, cooperation with the Soviets was envisioned by the Allied powers to bring Russia back into the Entente. Even the ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk by the Soviet government in mid-March did not mark the end of Allied advances toward the Soviets, and vice versa. The Allies knew the peace had been signed under duress. It did not necessarily mark the end of Russia's usefulness. By its terms Soviet Russia had ceded an immense swath of population- and resource-rich territory to the Germans. This angered those elements in Russia with little use for Lenin and his revolutionary plans.

Less than a week after the treaty's ratification, on 21 March, the Germans launched a major offensive on the western front. It was the first large-scale drive of the year, and the first time the Russian army could not be counted on to supply any countervailing offensive support in the East. American troops were in evidence in larger numbers than during the previous summer or fall, but they were not yet making a big difference on the fighting fields of Europe. The Allies believed they were thus in a precarious military position; a renewed eastern front was hoped for. They considered sending ground troops to Russia to keep Germany from getting hold of Allied war material, Russia's natural resources, and the country's extensive transportation network. There were serious discussions about using

Allied troops to help reopen an eastern front against the Central powers. Such a military intervention did not have to mean invasion. The Allies hoped as late as the spring that the Bolsheviks would invite their troops in as protection against feared German aggression. Over the next several months the situation in Russia was watched closely by Allied officials.

In addition to hoping Russia would return to a state of belligerency, the western powers were cognizant of what the Bolsheviks referred to as "counterrevolutionary" groups. Although by the time they signed the treaty the Bolsheviks controlled a large part of the former Russian empire, opposition forces were coming together in a few different regions: the north, the southeast, the western borderlands, and in Siberia. The Allies were aware of these anti-Bolshevik, or White Russian, forces. In late 1917 the Americans, British, and French had first moved to assist the Whites in southern and western Russia.[4] Consul General Maddin Summers, who had caused so much trouble for Robins, was among the American officials who made contact with anti-Bolshevik leaders.[5] Very little actual economic or military assistance made its way to where it was needed, but the potential for significant assistance was there. Allied agents could be found in a number of different parts of the former Russian empire, from the western borderlands to the southernmost extremes of the Caucasus, and from the Arctic towns near the White Sea to Vladivostok off the Sea of Japan. In all these areas the promise, if not necessarily the delivery, of Allied aid and political backing helped bolster White confidence in their eventual military success in the emerging Russian civil war.

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[4]George A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917–1921: A Study in the Politics and Diplomacy of the Russian Civil War* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 27–31.

[5]Acting on his own initiative, he met with Brusilov, and sent Vice-Consul DeWitt Clinton Poole to contact Alexeev, Kaledin, and Kornilov, the main anti-Bolshevik leaders in the winter of 1917–18. Summers gave them all strong moral support. Williams, "Raymond Robins," 104.

Although the Allies tried to work with the Soviet government in the first half of 1918, they increasingly pinned their hopes on anti-Bolshevik forces. Allied leaders and key advisors came to believe that a military intervention would help these groups and protect their own military and economic interests. Beginning early in the year, the Japanese pushed for a military intervention in the East. Allied powers including Britain and France supported the plan as a means of ensuring neither Allied war material nor Russia's resources would fall into German hands. Policy toward Soviet Russia waxed and waned in the winter and spring.[6] The French were the first to give up on rapprochement with the Bolsheviks, doing so in April. The British did not need much convincing to follow suit, and in July President Wilson gave the go-ahead to American troops landing at Vladivostok. The reasons for the policy shift were varied, and included ones that spoke to the specific political and economic interests of the power in question, as well as to the general military situation facing them all. The presence of the Czechoslovak corps was a significant factor in Allied planning and policy, and it was what eventually brought the Americans on-side with Japan and their western European allies.

In 1914, when Austria-Hungary went to war, the whole empire was mobilized. Like the Russian empire, the Habsburg state included a number of ethnic minority groups within its borders. Some of them aspired to independence as nation-states. The Czechs were among the most politically astute of these groups, and their national leaders saw the war as a potential opportunity to win independence for themselves and their close kin, the Slovaks. Lead by

[6]Betty Miller Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 142–56, 159–61, 165–69.

Tomáš Masaryk, a distinguished professor of philosophy, they began a campaign to ingratiate themselves with the Allied powers. They pushed for Czechs and Slovaks resident abroad to be allowed to fight in Allied armies. A Czechoslovak military unit that had already been raised in Russia showed this was possible. A Czechoslovak battalion was established at Kiev in August 1914 as an independent unit of the Russian armed forces. Unfortunately for Masaryk, who hoped tales of Czechoslovak bravery would win converts to his cause among world leaders, Russian authorities did not allow it to engage the enemy directly.

The March revolution presented the Czechs with an unexpected opportunity. The French were "desperate for manpower in the West," and with tsarist officials no longer in charge of the battalion's affairs, the French approached the Czechoslovak National Council to inquire about expanding the small Czechoslovak force in Russia. The two sides reached an agreement in June, and by the end of 1917 "an autonomous Czecho-Slovak army in Russia under the general direction of the French Supreme Command" was officially in place. The Czechoslovak regiments proved their loyalty and usefulness to the Allies during the Kerensky offensive in July 1917. After that, the forty thousand or so corps members were housed in and around Kiev, in Russian Ukraine.[7]

The French, along with the other Allies, planned to move the battalion to France as soon as possible. Once there, the soldiers would be used against Germany. After defeating the Central powers they hoped to return to an independent Czechoslovakia. The ending of hostilities between Russia and the Central powers and the disbandment of the Russian army left the men stranded in Russia with no means of escape. The geographically-easiest route—through German lines and into eastern Europe—was not available to them because of

[7]Ibid., 11, 62, 69.

ongoing fighting. Instead, Allied planners had them leaving via Arkhangel'sk or Murmansk in the North, or Vladivostok in the Far East, and came up with a variety of schemes for how they would go about doing so.[8]

President Wilson was less enthusiastic than his Allied colleagues about Czechoslovak independence. Spokesmen for the national cause in the United States argued Czechoslovaks were ready for statehood because of the economic and cultural development of Bohemia and the existence of a historical Czech state.[9] Americans such as Samuel Harper and Charles Crane were impressed with the Czechoslovak attachment to the Allied cause and their own political independence. They also respected the high levels of education, urbanization, industrialization, and other indicators of early twentieth century modernity in Czech society.[10] When Austrian authorities threatened to execute Masaryk's daughter, the news made headlines across the United States, and did much to publicize the Czechoslovak cause.[11] Still, Wilson was cautious. In his January 1918 Fourteen Points speech he came out in favour of the "autonomous development" of the subject peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but stopped short of calling for their outright independence.[12]

By then, American YMCA secretaries were already hard at work with the Czechoslovak regiments. Two Czech-speaking secretaries, Reverend Kenneth D. Miller and Charles M. H. Atherton, had been specially sent to Russia in September 1917 to work with Czechoslovak divisions on the southwestern front near Kiev. They were soon joined by three

[8]For more on the specifics of the Allied plans see ibid.,152–53, 159–65, 167–69, 171, 185–88, 201.
[9]Ibid., 48.
[10]Ibid., 26–27. For some statistics, see Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 172.
[11]Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 30–31.
[12]Peter Neville, *Tomáš Masaryk and Eduard Beneš: Czechoslovakia,* Makers of the Modern World: The Peace Conferences of 1919–23 and Their Aftermath (London: Haus, 2010), 49.

more men.[13] Before going to Russia, Miller had been in charge of the settlement house attached to the Jan Hus Presbyterian Church in New York. (Settlement houses were "sturdy multistory and multipurpose buildings, usually located right in the heart of urban slums," which offered "a wide variety of programs to help the poor." They "promoted moral reform" and "championed social engineering,"[14] much like YMCAs.) The *Czechoslovak Review* claimed he was "probably the only old stock American who [could] speak the Czech language fluently." "Big" Atherton, a retired professional basketball player, was one of Miller's colleagues from the settlement house.[15]

Upon his arrival in Kiev, Miller discovered "a crying need for our work."[16] His and Atherton's subsequent efforts brought the YMCA into a relationship with a new national army. There was a sense among the Americans that working with it would give the association a leg up in the hoped-for new state of Czechoslovakia: "If Bohemia is made free at the end of the war," Atherton wrote in January, "it will pave the way for a great work [by the YMCA] in Bohemia."[17] (After attending a YMCA lecture much later, in Siberia, one soldier agreed that "if the Association starts work in Bohemia it will have 50,000 enthusiastic supporters as soon as [corps members] get back there."[18]) From the beginning, the YMCA

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[13]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 37.

[14]Judith Sealander, "Curing Evils at their Source: The Arrival of Scientific Giving," in Freidman and McGarvie, *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility*, 227.

[15]Editor's note within Kenneth Miller, "With the Czechoslovak Army in Russia," *Czechoslovak Review* 2, no. 11 (Nov 1918): 170; "History of Jan Hus Church Presbyterian Church and Neighborhood House," http://www.janhus.org/history.htm; accessed 13 Apr 2011. Fellow secretary George Gleason referred to "Big Atherton" in his Siberian Report Letter No. 1, 19 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—George Gleason—1918.

[16]Miller report, 13 Jan 1918, in "Notes from the Field," in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918. See also Atherton to Heald, 23 Jan 1918, in Colton papers, vol. 2.

[17]Atherton to Heald, 23 Jan 1918, in Colton papers, vol. 2.

[18]K. D. Miller, "Carrying on with the Czecho-Slovaks: Y.M.C.A. Men Esteemed and Beloved as Their 'Uncle from America,'" *Křestanski Listy* 21, no. 50 (11 Dec 1919): 2. A copy of this article may be found in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czech A W 1918–19.

men had "the most hearty cooperation" of the Czechoslovak military authorities. And the work was appreciated. Miller reported from Ukraine in mid-January that a recently opened hut had been "crammed full day and night."[19] This and other huts were not used long: Soon the Czechoslovaks were on their way out of Russia.

For the moment, their future was uncertain. Political problems increased for the force after the Bolsheviks came to power. In late January 1918, the Ukrainian Rada (parliament), which had nominal authority over the area where the Czechoslovaks were stationed, proclaimed its independence and began to sue for peace with the Germans.[20] By the end of February the Czechoslovaks had secured sixty troop trains and were on the move away from Ukraine. As they headed east they were chased by advancing German forces and also clashed with Bolshevik troops.[21] After the Samara conference in March, half a dozen American secretaries joined Czechoslovak echelons (groups of trains).[22] "Each man had one or two cars fitted up as a small club and stocked with a limited supply of the various articles needed for Y activities."[23] Despite their small numbers—Atherton, for example, had "five troops trains, of sixty cars each, to take care of, an utter impossibility"—the Americans acquired an excellent reputation among the Czech and Slovak soldiers, who referred to them as their "uncles from America." For their part the "uncles" were enamoured of the Czechoslovaks. According to Edward Heald, who headed up Czechoslovak army work for the YMCA, they

[19]Miller report, 13 Jan 1918, in "Notes from the Field," in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[20]Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 74.

[21]Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Army without a Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 62, 69–74.

[22]Atherton to Vincent Pisek, 1 Apr 1918, in YMCA archives, World War I records, box 3, Minutes — C.A.A.P.O.W. (OIC) Apr 1918–Dec 1919. Another source claims 8 secretaries accompanied the Czechs across Siberia: E. T. Heald to C. H. Watson, 2 Jul 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19.

[23]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 38.

were strong, loyal, intelligent, progressive, eager to learn and please, and hardworking men. After too long under foreign rule, they were now ready, with American tutelage, for statehood. YMCA secretaries saw themselves as having a part to play in making this happen. The Czechs were also ideal candidates for religious conversion. According to Heald, who was eager to ensure continued support from New York headquarters for his work, their "political experience" had made them agnostics and atheists, but the YMCA men were "impressed more and more with the essentially Christian character of their spirit." The Americans believed that if Christianity were presented to the Czechs in the "right way," it would "appeal to them and win them." Heald surely hoped that his comments about the Czechs would have the same effect on the Association's budget men in New York.[24] Heald sensed that there was a "peculiar sense of fellowship felt by both the Americans and Czechs, and expressed by the latter by the way they familiarly termed the Association secretary as their American 'strychek' (Uncle)."[25]

Heald's views were shared by Miller, who heaped effusive praise on the "heroic" Czechoslovaks. In a report written about the spring of 1918, he narrated the story of the corps. The spirit of the men was "indefatigable and invincible," Miller wrote. Most had deserted from the Austrian army to fight alongside their Russian "brothers." They had taken a stand against autocracy and foreign domination, Miller related, only to be disappointed by the Russian refusal to let most of them enlist in the tsarist army and the subsequent death of so many Czechoslovaks in Crimean prison camps. In the summer of 1917, once they were

[24]Heald to C. H. Watson, 2 Jul 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19.

[25]Heald, "With the Czecho Slovak and Other Allied Armies in Siberia (An Account of Y.M.C.A. Service)," n.d., ca. Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19.

organized into their own fighting units, the Czechoslovaks were the heroes of the Kerensky offensive. These ferocious fighters, the report continued, made key gains, but were once again let down by Russian soldiers who quickly abandoned the fight "and gave themselves up to wild flight."[26] (In reality, the Battle of Zborov was but a minor affair in an unimportant sector.[27]) In Miller's telling, the valiant Czechoslovaks remained disciplined and kept up their morale in the face of the collapse of the eastern front. They were singularly focused on contributing to the defeat of the Central powers. When the time came to travel thousands of miles across Siberia, he continued, "most people who have been [there would be] staggered by the magnitude of the task, but not the Czechs. . . . It is one of the most daring moves that has been made by any military force during the war, and it certainly is in itself a convincing argument of the earnestness of the Czechs and their determination to fight for their freedom at whatever cost and with whatever sacrifice."[28] In other words, these men were fighting for the highest of goals: freedom. "The finest fellows in the world . . . these wonderful men," according to Miller's colleague Atherton, thought only of "free Bohemia." Atherton claimed the Czechoslovaks felt "the utmost contempt and disgust" for the Russian peasantry, a feeling Atherton shared.[29] The comparison between them and educated, valiant Czechoslovaks struggling for freedom and democracy did not work in the Russians' favour. Another American observer, surveying the scene in Vladivostok, lavished praise on the Czechoslovaks. They were, she wrote, "the one point of civilization in a sea of hopeless

[26]Kenneth D. Miller, "With the Czecho-Slovak Army," n.d., ca. Mar 1918, in World War I records, box 3, Minutes—C.A.A.P.O.W. (OIC) Apr 1918–Dec 1919.

[27]My thanks to Dalibor Vacha for pointing out Miller's—and contemporary Czechoslovak propaganda's—exaggeration of the role of the Czechoslovaks during the Kerensky offensive.

[28]Miller, "With the Czecho-Slovak Army."

[29]Charles Atherton to Vincent Pisek, 1 Apr 1918, in World War I records, box 3, Minutes—C.A.A.P.O.W. (OIC) Apr 1918–Dec 1919.

disintegration."[30]

Miller stressed that the United States—including the YMCA—had a duty to assist the Czechoslovaks. They depended upon America with a "faith" that "makes one tremble."

> They look up to us and cling to us as the last bulwark of international righteousness against the tide of imperialism and militarism which threatens to engulf us and them. Their faith in us must not be disappointed. There must be no time of disillusionment in regard to America, such as there has been in regard to Russia. The Czechs have had enough of tragedy in their national history. They also have had far more than their share of German domination. They have earned the right to govern themselves, and the world must see to it that that right is denied to them no longer.

"To a man intelligent and progressive," the Czechs were "just the sort of people to fall in line with the Y.M.C.A. army program." What American secretaries represented was more important than the services they provided. These included, first, "the incarnation of the American ideal of fighting to save democracy, and second and most important the incarnation of the Christian ideal of service." YMCA secretaries were "living proofs" of America's interest in "the smaller nations." Czechs and Slovaks could learn much from Americans; the reverse was also true:

> These men should stand before the American people as a living embodiment of the right of the small nations of the earth to govern themselves, and their presence amongst us should make us ashamed that we have sacrificed so little for our country and for the cause. For these men have given all that they have, and are going two-thirds of the way around the world looking for a chance to fight for their freedom. May their journey, with all its hardships and all its sacrifices bring to these men their reward, a safe return home to a free Bohemia.[31]

In the context of contemporary American rhetoric and Wilson's stated war aims, Miller could hardly have come up with better reasons why the Czechoslovaks deserved US support. His reference to Americans' guilty conscience about not having contributed much to the Allied war against the Central powers made his argument stronger. In early January 1918 Miller declared he was "absolutely confident that the Czechoslovaks will, as an outcome of the war,

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[30]Olive Gilbreath, "Men of Bohemia," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 138, no. 824 (Jan 1919): 248.
[31]Miller, "With the Czecho-Slovak Army."

secure their political independence, for which they have longed for generations, and which they so richly deserve."[32] Less than a year later, they did just that.

The Czechoslovaks' journey eastward was anything but uneventful. In late March, an agreement was reached between Czechoslovak leaders and the Bolshevik government that gave the soldiers permission to leave the country, and be only partially disarmed. Despite the understanding, the echelons were regularly harassed by local Soviet officials. They were forced to give up more and more of their weapons as they travelled east. The situation was fraught with tension. Among the complications were orders and counterorders that created significant confusion; fears about the corps' arrival in different towns that made officials jumpy; and attempted Bolshevik recruitment, which angered Czechoslovak soldiers and officers alike.[33] The Czechoslovaks tried to explain that they were "not looking for trouble, but only want[ed] to get out of the country." Yet Russian officials were wary. Atherton explained Soviet reticence as follows: "You see, this is the best organized and strongest fighting force in Russia now, and these dumb fools of Bolsheviks are afraid of us. They think we want to grab everything as we go, and are afraid that if we get to Vladivostok we will re-arm and turn against them."[34] (In fact, this is exactly what happened!) The "strongest fighting force in Russia" grew in size on the journey as the regiments collected prisoners of war from Siberian camps. By mid-May this Czechoslovak army, with a strength of perhaps sixty thousand men, was spread out along the railway, its regiments scattered in clusters

[32]Miller, "With the Czechoslovak Army in Russia," 170. Although published months later, the article was signed 4 Jan 1918. Miller himself later "won the eternal love of the entire Czech Army": "Siberian Expedition Report by G. S. Phelps," Part II, 3 Nov 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[33]Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 133–40, 157, 163, 171–72.

[34]Atherton to Pisek, 1 Apr 1918, in World War I records, box 3, Minutes—C.A.A.P.O.W. (OIC) Apr 1918–Dec 1919.

throughout the Urals, Siberia, and the Russian Far East.[35]

The first Czechoslovaks arrived in Vladivostok in late April. This is where they would stay for the time being, thanks to Allied indecision about their fate and a lack of ships to transport them elsewhere. Vladivostok—"ruler of the East" in Russian—is located in a strategically important spot: at the tip of a narrow strip of Russian land between China to the west and Japan across the sea to the east. The heavily-fortified city was founded in 1860 as a naval outpost, and was home to the Russian Far Eastern Fleet. Four decades later it became the eastern terminus of the grand Trans-Siberian Railway (completed in 1903). By 1917 many barracks dotted the hillsides surrounding the urban area, most of them built during the Russo–Japanese War (1904–5). The city was a frontier town,[36] its permanent inhabitants a mixture of Russians, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. The First World War brought economic benefits, but by 1917 conditions had worsened, infrastructure was in disrepair, and Vladivostok was overcrowded with refugees from throughout Russia and parts further west. The town's population had increased dramatically, and support services were stretched thin or non-existent. The newly arrived Czechs and Slovaks occupied barracks outside the city, generally content to wait for what the Allies had promised them: transportation back to western Europe.

"Vladi," as it was popularly known among foreigners, was an important Allied base during the war. This was in part because its impressive natural harbour was accessible year-

[35]Estimates of the force's size vary greatly, from about 40,000 in early to 80,000 or more by the fall. The corps did recruit and otherwise accept new members during its time in Siberia.

[36]For more on the city, see Birgitta M. Ingemanson, "Vladivostok: Russia's Frontier Town on the Pacific," 119–30, in *The Siberian Saga: A History of Russia's Wild East*, ed. Eva-Maria Stolberg (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005).

round with the help of ice breakers. When Russia was still a belligerent, the Allies shipped war material, industrial equipment, and other supplies to the city. These filled its waterfront storage facilities and inland warehouses. By the end of 1917 nearly six hundred fifty thousand tons of military, industrial, and other goods were stockpiled there. Once all indoor storage space was used up, the goods were piled in vacant lots and fields, and on surrounding hillsides.[37] The revolutionary turmoil that shook the city in late 1917 and into 1918 worried the Allies. They did not want the war supplies to fall into enemy hands. British and Japanese warships arrived in January to keep an eye on the situation. An American cruiser followed the next month. The Allies had reason for concern. The local pro-Moscow soviet took power in Vladivostok in November, and not long thereafter began moving Allied-owned military stores into the interior. In the spring of 1918, there were rival centres of power, much like in many other Russian towns: a Bolshevik-controlled soviet and a less radical city duma with close ties to the local zemstvo. The American consul general in Vladivostok, John K. Caldwell, reported no trouble in the city until late March when local Bolsheviks took over the telegraph office. Allied officials were already reaching the end of their patience with local authorities. Concerned about their ability to communicate with their own governments, they wondered if they should send in their "men-of-war."[38] Of on-going concern to the foreigners were the forty carloads of Allied war material being shipped out each day by the Bolsheviks.[39] They did not want this to continue.

Tensions reached the breaking point in early April. After a deadly incident involving Japanese merchants, the Japanese landed troops, citing the need to protect their nationals.

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[37]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:87.
[38]Caldwell to SecState, 25 and 30 Mar 1918, both in NACP, RG 84, CP, Vladivostok, vol. 4.
[39]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:145.

The British soon brought ashore a small group of their own men, ostensibly to guard the area around the British consulate. These moves did not lead to full-scale invasion. This small but clear show of force was all the Allies thought necessary to ameliorate the situation, and later that month both the British and Japanese removed their men from the city.[40] Allied warships in the harbour or not, local political developments continued apace. The Vladivostok soviet shut down the (more moderate) city duma in early May.[41] Three weeks later thousands of people took to the streets to protest the mayor's removal. All was peaceful, Caldwell noted, "in all probability due to the presence of the foreign warships and their patrols throughout the city."[42] No doubt another reason for the relative calm despite Bolshevik intrigue and frequent worker strikes was the growing number of Czechoslovak soldiers living just outside the city core.

By early May YMCA secretaries had set up huts and were providing services to Czechoslovak regiments in their barracks. These included a wide range of programs such as language classes in English and French, moving picture screenings, libraries, reading rooms, tea service, games, athletics, concerts, theatre productions, and other activities and entertainments. The intention behind all these offerings was to keep the soldiers away from the city and its many vices. Busy, happy, and socially and intellectually engaged men would, the Americans hoped, find little reason to cause or get into trouble in Vladivostok. YMCA work for Czechoslovaks grew rapidly in May and June. Seven tea rooms served seven thousand glasses daily, there were "kino performances" at three spots each week, and there

[40]Ibid., 1:144–46, 150–51.
[41]Caldwell to SecState, 4 May 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Vladivostok, vol. 4.
[42]Caldwell to SecState, 23 May 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Vladivostok, vol. 4.

were eight "attractive club rooms" in operation, with a ninth ready to open.[43]

The YMCA's three-pronged mission, to contribute to the well-being of young men in body, mind, and spirit, was—if association reports are to be believed—readily welcomed by the Czechoslovak military. The association's "greatest challenge" in its Vladivostok army work was a newly formed battalion of about a thousand men recruited from prison camps. These men were "broken by their terrible experiences." Czechoslovak army officials were, according to Heald, "trying to make new soldiers out of these men, but they realize that this can be done only if their manhood can be restored. If ever the Association confronted a concrete task in remaking men, it confronts it here,- a challenge that calls for as much humility as it does faith in the transforming power of the spirit of Jesus." In another report Heald noted that the Czechoslovaks "warmly welcome[d] the programme of the Association." There was never "a finer chance for the YMCA to rebuild men," he claimed.[44]

The situation in the interior was also worrisome in May. An unfortunate isolated incident changed the Czechoslovak corps' outlook and had a significant impact on Allied and Soviet policy toward them. A group of soldiers, on their journey eastward, were in the rail yards outside Cheliabinsk on 14 May; so too were pro-Soviet Hungarian prisoners of war, headed in the opposite direction, and destined for repatriation through Soviet–German lines. (After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, the [now technically former] POWs in Russia were slowly being repatriated.) A rash act of violence on the part of one POW wounded a

[43]Heald to Watson, 2 Jul 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19. See other letters in this file for more details on the early work in Vladivostok.

[44]Quotes from Heald to Sneyd, 10 May 1918, in World War I records, box 3, Minutes—C.A.A.P.O.W. (OIC) Apr 1918–Dec 1919; and Heald, "The Association with the Checho'-Slovacs," 1 Jun 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19. He continued: "They go out of their way to make the way easy for us. They say we [can] have everything we want. We could not look for more favorable cooperation with our own army officials."

Czech soldier. His comrades, seeing blood, retaliated. Local soviet authorities then arrested several Czechoslovaks. Tensions had been rising between the corps and the Bolsheviks for some time, and this action did not sit well with them. The Czechoslovaks occupied the city centre and forcibly freed their comrades. They had little desire to entangle themselves in a Russian civil war. But this was what happened when Bolshevik authorities over-reacted to the events at Cheliabinsk. Upon hearing of the incident, Soviet war minister and Red Army head Trotsky ordered the complete disarmament of the Czechoslovaks on pain of death. The foreigners were unwilling to lay down their arms and voted to fight their way to Vladivostok if necessary. They no longer trusted the Bolsheviks with their safety. By 25 May fighting had begun at many points along the railway. At the end of the month several towns were already under their control, including Mariinsk, Novo Nikolaevsk, Cheliabinsk, and Tomsk.[45] As the Czechoslovaks forced their way east, they were very quickly able to secure stations along the Trans-Siberian Railway, bolstering anti-Bolshevik groups forced underground during the previous few months. Soviet power was weak. It was in the main easily toppled.[46]

The Czechoslovak break with the Bolsheviks was a boon for White Russian "counterrevolutionaries." The movement of a large (and growing), disciplined, and determined group of men across Russia presented an enormous opportunity for them. Moreover, the Red Army was still in its infancy and not yet a significant fighting force. The time was right for a White strike against the Bolsheviks. The first group to benefit from the Czechoslovaks' action was the Socialist Revolutionary underground in the Volga region. A

[45]Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 173–85. See also Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 47–48; Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:151–56, 168, 172. Thank you to Dalibor Vacha for correcting a common error found in the literature, that is, that the wounded Czech was killed; he was not.

[46]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 100–2.

group of Czechoslovaks passing through Samara a few days after fighting began was convinced to pause and overthrow the local Bolsheviks. This action was a key turning point in the Russian civil war. It allowed for the formation of *Komuch*, the anti-Bolshevik Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly. *Komuch* soon established a "People's Army" under the command of Colonel Vladimir Oskarovich Kappel'. In the first week of July the Czechoslovaks advanced on Ufa and Orenburg. Between them, the Czechoslovaks and the new White army won Irkutsk on 12 July, Ekaterinburg ten days later, and Simbirsk in late July. In mid-July, as the Czechoslovak corps seemed poised to march into Ekaterinburg, the former Tsar Nicholas II, his immediate family, and members of their entourage, then imprisoned in the city, were executed.[47] In Moscow, meanwhile, Trotsky had slowly begun to build his new army. After the loss of Samara, he "ordered the first compulsory call-up of workers"; after the Czechoslovak First Regiment took Kazan in early August, he did the same with commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Trotsky himself left for the front on 8 August to bolster morale and shake up the military command.[48]

The changeover of power in Samara, Novo Nikolaevsk, and elsewhere had consequences for American YMCA secretaries working in those cities. Three secretaries in Samara "undertook some Red Cross field service" after the Bolsheviks were driven out of the city. "They were captured attending some Bolsheviki wounded," the senior YMCA man in Russia later recalled, "and were suspected by the Czechs [of] being spies. . . . They barely escaped being shot on the spot and only their American passports saved them." After some

[47]Ibid., 56–58, 100; Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 184; George Stewart, *The White Armies of Russia: A Chronicle of Counter-Revolution and Allied Intervention* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 111. For more on *Komuch* see Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 63–66.

[48]Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, 417–19. Thanks to Dalibor Vacha for the information about the independent Czechoslovak victory in Kazan. The regiment, commanded by a Russian, went against orders from Czechoslovak headquarters.

trying moments and a court martial, the commander dropped the charges.[49] Seemingly operating under the policy "of helping in friendly Association work for people of all parties and classes in every possible way demonstrating unselfish interest of America in Russian people," there was YMCA work on both sides of the battle lines. Although there is no evidence YMCA men were involved in assisting the retreating Red Army, ongoing work in Moscow included—among many other activities—"instructing the so-called 'Red' army regiments in setting-up exercises at the Soviet encampment" near the city. At the same time, the secretaries in the Volga region—there were five of them in Samara at the time of the uprising—took up work for People's Army recruits. Association men set up "welfare centers" for new recruits in the Samara and Ufa districts. YMCA huts, cars, and boats in the rear and at the front served both White Russians and Czechoslovaks.[50] Because there was no Red Cross presence, YMCA service "included medical and sanitary dressings, and even clothing for the sick and wounded."[51]

There were a few other groups that emerged stronger after the Czechoslovak uprising. On 23 June the Provisional Siberian Government was proclaimed at Omsk under the leadership of the liberal lawyer Peter Vasil'evich Vologodskii. Former tsarist army officers had gathered in Omsk by this point, and they helped set up a new Siberian Army. The first general mobilization was announced in late June. In the Transbaikal region further to the east, the Cossacks were led by the unscrupulous ataman, General Grigorii Mikhailovich Semenov. His men helped keep Soviet troops at bay when the Czechoslovaks rolled through

[49]Phelps to wife, 28 Oct 1918, in YMCA archives, G. Sidney Phelps papers, C—Mary Phelps 1918–19 (30).

[50]Mott, quoted in Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 33–34, 42. American and British Quakers in Buzuluk had a rather different experience at this time. For a first-hand account by a British Quaker, see John Rickman, "Commonplaces in Buzuluk," *Atlantic* 123, no. 4 (Mar 1919): 289–98.

[51]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 39.

eastern Siberia and Manchuria.[52]

The Czechoslovaks hit a snag in their campaign eastward in mid-June. It was then that local Bolsheviks, with POW support, retook Irkutsk from the Whites.[53] Irkutsk was an important city just west of Lake Baikal, and the fighting there put a stop to the Czechoslovak evacuation from Siberia. No more Czechoslovaks entered Vladivostok after 20 June. A few days later, representatives of the Czechoslovak National Council in Vladivostok decided that the fifteen thousand Czechoslovaks in the city must go assist their comrades. They requested Allied military aid to help them succeed.[54] Consul Caldwell endorsed the request, as did Admiral Austin N. Knight, in command of the American warship *Brooklyn*, which was still anchored in the Vladivostok harbour.[55] Soon the Czechoslovak regiments were on their way back westward. As they prepared to do so, they heard that the local government was shipping military supplies to Soviet forces in the interior. Angered by this, the Czechoslovaks issued an ultimatum and, after a brief battle, occupied the city on 29 June. On 30 June, half way around the world in Paris, the French government recognized the Czechoslovak National Council and welcomed the Czechoslovaks to the Allied fold. By early July the Allies had declared Vladivostok to be under their protection.[56] The city soon "assumed the atmosphere of a capital, with diplomatic representatives in its midst from all the principal allied

[52]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 103. For much more on the complex political events in Siberia, see Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*.

[53]Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 2:392n20.

[54]Caldwell to Secretary of State, 25 Jun 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 226.

[55]Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 2:392.

[56]"Report of R. M. Story on Y.M.C.A. Work in Russia and Siberia," 9 Mar 1919, in UIUC, Record Series (hereafter RS) 4/5/50, Committee on the History of the Participation of the University in WWI File, box 13; Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, 233.

nations."[57]

The same day the Czechoslovaks took Vladivostok, the YMCA decided to equip and run travelling military huts for them. There was no question that American secretaries "would continue to stick to the Czechs." Within a week or so American secretaries were off to the front lines with "their" regiments. Heald portrayed the scene:

> The sense of embarking on a great adventure, the end of which no one could foresee, and the consciousness of being the only Allied representatives to start out with the Czechs, gave the Y.M.C.A. secretaries a highly romantic background as they rolled out of the Vladivostok station on their club car attached to the Czech military train and already crowded with enthusiastic Czechs singing their 'Homeward Bound to Prague' songs, while the American flag waved over the car door.

In his telling it was almost as if the United States, through the YMCA, was leading the charge to free the Czechoslovaks from their Austro-Hungarian overlords, and Russians from the Bolsheviks. By 10 July five club cars had left Vladivostok, and three more were ready to go. In the words of Russell Story, in charge of YMCA work in Siberia, they were to accompany the Czechoslovaks "on their long journey to Berlin." The YMCA's charges might end up opening a new eastern front against the Central powers, he thought. The Americans ran canteen services; distributed cigarettes, chocolates, and biscuits; and otherwise did their best to boost the morale of the men they were serving. Though the situation was not quite as difficult as it was in the desolate and inaccessible parts of northern Russia where their colleagues worked (see chapter 5), it remained true that, as one association official put it, "the Y.M.C.A. cars were practically the only recourse that the officers as well as the men had for practically anything outside of their army rations."[58]

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[57]James Mackintosh Bell, *Side Lights on the Siberian Campaign* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1922), 90–91.

[58]Heald, "With the Czecho Slovak and Other Allied Armies in Siberia (An Account of Y.M.C.A. Service)," n.d., ca. Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19; Story to Gertrude, 10 Jul 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters.

Once the fighting at Irkutsk began and the Vladivostok Czechoslovaks mobilized for the fight, the American Red Cross was called into action. Unlike the YMCA, the Red Cross did not already have a presence in Vladivostok. It was represented in these early days by a lone American, C. L. Preston, who was in the city on private business; he was technically "the first American Red Cross representative" there.[59] It fell upon the Japanese branch of the organization, based in Tokyo, to respond to calls for help. The Czechoslovak corps was very much an active fighting force and in desperate need of medical services. Russell Story, seeing the soldiers' desperation, first urged that medical aid be sent to them. He sent a cable to the Japan Chapter of the American Red Cross: "Will Red Cross work among Czech troops? Need is serious. Czech organization is prepared to furnish full cooperation and bear expenses not usually assumed by Red Cross."[60] In response to this and other appeals from Americans and Czechoslovak officials in the Far East, US Ambassador to Japan Roland S. Morris called a meeting with the executive committee of the American Red Cross in Tokyo on 26 June. As a result, George Sidney Phelps, the head of the Japanese branch, asked an American doctor based in Tokyo to go to Vladivostok and report back.[61]

This man was Episcopal missionary Dr. Rudolf Bolling Teusler, superintendent of St. Luke's Hospital in Tokyo (which still exists), and a cousin of President Wilson's second (and

[59]*First Semi-Annual Report of the Siberian Commission American Red Cross July 26–December 31 1918* (Yokohama: The Box of Curios P & P, n.d., ca. 1919), 6. There is a copy of this and the other semi-annual reports in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[60]Riley Allen, "Siberia," in Howard Chandler Robbins and George K. McNaught, *Dr. Rudolf Bolling Teusler: An Adventure in Christianity* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1942), 86–87.

[61]Kendall Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of George W. Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission to Siberia American Red Cross Dec. 1918–May 1919," 13, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 Special Mission Report; "Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," Part I, 3 Nov 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General —Reports 1920 [2].

then) wife.[62] Teusler was a well-known physician and "leader in welfare enterprises." "He had been for many years one of the leading American residents in Japan—indeed, of the Far East." Morris knew him well, and he had been close to the State Department through the diplomatic service for a long time. He was medical attaché to the US embassy, and served as a physician to other foreign embassies.[63]

Teusler spent eight days in the first half of July investigating conditions in Vladivostok and along the railway up to Nikolsk, scene of a battle early in the month. The Czechoslovaks had sustained more casualties than their medical facilities could handle, reported their victorious commander, General Mikhail K. Dietrichs. He requested that the Allies send medical units to help his men, and quickly. Admiral Knight had already ordered the Red Cross Tokyo branch and doctors in Japan and the Philippines to organize a relief unit for the Czechoslovak wounded. Teusler was in touch with Knight, Caldwell, Dietrichs, and Czechoslovak medical officers. He and Knight arranged for the medical staff of the *Brooklyn* to run a makeshift hospital for wounded Czech and Slovaks, and they put the ship's surgeon, Dr. J. E. Gill, in charge.[64] The hospital was sorely needed. Wounded men arrived throughout the month from the battlefields around Nikolsk and Khabarovsk, the two key railway junction towns in the Russian Far East.

A few days after arranging for this makeshift hospital, Teusler went back to Tokyo.

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[62]Teusler is the subject of this hagiography: Howard Chandler Robbins and George K. McNaught, *Dr. Rudolf Bolling Teusler*.

[63]Allen, "Siberia," 87.

[64]Ibid.; James William Morley, *The Japanese Thrust into Siberia, 1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 252–53; Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 13. See also *First Semi-Annual Report*, 6. The YMCA advanced funds to meet the needs of the men in this improvised hospital. See Heald, "With the Czecho Slovak and Other Allied Armies in Siberia (An Account of Y.M.C.A. Service)," n.d., ca. Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–1919.

He urged the Red Cross undertake relief work for the Czechoslovaks and the anti-Bolshevik Russian forces that had mobilized in the wake of the Czechoslovak campaign.[65] Red Cross leaders in Washington agreed, and soon Teusler was asked to go back to Vladivostok to head up Red Cross work. "It was a call that Teusler could not refuse," according to Riley H. Allen, whom Teusler would work closely with in the coming months. "It was not only in the name of country but in the name of humanity; moreover, it was just the sort of thing that appealed to him. It had drama and immensity of scope." Although these words are not Teusler's but rather those of a future colleague of his in Siberia, they perfectly encapsulate what could well have been the constellation of impulses that drove Teusler to accept the assignment. Here was a project that conflated patriotism and humanitarianism. It also promised adventure and appealed to his personal ambitions. This "call," perhaps understood by Teusler as a spiritual appointment, provided him with a rare opportunity for service on a large scale.[66]

On 26 July Teusler and three other men—Everett Welles Frazar, a prominent American businessman in Japan; Phelps; and US Consul-at-large Langdon Warner—left for Vladivostok. They arrived three days later.[67] In Vladivostok, the Americans took stock of the situation and decided to set up an American Red Cross outpost there.[68] They no doubt met with all the key players—American and Czechoslovak military, diplomatic, and medical officials—and were updated on the Czechoslovaks' military successes. They were told, too, of plans to gain control of the Chinese Eastern Railway and defeat the Bolshevik forces in still-contested spots in eastern Siberia and Manchuria.

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[65]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[66]Allen, "Siberia," 89.
[67]Ibid.
[68]*First Semi-Annual Report*, 6.

Phelps, who was also connected to the American YMCA in Japan, encountered first-hand evidence of the success of that organization in the Russian Far East. He was invited by the Czechoslovak command to inspect the medical service at the Ussuri-Nikolsk front, not far to the north of Vladivostok. Phelps was told that the quickest way to reach it was on a YMCA train car. And so he went, along with Story, the senior YMCA secretary in Siberia, and Heald, assigned to service with the Czechoslovaks. All three men donned association garb. "In fact," Phelps later explained, "I found that the Y.M.C.A. uniform was better than my military permit to pass through the lines. In one place, when presenting my credentials to the military commandant, he said with decision: 'You don't need to show your permit. That uniform which you are wearing is sufficient credentials among us Czechs.'" A Czechoslovak commander informed him that "the Y.M.C.A. is our best friend. Its secretaries have followed us across Russia and into Siberia and now they are serving us on the fighting line. Our men call them uncle." Phelps was impressed and surprised at the extent of the work. He cabled New York, recommending that the same service be done for Allied troops when they arrived in the region.[69] Such praise may well have inspired Phelps and the others to significantly increase American Red Cross work.

And they did, building upon Teusler's earlier efforts. The three commissioners sent out calls to hospitals in China and Japan for American medical personnel, surgical supplies, drugs, and equipment.[70] On 7 August hospital supplies, medical equipment, and Japanese doctors and nurses from St. Luke's Hospital arrived in Vladivostok. Most of the doctors, all the nurses, and some of the material went to a new hospital on Russian Island, an island off

[69]Phelps, "The Y.M.C.A. in Siberia," 28 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918; "Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[70]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

the coast of Vladivostok in the Sea of Japan located across the Eastern Bosphorus straight. Gill opened the hospital on 10 August as a permanent home for the Red Cross. Teusler also distributed supplies and equipment to two Vladivostok hospitals caring for hundreds of Czechoslovak patients. Three of the doctors joined the staff of yet another hospital.[71] All this work in Vladivostok in late July and August was to assist the wounded Czechoslovaks who were coming back to Vladivostok from the fighting at Nikolsk and along the railway line around Khabarovsk. Over the next few weeks and months more staff and supplies would come from the Far East, the personnel recruited from among American expat missionary and medical communities and their native employees.[72]

Washington headquarters' quick response to Teusler's recommendation was due in part to President Wilson's decision to send an American Expeditionary Force (AEF) to Siberia. Worried about the safety of the Czechoslovaks, and an independent action by the Japanese, Wilson finally agreed in early July to this course. A military intervention had been discussed for months in Allied capitals, with the British and French leading the charge. At first, the goal was to protect war stores, secure the railway, and assist pro-Allied Russian forces re-open an eastern front against the Central powers. The Czechoslovak uprising and reports of Soviet resistance at Irkutsk, plus news that among those fighting the Czechoslovaks were pro-Soviet German POWs, convinced Wilson that the Allies should act.[73] Americans on the ground in the Far East were already involved. (For more on the lead-

[71]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 13.

[72]Charles A. Steward to Eliot Wadsworth, 8 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[73]Carol Willcox Melton, *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918–1921* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001). Though Wilson publicly claimed that a desire to aid the Czechoslovak force was what had inspired his change of heart on the issue, his reasons for agreeing to the intervention have been fiercely debated ever since. See, for example, the widely different

up to the intervention, see chapter 5.) Wilson typed up an "aide mémoire" that outlined his policy. This document was given to the man chosen to head up the American military expedition in Siberia, Major General William Sidney Graves. The aide mémoire outlined very limited objectives for the American army. According to Wilson's document, there was to be no "intervention." The Americans were only to help Russians "regain control of their own affairs," assist the Czechoslovaks consolidate their forces, and guard military stores.[74] Wilson was vague on specifics, but Graves' subsequent instructions were less so: American troops were not to go west of Irkutsk, and they were to be used only to help the Czechoslovak evacuation and to secure the railway. The AEF was otherwise to remain completely neutral in Russian affairs.[75]

Wilson's goals were at odds with those of his allies. This did not make him unique—all the countries involved in the intervention had their own reasons for wanting to be. For the moment, all agreed on the necessity of sending troops to the region.[76] Large numbers of Japanese, American, Canadian, French, British, and other soldiers were soon on their way to Siberia and—in the case of the Japanese—Manchuria. (Manchuria was home to the Chinese

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interpretations offered by David S. Foglesong, *American's Secret War against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917–1920* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, vol. 2; and Betty M. Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition, 1918–1920: A Study of National Policy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1956).

[74]*FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:287–90.

[75]The most detailed scholarly analysis of Graves, his instructions, and the military aspects of the Siberian intervention is Melton, *Between War and Peace*.

[76]The scholarly literature on the origins of the Allied intervention in Russia, and on Siberia in particular, is sizeable, and much of it very good. Only a few sources will be mentioned here: On the Japanese decision to intervene, see Morley, *Japanese Thrust into Siberia*; on British policy, see Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, vol. 1; on French policy, see Michael J. Carley, *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War, 1917–1919* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983); and the best published source on Canada policy is Robert Bothwell, "Borden and the Bolsheviks," in *Canada and the Soviet Experiment: Essays on Canadian Encounters with Russia and the Soviet Union, 1900–1991*, ed. David Davies (Toronto & Waterloo: Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Toronto / Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, University of Waterloo, 1993), 25–37.

Eastern Railway, which offered a short-cut through China for Russian trains headed west from Vladivostok.) Allied troops started to arrive in Vladivostok in early August. The British and French were first, followed by the Japanese and the Americans. These Allied soldiers joined the large Czechoslovak contingent as well as the nuclei of various White Russian armies. In addition to troops, the Allies sent support groups and other organizations to the region. They were there in part to provide services to the Allied armies, but civilian representatives also investigated present and future opportunities for trade and other relationships.[77]

The Allied leaders still had no clear policy on Russia in general or the Bolshevik government in Moscow in particular. They moved ahead with the intervention for a variety of stated and unstated reasons—reasons that changed over time, and differed markedly between heads of government, militaries, foreign ministries, and individual commanders and politicians. Siberia was important as a potential trading partner; the vast terrain was rich in resources, and observers hailed it as a new frontier, drawing comparisons between eastern Russia (including Manchuria) and the plains and prairies of western North America. The possibilities for economic development and the potential financial rewards for foreign capitalists were exciting.[78] The Siberian frontier was, moreover, important to American conceptions of the Russian psyche and their visions of the country's future. Frederick

[77]These groups included military auxiliaries such as Red Cross, YMCA, Knights of Columbus, Salvation Army; economic missions from Canada, the United States, Britain, and elsewhere; the American CPI; etc.

[78]On this, see especially Bacino, *Reconstructing Russia*, ch. 1. See also Christine A. White, *British and American Commercial Relations with Soviet Russia, 1918–1924* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 51–52; David N. Collins, "British Interest and Interests in Siberia 1900–1922," *Revolutionary Russia* 9 (Dec 1996): 206–33; Foglesong, *American Mission*, 17–18, 26–27; Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore*, 99–101. For some Canadian examples, see Jennifer Ann Polk, "The Canadian Red Cross and Relief in Siberia, 1918–1921" (MA thesis, Carleton University, 2004), 76–78, 81–83.

Jackson Turner's influential thesis that American westward expansion had made possible modern day political liberalism was pervasive among US policymakers. Its application to Russia led Americans to assume that the Siberian "frontier would foster liberal-democratic qualities among the settlers and constitute the foundation for a long-term community of interests between Russia and the United States."[79] The Siberian intervention was much more than a wartime measure; Siberia was more than simply economically important. For Americans, the basic fact of Siberia's existence ensured Russia's bright future and the country's close relationship with the United States.

Inter-Allied rivalry over economic positioning in Siberia coloured British views of the YMCA. A British vice-consul at Irkutsk was convinced secretaries were advance agents of US economic domination. "Several American Y.M.C.A. men are scattered over the country, attached to the Czech and Russian forces, but their intentions are perfectly obvious," he wrote. "Their chief object is to pick up the language and commercial information with an eye to the future. One and all are semi-attached to the Consulates and have to make their reports to the nearest Consular officer."[80] Although this was an exaggeration, the relationship between the YMCA and American officials was certainly close. Secretaries (and Red Cross representatives) with an eye for business were not blind to the possibilities, and even the least savvy men and women could see the similarities in landscape between parts of North America and Siberia and Manchuria. Comments on the potential economic opportunities awaiting American business in Siberia abound in contemporary reports and personal letters

[79]Bacino, *Reconstructing Russia*, 17. Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," was first published in 1893.

[80]British vice-consul (Irkutsk), 31 Aug 1918, in NA, Foreign Office, Vladivostok Consulate, FO 538, vol. 3, Miscellaneous C on Political & Military Situation in Siberia 1918–21.

and diaries. Given the relatively small size of the English-speaking community, especially outside Vladivostok and Omsk, friendships between businessmen and secretaries were common. In some cases, British and Americans involved in mining and other ventures even joined the ranks of relief workers. YMCA secretaries and Red Cross personnel were important sources of news about conditions and happenings in places where consular or diplomatic officials were not present. "It may not be desirable to make use of this fact," Colton observed, "but it is undeniable that our secretaries were constantly the channels of important information, especially from the remoter regions, to the American officials at the centers."[81] These close ties were accepted realities of relief work in Siberia and elsewhere in contemporary Russia.

The Red Cross was also close to American officials. Originally, Teusler's mission was conducted under the auspices of the Red Cross's Fourteenth (Insular and Foreign) Division. The substantial American military presence in the Russian Far East increased the significance of his efforts. Once this was made clear, the War Council took charge. The Siberian commission was born and "officially attached to two bodies of troops—the Czechs and the Americans." In addition to military relief, the new commission, which Teusler remained the head of, was charged with carrying out "broad and constructive" work among civilians and refugees.[82] In other words, its activities were to be developmental as well as strictly humanitarian.

After establishing a hospital on Vladivostok's Russian Island and ensuring that other

[81]Colton, "Report to John R. Mott of Association Work in Russia and Siberia," n.d., in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russia Work [1].

[82]Teusler was informed by cable from Davison, 21 Aug 1918. Allen, "Siberia," 92–93.

medical facilities caring for Czechoslovaks had needed supplies, equipment, and staff, the commission members turned to their next task. This was the establishment of care stations in Manchuria and the Transbaikal ahead of planned Czechoslovak battles in those regions. The Czechoslovaks, fresh from their victories in Vladivostok and Nikolsk, were expected to engage in heavy fighting. American and British doctors, and American and Chinese nurses from mission hospitals in northern China and Korea, answered the call for medical personnel. The first group reported for duty in Harbin on 12 August.[83] After a couple weeks' delay, the Red Cross opened a two hundred-bed hospital at Buchedu in Manchuria in late August. It was meant for Czechoslovak soldiers in the region west of Harbin. The Siberian commission also organized an evacuation hospital at Harbin.[84] General Dietrichs approved of the ventures in Manchuria and Vladivostok, and the Red Cross assigned a doctor to serve on his staff.[85]

Very shortly after the Buchedu hospital was set up, General Radola Gajda's Czechoslovak forces defeated the Red forces in the Transbaikal.[86] This young Czech officer—he was only twenty-five years old—had joined the Czechoslovak corps in Russia in late 1916. He rose in rank and responsibility over the months, and distinguished himself during the Kerensky offensive in the summer of 1917.[87] His "campaign across the steppes of

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[83]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 14; Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[84]The hospital was run by Dr. Lewis; there were two other doctors and 7 American nurses from China and Korea also on staff. The evacuation hospital was under Dr. Ludlow. The Buchedu hospital was in operation for three months. It was then turned over to the Czechoslovaks, and they ran it as a tuberculosis hospital until February. Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 16; Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; and Charles Lewis, *"Lu Taifu" Charles Lewis*, 110–11. (Emerson has his dates wrong; hospital could not have opened before late August.)

[85]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. This man acted as a contact officer for the ARC.

[86]This nullified the need for the Buchedu facility, and it was thereafter used as a convalescent hospital. Lewis, *"Lu Taifu" Charles Lewis*, 111.

[87]For more on his career, see David Kelly, "The Would-Be Führer: General Radola Gajda of

Siberia and through the Lake Baikal region was one of the most brilliant achievements of the summer," judged the YMCA's Miller. "He relied upon surprise attacks, terrifying bomb throwing, and a considerable sprinkling of good old American bluff to put to rout the disorganized 'Reds'; and he never had even a set-back."[88] A few days before the Transbaikal victory the Czechoslovaks, with limited support from British troops, defeated the Bolsheviks on the Ussuri front.[89] With these two victories the Czechoslovaks and their White Russian friends (backed by Allied support) now controlled the Trans-Siberian and its offshoot railway lines as far west as the Ural Mountains. General Graves and thousands of American soldiers arrived in time to share in the celebration.[90] In Miller's estimation, the summer's military successes was nothing but good news for Russians. They "meant for the millions of people in Siberia and Eastern Russia liberation from the tyrannical rule of the Bolsheviks, the restoration of a government by all the people, [and] the downfall of a government by one class for its own selfish interests." The Czechoslovaks, he concluded, "made Siberia and one of the wealthiest regions of Russia 'safe for democracy.'" They were, he thereby implied, doing America's work.[91]

Upon hearing the good news (on 31 August) about Gajda's victory, the Siberian commission's Teusler and another Red Cross man, Bishop H. St. George Tucker, met with the general and others at Harbin. The Czechoslovaks had no medical or hospital supplies, and almost no nurses or doctors. Gajda, who had served as a physician in the armies of Montenegro and Serbia before entering Russia, apparently begged the Red Cross to help.

Czechoslovakia," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 12, no. 3 (Sep 1999): 163–77.

[88]Kenneth Miller, "The Saviors of Russia," *Czechoslovak Review* 3, no. 1 (Jan 1919): 13, 15.

[89]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:262.

[90]Graves arrived in 1 Sep; two infantry regiments had arrived on 21 Aug.

[91]Miller, "Saviors of Russia," 12, 16.

Tucker agreed and relayed Gajda's requirements to Washington. This request for more doctors, dentists, and nurses was approved by headquarters, and it set about gathering the necessary personnel for the mission. At the same time, Teusler and Tucker, accompanied by Gajda's chief of staff, went back to Vladivostok to discuss the situation with Ambassador Morris, "and to rearrange [their] entire plans for helping the loyal Czech and Russian troops."[92]

The Czechoslovak victories meant that the Red Cross commission quickly found itself contemplating service to soldiers, refugees, and other civilians over nearly five thousand miles of railway track. American military policy did not dictate the movements of the relief organizations, but Graves's interpretations of his orders had consequences beyond strictly military affairs. Negotiations took place between Morris, Graves, Admiral Knight, and others over the course of two weeks. When Morris, supported by Graves and Knight, recommended that American soldiers move to Omsk to join the British and French in assisting the Czechoslovaks, the State Department refused to allow it: They could only go as far west as Harbin.[93] When Teusler was informed of this "it became a serious question just how far the Red Cross should undertake relief work of any kind in that district." Teusler met with Morris and Knight to discuss the situation. They decided that Tucker should go west for advance work, while Teusler stayed in Vladivostok.[94] Teusler duly asked Tucker to head back west "to build up a medical service for the Czecho-Slovak army."[95] The Red Cross was

[92]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Henry St. George Tucker, "Siberia," in Robbins and McNaught, *Dr. Rudolf Bolling Teusler*, 108.

[93]Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition*, 99–100; Tucker, "Siberia," 109.

[94]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. Teusler did not mention Graves in this report.

[95]Tucker, "Siberia," 109.

soon "formally regarded by the Czechs as being in charge of their Medical Dept."[96] Military aid was not the only kind of work on the Red Cross agenda. Already several weeks earlier the commission had established a refugee relief department for eastern Siberia. Morris had approved the venture, and Tucker was put in charge.[97] Until he could get to Harbin himself, a YMCA man at Irkutsk was made the Red Cross's temporary refugee agent.[98]

Building upon his experience thus far with the refugee situation and his knowledge of Czechoslovak medical needs, Tucker left Vladivostok in late September in charge of "Sanitary Train No. 1." The train included thirty-one freight cars filled with supplies, and carried American, English, and Czech doctors, Czech nurses, as well as other Red Cross personnel. The train was held up many times for a variety of reasons, and along the way the Americans found themselves transporting patients and personnel, learning about the plight of refugees, providing limited food relief, investigating hospital needs, and sending requests for assistance back to Vladivostok. When the train arrived at Omsk, Tucker received word that the Vladivostok office had authorized him to undertake refugee relief work for twelve hundred Serbians near Irkutsk, several hundred Armenians, and two thousand Russian children originally from Petrograd. (These children will be discussed in later chapters.) He took steps to get relief work underway, cooperating with YMCA secretaries.[99] The Red Cross workers gave a significant amount of supplies and equipment to a Czechoslovak-run hospital at Cheliabinsk. Dr. Charles Lewis, an American with the Red Cross, explained: "No supplies

[96]Meeting of the Finance Cmte, on board Flagship Brooklyn, 23 Sep 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[97]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[98]Tucker, "Report on Trip with Sanitary Train No. 1," 14 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[99]Tucker, "Report on Trip with Sanitary Train No. 1," 14 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Tucker, "Siberia," 109.

had gone into that particular hospital for two or three years and there were almost no surgical supplies there, while we had a train of-twenty-six cars loaded with supplies, and beds to set up a 350-bed hospital."[100] Such extreme deprivation was all-too common in Siberia's medical facilities. Americans found ready recipients for their supplies, equipment, and drugs throughout the region.[101]

While in western Siberia, Tucker and his associates discussed the placement of Red Cross hospitals with American consular officials, Czechoslovak military doctors, representatives of the Czechoslovak National Council, Czechoslovak commander General Jan Syrový, and Russian military authorities in Omsk, Cheliabinsk, and Ekaterinburg. Syrový (who was later the prime minister of Czechoslovakia during the Munich Crisis [1938]) "welcomed us warmly" and "left us a free hand as to our program," Tucker noted. He asked the Red Cross men to confer with Dr. Konopasek, the Czechoslovaks' chief surgeon. Konopasek recommended opening military hospitals in Omsk, Tumen', and Petropavlovsk. The Red Cross agreed to see what it could do.[102] At least one Russian observer, Baroness Sophie Buxhoeveden, was impressed with the resultant Red Cross hospital in Tumen':

> I had only heard of American methods before and had never seen them. I could not believe my eyes when I saw the rapidity with which these people made the slow Siberian workmen move. In an incredibly short time the large school building was turned into a model hospital. Partitions were built; water was laid on in all the prospective wards; electric light was installed lavishly. All the fittings were of the very best; and X-ray cabinet was put up and the operating theatre was supplied with the newest appliances. I was a judge of this, for I had passed some months of training at the Empress's hospital at Tsarskoe Selo and knew what a well-stocked hospital should look like. The large rooms, well heated, with plenty of light, made ideal wards, and the beds, bedding, etc., were so perfect and abundant that it was considered the most wonderful luck to be billeted in the American hospital.

The matron, Florence Farmer, could speak some Russian, and "was a born organiser, young,

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[100]Lewis, *"Lu Taifu" Charles Lewis*, 112.

[101]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[102]Tucker, "Report on Trip with Sanitary Train No. 1," 14 Nov 1918; and Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

active, and absolutely indefatigable. She seemed to be in every ward of the vast hospital at the same time, always cheerful and ready for any emergency, and issuing orders right and left." Buxhoeveden concluded that the facility and its personnel were "of great assistance to the [local] population."[103]

In the fall of 1918, Farmer's organizational skills remained to be seen. Teusler visited Tumen' in November. He left Vladivostok on 24 October at the head of a second American Red Cross sanitary train destined for western Siberia. He brought with him several carloads of medical supplies, hospital equipment, and drugs. After picking up doctors and nurses at Harbin, Teusler arrived in Omsk in mid-November. A suitable building was located for the planned Red Cross hospital in the city. But the Americans had trouble acquiring this building for themselves, and Farmer's hospital would not open until January. Similar difficulties came up again and again in Siberia. Russian authorities were glad to receive American materials, but did not look as kindly upon foreign meddling of a more direct nature. In this particular instance, the confused political situation in Omsk (see chapter 6) and the atmosphere of uncertainty it created was partly to blame. Teusler was reluctant to enter into a formal relationship with the government then in power: he wished to avoid "creat[ing] the impression of indirect American recognition." Trying to deal with representatives of a government not officially recognized by the United States put him in an awkward position. In Omsk, Teusler met with Admiral Aleksandr Vasil'evich Kolchak, the recently-appointed minister of war in the Omsk-based All-Russian Provisional Government. The admiral asked for American help getting underwear and other much-needed clothing to Russian soldiers.

[103]Sophie Buxhoeveden, *Left Behind: Fourteen Months in Siberia during the Revolution, December 1917–February 1919* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1929), 127, 129, 131.

Thus far, the only assistance given these anti-Bolshevik troops had been indirect, as a result of work established for the benefit of the Czechslovaks. After his meetings in Omsk, Teusler left an American doctor to await developments, and then continued on his journey through the region.[104] Another Red Cross man, Henry S. Thompson, remained behind, too. He was to set up an office in Omsk and take charge of refugee work in that part of Siberia.[105]

The Siberian commission was well on its way to fulfilling the commitments it had made to the Czechoslovaks.[106] It was also serious about helping Russian authorities handle the refugee situation. By mid-November Red Cross agents were working with them to ameliorate conditions in several Siberian towns. Refugee life was hardly better in Vladivostok. A great many Russians (and others) fleeing Bolshevik rule ended up in the far eastern city after being shunted from station to station along the railway by local administrations. The Red Cross set up a clinic and a refugee office near the Vladivostok railway station to assist individuals and families arriving from the interior. The organization also arranged for several barracks at First and Second Rivers to be cleaned out so they could house newcomers. Food and clothing were provided to residents who could not find employment, and the commission cooperated with local employment agencies to find work for several hundred refugees. In November the Red Cross sent two more trains into the

[104]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. There is no mention of the coup at Omsk on 18 Nov in Teusler's report, though he was in the city until about 20 Nov. According to this report (Gertrude Pardee Carter, "The Omsk Hospital," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.52 SC—Omsk Hospital), the ARC group arrived in Omsk on 10 Nov. On the fate of Omsk hospital see Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 16–17.

[105]Charles A. Steward to Eliot Wadsworth, 8 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[106]One Czech medical officer wrote a damning report about the lack of ARC supplies received by the Czechoslovaks between Aug 1918 and Mar 1919. His claims—which included specific statistics about the number of cases received—were vociferously denied by Dr. Václav Jirsa (Girsa), the representative of the Czechoslovak National Council in Vladivostok, and General Stanislav Čeček, as well as by Red Cross officials. See material in ANRC papers, box 921, 987.91 SC—Criticisms & Controversial Subjects. For more on criticism of the ARC and YMCA in Siberia, see chapter 6.

interior to distribute supplies. The organization placed staff members in large towns between Vladivostok and Omsk to deal with refugees along the Trans-Siberian Railway.[107]

Both the American Red Cross's Siberian commission and the YMCA believed civilian relief was an important part of their respective mandates. They were still committed to serving the Czechoslovaks, and prioritized the needs of these men over those of other soldiers in Siberia, including Americans. Now that the Czechoslovaks were actively engaging an enemy, the YMCA's work for them had switched from being primarily concerned with recreation to being mostly about assistance to fighters. C. W. Riley, one of the American secretaries travelling with the Czechoslovaks, believed association "presence near the trenches had a greater psychological effect than [he and his colleagues] at first expected when [they] planned simply to accompany the trains."[108] Crawford Wheeler, looking back from the fall of 1919, claimed the daily contact between the American "uncles" and hundreds of Czechoslovak soldiers "brought to these Bohemian soldiers the encouragement and inspiration which they so much needed in their bitter and discouraging struggle to hold the line for the Allies against Bolshevik and German aggression during the summer and fall of 1918."[109] Apparently even Masaryk, the future president of the Czechoslovak republic, "personally recognized" the YMCA "as a chief factor in the preservation of [the corps'] unsurpassed morale."[110] Association morale was high, too. YMCA chaplain William Young Duncan, looking back on his service with the "wonderful Czechs," declared that "those days .

[107]Steward to Wadsworth, 8 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[108]Riley, "With the Czecho-Slavs in Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Oct–Dec 1918.
[109]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 39.
[110]Colton to Mott, n.d., in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA Russian Work 1918–22.

. . shall long be treasured by me as days when I beheld the gold of human nobility coming to the top refined by the suffering through which it passed."[111] American admiration for the Czechoslovaks remained strong.

After the Czechoslovak victories at the end of August, the first "real train that went west" was a YMCA train. It included sixteen cars of supplies, and was billed for Kazan.[112] It never reached that far west: The Red Army seized the city on 10 September, and then took Simbirsk two days later. Trotsky's victories continued so that by the start of October the important Volga region was back in Soviet hands.[113] By then Phelps, who had been busy with arrangements for the Siberian commission, had resigned his post to become the new senior national YMCA secretary for Russia.[114] (Colton, whom he replaced, had not returned to Russia after escaping via Finland in late August [see chapter 4].[115]) Phelps planned to have the association go west and begin civilian work to aid in Russian reconstruction "by extending practical help to the people."[116] He spent a few days in consultation with Story before leaving on an inspection tour of western Siberia. Fourteen secretaries joined him. Their train left Vladivostok in early October.[117]

Phelps, in order to better understand Czechoslovak and Russian needs, "visited all the principal posts where [YMCA] work was being carried on as far West as Omsk."[118] In Omsk, where he arrived on 21 October, he had lengthy discussions with secretaries about their work

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[111]Duncan to Fleming, 25 Nov 1918, in Duncan papers, box 1.
[112]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[113]Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, 421–22.
[114]Phelps to Mott, 1 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.
[115]Lowrie to "folks," 10 Sep 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.
[116]"Bolsheviki Admit Defeat by Allies," *New York Times* (18 Sep 1918): 5.
[117]Phelps to Mott, 1 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919; diary, entry for 4 Oct 1918, in Duncan papers, box 1.
[118]Phelps to Mott, 1 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

and future plans. Phelps met with representatives of British relief agencies and local officials who were desperately trying to ameliorate the refugee situation in the city. Several hundred thousand refugees were overburdening services and wreaking havoc on the transportation system. N. D. Avksent'ev, a former minister of the interior under Kerensky, and now the head of the Provisional All-Russian Government—one of two rival governments competing for power in western Siberia and the Urals—and the commander in chief, General Vasilii Boldyrev, requested that the YMCA "take charge of relief work." They needed whatever help they could get. Bolshevik propaganda was a serious problem in Omsk, and the streets were so dangerous after dark that Phelps and his colleagues tried to travel in groups and made a point of keeping their guns with them at all times. Still, despite the challenges, Omsk, which was four thousand miles from Vladivostok, was a logical choice for a western base office complete with a warehouse and manufacturing facility. Phelps made arrangements, and also appointed a few men to head up association work there and elsewhere in Siberia.[119]

YMCA secretaries considered themselves to be of service to all "Allied" troops in Siberia, which they understood to include all the various anti-Bolshevik forces, foreign interveners, and the Czechoslovak corps. They served Russian soldiers from the summer of 1918 in all their huts and canteens. This included work at Cheliabinsk, Ekaterinburg, and Omsk. In the fall the association received a number of invitations to extend its programs to Russian military units. It was no doubt the success of the relief efforts for Czechoslovak soldiers that led to these requests from Russian commanders. The YMCA began targeted work for Russian soldiers at Irkutsk in October after being invited to work in one of the new Siberian army regiments. Conditions in the soldiers' camp were "indescribable and

[119]Phelps to wife, 28 Oct 1918, in Phelps papers, C—Mary Phelps 1918–19 (30).

unbelievable," according to secretary Fred G. Scherer. "The barracks are filthy, the men are under-fed and improperly clothed, and in these long evenings they are without light or warmth." The association provided tea service, a reading and recreation room, prepared inexpensive meals, and planned social and educational programs. The YMCA also took over management of the officers' mess, and was asked by the chief of staff to open "a small eating and sleeping apartment for soldiers in the city proper." The YMCA hoped "through the stomach" to "reach the head and heart" of these Russian soldiers. Soon after, another Russian officer asked the association to work in his regiment. "They have insufficient food, nothing to smoke, no literature, no amusement, no lamps, 'no nothing,'" Scherer informed the New York office.[120] The association received many invitations to extend its work to Russian soldiers in the fall of 1918.[121]

Apart from the work specifically for Czechoslovaks and White Russian fighters, the YMCA's operations grew with the arrival of Allied troops. The British and French forces each got a YMCA car of their own, and so did the Cossacks; moreover, "the Czech club cars became International clubs," and the Japanese association made use of the Americans' supply and transportation system. To enable soldiers to purchase goods from association stores, the YMCA set up an extensive currency exchange business. A biscuit factory was opened, and chocolate factories increased their capacity to fill YMCA orders. New departments were organized, and American engineers with the Russian Railway Service Corps were called upon to act as traffic managers in the larger centres. Personnel and supply shortages were a continual worry. Unfortunately for Russian-based secretaries, their calls for

[120]Fred G. Scherer to Watson, 30 Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Oct–Dec 1918.
[121]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

help fell on deaf ears in the United States. Recruits and supplies from the Far East had to be relied upon instead. In October the association hoped to start work in another dozen places, but it would have to wait until better support was provided for its efforts.[122]

Secretary George Gleason was among the Americans engaged in army work. He travelled the railway north of Vladivostok as part of a small, multinational team of men operating a rolling YMCA hut and canteen. He and his colleagues sold goods to soldiers and railway personnel. Because the "sugar, cigarettes, spoons, note books, caramels and tooth powder"—among many other items—were sold at cost and brought into Russia duty-free, the men were barred from selling goods to civilians. On occasion, they broke this rule, most often when it came to youngsters pleading to purchase sweets. (They also got into the habit of tossing small packages of candy to children from the train.[123]) According to Gleason, the YMCA operated forty cars that fall, some "continually moving up and down the railroad" offering a wide array of sweets, pastries, basic foodstuffs, and personal items for sale, and distributing newspapers and writing paper free of charge. When there was more time, soldiers used the cars for diversion and relaxation. There were plans in place to open stationary clubs in barracks at about twenty-five different spots. The arrival of Gleason's car was enthusiastically greeted by soldiers, and he and the others were sometimes kept up most of the night selling canteen goods to them. In late October, they were serving soldiers "in the most out-of-the way part of Siberia." Gleason believed their work brought "Sweetness and

[122]Heald, "With the Czecho Slovak and Other Allied Armies in Siberia (An Account of Y.M.C.A. Service)," n.d., ca. Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Czechoslovak Army Work 1918–19.

[123]After visiting an orphanage where he distributed chewing gum, one Red Cross man compared his actions to an earlier practice of Americans overseas: "Thus, as in ancient days, [when] whiskey accompanied the missionaries[,] so now chewing gum the Red Cross." Kendall Emerson, "A Trans-Siberian Land Log, 1919," 40, in Massachusetts Historical Society, Benjamin Kendall Emerson collection, box 22, typewritten log.

Light into the Heart of Siberia."[124]

The Czechoslovak force continued to be an active belligerent in the Russian civil war through the rest of 1918. Grumbling within the ranks grew in the fall. The men were, after all, very far from home and there was no specific timetable for their withdrawal. In the meantime, the fighting in Russia had become fiercer. Soldiers were staunchly anti-Bolshevik, but, even so, their morale was low. American observers recommended sending American soldiers much closer to the front lines to boost Czechoslovak confidence. As mentioned earlier, Secretary of State Lansing refused to allow such a move. Siberian affairs took on less importance for corps members after the proclamation of an independent Czechoslovak republic in October. Realizing their indebtedness to the Allies to keep their independence, its leaders agreed to keep the corps in Russia.[125] Once news of the 11 November armistice on the Great War's western front reached them, Czech and Slovak soldiers questioned why they were still in Siberia. Their dedication to the Allied cause in Russia was wavering. An agreement was reached whereby the Czechoslovak force would be moved out of harm's way, to do security duty along a portion of the Trans-Siberian Railway. For the next several months, Allied officials dragged their heels on the subject of the Czechoslovaks' repatriation, loath to simply let them sail away.

The Siberian commission continued to work with the Czechoslovaks during the winter and spring of 1919, supplying their hospital and other medical needs. Even after Czechoslovak troops left the front lines, there was still work to be done for them: the

[124]Quotes from Gleason, Siberian Report Letter No. 3, 30 Sep 1918; No. 6, 12 Oct 1918; and No. 9, 26 Oct 1918, all in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—George Gleason—1918. This paragraph is based on these and his other letters from the fall of 1918, all in ibid.

[125]Rowan A. Williams, "The Odyssey of the Czechs," *East European Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1975): 20–23.

provision of basic medical services, including dental care, care of invalids, and assisting in the repatriation of Czechoslovaks to central Europe. There were dental clinics in Ekaterinburg and Irkutsk aimed at Czechoslovak soldiers, and another three clinics in and around Vladivostok that also served Russians. In addition, a dental train operated between Omsk and Irkutsk. The Red Cross's dental service was a critical one because of the lack of dental supplies in Siberia.[126]

One of the important aspects of the Siberian commission's work for Czechoslovak soldiers were caring for invalids and other wounded men before they could be transported home to Bohemia. As early as September 1918, the Red Cross was already caring for five hundred Czechoslovak invalids in two local hospitals, and was sending additional patients to St. Luke's in Toyko.[127] The chief surgeon of the Czechoslovak army asked the Red Cross to help find and prepare barracks large enough to house one thousand Czechoslovak invalids.[128] And it happened: A week later repairs were being done on barracks on Russian Island.[129]

On his trip out west, Teusler was asked by General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, the Czechoslovak minister of war, to supply ships to take out-of-commission soldiers to Italy, from where they would travel to Bohemia. Teusler was hopeful that his Washington superiors would agree to the request. "Such action would undoubtedly receive wide-spread approval and thanks throughout the whole Czech nation and it will complete our task with the Czech troops here in a very practical and definite way." Czechoslovak invalids were

[126]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 22.

[127]"The American Red Cross," n.d., ca. spring 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[128]Report Medical Bureau Week Ending 21st December 1918, written by [The Reverend Major] D. Scudder, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[129]Report Medical Bureau week ending 28 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

evacuated from Vladivostok as early as January 1919.[130] Finally, after reaching a compromise and finding available ships, the second batch of wounded Czechoslovaks left Vladivostok in mid-June 1919. They travelled to the United States, where they were fêted in Washington, DC, and then continued across the Atlantic Ocean and, eventually, arrived home.[131] YMCA work among invalids was "especially appreciated"; it made months of waiting easier.[132] The rest of the corps was evacuated during 1920. Czechoslovaks left in batches of a few thousand whenever appropriate transportation could be arranged for them.[133]

The association's work with the Czechoslovak soldiers changed as the fighting continued. At first, the YMCA provided club cars, "but as we progressed and the strength of the enemy increased our work developed from one of recreation and amusement to one of relief and assistance." The YMCA's "presence near the trenches had a greater psychological effect than we at first expected when we planned simply to accompany the trains." Soon enough the association, in cooperation with Czechoslovak officers, found ways to take supplies to men not stationed on the railway line, by using horses or other pack animals as transportation. This was a different situation than in northern Russia (as discussed in chapter 5), initially because the weather was that much better, but YMCA efforts were similar: the distribution of cigarettes, biscuits, chocolate, cocoa, and other goodies to weary soldiers on long marches.[134] In the first six months of 1919, the YMCA operated fifteen clubs and

[130]Report of Medical Bureau for two weeks ending 11 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C; "The American Red Cross," n.d, ca. spring 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Henry Ware Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," *Current History* 12, no. 2 (May 1920): 302; quote from Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[131]For the departure of wounded Czechoslovaks from Vladivostok in the last half of 1919, see Williams, "Odyssey," 15–20.

[132]Miller, "Carrying on with the Czecho-Slovaks," 1.

[133]Williams, "Odyssey," 31–34.

[134]Riley, "With the Czecho-Slavs in Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Oct–Dec 1918.

eighteen canteen cars along eighteen hundred miles of railway track.

> The Colonel of a Czech regiment told [Phelps] that, in his opinion, it would be absolutely impossible to keep the Czech Army in Siberia were it not for the assistance of the American Y.M.C.A. in maintaining the morale of the men. I was told that in one regiment, which had suffered losses of forty percent of its men during last winter's fighting on the Volga front, the soldiers had passed a resolution of lack of confidence in their officers the day before the Y.M.C.A. hut and theatre were opened for their regiment. Three days after this, they met and rescinded the resolution, stating that the opening of the Y.M.C.A. buildings had shown them that their officers and the Allies did care for the welfare of the men and that the presence of the 'American Uncles,' as they call our secretaries, was a guarantee to them of the continued interest of their superiors in their welfare.[135]

It seems that the experience of the Czechoslovaks in Russia and Siberia helped pave the way for the American YMCA to take on work for the entire Czechoslovak army.[136]

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In American minds, the Czechs (and Slovaks) represented the best that the "small nations" of eastern Europe had to offer. They had much in common with Americans. Their actions during the war were interpreted as evidence of their intelligence, courage, and patriotism, all qualities Americans also admired in themselves. That the Czechoslovak soldiers needed assistance to boost their morale made them the perfect candidates for YMCA efforts, secretaries believed. The decision by association representatives to undertake front-line work for Czechoslovak soldiers fighting Soviet forces in the summer of 1918 did not require great reflection. They had already chosen to follow the Czechoslovaks. This new work was simply a logical extension of that earlier commitment, and American officials in the region supported this course of action. At no point, it seems, was there any thought of declining to become involved in the Russian civil war in this way. Indeed, the situation was not looked upon as having much to do with the internal affairs of Russia. The departing Czechoslovaks

[135]Phelps to Mott, Vladi, 15 Jul 1919, "Report of Work of the American YMCA in Siberia January 1 to June 30, 1919," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19.

[136]See V. Koflac, circular/agreement/order no. 143, 26 May 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

were under attack—through no direct fault of their own—and they needed assistance. The association also saw here a marvellous opportunity to spread its teachings to a large group of young men who would soon return to their homeland and to a hoped-for new republic. It was better that these men be instilled with the spirit of Christ and American values than return home embittered against the Allies and spiritually and physically battered, secretaries believed.

It was an association man who first alerted representatives of the American Red Cross in Japan about the plight of the Czechoslovaks. Their need for medical aid appealed to Dr. Teusler's professional, personal, and patriotic ambitions. He grasped this opportunity to infuse, through drugs and bandages, the spirit of Christ into these "broken" Czechs and Slovaks. The Red Cross work in the Russian Far East was started with the sole aim of providing for the Czechoslovaks. By the time American soldiers landed at Vladivostok the two welfare agencies were very much a part of the Russian civil war, even if in an indirect way. Soon their participation would be more direct. The arrival of American troops meant the Siberian commission had to extend its services to members of the AEF. Doing so was, after all, the primary purpose of the Red Cross during wartime. At first, services were extended to Russian soldiers as the need arose; later, assistance to them became more explicit. Assistance to the White Russian forces in Siberia is the subject of chapters 6 and 7.

The Czechoslovak presence in Siberia paved the road to Allied military intervention. There likely would have been no Allied action in Siberia if not for them. The already-complicated situation was made even more so by their presence, which—in President Wilson's mind—demanded an American response. The YMCA was ahead of him, as were military and State Department representatives on the ground in the Far East. Because of

them, American relief organizations were well-established in the region upon the arrival of Allied forces and once the Russian army was ready to take over the fight. By then, Soviet leaders had largely given up on rapprochement with the Allies. Red Cross and YMCA representatives based in central Russia did not long remain where they were once Moscow realized the extent of American involvement in the intervention. What happened to them is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

"Good beginnings"[1]
Soviet Russia, Spring–Fall 1918

> The Red Cross is planted in Russia & may it never be uprooted. That's the one outstanding thought. Not politics, not partisanship, but plain simple honest humanity & help. That's the best & the only propaganda for the Red Cross. That's what you have stood for - & that's what Williams & his people come for.[2]
>
> Russia must not be abandoned if the struggle for Democracy is to succeed. Democracy wins or loses this war by the decision won in Russia just as much as by the decision that may be made on the western front in France.[3]

When the Czechoslovak uprising occurred, Americans were scattered all over Russia. Red Cross representatives were based in Petrograd and Moscow, the new seat of government; YMCA secretaries were in the midst of expanding their activities beyond the major cities in European Russia. The Red Cross men continued their relief activities as best they could with dwindling supplies, and association men relied on cooperation with Soviet officials to carry out their work. For the most part, both organizations looked forward to their efforts growing in scope in the future. Over the summer, Red Cross and YMCA men based in Soviet Russia assisted returning Russian prisoners of war, provided food to refugees and civilians, and ran an assortment of programs aimed at Russians from different walks of life.

This chapter deals with the final months of relief work in the Soviet Russia. The Allied military intervention and American policy toward the Soviet government in the fall of 1918 severely limited what the remaining American aid personnel could accomplish in central Russia. The intervention eventually compelled an end to American Red Cross and

[1]Lowrie to Fred, 21 Sep 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.
[2]George B. Case to Wardwell, 21 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 14–31 Aug 1918.
[3]Story to Gertrude, 8 Jun 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters.

YMCA activities in Moscow and Petrograd. At the same time, the position of Americans in Soviet-held areas became increasingly untenable because of the opposition of the US State Department to their continued cooperation with Soviet authorities. But even after departing, they remained hopeful they could go back in, whether Russia was ruled by the Bolsheviks or once the Soviet government had been defeated in the civil war.

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It was not true, as a Russian Red Cross official apparently claimed in the summer of 1918, that Allen Wardwell and his colleagues had completely ended their humanitarian endeavours. "So far as we know," the Russian man had said, "with the exception of distributing condensed milk, [the Red Cross men] have done absolutely nothing here but political intrigue."[4] It was also an overstatement that "there [was] practically no Red Cross work to do [after] Colonel Robins left Russia."[5] The milk distribution program wound down during April, just prior to Robins's departure. As it did, a new project appeared on the horizon that fit in well with the Red Cross's international mandate. This was to provide assistance to returning Russian POWs.

The Brest-Litovsk treaty meant that prisoners of war were no longer technically so. They started coming back into Russia in much larger numbers than before. Two or three trainloads of these former soldiers were arriving in Petrograd each week, and the numbers were expected to increase to two or three per day. When the prisoners reached in Russia, they "were usually in bad condition," Wardwell told Robins, and neither the government or relief

[4]Quoted in John Pollock, Introductory Letter, in his *The Bolshevik Adventure* (London: Constable, 1919), xvi.

[5]Letter from unknown sender to Davison, 8 Aug 1918, in Thacher papers, box 6, C on Russia—July–Dec 1918 (outgoing).

organizations had the means to look after them.[6] By early May, Russians were returning from Germany at the rate of five thousand men a day. Nearly all of them were in poor physical condition had no means of supporting themselves.[7]

In April Wardwell was asked by a Mr. Chermandskii whether his organization could assist returned prisoners. Chermandskii had been connected to the (imperial) Russian Red Cross, an organization that had since ceased to have the sanction of the Soviet government. Wardwell "doubted whether we were in a position to assist in this matter," but promised to bring it to Robins's attention.[8] Two weeks later, William Webster went to Orsha "to look into the matter of relief for returning Russian prisoners of war."[9] He must have seen some harrowing sights. Orsha, now part of Belarus, was the transit point for prisoners from both sides of Great War who were headed home. The German-held city (February–October 1918) was also a major stop for refugees trying to make their way out of Russia and into the occupied territories.[10] The Red Cross, perhaps because of Robins's departure and the closing of the Petrograd office, did not undertake work for former POWs at this point.

The YMCA did. At around the same time that Chermandskii contacted Wardwell, V. M. Sverdlov, the acting head of the All-Russian Zemstvo Union's Central Committee, got in touch with the YMCA. He asked the association to undertake relief for POWs from the Central powers and those former Russian ones now hospitalized.[11] He wanted the

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[6]Wardwell to Robins, 20 Apr 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Robins.

[7]Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918. For comments on the returned men and what the YMCA was providing them, see Paul Dukes, "Situation in neighbourhood of ORSHA," 19 Jun 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 327.

[8]Wardwell to Robins, 20 Apr 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Robins.

[9]Webster to Francis, 4 May 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 332.

[10]Western portrayals of the Orsha at this time include "The Situation at Orsha," n.d., in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 324; and Dukes, "Situation in neighbourhood of ORSHA."

[11]Trott, "Soviet Medicine," 126–27.

organization's assistance to help him organize and direct a program to get the men to their homes.[12] In early April, with the Pskov "Travelling-Feeding Organization" closed, the Russian government was keen for the association to organize at least one more feeding station for men returning from Germany.[13] According to Donald Lowrie, the program would be funded by the government, which was "utterly helpless before the task of organizing the great work to be done. Properly attending to the reception, care and dispatch to their homes of at least a million and a half of men, probably at least half of whom are permanent invalids, is a big enough job for anyone to want," he commented. He "believe[d] the Association [was] equal to the task."[14] Now that these former prisoners had returned home, they were no longer the responsibility of the association's War Prisoners' Aid committee, but were rightly part of "our regular work,"[15] Colton knew. Secretaries were soon assisting former prisoners of war in Orsha, Petrograd, Moscow, and elsewhere.

In Moscow, the association's work started slowly, but by mid-July there was regular work in eight hospitals. This service reached about four thousand men daily. The work, which primarily involved the distribution of supplies, was carried out by Russian workers under the supervision of American secretaries.[16] "Newspapers, writing materials and musical instruments were supplied, and libraries, barber shops and game rooms were established in quick succession at all these points. Concert parties were organized to furnish entertainment for the four-year exiles who had suffered so much in the prison camps of the Central

[12]Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918; Lowrie to wife, 9 May 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Apr–Jun 1918.

[13]Colton to Davis, 5 Apr 1918, in NARA, RG 84, CP, Moscow, box 4, 360.

[14]Lowrie to Uncle Fred, 11 May 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Apr–Jun 1918.

[15]Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.

[16]Report on assistance to returning Russian POWs, 29 Oct 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA WPA in Russia 1917–20.

Empires." "Sometimes," according to Crawford Wheeler, "when the broken-down municipal machinery failed to function, our small but nourishing ration would be the only food these Russians received during the twenty-four hours."[17] Russian staffers "assembled the flour, milk, and egg supplies by carloads, purchased on expeditions to distant areas."[18] YMCA personnel also handled communication between the returned soldiers and their families and showed films.[19] One YMCA report (written during 1919) proudly boasted that there were additional benefits to the provision of much needed goods and services: For several months, "streams of men [travelled] to their homes violently bitter toward Germany, disgusted with the existing Russian government and grateful toward Americans."[20] Assistance to returning prisoners was conceived (at least in hindsight), it seems, as an anti-Bolshevik measure even though it occurred with the cooperation of Soviet officials. War made for strange bedfellows.

The American Red Cross joined the YMCA's efforts in June. Wardwell believed that assisting returned prisoners was work his organization should take on. He asked Davison to have medical supplies and special foods shipped to and distributed in Russia.[21] Wardwell was especially interested in assisting returned POWs who were recuperating in Moscow hospitals, and families being evacuated from war zones and large cities.[22] Jointly with the YMCA, each of the three thousand men a day who passed through evacuation hospitals in Moscow received supplemental rations that summer. (For a time, small-scale work was also done in

[17]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 22–23.
[18] Colton, *Forty Years with Russians*, 28.
[19]Paul B. Anderson, *No East or West*, ed. Donald E. Davis ([Paris]: YMCA-Press, 1985), 11–12.
[20]Heald to Colton, 4 Apr 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].
[21]Wardwell to Davison, 9 Jun 1918, as part of Poole to State Department, 12 Jun 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 326.
[22]Wardwell memo, 17 Jun 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, June 1918. See also ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 126.

Smolensk and Petrograd.)[23] The Red Cross purchased medicine, and applied to the United States for more relief goods. A shipment arrived at Archangel in October, but by then it was too late to be routed to Soviet Russia.[24] The YMCA cooperated with the Russian Red Cross in purchasing several million cigarettes. These were freely given out at the hospitals.[25] Later that summer the Red Cross's Webster decided to give "clothing and disinfectants to every institution existing in this region [i. e., Petrograd] for [returning Russian] war prisoners or refugees, which presents to me a written request stating their needs." He had no difficulties in dealing with Soviet authorities "as every branch of the Government in Petrograd has expressed and demonstrated great friendliness towards us."[26]

Returning Russians were not the only former prisoners of war on the YMCA's radar. Hundreds of thousands of former "enemy" prisoners were still in Siberian camps or otherwise residing in more eastern parts of the former Russian empire. Americans had ended their work for these men in the summer of 1917. But now Paul Anderson wanted to once again take up their cause, and he came up with a plan. Anderson travelled east from Petrograd in late February. Along the way, he visited (neutral) War Prisoners' Aid secretaries. Out of these meetings came recommendations for new YMCA work for POWs during their evacuation. Secretaries would continue their regular camp work and service, but, in addition, some men would organize huts and services for evacuees at a few main stops along the way out of Russia. Upon Anderson's arrival in Vladivostok in early April, he got word from Hibbard in New York that the association did not want to see a "considerable

[23]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 23.

[24]Wardwell memo, 17 Jun 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, June 1918. See also ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 126.

[25]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 23.

[26]Webster to Stevens, 29 Jul 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 14–31 July 1918.

expansion of the existing" work for prisoners. The Russian department opposed "anything that might increase the fighting strength of America's enemies." Anderson did not believe his proposed work would be a problem.[27]

Later the same month War Prisoners' Aid secretaries based in Siberia gathered in Krasnoiarsk to discuss the future of their efforts. During the conference, held 27 April–7 May,[28] a cable from Mott was received that advised a "temporary delay" in POW work. The secretaries took this to mean that they could continue their regular efforts but not start any new projects.[29] The attitude of secretary Hugh Anderson Moran, who refused to be promoted to acting senior secretary for war prisoner relief work, is telling. He was "perfectly willing" to serve the Russian army or "students, railway men, or others of the industrial class," but he was "unable . . . as a matter of conscience to continue the work for the prisoners of war when I know of the freedom which these prisoners enjoy and the part some of them are playing in the destruction of Russia." (He was referring to the participation of some of these POWs on the Bolshevik side of the civil war.) Despite the command to "love your enemies," Moran explained to Mott that "I do not think [our Lord] expects us to help them when they are working destruction [sic] on our friends."[30] The Russian department at YMCA headquarters in New York had slightly different concerns: It did not want secretaries to give "any aid to German prisoners of war [that] might increase the possibilities of their returning to Germany

[27]Anderson to Hibbard, 7 Apr 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok 1918–19.

[28]Paul B. Anderson, "Report on the Work of the War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Association in Russia from May 1917 to September 30, 1918," 15 Nov 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA WPA in Russia 1917–20.

[29]Mott cable quoted in Anderson to Mott and Harte, 1 Jun 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19 (also in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3]).

[30]Moran to Mott, 24 May 1918, in HIA, Hugh Anderson Moran papers, box 2, Y.M.C.A.—Russia 1917—China / John R Mott / Prisoners of War. See also Moran to Hibbard, 7 Sep 1918, in ibid.

to fight against the Entente Allies."[31] There was no new work for "enemy" POWs in Siberia by the YMCA in the spring of 1918. American aid to German and Austro-Hungarian men who were on their way back to central Europe, potentially to take part in battles against the Allies, was out of the question. All the money formerly intended for them was earmarked for former Russian soldiers returning from the West.[32]

In the spring and into the summer of 1918, secretaries were involved in various kinds of relief work and service in Soviet Russia. Including both military and civilian efforts, these reached across the former empire, from Odessa to Vladivostok. The Mayaks continued to operate much as before in Moscow and Petrograd.[33] Relations with the central government and local authorities throughout the country were good—much better than they had been in the early weeks of Soviet rule. Jerome Davis had extensive contacts in Moscow, and his personal relationships with officials made life easier for the association. "We had free contact practically with individuals, families, and under officials," Colton later remembered. "A private car granted me would be attached to nearly any passenger train on reasonable advance notice." Secretaries were usually able to secure the necessary passes and permissions to travel where they wished. Even without proper documentation, political confusion was such that one secretary "traveled half way across Russia by holding up to the guards a big red seal clipped from an American Express parcel."[34] Secretaries were "given

[31]Minutes, 11 July 1918, in World War I records, box 3, Minutes—C.A.A.P.O.W.(OIC)—Apr 1918–Dec 1919.

[32]Hibbard to Colton, 31 May 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 2. See also Hibbard to Colton, 18 and 19 Jun 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 1.

[33]In December 1917, the International Committee's foreign committee took over direction of the club from James Stokes. Miller, "American Philanthropy among Russians," 1:234–35.

[34]Colton, "With the Y.M.C.A. in Revolutionary Russia," 134–35.

every assistance by the present Russian soviet government," Davis told Ambassador Francis in May.[35] That cooperation continued for a few more months.

In YMCA lexicon, most secretaries were engaged in "community-type" or "city work." They worked with local authorities and private institutions to set up centres for educational, athletic, and spiritual outreach for civilian populations. By early May a variety of programming and work was being offered and undertaken, in as many cities as the association was able to serve with its limited personnel and resources: Moscow, Samara, Kazan', Kola, Vladivostok, Nizhnii Novgorod, Irkutsk, and soon in Arkhangel'sk.[36] At Samara, for example, the association set up a playground program, trained recreation leaders, served meals to refugees, and enrolled hundreds of youngsters in the local Boy Scout troop.[37] In Moscow, educational classes and lectures were held at the central club, a restaurant was opened, a dedicated program for railroad employees was put on, and work was also done among university students.[38] Broadly speaking, these activities were meant to "lay foundations for permanent friendship" between Russia and the United States, and establish the association in Russia so that it "can never be removed." The YMCA wished to expand to other cities, but needed more secretaries to do so. There were plans to take on "large projects" that involved "the extensive distribution of supplies to meet the urgent needs of the Russian people."[39]

In the summer of 1918 the association was involved in a unique venture in Russia. In cooperation with American and Russian agricultural experts, Russian government

[35]Davis to Francis, 1 May 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 20.
[36]Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.
[37]Latourette, *World Service*, 373.
[38]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 24.
[39]Colton to Hibbard, 9 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.

departments, and local authorities and organizations, the YMCA operated a floating, travelling exhibit and educational centre along the Volga River.[40] By the end of April Davis had received permission from YMCA headquarters in New York to begin preliminary preparations. He believed it was one of the best ways the association could help Russia.[41] The central government was on board, too. During a meeting with Trotsky, Chicherin, and other Soviet officials, the YMCA was "promised steamers and railway cars free of charge for [its] work as well as all other possible assistance."[42] Government authorities provided a 217-foot steamer, a barge, a salaried crew, and fuel for the trip. The association's rural work department then took charge, working out financial, infrastructure, and legal issues with local and national Russian government officials.[43] The trip was meant to provide the YMCA with up-to-date knowledge of Russian rural and agricultural conditions, and teach Russians how best to farm their lands and live their lives. Several kinds of exhibits, demonstrations, and lectures were proposed on subjects including field crops, agricultural machinery, horticulture, vegetable gardening, dairy and poultry farming, beekeeping, the cooperative movement, home economics, and hygiene and sanitation. An on-board book shop was planned, and guides were to be hired to explain exhibits to visitors.[44]

The project was the result of collaboration between American organizations and Russian government departments and institutions. That they were able to work together shows how similarly-minded reformers the world over were during the Progressive Era.[45]

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[40]Hatfield to Roberts, 23 Apr 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Clifford Hatfield.
[41]Davis to Robins, 27 April 1918, in Thacher papers, box 1, Raymond Robins.
[42]Davis to Francis, 1 May 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 20.
[43]Hatfield to Roberts, 20 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–18
[44]"Agricultural Extension Work in Russia. Agricultural Exhibition Demonstration Barge on Volga River in 1918," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–18.
[45]Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ:

YMCA plans fit in well with the contemporary Russian adult education movement, for one, which was itself "fueled by peasant demand for information, the exigencies of the home front, and prohibition" during the war.[46] For the Volga venture, Russian agricultural organizations provided exhibits and helped "make possible various workers." The Moscow People's Bank lent three men "to promote the organization of cooperation in the country"[47]—i. e., teach visitors about the cooperative movement. The American Red Cross funded the work of the hygiene and sanitation department on board, and the YWCA provided its own representatives to carry out programming aimed at women and girls. Many activities were left up to Russian experts to carry out; they comprised the bulk of the personnel. There was a wealth of agricultural and related expertise in Russia to draw upon. An American YMCA man later noted with satisfaction that many of the agricultural specialists on board "had risen from the peasant class and knew the needs of the people."[48] Planning for the Volga venture brought together shared American and Russian optimism about Russia's future. Proponents of modernization from both countries found common ground and the opportunity to test their respective theories about economic and cultural advancement. It was also a chance to see how well the Russian peasantry would take to new ideas.

The steamer with its staff of thirty-five stopped one to three days each at forty-five different villages, towns, and cities. It travelled three hundred fifty miles along the Volga River between Simbirsk (now Ul'ianovsk) to Kimesha, and welcomed thirty thousand

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Princeton University Press, 2003), 7–8.

[46]Scott J. Seregny, "Zemstvos, Peasants, and Citizenship: The Russian Adult Education Movement and World War I," *Slavic Review* 59, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 297.

[47]Hatfield to Roberts, 6 May 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–18. Consumer cooperatives pre-dated the revolution, but the Bolsheviks allowed them to function for a time after coming to power. They were only nationalized in the spring of 1919. Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 699.

[48]W. W. Banton, "Educational Work in Russia—An Effort to Satisfy the Hunger for Knowledge," *World Agriculture*, 2, no. 3 (Winter–Spring 1922), 152.

visitors aboard. Along the way, YMCA secretaries met with an assortment of "Russian leaders in all walks of life," and the association was invited to establish permanent work.[49] The trip was intended to give farmers, other agricultural workers, and rural residents the knowledge to do their work according to the latest scientific and technological advancements, and with greater ease and efficiency. It showcased American and Russian agricultural knowhow. It aimed to help solve the "agrarian question," defined as "the just distribution of land . . . among the working people and the organization of farming by small farmers and farmers' communities."[50] In addition to strictly agricultural endeavours, "general community problems" were tackled during the trip. Included in this were four kinds of work: sanitation and hygiene; recreation and after-school activities for boys and girls; home maintenance, cooking, and child care; and cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church. Staff members, both Russian and American, prepared special exhibits, demonstrated techniques and games, delivered an assortment of lectures, distributed translated YMCA agricultural pamphlets, and held conferences on a variety of subjects at each stop. All this would, the association hoped, pave the way for future work in the Russian countryside.[51]

Near the end of August, the steamer was in the Kerzhenets River, a left tributary of the Volga east of Nizhnii Novgorod. It was then that expedition members received word that a group of Americans—YMCA men among them—had been arrested at the Nizhnii railroad depot as they tried to leave the city. The news put an early end to the expedition. The

[49]Clifford G. Hatfield, comp., "Rural Life on the Volga," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–18; typescript report, n.d., ca. fall 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R nd. Poole wrote that the YWCA had worked with the YMCA in "77 villages along the Volga": Poole to SecState, 21 Feb 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 5.

[50]"Agricultural Extension Work in Russia. Agricultural Exhibition Demonstration Barge on Volga River in 1918," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–1918.

[51]"Report of the Cultural Department of the Y.M.C.A. Agricultural and Cultural Exhibition on the Volga, 1918," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–18.

American personnel made their way back to Petrograd and then out of Russia entirely (see below).[52] Despite its short duration, rural work secretary Clifford G. Hatfield judged the enterprise a success. He believed it boded well for "unparalleled opportunities in the future to a far greater extent than we shall probably be able to meet."[53] According to expedition member William Walter Banton, most visitors "gained practical ideas and by the time the boat departed, there was always left a group of from ten to thirty who had grasped the facts that better farming, better community life, better babies and betters schools were matters of vital import in every community."[54] In other words, the peasants had passed the American test. By understanding and accepting that modern methods were superior to traditional ones, they proved modernization in Russia was possible. Another of the journey's successes was the romance of YMCA secretary Bryant R. Ryall and Katherine Childs from the YWCA contingent. They were engaged in August, and married in Arkhangel'sk in early November.[55] There was perhaps only one downside to the project, that is, the discovery that the American association's symbol, an inverted red triangle, was "the sign of the devil or the Anti-Christ."[56]

Thousands of kilometres to the east, the central Manchurian city of Harbin was the site of relatively significant non-rural efforts beginning in April. Given its largely ethnic

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[52]Kenneth Earl Peters, "Howard C. Merrill with the Y.M.C.A. in Russia, 1917–1919," 11 Apr 1968, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Howard C. Merrill.

[53]Hatfield to Roberts, 3 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Clifford Hatfield.

[54]Banton, "Educational Work in Russia," 152.

[55]"North Russia Y. M. C. A. News Items," *Y.M.C.A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 10 (15 May 1919): 3; Lowrie to "folks," 7 Nov 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Oct–Dec 1918. YMCA work also brought other couples together. Siberian secretary Raymond Reiztel married association worker Gail Berg in June 1919. See "Well! Well!," *Y.M.C.A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 13 (30 Jun 1919): 1. Donald Lowrie met his future wife Helen Ogden while they were YMCA and YWCA secretaries, respectively, in northern Russia. Lowrie to "Folks," 3 Mar 1919, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Mar–Dec 1919.

[56]Clifford C. Hatfield, comp., "Rural Life on the Volga," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R 1916–18.

Russian population and strategic location on the Chinese Eastern Railway, the YMCA targeted the area for a variety of activities. Community and city work were organized, as were programs for American and Russian railwaymen.[57] (The American engineers, numbering more than one hundred men, were members of the Stevens's Russian Railway Service Corps. They had arrived in Harbin in March 1918.) Moran termed the formation of a railway department to be "difficult pioneering."[58] The programs there were first set up with an eye toward permanent work in Russia (and neighbouring areas). By the summer of 1918 Moran and his associates were teaching English to shop employees and had an active athletics program for young men and boys living in the city.[59] They established a small school to train physical directors—Russian men who could organize sporting events and other athletic pursuits. In addition to "practice in all athletics, sports and games," the school also offered "Bible study" and training in "actual leadership."[60] In September Moran reported that "our place here is like a three ringed circus; something on every night and more or less of a crowd all day as well."[61] The next month secretary Herbert S. Gott claimed that a weekly lecture delivered in English and translated into Russian was "the most popular event in the program of the Y.M.C.A." The talks provided "a splendid opportunity for combined English study and social life and have often furnished an opportunity for bringing home many

[57]"Report of R. M. Story on Y.M.C.A. Work in Russia and Siberia," 9 Mar 1919, in UIUC, RS 4/5/50, Committee on the History of the Participation of the University in WWI File, box 13.

[58]Moran to Hibbard, 7 Sep 1918, in Moran papers, box 2, Y.M.C.A.—Russia 1917—China / John R Mott / Prisoners of War.

[59]Moran to Story, 25 Jun 1918, in Moran papers, box 1, C—Vladivostok—Harbin etc. 1918.

[60]Herbert S. Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Month of August 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–24. Secretaries also served Czechoslovak soldiers for a time.

[61]Moran to Heald, 10 Sep 1918, in Moran papers, box 1, C—Vladivostok—Harbin etc. 1918.

valuable lessons of life."[62]

The way the association reached the community most effectively, according to Gott, was with "wholesome recreation for boys." The secretaries took advantage of the presence of the Czechoslovaks in this. The Americans admired the Czechoslovaks' athletic skills, honed during years of Sokol drills. (The Sokol movement was similar to the YMCA but its focus was fitness training and gymnastics. It originated in Prague in 1862.[63]) Gott organized a "Y.M.C.A. Summer Sporting School for boys," which ended with an athletic exhibition featuring Czechoslovak drills, a volleyball match that pitted Czechoslovaks against Americans, and demonstrations by the pupils. The event, which "took on the appearance of an international community activity," "was the first time in the history of Harbin that the whole community had gathered together for a community program furnished by the youth of the city." The boys "played their games and ran their races with an abandon and fighting spirit completely foreign to the Russian spectators," he boasted. It was as if to imply that after some American instruction and oversight, these Russian youths had become somehow less Russian and more American. Local schools were so impressed with Gott's results that they requested association help for their own programs. One large school asked the YMCA to "supervise and direct [its] physical work." Gott supplied and paid for the necessary staff to do so. Gott's wife organized a women's department to arrange programming for girls, and she herself was a Girl Scout leader in one of the town's schools.[64] During the fall physical

[62]Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Quarter Ending October 31, 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–24.

[63]See Claire Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[64]Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Month of August 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–1924.

work was done in three schools,[65] and the YMCA "was offered the supervision of all playgrounds in the city."[66]

The association had little opportunity to do religious work. Although it was ostensibly one of the YMCA's main pillars, religious programming was relatively underdeveloped in Russia. This was due to a number of factors, not least of which was secretaries' lack of facility in the Russian language and unfamiliarity with Eastern Orthodox traditions. A small number of Bible classes were held, but the limitations of the association's resources and the relative disinterest of the men it served meant they could do little in this area. Given these challenges, in his reports to superiors Gott understandably emphasized his efforts in this field, and took pride in his accomplishments.[67] Boys spent more time at church after joining the YMCA, he claimed.[68] He boasted that religious work was the association's "most notable development." The older boys served during the summer began "to enquire about the deeper things of life. This furnished the opportunity to open up a Bible class." Gott believed that "the great need of the youth of the city has been met, however, but not only that, for a contact has been made with a number of idealistic Russian boys who were striving to build their houses well; but without the aid of the great architect. These boys are now opening the door to the treasury of truth and life, - the Bible. God only knows where it will lead them!"[69] Some of these boys wrote to Gott after they had gone into army service, asking for his "moral support" to "stand the temptations here in Army life." If not for YMCA teachings, another

[65]Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Quarter Ending October 31, 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–1924.

[66]Gott, "Endorsements of Work in Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–Mar 1920.

[67]Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Month of August 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–24.

[68]Gott, "Endorsements of Work in Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–Mar 1920.

[69]Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Month of August 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–24.

letter read, "we could not lead clean lives. This is the only thing that keeps us."[70] The young man meant, of course, all those activities the association abhorred, including sexual promiscuity and drinking alcohol.

Cleanliness of a different sort also resulted from the work for boys at Harbin. In general Americans believed, as medical officer Colonel James S. Wilson put it, that "the average Russian civilian has no idea of cleanliness and much less regard for sanitary matters." This was the result of "ignorance" due to "disadvantages experienced through many years." By educating young people, "enlightenment" could be achieved.[71] As with the YMCA's success in teaching Russian soldiers to wipe their boots before entering association huts, in Harbin secretaries managed to impart clean habits in at least one of their young charges. An association report (about the work done there in September 1919) included part of an interview conducted with a mother impressed with the YMCA. She had feared her sons' interest in the association would result in them neglecting their studies. Instead, she found that it made "such a difference." "For years I have been trying to get the youngest, Meescha, to wash himself and keep clean," this mother told a YMCA secretary. "I never could succeed. But now suddenly he takes to washing with the utmost care and precision – not only his hands and face and neck, but his teeth every day! And I can see such a difference in them [her sons]. They don't quarrel so much as they did. They don't tease their sister so much."[72]

This, the report might have added, was among the aims of YMCA activities for boys:

[70]Somerville, "Annual Report Letter for Civilian Work in Siberia," 9 Sep 1919, in James Stokes Society, box 176, Mayak—St. Petersburg 1912–22.

[71]James S. Wilson, "Medical History of the Siberian Expedition," n.d., ca. summer 1919, 51, 54, in NACP, RG 395, E-6018, History.

[72]"Report of the City Work in Siberia for Sept. 1919," in James Stokes Society, box 176, Mayak—St. Petersburg 1912–22.

helping mothers raise healthier, moral, and faithful sons who would then turn into religious-minded, morally upright, hard-working men. Building character in children was an essential goal of the YMCA and similar institutions interested in boys.[73] The mother's words, the report implied, were proof that Russians appreciated the association's efforts, and that they saw the YMCA not as an alien import but as an institution that could help them achieve their own goals. In Harbin, as throughout Russia, the association was reaching out to a variety of constituencies, from mothers to (current and future) soldiers, private Russian institutions, community leaders, and political and military authorities, not to mention young men of different classes and occupations. YMCA secretaries believed all of them would embrace American teachings, accepting the association's guidance in showing them the way to a better life and, ultimately, personal salvation. Americans ascribed extraordinary ends to their efforts. Establishing modernity with a Russian twist in the former tsarist empire was imperative for international peace and prosperity in this world, and to open the doors to heaven in the next.

The most important location of YMCA work in Russia in the coming years would be Vladivostok. YMCA secretaries were in "Vladi" by the winter of 1918.[74] The first secretaries arrived in March,[75] and by early April, there was a small handful of them living and working in the city. They were doing work for the Russian residents of the town, the refugees coming "down the line," and were also serving the recreation needs of marines and sailors on

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[73]Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*.

[74]"Report of the Siberian Expedition of the American Young Men's Christian Association in Russia from September 17, 1918 to February 18, 1920 by G. S. Phelps, Senior National Secretary for Russia," Part I, 3 Nov 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[75]Note on A. A. Simmons, in "Changes in Our Personnel," *Y.M.C.A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 17 (30 Aug 1919): 4; Anderson to Mother, 5 Apr 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA Russian Work 1918–25.

American and British cruisers, the HMS *Suffolk* and the USS *Brooklyn*. The secretaries had permanent, Mayak-type city work was in mind. Uncertain political and military conditions meant that very little in this direction was accomplished. According to Hollinger, the work was in good hands. Secretary Fred Goodsell, he wrote, was "the 'angel' of not only American refugees but of British, French and Belgians as well. His vigorous manliness and sterling Christian character impress all who meet him, and go far towards correcting unfavorable opinions of the association already formed." Another American secretary, Harry Long, predicted that "a vigorous local Russian [Mayak] association" would be up and running by the fall.[76]

Later in April, the go-ahead for expanded work was received from the local "Bolshevik powers that be."[77] The acting mayor, Pëtr Mikhailovich Nikiforov, was friendly and promised to help.[78] Over the summer association men organized programming for Boy Scouts and on all city playgrounds.[79] The association's chief representative, Story, had direct dealings with the local (Bolshevik) authorities despite the continual refusal of his own and other Allied governments to recognize the Soviet regime. He found the Vladivostok Bolsheviks "quite reasonable, willing to accommodate and the most polite group that I have come into contact with" save perhaps the American engineers. In fact, Story preferred the Bolshevik Russians to members of the intelligentsia. He pitied the latter, and thought them "thoroly [sic] rotted out with fear and corruption."[80] While judging Russians as "child[ren] in

[76]Harry Long to James Stokes, 20 Apr 1918, in James Stokes Society, box 176, C 1918–19; Hollinger to Mott, 21 Apr 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Dec 1917–Apr 1918.

[77]"Report of R. M. Story on Y.M.C.A. Work in Russia and Siberia," 9 Mar 1919, in UIUC, RS 4/5/50, Committee on the History of the Participation of the University in WWI, box 13.

[78]Story to Colton, 18 May 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters.

[79]Long to Stokes, 22 Jun 1918, in James Stokes Society, box 176, C 1918–19.

[80]Story to Gertrude, 8 Jun 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters. A year later his

many many things," the YMCA man acquired "a real liking for the ordinary Russian and an appreciation of his good sense."[81] He himself looked forward to heading home to be with his wife and return to his academic position come September, but Story's time in the country convinced him that "Russia must not be abandoned if the struggle for Democracy is to succeed. Democracy wins or loses this war by the decision won in Russia just as much as by the decision that may be made on the western front in France."[82]

"The struggle for Democracy" in Russia was well underway. By early August the Allies were waging an undeclared, small-scale war against Soviet Russia. As soon as news of the start of hostilities in the North reached Moscow (see chapter 5), Soviet authorities arrested the British and French consuls, their staff, and other foreign nationals still in the city.[83] British agent Lockhart, a close associate of Robins and the primarily link between the British and Soviet governments for most of 1918, was left free, along with his assistant. Americans, including Red Cross and YMCA representatives, were spared imprisonment for the moment. They were also spared the vitriol against the British and French in the Moscow press.[84] The Soviet leadership distinguished between the United States and its western European allies. At this point there were only two dozen US marines involved in the northern campaign. The commissar for foreign affairs, Chicherin, still favoured the United States. As a result Wardwell, Webster, and other Americans in central Russia experienced no discomfort.

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views of Bolshevism had changed somewhat, but he still characterized the Russian elites and intelligentsia in similar terms. See his "Russia—Present and Future," in "International Reconstruction," special issue, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 84 (Jul 1919): 81.

[81]Story to Morris, 15 Jun 1918, in Anderson papers, box 25, Russell M. Story Letters.

[82]Story to Gertrude, 8 Jun 1918, in ibid.

[83]Allison, *American Diplomats*, 111.

[84]Lockhart, *Memoirs*, 308–9, 313; Webster to Wardwell, 5 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, Chronological File 1–13 Aug 1918.

From Moscow, Wardwell kept a close watch on the situation; Webster did the same in Petrograd. Wardwell visited the foreign prisoners on a daily basis, bringing them food and supplies from Red Cross reserves.[85] He "worked untiringly" to alleviate their distress, and was able to persuade government ministers, including Feliks Dzerzhinskii, the head of the Cheka (i. e., the Soviet secret police), to provide relief in special cases.[86] In Lockhart's estimation, Wardwell's actions were "heroic."[87] After Lockhart's return to England, "the British Government conferred the Knighthood of the Order of St. Michael and St. George on the neutral Ministers who had conducted the negotiations for our release." The former agent "was able to secure for Wardwell, who as an American could not accept an Order, a piece of silver-plate with an inscription conveying the gratitude of the British Government for his services on our behalf."[88] In Petrograd, Webster did similar service for the imprisoned Allied nationals. He "succeeded in obtaining considerable betterments in" the conditions in which they were held, according to Consul General DeWitt Clinton Poole.[89] (Poole had replaced Maddin Summers, his former boss, in Moscow after Summers's sudden death in early May.)

In early August, even before the arrests, Poole recommended the withdrawal of American relief workers from central Russia.[90] He himself closed his consulate on 6 August.[91] Wardwell agreed with Poole, and after waking up to news of the Allied arrests, asked Webster to close up his work in Petrograd and suggested that he leave the country. Their locally-hired staff members, Magnuson and Pollatts, were also to leave as soon as they

[85]ANRC, *Annual Report . . . 1918*, 126.
[86]Poole to Lansing, 4 Nov 1918, in Williams papers, box 3, Notebook 1918.
[87]Lockhart, *Memoirs*, 340.
[88]Ibid., 344.
[89]Poole to Lansing, 4 Nov 1918, in Williams papers, box 3, Notebook 1918.
[90]Poole to Wardwell, 3 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Poole folder.
[91]Anderson, *No East or West*, 11.

received permission from Soviet authorities to do so. Wardwell based his decision on the belief "that substantially a state of war exists between the Allies and the Soviet Government, and I believe that the duty of the Mission and its individual members is on the side of the Allies and not in Russia."[92] The intervention had made their positions untenable for patriotic reasons.

But Webster hoped Red Cross work would continue. He disagreed with Wardwell's assessment of the military situation. On 4 August, "authorities in Petrograd" informed him that there were no American troops on Russian soil, nor did they think the Americans intended to land any. The Red Cross man in Petrograd believed the Russian government was "especially friendly towards us and will be only too glad to have us remain and continue our work, not only by giving us permission to do so, but also every facility."[93] The Bolshevik leaders, he informed Wardwell, were "especially anxious at this time to cultivate our friendship."[94] He and his assistants wanted to remain "as long as is necessary." They were not worried about being able to carry out their work successfully as long as they continued "the policy which the American Red Cross has always maintained, viz: absolute neutrality as far as political affairs are concerned and going ahead with our business regardless of all disturbances." He judged that the activities of the mission could "only elicit praise from whatever authority is in charge in Russia and would certainly seem to be the best for us to maintain." Webster's views about the importance of continued American relief work in central Russia extended beyond the Red Cross. Having heard that the YMCA might close up

[92]Wardwell to Webster, 5 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 1–13 Aug 1918. All remaining YWCA representatives would go with them.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Webster to Wardwell, 6 Aug 1918, in ibid.

shop, Webster judged that "if our Y.M.C.A. is thinking of running, I would think it was not only foolish, but cowardly."[95]

Webster expressed reservations about Wardwell's decision for both practical and political reasons. Among these was the mission's important diplomatic role. "At present, as well as for the past 6 months," he wrote, it was "the one foreign institution which has had the closest relations with the Soviet Government of any of the Allied or neutral Missions. To withdraw at this time, when we are the one Mission which can deal with these people and who meet with such sympathetic response would seem to be casting aside a powerful influence, capable of aiding the Allies' cause." He optimistically believed he and his colleagues should work "to help neutralize the further difficulties which allied individuals may encounter." Webster thought "that as long as we are in Russia, we should remain as an official Mission, maintaining what influence we can and carrying on such Red Cross work as we see fit to do, be it ever so little."[96]

Webster's reasoning did not convince Wardwell to change his mind about ending work in Russia. Wardwell, based in the Soviet capital, could keep abreast of political developments much better than Webster. By 8 August Wardwell was even more sure than he had been a few days earlier that a state of war existed between the United States and Soviet Russia. Allied diplomats in central Russia agreed. By now all the consuls had entrusted their affairs to representatives from neutral countries. "I think we must accept this situation whether we agree with it or not," Wardwell told Webster. He believed "it would be highly improper for the Mission by continuing to remain here formally to suggest a split in the

[95]Webster to Wardwell, 5 Aug 1918, in ibid. As for the YMCA, he meant the organization and not the individuals YMCA men (Penningroth and Anderson) in Petrograd.

[96]Webster to Wardwell, 7 Aug 1918, in ibid.

policy of the Allies, and even in that of America, no matter how friendly we may have been with the people and the Soviet power." The start of hostilities between the Allies and Russia meant that he and Webster now technically found themselves behind Allied lines. It was inappropriate, he knew, for an "official" mission to be thus located. After all, he and Webster still donned US army uniforms and held military rank, despite the fact that their work was not under the direct authority of Ambassador Francis, Consul Poole, or the military mission. Diplomatic relations had never been formally established between the Soviet and Allied governments, but the presence of foreign representatives of various kinds in Moscow and Petrograd suggested the possibility of accord. Now, though, all these representatives were making arrangements to leave the country. In Wardwell's mind the appropriate arena for Red Cross activities in Russia was Siberia, where Allied troops had recently landed. He suggested that Webster would "be of great use" there because of his "familiarity with Siberia and with refugee work."[97] A few days later Wardwell received permission from the Russian authorities for the mission members, along with the American consular officials and the members of the military mission, to leave the country. He only needed German guarantees of safe conduct to make his way out of Russia.[98]

Following the lead of Allied representatives, the YMCA's Jerome Davis also asked at this time (10 August) that American secretaries be permitted to leave Soviet Russia.[99] They were not included in Soviet promises to Wardwell and Poole because, unlike the Red Cross,

[97]Wardwell to Webster, 8 Aug 1918, in ibid. Webster agreed about his suitability to work (and take charge) in Siberia. See Webster to Wardwell, 12 Aug 1918, in ibid.
[98]Wardwell to Webster, 11 Aug 1918, in ibid.
[99]Davis to Karachan (draft), 17 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.

the YMCA lacked official standing.[100] In Moscow, despite some advancement in service for working men, association work had become increasingly difficult. In the first half of July the YMCA's main building was requisitioned and the association was ordered out of its boys' work facility. The organization's automobile was even commandeered for three days. Donald Lowrie, in a letter to his family, after apologizing for its disjointed contents, explained that "it couldn't be more of a jumble than the times in which we are living here." "It is like living over a volcano," he concluded. "Once in a while a man feels that it would be a real relief to have it explode—that, at least, would be something definite."[101] His wish never came true. Instead of an explosion tensions simply simmered for a time.

In early August, while they waited for approval from Soviet officials to leave the country, YMCA and YWCA representatives in Moscow took a train to Nizhnii Novgorod. They had decided to leave the site of the Allied arrests while they still could. Lowrie was unhappy about leaving. He thought he finally had the Moscow work well in hand.[102]

> I feel that we really made good beginnings in Moskow. We had one central building and two boys' buildings, playground work for more than fourteen hundred different boys, conducted on three different grounds. A life-saving station and swimming classes for the crowds of swimmers in the Moskow River, a club for soldiers of the Red Army, Industrial work in three factory centers, including welfare and educational work for the children of workmen, one full-time man on student work, and a Gospel team, preaching in the villages.[103]

"I am beginning to feel," he wrote on another occasion, "as tho life in Association work in Russia was just a series of evacuations of nicely started work." Lowrie "left a very efficient Russian staff to carry on such parts of the work as the Bolsheviks permit."[104]

In Moscow, Davis still hoped to receive permission for himself, Colton, Hatfield,

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[100]Wardwell to Webster, 11 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 1–13 Aug 1918.

[101]Interestingly, Lowrie claimed three "cabinet ministers" tried to get the building requisition overturned, but to no avail. Lowrie to "folks," 16 Jul 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.

[102]Lowrie to "folks," 15 Aug 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.

[103]Lowrie to Fred, 21 Sep 1918, in ibid.

[104]Lowrie to "folks," 15 Aug 1918, in ibid.

Hollinger, Lowrie, Ryall, Wheeler, and others—twenty-five secretaries in total—to travel to the Volga region, which he (incorrectly) thought was then still in Soviet hands. He drafted a letter to Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs Lev Mikhailovich Karakhan that provided details of the YMCA's cooperation with Soviet authorities.[105] It is unclear if Davis's message was ever sent, but after two weeks in Nizhnii—during which time the Americans were at one point arrested and detained for a few hours (see above)—the YMCA group learned that Poole had received permission for them to leave Russia via Finland.[106] There was no other way out of the country that did not pass through White Russian-held territory. Lowrie, for one, was certain he would be back in Moscow to continue association work after this "enforced vacation." For the moment, though, his buildings had been requisitioned and boys' work stopped "on the grounds that we were a capitalistic and counter-revolutionary organization."[107]

American representatives still based in Soviet Russia in August knew little about the Allied interventions in northern Russia and Siberia. They, in fact, had been without news from outside Bolshevik Russia for several months.[108] At the moment, they were not in danger of arrest, but there was no knowing how long their luck would hold out. In mid-August Wardwell wrote to Karakhan, asking permission for himself, Magnuson, Webster, Pollatts, an interpreter, and Andrews to go to Arkhangel'sk. They expected that medical supplies and foodstuffs for hospital use and relief purposes would have arrived there by now. Wardwell

[105]Davis to Karakhan, draft, 17 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R May–Sep 1918.
[106]Lowrie to "folks," 6 Sep 1918 (no. 53), in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.
[107]Lowrie to "folks," 6 Sep 1918 (nos. 55 and 56), in ibid.
[108]Lowrie to "folks," 10 Sep 1918, in ibid.

believed that, in cooperation with other relief societies, they could then arrange for the transport of the supplies to Moscow and Petrograd. He told Karakhan that he had assisted Sverdlov, the head of the (Soviet) Russian Red Cross and Zemstvo Union, in a similar scheme to bring grain from Samara to Moscow.[109] Chicherin and Karakhan agreed to let the men go to Arkhangel'sk, but claimed they needed the assent of "other Commissars" before formal approval was given. Wardwell was "inclined to think" it was "just another effort to stall [their] departure."[110]

The Red Cross War Council had by now dispatched a commission to northern Russia under C. T. Williams. When Williams set sail from the United States, the council was still keen on keeping the original Russian mission alive. It "had tremendous admiration for the way you have stuck it out," council member George B. Case wrote to Wardwell in August. "Your lot must have been a hard one indeed this last five months or so. But you have had our idea - i.e. not to haul down the Red Cross Flag & that idea will tell in the end." Case went on to inform Wardwell that Williams, whom he was acquainted with, was on his way back to Russia with supplies and a few other Red Cross men. "We must wait and be ready for the opening of the door [to work in Russia]," he wrote. "The Red Cross is planted in Russia & may it never be uprooted. That's the one outstanding thought. Not politics, not partisanship, but plain simple honest humanity & help. That's the best & the only propaganda for the Red Cross. That's what <u>you</u> have stood for - & that's what Williams & his people come for."[111]

Uncertainty as to how they were to leave Russia was the main reason why it was not

[109]Wardwell to Karakhan, 15 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 14–31 Aug 1918.

[110]Wardwell to Webster, 20 Aug 1918, in ibid.

[111]Case to Wardwell, 21 Aug 1918, in ibid.

for some time yet that Wardwell and Webster made their way out of Soviet Russia. By mid-August the liquidation of the mission was almost complete. Webster was spending nearly all his time working on Allied "trading company" or *Tovaroobmen*—the Russian word for "barter" or "commodity exchange"—business.[112] He had earlier been asked to assist with its work, and became its de facto American representative in Petrograd when R. R. Stevens, the head of the branch of the National City Bank of New York (then based in Volodga), was out of reach.[113] The *Tovaroobmen* was the means through which the Allies purchased Russian supplies, including textiles, that Webster wanted to acquire so he could continue his distributions of clothing and other goods to institutions giving aid to refugees and POWs. Webster had maintained in late July that by purchasing textiles the *Tovaroobmen* might accomplish "big work . . . to prevent Germany from obtaining the vast quantities of supplies which she would otherwise secure." Allied economic intervention was key to salvaging the situation, he believed. He wanted to see the United States send a trading mission, as the British had recently done. Webster maintained that "we Americans could do even bigger things, because we not only meet with a greater sympathy, but are capable of acting with much more boldness, which are the two things that count."[114] The timing was not right, though. The *Tovaroobmen* could not continue. Webster assumed his next Russian project would be to take charge of Red Cross activities in Siberia. He did not know that the Siberian commission already had an appointed leader, and that its work was underway.[115]

Finally, with permissions secured and a route planned, ninety-five Allied nationals

[112]Webster to Wardwell, 7 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 1–13 Aug 1918; Webster to Wardwell, 14 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 14–31 Aug 1918.

[113]Webster to Wardwell, 7 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 1–13 Aug 1918.

[114]Webster to Stevens, 29 Jul 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 14–31 Jul 1918

[115]Webster to Wardwell, 14 Aug 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File 14–31 Aug 1918.

left Moscow on 26 August. The group included all remaining US consular officials except for Poole, as well as Colton, Lowrie, and the rest of the YMCA personnel just arrived from Nizhnii. The Allied train arrived in Petrograd two days later.[116] On 30 August, the head of the Petrograd Cheka, Moisei Uritskii, was shot to death by an assassin. Later that evening, Lenin was also shot (but not killed) after a speech at a workers' rally.[117] Following these acts of violence, there was a wave of arrests and state-organized killings—the start of the Red Terror. This state-sponsored violence gripped Soviet Russia officially from early September, but on 31 August, Soviet officials ordered the execution of hundreds of political enemies in Moscow, Nizhnii Novgorod, and Petrograd.[118] On 31 August, too, a British naval attaché was killed in Moscow, and Lockhart was imprisoned. (Lockhart was involved in an Allied plot to overthrow the Soviet government, and was only released in October.[119]) It was in this context of increasing state terror and threats to foreigners that the Allied group received authorization to travel toward Finland. Their train left Petrograd's Finland Station that night and crossed the border shortly thereafter.[120] According to Lowrie, Uritskii had been holding up their departure before his assassination. "Late that evening [31 August], permission was suddenly received, and we pulled out for Bieloostrov, the Finnish border station. I suppose it is a diplomatic secret, how much, in roubles, that permission cost. I am sure I do not know, but

[116]Allison, *American Diplomats*, 112; David A. Langbart, "Five Months in Petrograd in 1918: Robert W. Imbrie and the US Search for Information in Russia," *Studies in Intelligence* 52, no. 1, Web Supplement (Mar 2008): 3, 9 (Imbrie report). This article is available from https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-52-no-1/; accessed 17 Aug 2011.

[117]Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 806.

[118]Ibid., 818–19.

[119]The "Lockhart Plot" is detailed John W. Long, "Searching for Sidney Reilly: The Lockhart Plot in Revolutionary Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 47, no. 7 (Nov 1995). Richard K. Debo weighed the evidence several decades ago in "Lockhart Plot or Dzerhinskii Plot?" *Journal of Modern History* 43, no. 3 (Sep 1971): 413–39.

[120]Allison, *American Diplomats*, 112–13.

the whole four days' delay, apparently, could have been avoided, had we realized that fact, by a simple financial transaction. That is one reason I have small hopes for the permanency of the present Russian regime."[121] Corruption, in his mind, was not a good base on which to build a state. It was a naïve view.

Lowrie's colleagues Anderson and Penningroth remained in Moscow and Petrograd, respectively, to continue their POW work. They were then the only two Americans working in conjunction with the association's War Prisoners' Aid office; the other nine secretaries on its roster hailed from neutral countries including Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.[122] Webster did not leave Petrograd, and Poole and Wardwell remained in Moscow because some foreigners were still being detained. Wardwell also had to look after Andrews, the Red Cross's treasurer, who was unable to travel due to illness. While Andrews convalesced and the men waited for permission to depart at a later date, Wardwell gave "some relief to the Allied subjects in prison." Because he knew his time in Russia was coming to a close, Wardwell's efforts in this direction were "gradually being turned over to the International Red Cross."[123]

Less than a week later, on 6 September, Cheka forces seized the (former) American consulate, then being watched over by the Norwegians. Soviet authorities also issued arrest

[121]Lowrie to "folks," 6 Sep 1918 (no. 55), in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918. This passage is preceded by: "Nobody seemed to be able to find out exactly why, but permissions for our departure seemed unobtainable. The local Kommissar refused to recognize the orders of the Grand Mogul in Moskow, and we found ourselves practically imprisoned in our train [which had just come from Moscow]. It was really comic. The first day in Petrograd, everybody went sightseeing at will. That afternoon the Kommissar threatened to arrest any Americans found on the streets, and the next day we all stayed in the station. The third day, permissions were issued for visits in the city, and, then, in the middle of the day, the man who had been holding up our permissions was assassinated, and the fourth day we spent very quietly within the confines of the Finland [train] station."

[122]Anderson, *No East or West*, 9; Wardwell to Larsen, 1 Sep 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File Sep 1918.

[123]Wardwell to Christiansen, n.d., in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File Sep 1918. For more on the ICRC's work for POWs in Soviet Russia during 1918, see Durand, *Sarajevo to Hiroshima*, 102–5.

warrants for all Allied personnel except Americans.[124] Although several thousand US troops had landed in Arkhangel'sk two days earlier, Chicherin, Lenin, and other Soviet leaders still differentiated between "Anglo-French imperialism" and the United States.[125] On 10 September, the joint YMCA and Red Cross programs for returned Russian war prisoners—food aid and recreational activities—were ended by order of the Soviet government. Russian authorities asked the Americans to turn their work entirely over to representatives from neutral countries.[126] Anderson sought out an explanation, and was informed that the order was the result of the "nationalizing of all efforts of private organizations in relieving prisoners." The YMCA's unofficial status made it subject to regulations affecting "private" groups. Confiscated supplies and equipment, including pianos and other musical instruments, office equipment, a large supply of cigarettes, and other goods, were not returned to the association. Anderson discussed the situation with Wardwell and Poole; they agreed not make an official protest. Instead, Anderson decided to formally end his work, selling off or otherwise disposing of remaining assets, letting staff members go, and cancelling the lease on his building.[127] (The War Prisoners' Aid office continued to function with neutral secretaries in charge.[128])

In Petrograd there were no arrests, and the POW program under Louis Penningroth continued without government harassment. But early September saw the forced closure of the Mayak by order of the People's Commissariat of Popular Education. The Mayak's

[124]Allison, *American Diplomats*, 112–13.

[125]Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 276–77

[126]Report on assistance to returning Russian POWs, 29 Oct 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA WPA in Russia 1917–20; Trott, "Soviet Medicine," 127.

[127]Anderson to Mott ("Moscow"), 11 Oct 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR.

[128]Anderson, "Report on the Work of the War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Association in Russia from May 1917 to September 30, 1918," 15 Nov 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA WPA in Russia 1917–20.

(Russian) council objected to the decision—and to the charge that the organization was counterrevolutionary—and won. "American help was approved, and with a program made more practical" the Mayak continued to function for the time being.[129] It seems Soviet officials, after holding onto the distinction between America and the Entente powers, were unsure how to react to news that US soldiers were actively taking part in the civil war in the North. But after hostile American moves continued through September—the publication of Sisson's collection of (fake) documents purporting to prove Soviet leaders were German agents, among them—it was made abundantly clear to the Soviet government that the United States was not on its side. By October Russian officials "lumped the 'Anglo-French, American, and Japanese imperialist robbers' together."[130]

Before Anderson could finish liquidating his work in Moscow, the Cheka arrived at the former American consulate and arrested him on the morning of 17 September. Another YMCA secretary, not an American but a Danish man who headed up his country's War Prisoners' Aid committee in the city, was also detained. Over the course of the day nearly fifty more people, including YMCA secretaries, Russian employees, wives, and visitors to the building, were arrested and brought to Lub'ianka prison. Most of the individuals imprisoned were not released for several days; Anderson was held for a week. After being released he and Penningroth left the country in early October at the request of the Norwegians.[131] They had been the last YMCA men left in Soviet Russia.[132]

The Cheka ordered the final end to YMCA presence and work in Soviet Russia on 25

[129]Anderson to Mott, "Moscow," 11 Oct 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR; Turpeinin, "Recollections."

[130]Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 277.

[131]Anderson to Mott, "Moscow," 11 Oct 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA IC HQ in USSR. See also related material in this folder.

[132]Anderson, "Reflections on Religion in Russia," 14.

October. The Cheka decided that the association was "decidedly a harmful organisation for the present moment" and ordered it closed and its property confiscated. People employed as couriers, especially those going to the Czechslovak front, were to be exiled or held in concentration camps.[133] According to Colton, "certain members of the Central government invited" YMCA activities to continue and "guaranteed the personal safety of all secretaries who would remain and who would declare essentially their allegiance to the Bolshevik government."[134] No one took them up on this offer. At the end of October Soviet authorities arrested the Mayak's director, J. G. Turpeinin—he had taken over from Hollinger in February—and the Mayak council president. Turpeinin was released in November; the president died after only a few days behind bars.[135]

Webster left Petrograd on 4 October aboard the same train as Anderson and Penningroth.[136] He expected the move to be temporary: He was still in contact with Soviet authorities, and wished to return to Petrograd. In fact, Webster believed that the Red Cross goods headed for Arkhangel'sk, discussed in the next chapter, might still make it to Petrograd. He waited in Copenhagen for a message telling him to return to Petrograd. "Have made all arrangements with Soviet authorities for my safe return and assistance in supervision and distribution these supplies," he cabled the embassy in Arkhangel'sk.[137] Perhaps Webster, like the YMCA's Lowrie, found himself "homesick for Russia."

> It may be largely my work which draws on the strings of my heart, or it may be the knowledge of the unspeakable need which we can help in some small measure to fill, back there, but here [Sweden],

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[133]Peters and G. de la Far to YMCA, 25 Oct 1918, in Anderson papers, box 5, YMCA RW Soviet 1917–19.

[134]E. T. Colton, letter to the editor, *The New Republic* (8 Mar 1919): 185.

[135]J. G. Turpeinin, "Recollections . . . ," n.d., ca. 1921, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R 1921 [2].

[136]Anderson, *No East or West*, 22.

[137]Webster to embassy (Archangel), 17 Oct 1918, in NACP, RG 84, DP, Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 4.

> after less than three weeks of absence, I find myself longing for the romantic skies of Russia; for her gilded domes and towers; for the moving music of her Church; most of all for the chance to go on with my friendships among her young men with their vast capacities for idealism and self-sacrifice as yet unguided.

As was true of Webster, Lowrie expected to return to Moscow "as soon as that is possible."[138] "We must go back," he flatly declared.[139] It was not an impossible hope. Despite the American military activity in the North, the Bolsheviks still wanted better relations with the United States. Before Webster's departure, Chicherin had given him a message for Robins "that every attempt should be made to get permission for an official representative to visit Washington, because 'nothing is more desirable to us than to get into friendly relations with the United States.'"[140]

From Stockholm in September, Magnuson speculated about the intentions of Red Cross headquarters in Washington. Having heard about the groups sent to Siberia and Arkhangel'sk, he surmised the original Russian mission "should take care and look after the needs in Soviet Russia. In this manner the American Red Cross would have representatives over [the] whole [of] Russia, and great work can be done." Magnuson thought prisoner relief was the only activity the mission could perform. He read a *New York Times* article from the end of July in which Davison was quoted as saying that Americans, through the Red Cross, "were eager to be of service to the Russian people in their distress and affliction." Based on this statement, Magnuson believed the War Council would approve of food being sent into Soviet Russia to be used in hospitals caring for returned war prisoners. If a "systematic and satisfactory plan for this work" was formulated, he thought the Soviet government would "co-operate with [Wardwell] in every possible manner." "No one knows better than you and

[138]Lowrie to "folks," 18 Sep 1918, in Lowrie papers, box 1, Jul–Sep 1918.
[139]Lowrie to Uncle Fred, 21 Sep 1918, in ibid.
[140]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 27.

Webster," he told Wardwell, "what a hard winter they will have this year in Petrograd and Moscow . . . [I]t certainly would be a great work for the American Red Cross to relieve the suffering amongst the thousands of returned war prisoners in these two cities, irrespective of what political differences there may be." Magnuson wished to use the shipment of goods brought to Arkhangel'sk by Williams for this purpose, and was "very sorry that [he had] left Moscow." He believed the War Council had wished the mission to stay on.[141] But Magnuson made too much of Davison's statement, and did not carefully consider its date; a great deal happened between late July and September. Given the organization's close ties to the US military, there is no reason to believe the War Council would have wanted its representatives in Soviet Russia to continue their efforts.

Three days after Webster, Anderson, and Penningroth left, Poole judged that "the general situation" was such that it required the departure of Wardwell and Andrews as soon as the latter could travel without seriously endangering his health.[142] Poole himself had already left Russia, departing in mid-September. He very narrowly escaped arrest at the Finnish border, and arrived in Archangel on 2 November to take over American interests from an ailing Ambassador Francis.[143] Wardwell, accompanied by Andrews and a member of the American consular staff, duly left Russia on 17 October and arrived in Stockholm four days later. They were the last Americans to leave central Russia.[144] The departure did not mean the end of Wardwell's efforts with respect to relief work in Soviet Russia. From

[141]Magnuson to Wardwell, 10 Sep and 20 Sep 1918, both in Wardwell papers, box 2, Chronological File Sep 1918. The clipping Magnuson saw was "Red Cross Sends Relief to Russia," *New York Times* (29 Jul 1918).

[142]Poole to Wardwell, 7 Oct 1918, in Wardwell papers, box 1, Poole folder.

[143]Allison, *American Diplomats*, 114–15.

[144]Wardwell to Williams, 23 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 4; McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 146, 149.

Sweden, he inquired about the possibility of goods entering Soviet Russia and was informed by the head of the Russian Red Cross—then a government institution—that they "could be sent to Moscow and Petrograd and used there for returned war prisoners or children's relief under AmRedCross control and that he could obtain from Soviet authorities satisfactory assurance to this effect." Wardwell told Williams that if such a move was "consistent with our Government's policy in Soviet Russia Webster or I could return to complete arrangements and take control. Am satisfied we could do so with entire security and could work without difficulty."[145]

The two veteran Red Cross men and their loyal assistants wanted to keep working in Russia. Even if there had been a chance of them getting their way, they were stymied by Francis and Williams in Arkhangel'sk. Williams sent word to Davison that the "military situation" and "transportation difficulties" meant it was "impracticable" to send supplies through Bolshevik lines. He did not want shipments to be interpreted by Soviet authorities "as evidence America [was] assisting them." This was all the more important, he implied, given the "latest Bolshevist methods": "outrages on population excused by political reasons."[146] Francis was alarmed by Webster and Wardwell's eagerness to carry out their plans. He cabled recommendations to Washington, intending them to reach Davison. The ambassador asked that if Wardwell and Webster returned to Russia and the supplies did reach Petrograd and Moscow "that relief be not distributed under Bolshevik control or supervision but that American character thereof be emphatically stated and Red Cross representatives be instructed to extend such relief first to anti Bolsheviks whom Soviets have been starving and

[145]Wardwell to Williams, 23 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 4.

[146]Williams to Davison, 22 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C 1918, vol. 330.

brutally murdering." This could put Red Cross workers in danger, but Francis wanted the "Bolsheviks [to be] driven out by Allied troops" before any Red Cross relief went in. He went on to comment that the Soviet Red Cross, which he thought was then being organized, would serve only "to perpetuate [Bolshevik] power and promote world wide social revolution." He considered the latter to be a "menace to all well regulated governments and to society itself; therefore nothing should be done to lend respectability to such murderers or to perpetuate such blot on civilization."[147] It would have been difficult for Davison and his colleagues to ignore such pointed language about Russia's rulers.

It was no matter: The State Department put an end to all work in Soviet Russia. The department informed the Red Cross in Washington "that it does not see how this Government can sanction cooperation with Soviet authorities in view of circular of September 20th."[148] That circular, from the secretary of state to all diplomatic missions, repeated information received from "reliable sources," namely, "that the peaceable citizens of Moscow, Petrograd and other cities are suffering from an openly avowed campaign of mass terrorism and are subject to wholesale executions."[149] Wardwell and Webster would not have disagreed. Wardwell himself had earlier protested to Chicherin about "the extreme measures" taken with "the beginning of a class terror."[150] In his reply, Chicherin had scolded Wardwell for the Red Cross's failure to equally condemn recent White atrocities perpetrated against Bolshevik sympathizers elsewhere in Russia.[151] There is no evidence Wardwell ever responded to

[147]Francis to secretary of state, 28 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 1.

[148]Lansing to embassy, Archangel, 29 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 1.

[149]Lansing's telegram is reproduced in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 1:687–88.

[150]8 Sep 1918, reproduced in ibid., 1:685–86.

[151]11 Sep 1918, in ibid., 1:713–15.

Chicherin's entirely fair rebuttal.

The members of the Red Cross mission never returned to Soviet Russia, and neither did the majority of YMCA secretaries. From Stockholm, Wardwell travelled to Oslo, and left there at the end of October. Before he departed,

> Wardwell promised that he would continue to take an interest in the Russian question, as he realized that the amount of health, experience, time and work which had been expended by the few remaining members of the American Red Cross in Russia must not be allowed to go for nothing. We sincerely believe, that even if he personally should be too tired or should have some other reasons for severing his connection with the Russian cause, he will use all his knowledge and influence to make other people take an interest in the cause, in connection with which the names of Mr. Thompson, Colonel Robins, [Thacher], himself and Captain Webster were carrying on the difficult task of assisting the numerous British, French and other prisoners, who were suffering in the Peter & Paul Fortress, the Lubianka and other prisons.

Though Wardwell returned to his law practice in the United States, he did continue his involvement in American–Russian relations. While in Scandinavia, Webster waited for instructions from Washington. He was still in Copenhagen at the end of November, temporarily in charge of the local American Red Cross bureau, in addition to being engaged in Russian affairs.[152] By then, many of the YMCA secretaries who had left Russia with Colton in late August, or later in the fall, had made their way to Arkhangel'sk.[153] By the start of 1919, Soviet Russia was very nearly completely isolated politically and diplomatically. There remained only one foreign mission in Moscow, namely, that of the Danish Red Cross. Its members continued to work on behalf of former war prisoners and looked after the interests of western countries in Russia, including the United States.[154] But even they did not

[152]Alexis ? to Thacher, 29 Nov 1918, in Thacher papers, box 5, C Jul–Dec 1918. Wardwell is mentioned several times in Norman Saul's *Friends of Foes? The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921–41* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

[153]Anderson, *No East or West*, 19.

[154]Teddy J. Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology: The Origins of Soviet Foreign Relations, 1918–1930* (London: Sage, 1979), 52.

last much longer. The Danish mission left Soviet Russia in February 1919.[155]

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In the summer and fall of 1918 the remaining members of the YMCA and Red Cross in Soviet Russia cooperated with government authorities. The YMCA's efforts in Russia fulfilled a number of American desires, from making the world safe for democracy to ensuring Russians' personal salvations come judgment day. There was room enough in the semi-secular, broadly Christian war-time YMCA to embrace short- and long-term goals, and both earthly and heavenly ones. Political and economic concerns animated members of the Red Cross more than religious ones, but all Americans were optimistic that their efforts would improve the lives of Russians. Doing so would indirectly benefit American–Russian relations.

The Red Cross men based in Russia had little idea that relations between their two countries would sour to the point that the Americans would refuse to even officially recognize Russia's rulers until more than fifteen years after the revolution. They were operating consciously in the context of the war with Germany; believed that good relations between the United States and Russia were important, if only for the sake of trade and influencing Russians to be more like Americans; and took a pragmatic approach in order to continue their efforts. Generally speaking, relations were good. The combined Russian–American condensed milk distribution program in the winter of 1918 was telling of the cooperation between the American Red Cross and Russian officials, both Bolshevik and non. This cooperation continued in the months that followed. Whether the recipients of aid were

[155]For more on the Danish Red Cross mission and other Danish representatives in Soviet Russia, see Bent Jensen, "Missiia Datskogo Krasnogo Kresta v Rossii, 1918–1919 gody," *Otechestvennaiia istoriia* 1997, no. 1 (Jan–Feb): 27–41.

Russian soldiers, officers, or their families; the children of Petrograd; returning Russian prisoners of war; Serbian refugees; or foreigners resident in Russia, the mission got on well with Russian officials, both before and after the November revolution.

Even after the beginning of hostilities in the North the relief workers did not find themselves particularly aggrieved. As Americans, they were given special treatment by the Bolsheviks. Their Allied friends were quickly arrested (if not otherwise mistreated). Slowly, though, beginning in the summer, conditions became increasingly difficult. The YMCA's Lowrie found his efforts under attack bit by bit. Even so, he interpreted the situation as one arising out of confusion and believed the Bolsheviks would not long hold the reins of power. After he left Russia in early October, Webster remained convinced for some time that he would return to the country to continue relief activities. Despite the American military intervention, Lowrie, Webster, and their associates had little sense that their work in central Russia was truly finished. Though recent developments were cause for concern, they remained hopeful that the revolution would lead to important changes to Russian politics and society, and they wished to be there as they occurred, helping to lead the way to the future. In the meantime, these men also took their jobs as relief workers, ambassadors of American goodwill, and protectors of Allied interests seriously. So did their colleagues based in northern Russia.

CHAPTER 5

"A splendid field"[1]
Northern Russia, 1918–19

> The Y.M.C.A. in North Russia is the only thing that comes between the soldier and absolute misery. Outside Archangel, which has few enough distractions, there is nothing else to keep a man from going crazy in this cold, deserted wilderness of a country.[2]

> There will be at least 20,000 people of the coming generation in North Russia who, however, interior politics may shift and change will always be strong partisans of the democracy across the seas.[3]

The Allied military intervention began almost simultaneously in the Russian Far East and northern Russia. In the North, unlike in Siberia, the welfare of Allied troops rather than the well-being of Russian or Czechoslovak soldiers was prioritized by representatives of American welfare agencies. They generally remained focused on military relief work. The need for their services was greater in northern Russia than perhaps on any other fighting front during the First World War. As the head of YMCA work noted in an early report on his efforts, "there is nothing to be had in the bleak country so [soldiers] will have just what we provide them."[4] The Red Cross focused on work in Arkhangel'sk and sent its representatives on supply trips to provide the scattered American troops with additional foodstuffs, supplies, and medicines. YMCA secretaries had a greater presence at the various fronts, working directly with the military to supply so-called comforts and canteen goods to cold, exhausted,

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[1]D. O. Lively to R. E. Olds, 8 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.61 North Russia—Military.

[2]E. O. Munn to J. A. Ruggles, 8 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia— Archangel & Murmansk District 1918–19.

[3]George B. Ford, comp., "Historical Facts relating to the Work of the American Red Cross in Northern Russia up to 15 September, 1919," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[4]Craig to Hibbard, 16 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2]. In subsequent letters Craig continued to stress that soldiers needed to come properly equipped because they was nothing for them to purchase once they arrived.

and increasingly unhappy fighters.

Though consciously part of a military operation, the relief organizations saw their mandate as including some measure of aid to locals and refugees. YMCA secretaries distributed small amounts of foodstuffs and other goods to groups of needy villagers on occasion, and their work piqued the interest of residents of at least one town. Civilian relief was equally never a priority for the American Red Cross, though at times small distributions and targeted programs in Arkhangel'sk and elsewhere benefited civilians. As winter wore on, the Red Cross was called upon to expand its civilian relief program more and more by a variety of individuals and groups. The organization set up a food distribution program for school children and destitute civilians in Arkhangel'sk, did one-off distributions to families and others in remote parts of the region, set up an employment agency, and provided assistance to refugees. Still, this non-military work always took a backseat to service to the Allied army. Representatives of the welfare agencies sometimes lamented this fact.

This chapter discusses the Red Cross and YMCA work in northern Russia during the Allied military intervention, 1918–19. Limited budgets and harsh conditions meant both organizations found themselves stretched thin. The inherent tensions between their dual roles—military and humanitarian—were exacerbated by stresses particular to this northernmost fighting front. These included dealing with the British command, the over-abundance of alcohol, and the extremely limited availability of food, basic supplies, and other items. Representatives of both organizations found value in carrying out what limited civilian work they were able to, for reasons that will be familiar to readers by this point: success of the Allied occupation, friendly relations between Russia and the United States, and the future development of Russia itself.

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The part of northern Russia Allied soldiers were sent to was sparsely populated, poorly built-up, and suffered through long, cold, dark winters. It was, however, one of only two Russian areas still accessible to the Allies after Bulgaria joined the Central powers in October 1915. There were two available ports—the ice-free one at Murmansk established out of necessity in 1916, and that was located on the Kola Bay of the Barents Sea, and that of the more southerly Arkhangel'sk on the White Sea, which was frozen half the year. Both were used by the Allies—including the American Red Cross and YMCA—to ship equipment and supplies into Russia. In the region around Arkhangel'sk there were four main rivers, all flowing into the Arctic Sea, namely, the Northern Dvina, the Pechora, the Onega, and the Mezen. Other than these and many smaller rivers, the area had limited transportation infrastructure. The Murmansk railway was completed by November 1917. It connected the region to the rest of Russia. Parts of northern Russia that lay out of reach of rivers and railways were completely isolated much of the year, while other spots could only be reached by sledges in the winter months. During the spring thaw, trails were mostly mud, wreaking more havoc on any attempts to traverse the region. Just over half a million people lived in and around Arkhangel'sk in 1918. The Murmansk region, home to about 110,000 souls, extended north into the Arctic Circle.[5] The First World War saw large quantities of raw materials including flax and timber shipped out, primarily by British exporters. To protect this market, Britain considered Murmansk its preserve. The area was put under the Admiralty's control in 1916.[6] The direct military involvement of the Allies in the Russian North must thus be traced back

[5]Population figure for Murmansk from "Memorandum - Murmansk," 28 Sep 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[6]White, *Commercial Relations*, 46–51.

in part to British commercial interests in the region.

British ships had patrolled the waters around Murmansk for some time. Their presence had not stopped the revolution from reaching Russia's North, however, and by early 1918 the region's local governments owed their allegiances to Moscow. More direct British interference began in early March when British marines landed at Murmansk. In addition to helping guard Britain's commercial interests, the landing was intended as a show of support for the region's Soviet government, which feared a German-backed Finnish invasion. (Murmansk is about equidistant to Helsinki and St. Petersburg.) Trotsky himself had ordered Murmansk to accept Allied aid for defensive purposes.[7] American and British cruisers joined Russian ships in the port; an American YMCA secretary, Jesse Halsey, arrived in March and opened a hut to serve the foreign seamen as well as Allied nationals on their way out of Soviet Russia.[8] The Allies had no intention of providing long-term support for the Bolsheviks, but at this particular juncture and place, they were better bedfellows than were the Germans. In April and again in early May the Murmansk Soviet asked the small numbers of Allied military personnel already there for assistance in a campaign against pro-German Finnish forces. The British acquiesced, sending British marines and French soldiers to protect a group of Red Finns near Kandalaksha. Allied fighters later worked in conjunction with Bolshevik forces to fend off White Finn attacks.[9] A few weeks later, the Reds would become the enemy, and the Whites, Allied friends.

Despite this genuine cooperation, top Soviet officials were concerned with the

[7]Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 2:46.

[8]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 19; diary, entry for 22 Mar 1918, in Rogers papers, box 1, folder 6; Thacher to Robins, 19 Mar 1918, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 4.

[9]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:175–76.

increasing British and Allied presence in Murmansk, and the interference of Britain's Admiral Thomas Kemp in local political affairs. The situation was complex, though, and the Bolsheviks were not in a position to defend their own territory.[10] By the fourth week of May a British general named Frederick Cuthbert Poole had arrived at Murmansk to head up British operations and to organize local recruitment and training of a volunteer force.[11] The Soviets and Allied officials still occasionally saw eye-to-eye when it came to defensive measures in northern Russia as late as early June. But soon enough mutual mistrust, German pressure—Allied presence went against the terms of the Brest-Litovsk treaty—and the impact of the Czechoslovak uprising caused the situation to come to a head.

A potential military intervention in Russia beyond the limited landings in the farthest northern and eastern reaches of the country was a hot topic in Vologda, Moscow, and the Allied capitals in the spring of 1918. Robins's (and Thompson's) strenuous objection to such a course of action were among the reasons for his final break with Francis. The Czechoslovak uprising was unplanned by the Allies, but was quickly embraced by staunch interventionists. It also provided Wilson with a convenient excuse for agreeing to send troops to Russia, even though he had initially been less keen on the idea than his Allied partners. Wilson came on board in late spring, agreeing in principal to the idea of military action in the region.[12] The president was being pressured from all sides to do so; few arguments against intervention reached him. Moreover, Wilson believed a small-scale intervention would help Russians work out their political future. He hoped they would take advantage of Allied support to

[10]Debo, *Revolution and Survival*, 264–70.

[11]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:178. It was thought that this volunteer force would be made up in the main of Czechoslovak soldiers, who were expected to start arriving at Arkhangel'sk shortly.

[12]He "approved the idea of military action in north Russia": Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 198.

overthrow the Bolsheviks, and in May he authorized an American military expedition to northern Russia. By early June the Allied Supreme Council had given its approval too. At one time the Allies had hoped to be invited to land but by then they no longer worried about Soviet approval.[13]

The tension between the Moscow leadership and the Allies finally reached its breaking point a few days later. On 15 June Chicherin ordered the immediate departure of American, British, and French warships from Russian ports. One armed ice-breaker, which had earlier accompanied two British food ships sent to Arkhangel'sk as (failed) leverage in negotiations with Soviet officials, did leave. In Murmansk, things turned out differently. The local Soviet government defied Chicherin (and later Lenin) and welcomed the arrival of a six hundred-strong British force on 23 June. In early July these troops fought their first military battle on Russian soil, and the local Russian military leadership severed, quite literally, its ties to Moscow. Telegraph wires were cut and bridges blown up, completely isolating the region from the rest of the country.[14]

The Allied embassies, then based at Vologda, evacuated that city in late July. The Soviet government wanted them to return to Moscow. Instead, the foreigners and many of their Russian staff members and anti-Bolshevik friends headed by train to Arkhangel'sk. They feared for their safety should they remain in Bolshevik territory, and upon reaching Arkhangel'sk most boarded ships to take them out of Soviet Russia altogether. American Ambassador Francis and British Ambassador Francis Oswald Lindley asked Major General

[13]Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 189–90 (and the rest of ch. 7).

[14]John F. N. Bradley, *The Czechoslovak Legion in Russia, 1914–1920*, East European Monographs, no. 321 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 53; Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:172–85; Kennan, *Soviet– American Relations*, 2:248–50. An early, but still useful, study of the lead-up to the military intervention is Leonid I. Strakhovsky, *The Origins of American Intervention in North Russia (1918)* (1937; repr., New York: Howard Fertig, 1972).

Poole to occupy Arkhangel'sk. Preparations for an Allied landing were already underway, but the request hurried them up, to coincide with a planned anti-Bolshevik coup d'état.[15]

From their base in Murmansk, British agents conspired with anti-Bolshevik Russians to have the local Soviet government in Arkhangel'sk overthrown. The Allied flotilla overcame weak Soviet resistance at a nearby island and then sailed toward Arkhangel'sk on the morning of 1 August. Ensured success, that evening Georgii Ermolaevich Chaplin, a former Russian naval officer, led a coup, toppling the pro-Moscow regime. (The city had been under Bolshevik rule since February.[16]) The next day Chaplin invited Nikolai Chaikovskii to form a government. This was the same Chaikovskii who had been a member of Breshkovskaia's publicity committee in 1917; he claimed political legitimacy because he had been elected to the Constituent Assembly and was connected to Siberian leader Avksent'ev. A few hours later, Poole's ships made their way into the now-friendly port. The new administration officially invited his troops to land.[17] They comprised in the main Scots, Canadians, Frenchmen, and Serbs, with about fifty American naval men. In total, the Allied landing party included twelve hundred men, all under British command.[18] More troops were soon on their way from England, including three American infantry battalions.

Less than a week after their arrival, Allied sailors and soldiers, including Americans, were fighting their Bolshevik enemies on two different fronts. So much for Wilson's aide

[15]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 306, 312; Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:235.

[16]On the situation in Arkhangel'sk in early 1918 see Benjamin D. Rhodes, *The Anglo–American Winter War with Russia, 1918–1919: A Diplomatic and Military Tragicomedy*, Contributions in Military Studies, no. 71 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1988), 10.

[17]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 312–14; Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations*, 2:424–25; Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:235–37. Chaikovksii and Avksent'ev were both members of the Union for the Regeneration of Russia, a loose group of anti-Bolshevik socialists who came together in Moscow in the spring of 1918. Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 35.

[18]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:235.

mémoire, which had clearly instructed Americans to stay out of direct interference in Russian affairs. First, a small Allied force proceeded south toward Vologda. Within a few days it had advanced about twenty five miles. Second, on 6 August about four hundred soldiers began chasing retreating Reds on the Dvina River. They advanced 140 miles in two days before meeting any serious opposition. Soon, though, the difficulties of fighting on Russian soil with the equipment the Allied force had available to it were apparent.[19] This would not be an easy fight.

As young men went off to fight the Russians' war, older men squabbled in Arkhangel'sk. Allied agreement at the highest levels on the desirability of intervention did not go much further than that. The details of military arrangements and governance were worked out on the ground, with much conflict and of little benefit to the region's people. Despite the existence of a civil administration, Poole behaved as if he was a colonial administrator, establishing martial law in the district and informing Chaikovskii's government of his decrees only after the fact. The diplomatic missions returned to Arkhangel'sk from Murmansk on 9 August, further complicating the situation. Francis, now the dean of the diplomatic corps, explained that "British soldiers have been colonizers for so long that they do not know how to respect the feelings of socialists." Poole was supported by the rabidly anti-Bolshevik French ambassador but not by his own political counterpart, Lindley, or Francis. The general got himself into further trouble when British agents were implicated in the arrest and removal of most of Chaikovskii's cabinet from Arkhangel'sk in early September. This action lead to unrest among the local population and was opposed by Francis and Lindley, who had the men brought back. Poole's command was the cause of

[19]Rhodes, *Winter War*, 26–29.

much consternation, not least among American military and auxiliary officials who chafed under British regulations. It was not only in Russia itself that Poole found himself increasingly isolated. His repeated calls for reinforcements went unheeded in the Allied capitals. After receiving Lindley's negative reports, and after President Wilson threatened to withdraw American troops from Poole's authority because of his heavy-handed meddling in Russian domestic politics, the British removed him from his post. Poole was replaced in early October by Brigadier General William Edmund Ironside.[20] To ensure a tighter lid was placed on any dreams of imperialistic glory, Ironside was given instructions "to hold the fort until the local Russians can take the field."[21]

Holding the fort was more complicated than simply keeping the Bolsheviks at bay on the battlefield. The Allies knew their military occupation needed to rest on more than just success in battle and cultivating anti-Bolshevik politicians. Even before the intervention, Allied officials were concerned about conditions in northern Russia. The food situation in Arkhangel'sk was serious enough that in early January 1918 a local committee got in touch with American consul Felix Cole about purchasing food supplies and other crucial items from the United States.[22] Cole supported such a course and advised the sending of foodstuffs. Doing so would "make the name 'America' and 'United States' popular and universally known in the North of Russia." The "tremendous advertising power of a few shiploads of

[20]Leonid I. Strakhovsky, *Intervention at Archangel: The Story of the Allied Intervention and Russian Counter-Revolution in North Russia 1918–1920* (1944; repr., New York: Howard Fertig, 1971), 90; Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 1:237–38, 239 (quote), 244–51; Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 213; Williams to Case, 15 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[21]Henry Wilson, quoted in Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 219.

[22]Translation of letter from Archangel Provincial Food Committee to American Consul, 11 Jan 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 329.

food" was well worth considering and "can hardly be exaggerated."[23] Cole would later be the strongest American voice opposed to the intervention; instead, he argued for American food aid.[24] He was largely ignored, much like Robins and Thompson were upon their respective returns to the United States.

After the Allies established a front just south of Arkhangel'sk in early August they realized that no food supplies would be coming into the region while the fighting continued. The necessity of feeding the civilian population had been apparent to Allied representatives during the planning stages of the intervention, for both military and political reasons, in addition to humanitarian dictates.[25] During Colton's stay in the city in the summer he found that food was scarce and of poor quality.[26] The harvest was bad and weather conditions often made transportation impossible. A significant humanitarian disaster could soon be on Allied hands if action was not taken, and quickly.

To make matters worse, by early September the occupation was not going well. The attempted coup and worker strikes in Arkhangel'sk made plain the Allies' unpopularity. Cole continued to be critical of Allied policy. The political situation was anything but stable, and he believed the foreigners had to shoulder an important share of the blame. General Poole lacked political acumen. His outright disregard for the subtleties of the situation in Russia's North, combined with the non-arrival of food supplies in the early days of the Allied

[23]Cole to Francis, 26 Jan 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 329. See also Rhodes, *Winter War*, 14.

[24]For more on Cole's opposition to the intervention, see Rhodes, *Winter War*, 14–19, and Rhodes, "A Prophet in the Russian Wilderness: The Mission of Felix Cole at Archangel, 1917–1919," *Review of Politics* 46, no. 3 (Jul 1984): 388–409.

[25]In the summer ARC man Wardwell had suggested that his organization take over distribution of food to northern residents, in close cooperation with military and transportation authorities, in the event of intervention. See Wardwell to Davison, 10 July 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 326.

[26]Letter from Colton, 9 Jun 1918, in Colton papers, box 2, Manuscript [1].

presence, were a boon for the Bolsheviks. "The arrival of a food ship in these first days [after 2 Aug] would have done much to relieve the situation but no such ship came," Cole reported in frustration.[27] The Allies were unpopular with locals for several reasons—occupying armies rarely endear themselves, after all—but the primary one was "the apparent indifference of the Allied authorities to the food situation." Cole was thoroughly unimpressed with how the situation had been handled thus far:

> No food ships had come in with the troops. No word as to the near approach of any such ships had been, or could be spread, among the people. At this time the Allied command and the Allied diplomatic corps did not itself know what would be sent. This uncertainty was a trump card in the hands of the Bolsheviks who argued that the Allies could not furnish food being themselves on the verge of starvation and needing every ounce of food to use at home to prevent the outbreak of those hunger riots which would soon develop into the world revolution so long predicted by the Bolsheviks and which latterly was their only reliance. America, said the B[olshevik]s, would furnish nothing, she being only interested in strengthening her own financial, military and commercial position *vis-à-vis* the weakened nations of Europe, and in furthering her own imperialistic aims in Siberia. Great anxiety was constantly expressed by the moderate socialists and cooperative leaders in the food-supply committees, who did not doubt that food would be sent but feared it would come too late to avoid a severe pinch of a week or so. They justly argued that the food question was a vital one and one on which they had based a great deal of their pro-Ally propaganda against the Bolsheviks and that delay in bringing food would block their agitation in favor of the intervention. They feared that it was not sufficiently realized that the mere arrival of food ships in the harbor did not mean food in the peasants' huts as time must elapse between the ship's arrival and the receipt by the consumer, due to the necessary work of distribution, etc. In a word the delay and uncertainty concerning food worked a good deal of injury to the Allied cause here.[28]

American Vice Admiral Newton A. McCully agreed that providing food would both relieve suffering and help undermine the Bolsheviks.[29] "Russia is now a sick organism," he wrote to the American commander. "Sick, starving and temporarily insane. The disease is also contagious. To use only force on such an organism will be of no use to the patient, and the disease may be communicated to the agents employing the force. The only force that should

[27]Cole to Lansing, 10 Sep 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:527. See also Strakhovsky, *Intervention at Archangel*, 98.

[28]Cole to Lansing, 10 Sep 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:530. See also Cole to SecState, 3 Sep 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Moscow, box 9, Miscellaneous Records.

[29]Charles J. Weeks, "A Samaritan in Russia: Vice Admiral Newton A. McCully's Humanitarian Efforts, 1914–1920," *Military Affairs* 52, no. 1 (Jan 1988): 14.

be used should be just sufficient to prevent the patient doing harm to himself or to others."[30]

Allied officials were under no illusions about the state of existing food supplies. Based on holdings as of 1 August, Arkhangel'sk would run out in a month and a half, with other areas having as much as two months' supply on hand, and still others with less than a month to go before they would have nothing left. Not only did supplies have to come in soon, but some areas would be cut off entirely once winter set in; these areas would have to receive as much as ten months' rations before the end of September. Since shipments of supplies were not due to arrive before mid-September, there was some scrambling and much worrying on the part of Allied and Russian officials. Various schemes were considered. But once it became clear that the Allied military force—which wished to oversee a distribution program—was disliked by Russians, especially after word of British involvement in the attempted coup got out, an Allied Supply Committee was formed. This included both military and civil representatives from Britain, the United States, France, and Italy (all of whom had troops in the North). Several Russian officials were also included in meetings over the next few months. The committee arranged for the shipment and distribution of needed supplies, mostly foodstuffs such as flour, sugar, tea, cocoa, oats, and salt pork, to northern Russia. It was important that the Allies provide this crucial service because Russian officials were unable to arrange for the shipment of the necessary goods themselves.[31] Moreover, as Cole later counselled, the Allies had "a clear moral duty towards the inhabitants of the Archangel District" and also had obligations in Murmansk. "It would be politically unwise," he put it matter-of-factly, "if the non-combatants in North Russia were to be driven into

[30]McCully to force commander, 23 Nov 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 23.

[31][Cole,] "Memorandum Re Allied Supply Committee," 8 Nov 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 23.

Bolshevism on account of starvation."[32] Food was as important a weapon in the fight against Bolshevism as bullets or bombs.

The importance of food, as a tool of foreign policy and even of war itself, was not lost on Cole. It had also, as discussed in chapter 2, been grasped by members of the original American Red Cross Mission to Russia. In Washington earlier in the summer of 1918, before the intervention was decided upon, Lansing and House had proposed sending food to Russia in exchange for moderating Bolshevism.[33] The following April, the Allied leaders in Paris came up with a plan to feed Russia, hoping that the promise of desperately-needed humanitarian aid would force an end to the civil war in Russia and help hasten Bolshevism's demise. The Soviet leadership eventually rejected the overtures.[34] Not many months passed before Lenin's government called upon the international community to feed millions of Soviet citizens in danger of starving during the Russian famine of 1921–23. The American response was motivated, at least in part, by the thought that there would be positive political benefits to the distribution of food aid.

In northern Russia, the food distributed by the supply committee was not meant to be charity; Russian agents were expected to buy and subsequently sell the goods to the civilian population. This was common American practice in Europe, but also betrayed the westerners' attitudes toward Russians. As Cole put it, "there is no need of making a gift to the Russian populace . . . [F]urnishing food at cost price only would merely debauch the

[32]DeWitt Clinton Poole to State Department, 2 July 1919, in NA, FO 175, vol. 9, folder 1. This telegram was written at a time when America's continued participation in food shipments was in question.

[33]Herbert Hoover, *Famine in Forty-Five Nations: Organization behind the Front, 1914–1923* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), 133–35.

[34]For more on this Hoover-Nansen relief plan, see Eugene P. Trani, "Herbert Hoover and the Russian Revolution," in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and Its Aftermath 1914–23*, ed. Lawrence E. Gelfand (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), 124–130.

peasantry and encourage them in their greed without really helping the financial situation at all," he judged.[35] This understanding of Russian behaviour—and indeed of the contemporary American fear of pauperism—explains why the Red Cross head had to assure the supply committee that his (charitable) civilian distributions, discussed below, would not compromise its work.[36] Representatives of the American Red Cross and YMCA focussed on emergency aid, and did not require recipients or their government to cover the costs involved. The Allied militaries, through the supply committee, shipped and distributed food basics in exchange for payment from various Russian organizations that were responsible for ultimately handing out the supplies to needy residents.[37]

The Allied command did not seek out the assistance of representatives of the Red Cross or YMCA in any significant way as it sorted out the structure and functioning of the occupation. This is hardly surprising but still worth pointing out: Military leaders, while appreciating to a certain extent the services done by volunteers and militarized civilian employees, had no desire to relinquish any control over army matters. For members of the Red Cross and YMCA, both wartime auxiliary organizations, offering their help and cooperation to military authorities was practically the sum total of their work. In northern Russia, two American secretaries unexpectedly found themselves in this situation as the front lines of a new Allied military theatre formed around them.

The YMCA had not yet established "community-type work" in the North by the time

[35][Cole,] "Memorandum Re Allied Supply Committee," 8 Nov 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 23.

[36]Williams to Davison, 17 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[37]See ? to Miller, 16 May 1919, in NA, FO 175, vol. 9, folder 1.

of the Allied landings. The vagaries of the war and transportation difficulties meant the city was still on the association's to-do list. Still, the importance of the region's port facilities meant there was a small YMCA presence. Earlier that summer Colton and other American secretaries had been in town, overseeing the arrival of supplies earmarked for returning Russian prisoners of war.[38] Now, only Allen M. Craig and Piet H. Hofstra remained. Craig had previously worked for the YMCA in southern Russia, operating a club for Armenian soldiers at Erevan during the winter. While Arkhangel'sk was under Soviet rule, he spent most of his time salvaging association supplies and equipment from the wreckage of the British naval freighter *Wrexham*. (The ship had carried 150 tons of YMCA supplies from Murmansk to Arkhangel'sk; only a small fraction of its cargo was saved.) This work was coming to an end when Allied soldiers arrived.[39]

After the Allied landing, Craig and Hofstra quickly immersed themselves in army and navy work, establishing good relations with the military authorities.[40] The arrival of Allied soldiers shifted the nature of their efforts entirely to serving the needs of the newcomers. There was little except scarcity and political intrigue to greet the soldiers who arrived in Arkhangel'sk. Never a bustling urban centre, the war and poor harvests ensured consumer goods and services were nearly non-existent. The situation was worse elsewhere in the

[38]Letter from Colton, 9 Jun 1918, in Colton papers, box 2, Manuscript [1].

[39]Craig to Watson, 14 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2]; extract from a report on YMCA in northern Russia, "Section on Individual Personnel," 14 May 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 20, Personnel Lists [1]. The *Wrexham* carried YMCA supplies intended for use in Russia. Statistic: Francis to Cole, 26 Jun 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:504. Some of the Wrexham goods were later used by the ARC for civilian relief. See Williams to Davison, 3 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[40]Cole, the most experienced American in the region, was impressed with Craig and Hofstra's conduct during the first two days of August. He commended them "for the excellent manner in which they stood by and the courage they showed" in a note to the secretary of state. Cole to Lansing, 6 Aug 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:512.

region. The more senior Craig was happy to do his part. There was no question that he and Hofstra would prioritize military work over other YMCA programs. It was, in Craig's words, "the opportunity of a life time."[41] Their decision to assist the military was echoed by promises of support made to General Poole from the London offices of both the British and American YMCAs. The general was informed that he could expect their full cooperation. British secretaries would soon be on their way, and a large quantity of supplies was being gathered for shipment to the region.[42] For the moment, though, Craig and Hofstra had their work cut out for them, and YMCA military service got off to a slow start. It was not until 20 August that the first hut for Allied soldiers in Russia opened in Arkhangel'sk.[43] Two British secretaries finally arrived a week later, bringing the total number of YMCA men in the region to four. Because the Americans were already established, the British authorities decided their representatives would join the American team, working under their leadership. The combined nature of the Allied force meant troops would not necessarily be separated by nationality; their YMCA partners need not be, either.[44]

Though he had his hands full with military matters, Craig remained interested in doing more. His reasons had to do with long-term association plans for the country as well as what he believed was sound Allied policy. Referring to Russians as "much like children," he explained to a superior that they supported the Allied presence but expected their lives to improve. With that in mind Craig believed that the YMCA was the only organization able to

[41]The hairy political situation of early August had also meant for "some very trying situations here for two weeks." Craig to Hibbard, 16 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

[42]Cables from Halsey to Poole and Colton, 3 Aug 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 4. See Halsey to Murmansk, 3 Aug 1918, in ibid., folder 6, for more details on the British plan to send supplies and secretaries to Arkhangel'sk to form part of Colton's group.

[43]Craig to Hibbard, 16 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2]; Craig to Mott, 21 Aug 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

[44]Craig to Hibbard, 27 and 30 Aug 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

make sure Russians would not turn against the Allies. "We can bring to these people a program of helpfulness, and of kindly direction, that will be of tremendous importance at this time and that will have an important bearing on the future work of the Association in Russia." He was also "convinced that if a man is looking for a real patriotic service, he can find it here at this time." He reported that he and his associates were planning "a modest program of service" to bring the YMCA's "message" to the broader community. There were to be two main features, namely, "educational work"—English language courses for businessmen and clerks—and "Community Boys' Work." The latter was important because, Craig explained, "I do not know that the present generation will mean much to the Association, I fear they are lost to the influence of it to a very great extent, but we have a great field among the boys of Russia." Ambassador Francis was supportive. He requested that Mott send personnel and supplies, and called the situation "critical."[45] The British association agreed, but its agents could not begin civilian projects until more men and supplies arrived.[46]

Military relief was always the YMCA's priority. Craig's pleas for supplies and personnel took on new urgency after the arrival of about forty six hundred American troops, mostly infantrymen from the 339th regiment ("Detroit's Own," thereafter "the Polar Bears"), on 4 September. The men came via Britain ill-equipped for the weather and fighting conditions, with little training and no experience using their weapons. Some of them were also ill with influenza, and medical facilities were inadequate.[47] The small city did not have

[45]Francis to Lansing, 31 Aug 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:517.

[46]Paul Dukes to Arthur Yapp, 6 Sep 1918, in NA, FO 175, Allied High Commission—Archangel, vol. 9, folder 1.

[47]Rhodes, *Winter War*, 34–35. See also Robert L. Willett, *Russian Sideshow: America's Undeclared*

much to recommend it to the newcomers. As the American forces newspaper, the *Sentinel*, later put it: "Up here in this tough town there are 269,831 inhabitants, of which 61,329 are human beings and 208,502 are dogs. . . . The wind whistles across the Dvina river like the Twentieth Century Limited passing Podunk."[48] Within hours of their arrival, American troops were ordered to active fronts to fight Bolsheviks. One battalion was sent south on the railway toward Vologda, one along the Dvina toward Kotlas, and one took up guard duty in Arkhangel'sk.[49] In the end approximately fifty-seven hundred American soldiers went to northern Russia.[50] The rest of the Allied force was made up of about five thousand British troops, seven hundred French, seven hundred Poles, and sixty-two hundred Russians, all under British command.[51]

The troopships that brought the main contingent of US soldiers to Arkhangel'sk also carried a representative of the American Red Cross to the region. This was W. H. Wynn, a former newspaperman sent by the London office of the American Red Cross. In early July this London office had been asked by army authorities in Britain to cooperate in a planned US military venture.[52] This was only to be expected: The Red Cross was an important part of the US military apparatus during the war, and worked alongside American troops in foreign theatres. Indeed, their officers in the field were officially part of the army's sanitary corps.[53]

War 1918–1920 (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2003), ch. 3–4.

[48]C. B. Knight, "We Don't Know Why He Didn't Write It For Us, But It's So Good We'll Print It Anyway," letter to the editor of *The Stars and Stripes*, printed in *The American Sentinel* (25 Jan 1919), 4. Quoted (incorrectly) in Rhodes, *Winter War*, 35. A copy of the original may be found in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.72 North Russia—American Sentinel.

[49]Francis to Lansing, 10 Sep 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:532.

[50]Rhodes, *Winter War*, 36, 33.

[51]Willett, *Russian Sideshow*, 53. These are the numbers from the end of February 1919.

[52]"Murman Coast Expedition," n.d., ca. Sep 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports; Endicott to Williams, 9 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 4.

[53]Capt. W. H. Wynn, "Report of the North Russian Military Relief Expedition," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Report of North Russian Military Expedition.

The London office collected supplemental medical supplies and goods for all troops, including "musical instruments and recreational equipment," as well as "food, chocolate, tobacco and items of this kind." They were "calculated to take a little of the edge off the hardships" that would befall the members of the American force.[54] The supplies intended for "amusements and diversions" were ones usually distributed by the YMCA; Wynn had been told in mid-August "that the Y.M.C.A. would not at first be represented."[55]Although Wynn was charged with military relief, once he arrived he saw the acute need for distributions to civilians, including foodstuffs and medical supplies. He suggested that the Red Cross "enlarge plans for civilian relief very much."[56]

Mostly, though, Wynn busied himself with military matters. His team—three more men arrived with a second shipment of supplies from London[57]—was too small to be able to do much else. Like Craig and Hofstra, the Red Cross representatives established good working relations with the military. They also equipped a small medical facility, and in general provided support for the American medical and sanitary corps.[58] The little hospital, whose existence as an American institution was objected to by the British, was brought to life "in a spectacular manner" according to one contemporary source. Wynn helped one of the officers in charge raise an American flag over the building "and dared the British to take it down." The same account sang the facility's praises, claiming it was "a haven of rest that appears in the dreams today [1920] of many a doughboy who went through those dismal days

[54]"Murman Coast Expedition," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[55]Wynn, "Report of the North Russian Military Relief Expedition," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Report of North Russian Military Expedition.

[56]Wynn to Endicott, 5 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

[57]"Murman Coast Expedition," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[58]Wynn to Endicott, 19 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4. He took over a small, 40-bed hospital from the Russian Red Cross, and turned it over to the army medical authorities. See Wynn to Endicott, 13 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

of the first month in Archangel. There they got American treatment and as far as possible food cooked in American style."[59]

The potential propaganda value of Red Cross efforts was recognized by Wynn's London superiors. They were "convinced that an excellent opportunity presented itself whereby we might be able to tell the people of Russia first, what the war situation was; second, what America said she would do when she entered the war, and what she had done already and what she intended to do and then to follow this up with a message to the Russian people." Russian representatives approved the plan, an interpreter was hired, and a pamphlet was put together based on "the speeches and messages of President Wilson and from Mr. Davison's message to the Russian people." Twenty thousand copies were printed and shipped to Russia.[60]

A separate and unrelated Red Cross mission for northern Russia was also organized that summer. Seemingly unaware that there was an American Red Cross man en route to Arkhangel'sk from London, Washington headquarters decided to send a few thousand tons of medicines, foodstuffs, and other "miscellaneous supplies" to relieve the civilian population of the city.[61] Allied food shipments had been arriving sporadically in the northern ports for the past few months. That the Red Cross would join in the relief efforts was not surprising. The organization had sent civilian relief missions to several European states already,

[59]Joel R. Moore, Harry H. Mead, and Lewis E. Jahns, comp. and ed., *The History of the American Expedition Fighting the Bolsheviki: Campaigning in North Russia 1918–1919* (Detroit, MI: Polar Bear Publishing, 1920), 16.

[60]"Murman Coast Expedition," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[61]"Murman Coast Expedition," n.d., ca. Sep 1918, and Roger Lewis, "A Short History of Red Cross Activities in North Russia," 1 Jun 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports. See also Polk to Cole, 30 Jul 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:504.

including Belgium, Italy, Romania, Serbia, France, and Britain.[62] And so another Red Cross relief mission, this one under C. T. Williams, was organized.

Williams had been a member of the American Red Cross commission to Romania, and, in connection with his duties, had spent several months in Russia in the latter part of the year.[63] Because of this, he was acquainted with some of the Allied officials there. Williams, in fact, had a rather low opinion some members of the Red Cross team that had been in Petrograd. He thought Thompson had given $1 million to the Bolsheviks, as press headlines sometimes indicated, instead of to an anti-Bolshevik committee.[64] When he was asked by the Red Cross War Council to return to Russia, he accepted only "with great reluctance." He did not wish to be away from his young family for so long, and with an uncertain date of return.[65] Another reason for not wanting to accept the task was that he believed he would be "faced with the problem of having to counteract and live down some things done in Russia by other Red Cross workers not in conformity with the intent of the American Red Cross and apparently directly at variance with the policies of the government."[66] His concerns came out of, in part, meetings with Red Cross officials in Washington. They show how far Thompson and Robins had fallen in their esteem over the past year. The willingness of the members of the first mission to Russia to cooperate with the Soviet government was something the War Council wanted to disavow.

Williams, a dozen other Red Cross men, and three YMCA secretaries sailed for Russia at the end August. The Red Cross representatives brought with them forty-two

[62]Davison, *American Red Cross in the Great War*.
[63]Williams to Woodrow Wilson, 1 Jul 1918, in UVA, C. T. Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1918.
[64]See material in Williams papers, box 1, C Jan–May 1918.
[65]Williams to Hennen Jennings, and Williams to E. L. Bemiss, both 21 Aug 1918, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1918.
[66]Williams to Van Lear Black, 28 Sep 1918, in Williams papers, box 1 C Jun–Dec 1918.

hundred tons of food and medicine, all intended for the civilian population of Arkhangel'sk.[67] The venture was organized "in conformity with President Wilson's desire to show American good will," according to the Red Cross.[68] The public statement about Williams's mission emphasized that "its only aim is humanitarian," and that he and his group wished "to lessen a little the suffering of Russia and pave the way perhaps for a return to conditions that are normal and prosperous." Although the statement was explicit that the mission had no political purpose, it was clear where the organization stood: "The Red Cross views Russia as a sister nation, in need of material help and moral support. It believes - and this belief is shared by American public opinion in general - that the Russian people must work out their own political destiny and that the inherent Russian desire, born long before the revolution, for a free representative government, in accordance with the will of the majority of the people, will ultimately prevail."[69] Bolshevism, in other words, was an alien import, and it needed to be defeated. As an editorial in the *Red Cross Magazine* later put it, "Russia has been tricked and deceived to her terrible undoing. The solution of her staggering problems must follow the success of her own and her Allies' arms; but her faith, which has been abused and prostituted and shaken, must be re-enthroned by such practical demonstration of good will and honest intent as shall leave no room for doubt, suspicion, or disbelief." Red Cross assistance was part of America's "proof of comradeship."[70]

Mission members were aware that their presence in Russia had significance beyond

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[67]See material in Ford, "Historical Facts"; Williams to "General," 28 Sep 1918, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec1918.

[68]American Red Cross, advertisement, *Survey* 40, no. 17 (27 Jul 1918): 485.

[69]"A Message from the American Red Cross to the People of Russia," n.d., in HIA, Roger L. Lewis papers, box 1, folder 2. Although there is no date or author indicated on the document, it is reasonable to assume it was Lewis's work, prepared for the arrival of Williams's group in northern Russia.

[70]"Faith in the Future of Russia," *Red Cross Magazine* 13, no. 12 (Dec 1918), 4.

the humanitarian aid they intended to distribute. They were told in a meeting while at sea that "the general spirit and bearing of this Unit will furnish the Russian people with the only available index to the character of the Nation which we represent." The responsibility was "a large one." General Order No. 3 also stressed that the organization was "strictly non-political."[71] The mission had some image issues to face. When Williams went ashore at Murmansk on 29 September[72] he met with the American military control officer in that jurisdiction, Lt. Hugh S. Martin. According to Martin, "the friendly feeling among the Russian people toward the Americans had been steadily increasing, and . . . conditions were ideal for the Red Cross to render valuable service, not only to encourage the Russians, but to relieve actual distress in the outlying districts." But the commission, Williams was told, "would work under a very serious handicap": The activities of Robins and his colleagues "in the interests of Bolshevism [were] pretty generally known and condemned by the better class of Russians, as well as the British and French." It was "common," Martin said, for a Red Cross uniform seen in Moscow to be "commented upon by the Russians as representing the American Bolsheviki."[73]

There was another, more pressing matter for Williams upon his arrival in Arkhangel'sk. This was how to deal with Wynn, whom he had not expected to find there. The London office's envoy had been in town for nearly a month at this point and was already "fairly established." Friction soon developed between the two Red Cross men.[74] Williams informed the London office responsible for Wynn's mission that the connections between the

[71]Notes on meeting, 23 Sep 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.
[72]Williams to Davison, 1 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.
[73]Williams to Case, 28 Sep 1918, in ibid.
[74]Francis to Davison, 8 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 1.

military and civil situations made the existence of two separate Red Cross groups "impracticable" and their independence impossible. His own group was prepared to handle the military situation and relieve Wynn of his duties, he said.[75] Wynn, for his part, was unimpressed with the new arrival's attitude, especially considering he came without military supplies, and with the sole intention of doing civilian relief.[76] Indeed, Williams's group had originally been meant to focus on "caring for prisoners returning from Germany and Austria."[77] The squabble between Williams and Wynn was serious enough for the American ambassador to become involved. Francis quickly tired of acting as "pacificator" between the two men, and told Davison that Wynn was "indifferent about civilian relief."[78] Although this was an overstatement, it is true Wynn believed the military situation was urgent enough that he concentrate his efforts on it, rather than subordinate himself and his men to Williams's whims. He asked to be sent elsewhere "if any other arrangement is decided upon."[79] This "intolerable situation"[80] was worked out soon enough. Wynn and Williams were both informed that the newcomer was in fact in charge of American Red Cross activities in the region, for both soldiers and civilians. Wynn was ordered to hand over all his supplies to Williams.[81] Displeased but without recourse, Wynn left Arkhangel'sk at the end of October.[82]

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[75]Williams to Endicott, 6 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

[76]Wynn to Endicott, 6 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

[77]American Red Cross, advertisement, *Survey* 40, no. 17 (27 Jul 1918): 485.

[78]Francis to Davison, 8 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 1. See also other material in this file.

[79]Wynn to Endicott, 9 Oct 1918, in ibid.

[80]Wynn to Endicott, 6 Oct 1918, in ibid.

[81]Davison? to Williams, 8 and 14 Oct 1918, and Endicott to Wynn, 9 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 4.

[82]Wynn, "Report of the North Russian Military Relief Expedition," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Report of North Russian Military Expedition.

Among the first tasks Williams undertook in Arkhangel'sk was the establishment of a dedicated American Red Cross hospital. Such a venture was important for morale and publicity purposes, as well as to go some way toward alleviating the demand for hospital beds for soldiers in Arkhangel'sk. It took many weeks for Williams to convince the British commander that it was appropriate and expected that his mission establish a hospital for American soldiers. Poole's departure was what finally made the difference.[83] By mid-November a sixty-bed hospital was treating patients, including Russians. News that the hospital was open was well-received by American soldiers who "were scattered about in various British hospitals and inclined to resent the fact that although they formed a larger contingent than either the British or French," they had no institution of their own . . . and they were forced to accept the hospitality of other nations."[84] Two female American nurses were already in Arkhangel'sk and working in the hospital. Over the coming weeks and months Williams made numerous, and increasingly desperate, requests for more nurses to staff the facility. None would ever come, and the two women were recalled to the United States in April. The intractableness of the British military was to blame. Its officers feared for the safety of the women.[85]

For his part, the YMCA's Craig was pleased with the apparent British commitment to

[83]Williams to Francis, 19 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C,1918, vol. 330; Williams to Needham, 5 Nov 1918, in NACP, RG 84, Archangel, vol. 17; and Note by Brigadier General Needham, 15 Nov 1918, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, vol. 17.

[84]Lewis, "Short History," 3; Williams to Case, 16 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[85]Lewis, "Short History," 4. The British high command was ultimately responsible for refusing permission to the ARC to have more nurses sent to the region. See Davison to Lively, 14 Feb 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 13. Also: "Am satisfied if we had fifty American nurses here now many lives would have been saved." Wynn to Endicott, 19 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

association work in the region. Although he saw the potential for conflict because of different national operating procedures, relations between his men and British secretaries working under his direction were good. So too were relations with the military authorities. The latter wanted the YMCA to establish itself at many more spots than just Arkhangel'sk. There were, on 10 September, only five association men in Arkhangel'sk—the fifth was (later Sir) Paul Dukes, a recent arrival from Britain who had previously served in Russia with the YMCA. More men were required before the planned work outside the city could be undertaken. In the meantime the YMCA planned to serve men along the railroad front by visiting each group of soldiers regularly.[86]

The YMCA prided itself on providing some of the comforts of home to soldiers far from their loved ones and in unfamiliar surroundings. The work of the association was thus generally divided up by nationality. American secretaries served Americans, and British men worked with British troops. Because of the small numbers of YMCA representatives in Arkhangel'sk, though, such a division was not usually possible in the early days of the intervention. Only one of the three British secretaries was liked by American troops, Craig informed Mott.[87] He did not indicate what the specific issue was with the British men. American YMCA secretaries had similar troubles with their British counterparts a year earlier. In November 1917, Jerome Davis and Ambassador Francis had written to Mott asking him to use his influence to stop British secretaries from coming to Russia. Davis claimed that "the Russian soldiers, a great majority of them, feel that England wants

[86]Craig to Hibbard, 10 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2]. Dukes was also a British intelligence officer! He would soon become one of the world's most famous spies. He only briefly mentions his YMCA work in a memoir: Paul Dukes, *Red Dusk and the Morrow: Adventures and Investigations in Red Russia* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1922), 3–4.

[87]Craig to Mott, 20 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

something from the war. If we sent English men down to the front they would be sure to arouse great hostility for our entire Association."[88] The unpopularity of the two British men in northern Russia, combined with a lack of supplies, meant for an embarrassing situation, Craig believed: "We must have men and supplies otherwise [the] Association will miss [a] great opportunity and lose prestige here."[89] In late September he made his frustrations more explicit than he had before. Craig complained to New York that

> There are many vexing and trying problems coming up daily because of the varied nationalities we are trying to serve with such a limited force, and there are many really delicate situations arising from the fact we have so many American troops (that is in proportion) who expect to find a little more of "America" about the Y. M. C. A. I often long for some sympathetic ear in which to pour some of the problems which we face, but I am not going to give you any more of them tonight for fear you may think we have nothing but <u>problems</u> on our hands.

He finished up with "I hope we are not being forgotten at home." At that point there were still only two American, three British, and one Russian secretary,[90] although Craig had been asking for reinforcements for many weeks.

Craig wrote regularly to his superiors in New York, but come late September he had not had word from that office since he left it a year earlier![91] His letters included repeated pleas for more personnel and material, but Craig had to make do with only a few men and limited supplies until October. By the fourth week of September, Craig and Hofstra were still the only American secretaries in the region. Overworked, Hofstra had collapsed from the strain, and Craig "nearly so."[92] Yet the work the men had been able to accomplish impressed American officials. At the end of the month Francis complimented the YMCA on its

[88]Davis to Mott, 4 Nov 1917, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].
[89]Craig to Mott, 20 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.
[90]Craig to Watson, 29 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].
[91]Craig to Watson, 14 and 29 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].
[92]Craig to Wheeler, 22 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 5, folder 4.

"excellent work."[93] The day Williams arrived in Arkhangel'sk, he went to the YMCA building, and found reading and reception rooms "crowded with American, French and Russian soldiers . . . . Everything was bright and cheerful."[94]

The lack of men and supplies remained a serious concern. The coming of winter meant more than just long, dark, cold nights in a mostly desolate region without many comforts of home for American soldiers. A lack of infrastructure and bad weather promised that after about the middle of October, so Craig estimated, "three of the most important points in my entire district will be completely isolated . . . and our only means of communication will be long drives probably with dog teams, or otherwise." With only two weeks to go before then, "we haven't one ounce of supplies, either for hut equipment on canteens, and no secretaries here," Craig noted. He worried that the supplies and secretaries that were on their way would not arrive in time. He negotiated with the British Army Canteen Board to get some of its stocks.[95] This was far from ideal.

During September and October the YMCA's roster expanded considerably, bolstered by new recruits from both Britain and the United States.[96] Upon their arrival, the British realized that Craig's group had well established itself. This, combined with the integrated nature of the Allied force, suggested to them that there was no need to set up a separate British operation. It would be impossible to divide up welfare work by nationality, the head of the British group informed his superior back in Britain. And so the two national

[93]Francis to Lansing, 29 Sep 1918, in *FRUS, 1918: Russia*, 2:550. "Y.M.C.A. doing excellent work, also the American Red Cross; vessel just arrived with 2,000 tons supplies."

[94]Williams to Davison, "Subject: Relations with the Y. M. C. A.," 17 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[95]Craig to Watson, 29 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

[96]Information about American arrivals can be found in "Activities of the Army and Navy Y. M. C. A. In Northern Russia with the Allied Expeditionary Force," in YMCA Russia, box 20, Personnel Lists [1].

associations formally decided to pool their resources and maintain American control.[97] Two Canadian YMCA secretaries also joined this combined YMCA force.[98] Craig was never meant to oversee any major work in northern Russia, and he was replaced, much to his own relief, in mid-October by the more senior YMCA man Crawford Wheeler.[99] By then there were twenty-four American and nineteen British secretaries working out of Akhangel'sk. Wheeler wanted at least a dozen more Americans, and more supplies.[100] By late October there were three huts open in the city, and three more were ready to start serving soldiers once more secretaries and supplies arrived.[101]

Even after more American and British secretaries arrived, the YMCA team was still woefully inadequate to meet the demand for its services.[102] The situation was serious enough that Ambassador Francis, just prior to his departure from northern Russia for medical treatment in London,[103] was convinced to sign his name to a cable sent to Mott in early November. It noted that despite repeated cables since 3 August, the YMCA had "received no specific reply and no supplies are reported en route." As a result, "constant urgent demands on association by military authorities are left unfilled. Comprehensive intelligent planning impossible to association leaders under conditions of total lack of information regarding support from home office." The note warned that "action must be immediate if results are

[97]Morley to Yapp, 6 Oct 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

[98]McNaughten to Colton, 3 Sep 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Received, box 13, folder 6. See also Charles W. Bishop, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in the Great War: The Official Record of the Activities of the Canadian Y.M.C.A. in Connection with the Great War of 1914–1918* (Toronto: National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada, 1924), 300.

[99]Craig to Hibbard, 10 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2]; Wheeler to Colton, 11 Jan 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919.

[100]Wheeler to Colton, part of Francis to SecState, 17 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 330.

[101]Wheeler to Colton, part of Francis to SecState, 27 Oct 1918, in ibid.

[102]See Wheeler to Colton, 17 Oct 1918, in ibid.

[103]David R. Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy: April 1916–November 1918* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), v.

expected."[104] Supplies and more personnel did eventually arrive, but never in the amounts desired. (In the end, sixty-five American secretaries, about thirty British, and a number of men of other nationalities served as association secretaries in northern Russia.[105]) Still, Wheeler was able to report to Colton at the end of December that "along a four-hundred-mile line of fronts twenty [YMCA service] points are open and six are under construction."[106] In January Wheeler boasted about what his group had accomplished. When he had arrived in Arkhangel'sk in October one YMCA hut was open, but three months later "the triangle is now represented at practically every point where troops are stationed in this region."[107]

Northern Russia was an active fighting front—actually, several fronts—for Allied soldiers. Though they had arrived ostensibly to assist in the defence of the region against German or Finnish attack, once they got there it was Russian Red Army soldiers whom they faced on the battlefields. In the fall the Allied force made only modest gains. In December Bolshevik efforts to defeat the Allies grew stronger, and the latter continued to be on the defensive through the early part of the winter.[108] By then, of course, the Great War was over. The fighting on the western front had ended with the armistice of 11 November, and American soldiers based elsewhere were going home. There was no end in sight for their counterparts in northern Russia. In fact, a large battle was fought on Armistice Day itself.

With Allied forces involved in combat, supplies having arrived, and early troubles

[104]Francis to Secstate, 4 Nov 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 1, which makes clear that the message was drafted by Wheeler.

[105]"Work in Russia during the World War Period," n.d., 6, in HIA, Russell M. Story collection, box 6, Reports & Pamphlets . . . Russia & Czechoslovakia.

[106]Wheeler to Colton, 30 Dec 1918, in NACP, RG 84, Embassy, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 3.

[107]Wheeler to Colton, 11 Jan 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919.

[108]Strakhovsky, *Intervention at Archangel*, 93, 125, 135.

somewhat sorted out, the two military auxiliaries settled into their work. They had different, but occasionally overlapping, roles when it came to the armed forces. The Red Cross was involved primarily with medical issues; the YMCA, with the provision of extra goods and services aimed at improving the lives of soldiers. "There are not only opportunities here for real service," Williams observed in late October, "but a demand for it with our own kind [i. e., Americans]."[109] Both organizations were keenly interested in boosting soldier morale, improving living conditions, supplementing army rations and other disbursements, and giving relief to civilian residents and refugees their representatives encountered on their travels. Both organizations faced the same logistical challenges to the successful carrying out of their work: transportation woes, extreme weather, British obstinance, meagre rations, inadequate clothing and gear, lack of support from their respective headquarters, fast-changing and poorly demarcated front lines, and the threat of being captured, wounded, or even killed by Bolsheviks in "this Godforsaken, Wilson-forgotten suburb of the North Pole."[110] Troubles with the British military command and their own headquarters were especially egregious in the minds of American relief workers because conditions were so difficult. As Wheeler put it in one of his angry reports home, "One does not like to be shoved off in a hot corner and forgotten."[111] He could equally have been referring to the entirety of the Allied military operation.

Northern Russia was indeed "hot." The Red Cross and YMCA, as military support agencies, were thus also indirectly involved in a military campaign against the Soviet

[109]Williams to "Van," 27 Oct 1918, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1918.

[110]Frazier Hunt, *One American and His Attempt at Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1938), 122.

[111]Wheeler to Colton, 3 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia—Archangel & Murmansk Districts 1918–19.

government. The Allied militaries, led by the British, were in control of the region, having invaded and occupied it. Such issues as the legality or politics of the situation were of little concern to Red Cross or YMCA men. But they were fully aware of the situation, because of their close contact with soldiers. One secretary, Ralph Albertson, was assigned to the river front after his arrival from the United States in early December.[112] In a memoir of his time in Russia, he noted that "everywhere, on every occasion, I was asked persistently and importunately, 'What are we here for?'" He attempted to provide answers, "but I found it easier to convince myself than I did to convince these men. . . . The American and Canadian troops were particularly outspoken in their resentment at being at war in a futile fight against nobody and for nothing in particular when the rest of the world had stopped fighting."[113]

The organizations' decision-makers based elsewhere did not always appreciate the challenges their representatives faced. Even new YMCA recruits who came to join the northern Russia team did not understand that they were in for real frontline duty.[114] Daniel O'Connell Lively, who replaced Williams at the head of the Red Cross mission in late January, later lectured a superior in no uncertain terms about the damage done to his efforts because of unhelpful decisions, unfilled orders, and foolish instructions. To drive home his point, he commented that "it can be confidentially asserted that no mission representing the American Red Cross in any field has covered so much ground, afforded as much relief[, and] maintained its personnel and its effectiveness generally at so little expense."[115]

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[112]He was highly praised for his efforts. "Activities of the Army and Navy Y. M. C. A. In Northern Russia with the Allied Expeditionary Force," n.d., ca. 1919, 1, in YMCA Russia, box 20, Personnel Lists [1].

[113]Ralph Albertson, *Fighting Without a War: An Account of Military Intervention in North Russia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920), 6–7.

[114]Crawford Wheeler, "'Y' Front Line Service in Arctic Russia," in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [3].

[115]Lively to Olds, 17 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

Like Red Cross personnel, YMCA secretaries were also incredibly busy. They were to be found "at fifty different points," travelling with military units, providing rest-stop service to moving troops, and operating rolling and stationary canteens and huts.[116] The scattered nature of army outposts and their location "in an out-of-the-way corner of the world," far from the "stream of forces and supplies," meant YMCA men, equipment, and goods were spread very thin. The scarcity of army chaplains meant that secretary Brackett Lewis held informal services during his many trips between garrisons and front positions. His one-day record was thirteen. Another day "was exactly fifty-two hours long," and it saw he and his colleagues serve basic meals to men out of their small hut, which was "simply a two-roomed peasant cabin."[117] The association, he told Colton, "was compelled first of all to act as the retail canteen for practically all the troops."

> We lack equipment to do even this most essential form of service. When it comes to building cinema halls, starting educational work, conducting dramatic and musical entertainments and large athletic activities, we are even more seriously handicapped by the lack of the first requisites in the line of equipment and space. Every man on the staff has to do all kinds of work and he never knows when something new will turn up. There is not anything catchy or romantic about the kind of work the men have to do up here; I cannot write any glowing descriptions of our long programs with huge tabulations of the number of this or that entertainment; we haven't any press agent; our cameras are all out of films and the fact is most of us have not any time to write reports.[118]

The Russian North was unlike other fronts during the war and soldiers were ill-equipped and -prepared for the harsh realities of life there. Americans complained that (British) rations were less abundant than what they were used to. At least equally problematic was that the winter clothing and gear they received were not appropriate for the climate.[119] There was a serious lack of basic supplies, and much else besides for soldiers to grumble

[116]Arthur K. Yapp, "The Y.M.C.A. in Russia," n.d., ca. 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 28, Pamphlets in English 1917 & 1923.
[117]Lewis to Mott, 22 Sep 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [3].
[118]Wheeler to Colton, 11 Jan 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6].
[119]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 315–16; Lewis, "Short History," 2.

about.[120] The men were dispersed over several hundred miles of fluid fronts that extended in fan-like fashion north and south of Arkhangel'sk. In an effort to ameliorate the situation for Russian and other soldiers, the Red Cross distributed a wide variety of items and supplemental foodstuffs throughout the region, and organized a cable system that allowed US soldiers to send messages home. Red Cross staff even helped send eight "war brides" to the United States.[121] (They would later do the same for a much larger number of women in Siberia. "These American boys have a way of appropriating to themselves whatever they want of the feminine gender," commented an American doctor about US soldiers there.[122]) Because of the extra work, difficult terrain, freezing temperatures, and lack of infrastructure, the northern campaign proved to be the most expensive one per capita for the Red Cross to mount during the First World War. One report surmised that "the individual soldier has cost the Red Cross from two to three times the amount expended upon any other front."[123]

As for the YMCA, a report claimed four times as many "Red Triangle workers were needed in Russia, to serve a thousand troops, than were required elsewhere during the war to do similar service." The association saw through this "colossal task" alone.[124] Well, perhaps not quite alone, but it was true that all the other avenues troops on other fronts had for receiving extra goods and services were woefully absent in northern Russia. The British canteen board's distribution system left much to be desired, creating bitterness among some soldiers, the local populace, and the YMCA, to whom it refused to sell some of its surplus

[120]See report, dated 7 Oct 1918, about conditions among troops at the Dvina front. It was handed to Major Williams. ANRC papers, box 867, 948.61 North Russia—Military.

[121]Lewis, "Short History," 4–8.

[122]William Henry Bucher, *Surgeon Errant: The Life and Writings of William Henry Bucher 1874–1934*, ed. Emil Bogen (Los Angeles: Angelus, 1935), 85.

[123]Clewell to Rockwell, 29 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.61 North Russia—Military.

[124]"In North European Russia," in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... no date 1918 & 1919 [3].

stores.[125] Even so, and despite a severe lack of necessary equipment or infrastructure, the YMCA was left having to run nearly all canteen services for Allied soldiers because there were so few other spots where men could acquire supplemental personal items or additional food and drink. There were, in fact, only three canteens in northern Russia not run by the YMCA.[126] Soldiers "visited the YMCA to purchase anything eatable besides hardtack, M&V [i. e., 'meat and vegetables'], and bully beef," Private Donald Carey remembered.[127] A handful of YWCA representatives helped out in Arkhangel'sk, and local "ladies" joined forces with the auxiliaries, but there were no other support groups, especially outside the cities. "You see," Wheeler informed Colton, "we play Ladies Aid, Salvation Army (for we have made doughnuts and wheat cakes), and army supply company all in one, to say nothing of filling to a certain degree the function of the YM.–YWCA."[128] Most of the regular military auxiliaries that served American troops, including also the American Library Association and the Knights of Columbus, did not have a presence in northern Russia. The YMCA and Red Cross could not call upon local volunteers to assist them, something they would have been able to do elsewhere.[129]

A large percentage of the organizations' financial outlay went to paying for dozens of supply trips undertaken by Red Cross and YMCA men in the winter and spring of 1918–19. There was little transportation infrastructure beyond trails through snow and ice and the ability, on occasion, to borrow horses or other pack animals from the military. The difficult

[125]Wheeler to Colton, 20 Nov 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R Oct–Dec 1918.

[126]Wheeler to Colton, 11 Jan 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919; Wheeler to Colton, 6 Mar 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia—Archangel & Murmansk Districts 1918–19.

[127]Donald E. Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks: The Russian War Memoir of Private First Class Donald E. Carey, U.S. Army, 1918–1919*, ed. Neil G. Carey (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1997), 128.

[128]Wheeler to Colton, 27 Jan 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [4].

[129]Wheeler to Colton, 11 Jan 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [6].

terrain and weather conditions meant that men on supply missions travelled over water, through snow and on ice, and later, through slush and mud. The supply runs started as soon as the first shipments of goods arrived in October, and the relief workers had to be quick about it: Once winter set in for good, some of the more remote parts of the region would be completely cut off until spring. Williams reported in early January that he and his colleagues were "spending much of their time" at the various fronts or in supply convoys. He himself had just spent Christmas at the front, and had "travelled nearly eight hundred miles by sled . . . visiting soldiers at isolated out-posts."[130] American Red Cross supply trips, which often brought medicines, foodstuffs, and other equipment and supplies to soldiers and civilians alike, continued through May.

These trips could be extremely dangerous. At least one Red Cross man found himself and his companions travelling through newly gained territory, barely missing firefights between American and Bolshevik forces.[131] It was, after all, "war work, pure and unadulterated," to quote Wheeler.[132] YMCA men found themselves under fire on a daily basis at some fronts.[133] A few Red Cross representatives barely escaped being taken prisoner. YMCA secretaries were not so lucky: Four of them did end up in Bolshevik hands.[134] Two

[130]Williams to Davison, 2 Jan 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 1, Nov 1918–Jan 1919. See also Lively to Case, 31 Jan 1919, ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports. One of Williams's letters to Red Cross headquarters about a supply trip was published as "Life on Our Only Fighting Line: An Unusual Letter from a Red Cross Worker in Archangel," *New Red Cross Magazine* 14, no. 5 (May 1919): 29–33.

[131]Pollatts, "Report on Third Trip to Dvina and Vaga Fronts," 17 Mar 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.61 North Russia—Military. See also "Summary of ARC work in Archangel, Sept. 1918–July 1919," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[132][Wheeler] to Colton, 6 Mar 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].

[133]Unsigned, undated cable, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [3]. See also other material in this folder, including C. E. Pagett to Crawford Wheeler, n.d.

[134]Merle V. Arnold and Bryant Ryall were captured, taken to Moscow, and held in prison until they were released in May. Wheeler to Hatfield, 8 Jul 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 3. Their release came thanks to fellow YMCA secretary Louis Penningroth, who went into Bolshevik Russia from

other secretaries had an unexpected adventure when they were arrested by mutinous Russian soldiers. They escaped during a shootout, and made their way to Arkhangel'sk by boat and on foot through mud.[135] Craig was struck by danger of a different sort. After one arduous sled trip that winter, he came down with pneumonia and was in hospital for two weeks.[136] For their bravery and service under combat conditions, several secretaries received the French Croix de Guerre or the Russian Cross of St. George.[137] Four Red Cross men received Russian military service awards "for self-denying work for the Russian army."[138]

Service to foreign troops took up the majority of relief agents' time. Still, the YMCA operated three Russian clubs in Arkhangel'sk and two base centres at the front primarily served Russians. After American troops withdrew from northern Russia, association secretaries remained. A dozen secretaries served Russian soldiers. When the Allied armies had completed their withdrawal, "the two largest 'Y' huts in Archangel were turned over intact to the Russian military command."[139]

Improving soldier morale was arguably the most important task of military auxiliary groups during the First World War, and northern Russia was no exception. That Allied

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Copenhagen and secured their release as well as that of American and British soldiers who had been taken prisoner during the winter's fighting. "In North European Russia," in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... no date 1918 & 1919 [3]. YMCA men Clinton W. Areson and Albert F. Boyle were captured on 21 July and released in October. Shelby F. Strother to SecState, 17 Nov 1919, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Archangel, box 5, Misc C I—1919; Pierce to SecState, 7 Oct 1919, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Murmansk, vol. 3. As part of the negotiations for their release, the Red Army wished to exchange the prisoners for YMCA supplies. Such a course was rejected. Cole to SecState, 12 Aug 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 3. Once the men were released, the State Department was interested in what information and impressions Areson gained about Bolshevik Russia. See memorandum by Areson attached to Strother to SecState, as above.

[135]All secretaries taken prisoner were later freed and claimed to have been well treated while in Bolshevik hands. The story of arrest and escape is told in Tom L. Cotton, "From Archangel to the Bolshevik Front, and Back for the Y.M.C.A.," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [3].

[136]"Extract from report of Crawford Wheeler," received Oct 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [4].

[137]"In North European Russia," in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... no date 1918 & 1919 [3].

[138]These were Lively, Lewis, Mason, and Pollatts. See translation of "Order of the Governor General of the North Region," 10 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[139]Wheeler, "War Time Activities in Russia," 44–45.

soldiers were fighting Red Russians for an uncertain purpose after the western front armistice had been signed, and were doing so while their comrades on most other fronts were headed home, was cause for discontent among soldiers. Morale, never high, remained at a low point after news of the armistice reached the men. By February there was general discontent among Allied troops. Mutinies were on the rise.[140] There were several cases of soldiers wounding themselves in the hopes of being sent home—or, at least not to the front.[141] YMCA efforts made little difference overall, but they did provide some respite from "gloomy Russia." Private Carey "years later" still caught himself occasionally whistling tunes he first heard coming from a YMCA phonograph while lying on his bunk in Bakaritsa.[142]

Questioning their government's policy was not something Red Cross or YMCA representatives did publicly, and so whatever their personal feelings, they did what they could to ameliorate the situation while the undeclared war against Bolshevism continued. After all, no matter the specific purpose, soldiers continued to fight. "Our soldier boys don't know why there are up here - they came to fight Germans and to guard stores, but they aren't doing it now," Wheeler noted. "And it helps them a lot in their discouragement and loneliness to have a 'Y' man, as they say, come up to the front, while the shrapnel is singing overhead, on these cold days up here where it grows dark at two in the afternoon."[143] "The YMCA was the best feature of camp and relieved the monotony of army life," declared Private Carey.[144] During the retreat from Shenkursk two secretaries—one American and one

[140]Willett, *Russian Sideshow*, 88, 53, 44–45.
[141]Ibid., 122 [my speculation].
[142]Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks*, 54.
[143]Crawford Wheeler, "'Y' Front Line Service in Arctic Russia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [3].
[144]Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks*, 132. The YMCA is positively mentioned several times in this memoir.

Russian—served "limitless steaming coffee, crackers and Lucky Strikes": "The men coined the terms of 'Life Saver' for the Y and were grateful until both the English and the profane vocabularies failed them. Even the colonels stood in the mob drinking and munching crackers," reported Brackett Lewis. "Their praise for the 'Y' did not weigh a grain, however, beside the startling transformation in expression and feelings of the boys which was wrought in their faces by our hot drinks."[145] Lewis himself came in for high praise from his colleagues, who "speak in the highest terms of the unselfish, untiring and effective service" he rendered during the slow retreat on the Vaga front.[146] When YMCA secretaries served soldiers hot coffee, handed out chocolate and biscuits, and distributed cigarettes mid-way through a long night-time march through frigid arctic winds and many feet of snow, the benefits were intended to be psychological as well as practical.

The American Red Cross mission, with a smaller staff than the YMCA, was equally concerned with soldier morale. As part of its work it founded, financed (with the Committee on Public Information), and distributed (with the help of YMCA secretaries) an English-language newspaper for soldiers called the *American Sentinel*. The venture was thought of explicitly as a morale-boosting measure. Its "vast assortment of newsy items" was sorely needed by "men isolated from the world's fast-moving events." Twenty-five issues were produced between December and May.[147] Other Red Cross efforts were also motivated in part by the knowledge that soldiers had no news from home for many months, "and as the

[145]Brackett Lewis, "The Bolsheviki Capture Shendursk," 18 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia—Archangel & Murmansk Districts 1918–19.

[146]"Activities of the Army and Navy Y. M. C. A. In Northern Russia with the Allied Expeditionary Force," n.d., ca. 1919, 8, in YMCA Russia, box 20, Personnel Lists [1].

[147]Roger L. Lewis, "Report on the American Sentinel," 1 Jun 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.72 North Russia—American Sentinel; Williams to Davison, 20 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia; quotations from Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks*, 97.

sunless days of winter set in, their sense of isolation became acute and their spirits sunk to a low ebb which was bound to interfere seriously with their efficiency as soldiers." Even the establishment of a Red Cross hospital had important morale implications. Before they received their "own" hospital, sick and wounded Americans were scattered in British care centres, "inclined to resent the fact that . . . no provision had been made" specifically for them. Once opened, "the hospital did a great deal to restore the depressed spirits of the American troops." American soldiers were treated to special dinners and treats over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, thanks to the Red Cross. Of the holiday stockings, Williams commented that "no one could possibly perceive the moral effect of this nor could one believe how depressing or lonesome a Christmas would have been to these men without some such expression from the folks back home."[148] British Brigadier General H. Needham, chief of supplies, was impressed with the work the mission did to improve the morale of American soldiers and, to quote Williams, in "straightening out a situation which seemed to be going from bad to worse."[149] "I think it is a jolly good thing you came when you did," Needham told Williams in early January. "Things were going in a bad way and growing worse, and you have helped out a lot."[150]

Grumbling about British command and regulations was a feature of the entirety of the intervention. This was presumably in part a reflection of general dissatisfaction with being in northern Russia, but meagre rations and improper British-distributed clothing and equipment

[148]Lewis, "Short History," 2–3, 7; Williams to J. H. Beatson, 31 Dec 1918, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1918.
[149]Williams to Davison, 6 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.
[150]Entry for 6 Jan 1919, in Williams papers, box 3, Notebook 1918.

were serious concerns.[151] Conditions for Russian and other locally-recruited soldiers were even worse than they were for the foreign Allied troops.[152] For the YMCA, of especial trouble was the inclusion of "demon rum" in rations. American secretaries were all strong advocates of prohibition, in keeping with contemporary social mores, especially those of religious- or reform-minded progressives. The prohibition movement had triumphed in the decade prior to American's joining the Entente, and in 1919 prohibition was established throughout the United States with the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.[153] (The prevailing attitude toward the consumption of alcoholic beverages is made plain by the decision of the earlier American Red Cross Mission to Russia "to go on the water wagon" for the duration.[154]) In areas where American authorities were in control—in and around Arkhangel'sk, for example—the rum ration was eliminated. But at the fronts, and especially in Murmansk, rum was distributed.[155] According to one American soldier involved, the British brought "forty thousand cases of good Scotch whiskey" with them.[156] In one of his reports home, Wheeler accused the British military of cooperating with merchants, resulting in the importation of large quantities of alcohol to the region. This was not just a problem for the teetotallers of the YMCA: It lay behind some disastrous military decisions, according to Wheeler. The association head was outraged in part because it seemed to him that British shippers were able to bring in large quantities of alcohol while needed YMCA

[151]For more details about British equipment and poor British–American relations, see Willett, *Russian Sideshow*, 21, 27, 116–17.

[152]Strakhovsky, *Intervention at Archangel*, 100–1.

[153]Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum*, xi.

[154]Robins to Margaret, 5 Jul 1917, in Robins papers, Micro 567, reel 2.

[155]Hollinger, "Notes on North Russia 1918 Political Situation," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia [3]. At least one US commanding officer decided the rum ration was a bad idea, and refused to issue it to his men. Joel R. Moore to Williams, 23 Nov 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 325.

[156][John Cudahy], *Archangel: The American War with Russia* (Chicago: McClurg, 1924), 76.

goods never came.[157] Williams also worried about alcohol. It could be purchased from British canteens for cheaper than in New York City, he told Francis, and he believed its consumption by US troops could lead to international scandal. At the very least, it was making a bad impression.[158] American soldiers certainly indulged in drink. According to Donald Carey, after news of the 11 November armistice reached his group at Bakaritsa, "officers and men spent the night in a drunken spree." He was awoken during the night and found "the barracks was in an uproar. Men were singing, yelling, talking—all raising hell." "During our stay in Bakaritza," he noted, "I saw more drunks than ever in my twenty-five years."[159] Even the Red Cross's Williams imbibed, at least on occasion. "Medicinal brandy" and "Three Star Hennessy" (i. e., cognac) helped keep himself and journalist Frazier Hunt warm and the conversation flowing during their sled ride together through the Russian north.[160]

Servicing the needs of soldiers and the military command kept representatives of both American auxiliaries almost completely occupied. Neither Craig nor Wheeler of the YMCA oversaw much civilian or refugee relief work. Craig hoped that the arrival of more manpower would allow the association to reach out to the Russian population of the region.[161] But this was not to be. The YMCA's mandate in northern Russia was to assist soldiers. By January it was clear where things stood. Between operating canteens and running supplies up to soldiers

[157]Wheeler to Colton, 12 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia—Archangel & Murmansk District 1918–19. See also Wheeler to Colton, 30 Nov 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia [3].

[158]Williams to Francis, 6 Nov 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 325. According to another source, the British imported fourteen thousand cases of scotch for army use, and sold them for $6 a case. See Hunt, *One American*, 117.

[159]Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks*, 61.

[160]Hunt, *One American*, 118.

[161]Craig to Watson, 29 Sep 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

in dozens of locations, setting up and manning huts, and accompanying soldiers as they moved from front to front, there was little time to focus on much else. And American soldiers found much to criticize in the work and men of the association, despite most secretaries' apparent dedication to their charges.[162] The YMCA came in for its share of flak during the war. This was perhaps only inevitable given all the things secretaries attempted to do.[163] In northern Russia, where conditions were so difficult, the YMCA was unable to keep up with soldier demands and its own service goals. In Siberia, at least one secretary laid similar charged. William Young Duncan, who was attached to a Czechoslovak regiment, believed his own association was "asleep." Though he wondered if his troubles getting supplies were due to his being located further west than any other secretary, he still complained: "Instead of supplies and help we get words, promises and explanations."[164] Wheeler would have agreed.

Although there were not enough staff members to do civilian work, the association tried "to keep up friendly contacts with the Russian people at all times," Wheeler told Colton. The "permanent work secretaries"—those men who had signed on for long-term Russian service—"have not neglected opportunities to make friendships or to learn the language."[165] As had been true for some time, YMCA representatives were interested in exploring post-war opportunities in Russia. At the moment, only sporadic efforts were possible. After all, as Wheeler commented about the work in Murmansk, "We could not hope to be successful in carrying on a program for civilians up there so long as our army work was lamentably weak

[162]Moore, Mead, Jahns, *Fighting the Bolsheviki*, 255.

[163]See also Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, 126: "Agencies like the YMCA that attempted to do most [for soldiers during the war] suffered criticism for sins of omission and commission."

[164]Diary, entry for 8 Jul 1919, in Duncan papers, box 1.

[165]Wheeler to Colton, 11 Jan 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919.

and the soldiers were kicking and shouting extra loud about our Americanism, etc."[166] In other words, military service came first.

On occasion secretaries made small distributions to civilians[167] and did indeed strike up friendships with locals. This happened in the village of Shenkursk, near the hotly-contested Vaga front, and itself the scene of fighting that winter.[168] British secretary T. R. Ponsford and his team were approached by residents in October "who expressed a very strong desire that the Y.M.C.A. should try to do something for them in providing them with a club. They wished to be shown how the Y.M.C.A. was managed and to be taught how to run their own Association."[169] According to another British secretary, A. J. Coffey, the association men had excellent relations with the townspeople of Shenkursk: "We were their confidants and their intermediaries in all dealings with the Allied command."[170]

> When the civilian population wished to organize anything they came to us. When the Russian Authorities did not help them in the way they desired, they came to the Y.M.C.A. and we always managed to get matters satisfactorily fixed up for them, which they always appreciated. We organized children's parties at Christmas, and you would have been greatly interested to see the Russian children romping about, playing English games and singing English songs. When the people required anything from the Military they invariably came to the Y.M.C.A. and we acted as intermediary. Among other things we saved the schools for them. We appealed to the Military and the schools were restored to the people and extra facilities were given them. At one period during the three months we had the influenza epidemic amongst the townspeople, and particularly amongst the Russian soldiers. We were able to assist in this sphere to some extent, supplying the hospitals with the extra comforts the authorities were unable to provide them with. Everything is going quite all right.

When Coffey and his associates had to depart in mid-January ahead of Bolshevik advances, he found it "very hard to leave the town and the civilian population, but it was the only

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[166]Wheeler to Colton, 14 Jan 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

[167]British secretaries distributed biscuits, chocolate, and cocoa to refugees on at least two occasions. See C. E. Pagett to Wheeler, n.d., and T. R. Ponsford, "The 'Y' On An Arctic Sector," n.d., both in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [3].

[168]For more on the Vaga front, see Willett, *Russian Sideshow*, ch. 9.

[169]T. R. Ponsford, "The 'Y' On An Arctic Sector," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [3].

[170]A. J. Coffey, "Allied Y.M.C.A. In Northern Russia, Report of Work in Shenkursk Area, October 16, 1918 to January 29, 1919," in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

possible thing to do." Three hundred fifty civilians evacuated with them.[171] Shortly thereafter the YMCA hut and the village fell into Bolshevik hands. It had been under Allied control since mid-September.[172]

While the YMCA made a positive impression on at least a few Russians, the Red Cross mission aimed to make itself more widely known, at least in Arkhangel'sk. Williams's civilian relief work began in earnest in mid-October. News of starving villages in a remote part of the region spurred him to action. "There is real suffering hereabouts," Williams wrote to a friend that fall. He sent Lively on a trawler loaded with one hundred tons of foodstuffs and medicines. Over the next week Lively distributed the goods to five villages. In addition to starvation, influenza was taking an incredible toll, with deaths over the previous week reported as high as ten percent of the population of one village. Malnutrition had led to other problems, and Lively decided to do what he could to get more supplies to the villagers as soon as possible.[173]

The involvement of the mission in welfare relief for civilian residents of northern Russia was welcomed, if anecdotal evidence is representative. Williams and his group received "all sorts of letters and applications for assistance and all sorts of offers of help and assistance."[174] Even American soldiers got in on the relief efforts. Captain Joel R. Moore of the 339th Infantry found himself overcome with "a glowing emotion of pride" when he discovered his men were sharing the contents of their Red Cross Christmas stockings with

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[171]"Verbatim report of speech made by R. F. Coffey - Y.M.C.A. Shenkursk," in YMCA Russia, box 18, North Russia... [2].

[172]Moore, Mead, Jahns, *Fighting the Bolsheviki*, 153, 63.

[173]Francis to Davison, 14 Oct 1918, and Williams to Davison, 25 Oct 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, C, 1918, vol. 330; Williams to "Van," 27 Oct 1918, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1918; Williams to Davison, 25 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[174]Williams to Case, 22 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

local women and children. "He [i. e., the American Red Cross] is prodigal of his money, his food, his clothes," Moore wrote Williams about the organization. His words brought to the fore the firm link between the Red Cross and war, and the rhetorical shift that had taken place to change the Red Cross from a female-identified entity to a martial, masculine one. Moore concluded that "he is generous to a fault—this red blooded warrior from America."[175] In November an American officer took a shipment of condensed milk and a case of medicine to the Murmansk district, and organized its distribution through Russian committees to go to the sick, and to women and children.[176] That same month, the Red Cross mission agreed to furnish milk every two weeks to an Arkhangel'sk group. The institution, called "Drop of Milk," distributed the milk to a small number of local infants.[177]

Conditions were rarely good in northern Russia. They were even worse than usual in the winter of 1918–19. The harvest had been extremely poor, and the civil war disrupted supply lines and created political and economic refugees. In areas that changed hands between the Bolsheviks and the (pro-Ally) provisional government over the course of 1918–19, there was additional suffering: When the Bolsheviks evacuated these areas, they took foodstuffs, supplies, and equipment with them, leaving the remaining inhabitants very little to live on. There were groups of refugees and a smaller number of returning prisoners of war without access to peacetime social and trade networks to secure food, shelter, and medicines. The occupying militaries tried to make up for shortfalls through their supply committee, but there were many problems with the Allied system. The supplies (which were sold, not given)

[175]Moore to Williams, 13 Jan 1919, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jan–May 1919. For comments about this shift, see Irwin, "Nation Building," 418.

[176]Williams to Vacetch, 13 Nov 1918, and P. I. Bukowski to Williams, 27 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia. 430 cases or 20,640 cans were intended for women and children: Williams to Davison, 2 Dec 1918, in ibid.

[177]Williams to Vacetch, 13 Nov 1918, in ibid.

rarely reached the more isolated spots of the region, and the poorest peasants, who could not afford to pay for the goods, received nothing. In addition, supplies often had to be shipped in batches meant to cover several months, and were often used up or sold off long before more supplies arrived.[178] The Red Cross found it necessary to supplement Allied distributions with its own, as relief workers discovered time and again on their journeys into the northern Russian countryside. Williams also came to an agreement with the supply committee about being able to distribute foodstuffs free of charge to families who could not afford to pay.[179] During one of his trips, Williams saw such pathetic, incredibly sad sights that he "rather wished [he] were somewhere else."[180]

Beginning with the Christmas rush, mission men spent "practically all" their time and effort on military work.[181] Even so, they managed to get in some civilian relief. In Arkhangel'sk, the Red Cross distributed food rations and clothing to three hundred destitute families. With the cooperation of a Russian charity, housing conditions were improved and the sick were moved to hospitals. Russian hospitals, orphanages, "almshouses," and prison hospitals "were supplied regularly with medicines, sheets, blankets, pillows and other necessary equipment by the Red Cross." They were also given foodstuffs and other items that "particular emergencies required."[182] The Red Cross ran a free employment agency in Arkhangel'sk, assisted returning prisoners of war, and helped refugees on a case-by-case basis who came asking for it that winter.[183] Other occasional distributions were handled,

[178]Lewis, "Short History," 11.

[179]Williams to Davison, 17 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports. See other material in this folder for more on the ARC–ASC relationship in the fall of 1918.

[180]Williams to Lewis, 10 Jan 1919, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jan–May 1919.

[181]Lively to Olds, 8 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[182]Lewis, "Short History," 16–17.

[183]Lively to Case, 22 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports; Lewis,

sometimes at the request of the military. In late January the military asked the mission to provide rations to a group of seven hundred refugees headed to Arkhangel'sk on foot.[184] This work was undertaken with the help of a YMCA man stationed at Emetskoe. More than five hundred "refugee children and sick mothers" were assisted.[185]

There were many small distributions. Red Cross men gave out foodstuffs, medicines, or other supplies like blankets and clothing on most of their trips, or made plans to have goods forwarded after gathering information. The organization was never able to do enough, mission members believed.[186] Not all Red Cross workers were sympathetic to the plight of some Russians. After one relief trip, A. C. Robinson noted that "although the Red Cross supplies given out to these people answered a much felt want as regards a very small percentage of the population, it was not difficult to realize that the entire population were prepared to sit back and let us feed them indefinitely if we were foolish enough to do so."[187] This attitude, that emergency relief was important but ongoing charity would be counterproductive to establishing a strong Russian state, was also common among the Siberian relief workers. American social welfare workers, at home and abroad, were concerned about promoting pauperism, that is, reliance on long-term charity to make ends meet.

There was value in the ongoing small bits of relief work even if some Americans' attitudes tended toward the unsympathetic. One Red Cross man finished off his report of a

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"Short History," 17–18.

[184]Dudley and Pollatts to Lively, 7 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.4 North Russia—Supplies.

[185]Pollatts, "Report on Third Trip to Dvina and Vaga Fronts," 17 Mar 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.61 North Russia—Military.

[186]See, for example, letter to Town Council, Charity Section, 5 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.62 North Russia—Civilian Relief.

[187]A. C. Robinson, "Report on Civilian Relief at Bolshie Ozerki," 16 May 1919, in ibid.

supply run up the Murman coast by noting that about fifty thousand "people have come to realize, for the first time, that there is such an organization as the American Red Cross." Americans were already popular there, he claimed, and "if the American Red Cross has contributed even a little in gaining their friendship and respect, we should feel amply repaid . . . [R]elief and goodwill from the American people cannot fail to assist in building up the morale of stricken Russia."[188] Whether it did is questionable. Williams visited "large numbers" of "peasants" during his travels in the winter of 1918–19. He found that although they were "particularly well-disposed toward the Americans," their friendly attitude was "offset, in part at least, by the fact that American troops constitute the bulk of the actual fighting forces." Bolshevik propaganda took advantage of this fact by claiming "that the Allied expedition was inspired by American capitalism."[189]

The Red Cross's largest civilian relief project was the school lunch program. It ran from October until the end of the school year, and originated in a request by municipal officials. The public education department of the city of Arkhangel'sk could not afford to provide warm lunches to children, but knew there was a desperate need for them over the winter.[190] Williams and his team learned that "school attendance had fallen to such a low mark on account of sickness [and] lack of proper food, and the actual physical inability to walk to school, that the closing of the schools was being considered by the authorities in this district. Not only the physical health but the whole future outlook for over twenty thousand Russian

[188]J. R. Clewell to Lively, n.d, ca. late Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[189]"Notes of Conversation with Mr. C. T. Williams . . . ," 22 Feb 1919, in Williams papers, box 3, Notes of Conversation.

[190]Translation of "Memorandum Concerning the Meeting of the Archangel City Duma on July 4th 1919," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Child Welfare.

school children in Archangel was jeopardized."[191] The Red Cross agreed to assist the municipality. By mid-October a school lunch program was being planned, and it was launched later that month.[192] In addition to a desire to lessen suffering among children, Williams believed the lunches would be "good American Red Cross propaganda to carry back into [the children's] homes."[193] Robins, Thacher, and the other members of the Red Cross Mission to Russia had thought very similarly about the milk distribution program in Petrograd the previous winter.

During its first week in operation eighteen hundred "anaemic public school children" received a free lunch. At first, only Arkhangel'sk schools were targeted,[194] but the organization soon expanded the program to nearby districts. The Red Cross donated biscuits and cocoa, cans of milk, and sugar to prepare hot cocoa. It arranged for most schools to purchase bread from the Allied food committee.[195] The organization allocated one can of milk a day for each thirty children, plus a teaspoon of cocoa and sugar for each child. As was the case with the Petrograd distribution, careful records were kept to ensure fairness, nutritional balance, and to avoid abuses.[196] Teachers cooperated and were appreciative of the program.[197] In the third week of November it was expanding by four or five new schools every day.[198]

In the New Year, although the Red Cross was otherwise lessening its commitment to

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[191]Lewis, "Short History," 14.

[192]Williams to Davison, 2 Nov 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 1, Nov 1918–Jan 1919.

[193]Williams to "Van," 27 Oct 1918, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1918.

[194]Williams to Davison, 2 Nov 1918, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 1, Nov 1918–Jan 1919.

[195]Lively to Olds, 14 Jun 1919, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jun–Dec 1919.

[196]Lively to Williams, 31 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Child Welfare.

[197]Williams to Davison, 6 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia.

[198]Williams to Case, 22 Nov 1918, in ibid.

civilian relief, the school lunch program continued. Its humanitarian and propaganda value, and the short- and long-term political benefits organizers ascribed to it, gave it priority over other non-military projects. By 1 February the organization had provided 22,500 lunches to more than 12,000 children.[199] By 1 April it had served more than 1.25 million lunches in 260 schools, feeding about 17,500 students. Over the course of that month, seventy more schools were added to the list of recipients, so that by 1 May there were 330 schools receiving food supplies. The schools were located up to 250 miles from Arkhangel'sk.

> At the end of the school year 1919, 20,134 school children had received regular daily lunches from the Red Cross and over 1,500,000 individual lunches had been served. . . . They were served by Red Cross workers and later by the teachers in the schools who had entered into the plan with the greatest of enthusiasm. The results were too astounding to have been predicted. . . .
>
> There will be at least 20,000 people of the coming generation in North Russia who, however, interior politics may shift and change will always be strong partisans of the democracy across the seas.[200]

The program had positive effects on the health and well-being of many Russian children. It had, too, success in ensuring many youngsters went to and took an interest in school. According to the superintendent of public instruction, "the zest for education is great and the lunches furnished by the American Red Cross in Archangel strengthens and nurtures the children thus enabling them to pursue their studies with increased diligence."[201] A Red Cross report boasted that because of the program "school attendance came back with a bound to normal and the anaemic pallor of the children's faces was replaced by a glow of health and the drooping interest in school work was revived."[202] According to Lively, the "small daily ration" had "been a really great help" in improving school attendance and health.[203]A

[199]Lively to Davison, 18 Feb 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 4.
[200]Ford, "Historical Facts."
[201]Williams to Davison, 4 Dec 1918, in NACP, Embassy, Telegrams Sent, box 6, folder 4.
[202]Ford, "Historical Facts."
[203]Lively to Case, 22 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

member of the Arkhangel'sk city duma thanked the Red Cross for the warm lunches. He wrote that, according to a local physician, "school children were scarcely affected by infectious diseases this winter."[204]

The propaganda benefits were also important, something Williams and other Red Cross officials continually stressed in their reports. Lively believed that even when the program ended, there would be "no reaction in the wave of kindly feeling that has been put in action over this part of Russia toward America and the American Red Cross."[205] He did not shy away from proclaiming, in a letter to Williams at the end of 1918, that the project "accomplished a work of propaganda that cannot be excelled."[206] (Williams then used the same language when he wrote to Davison.[207]) The program apparently also had some high-level backers among Allied officialdom in Russia. French ambassador Joseph Noulens was, Williams reported, "greatly interested," and felt the work "was the best kind of propaganda to create a friendly feeling toward the Allies."[208]

A related result was "a flattering interest in America and everything American" on the part of pupils. "Schools vied with one another to think of new ways of showing their appreciation, and thousands of Russian toys, needle and embroidery work and all sorts of remembrances were brought into the Red Cross to be forwarded to the children of America, with bundles of letters expressing a desire to learn more of their American Comrades."[209]

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[204]Translation of a letter from Makarjin, 7 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Child Welfare.

[205]Lively to Case, 22 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[206]Lively to Williams, 31 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Child Welfare.

[207]Williams to Davison, 2 Jan 1919, in ibid.

[208]Williams to Case, 22 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia. Noulens did not mention the program in his memoirs of his time in Russia: *Mon ambassade en Russie soviétique, 1917–1919* (Paris: Plon, 1933).

[209]Ford, "Historical Facts."

There were potential spin-off benefits for Russians and Americans alike. There were plans to use some of the toys and gifts to promote cross-cultural learning in US schools and suggestions that they would "attract the attention of dealers in toys."[210] The Junior Red Cross in the United States took an interest in the gifts, too.[211] Lively even sent a box of homecrafted handkerchiefs to Margaret Woodrow Wilson, the president's (adult) daughter, with the request that she distribute them among American school children.[212] The Junior Red Cross later sent "letters and small gifts" to "the children of Archangel."[213]

The program resulted in "a friendly correspondence" between Russian children and American youngsters, creating "friendship and unity." In the words of one Russian official, "this union [was] a pledge of brotherly love between two nations; a love which started in childhood expressing the most stable and sincere feelings." Letters from American children that urged "love of the Fatherland, for brotherhood and freedom [were] met with enthusiasm and [took] deep root in the soul of the [Russian] children."[214] The "earnest friendship" engendered by the hot cocoa reached their parents, too.[215] A letter from city authorities included, no doubt, just what the American Red Cross men wanted to hear, that is, that their efforts were contributing to good relations between a democratic Russia and the United States. Schools requested, framed, and hung portraits of President Wilson. Seeing them

[210]Lively to District HQ, ARC, Chicago, 26 Mar 1919, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia. The same note was sent to San Francisco.

[211]J. W. Studebaker to Division Directors, 21 Mar 1919, in ANRC papers, box 866, 948.08 Commission to North Russia. For more on the exchange of letters and gifts between Arkhangel'sk children and the United States, see material in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Junior Red Cross, and Lively to Williams, 28 Mar 1919, in Williams papers, box 1, C Jan–May 1919. For more on the Junior Red Cross, see Irwin, "Humanitarian Occupations," ch. 7.

[212]Lively to Wilson, 17 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Junior Red Cross. Margaret Wilson was apparently interested in "the amelioration of the needs of the poor and their schools."

[213]Letter from the national director of the Junior Red Cross to Lively, 7 Nov 1919, in ibid.

[214]Translation of a letter from Makarjin, 7 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Child Welfare.

[215]Lively to Williams, 31 Dec 1918, in ibid.

"occupying the place of vantage" during his visits "added fuel to the flame of patriotism," noted Lively. He was also proud "to hear constant references to the implicit faith the people of Russia [had] in America and its President."[216] The program was a hopeful metaphor for the entire Red Cross effort—a small piece of work with significant results that improved Russia's chance for a better future and laid the groundwork for close ties with the United States.

Civilian relief work, such as it was, ended with the departure of foreign relief workers in the summer and early fall of 1919. In mid-February President Wilson promised to end American participation in the military venture. He was never fully comfortable with the northern Russia campaign: Wilson had a more limited vision of what American troops were to do than did the British and French. When this was made clear soon after the start of the intervention, he restricted American movements. For the sake of accord with his allies, he kept his military men in Russia. After the 11 September armistice, domestic opposition in the United States to doughboys in Russia increased, and by January politicians and members of the public were clamouring for the soldiers to come home. In the face of this and other criticisms—including that the intervention had allowed the Bolsheviks to strengthen their hold on Russia rather than diminish it—Wilson finally assented to ending the American part in the military venture in northern Russia.[217]

Come the spring of 1919, the war with the Bolsheviks was not going well. The past few months had seen near-defeats, retreats, and tense situations galore. Because the port at Arkhangel'sk was frozen until spring, continued Red advances brought with them not just the

[216]Lively to Margaret Wilson, 17 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.621 North Russia—Junior Red Cross.

[217]Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, ch. 7.

threat of casualties, equipment losses, and international embarrassment, but a potential death sentence to all Allied soldiers and their Russian backers. If the Bolsheviks drove the troops back into the city, there would be nowhere for them to go. Fortunately for the Allies, such a situation did not come to pass. Four thousand British replacement troops arrived and kept the front lines from receding too far. Beginning in April the men at the front were recalled, to await transport home from safer confines near Arkhangel'sk. The bulk of the American force departed northern Russia in June, and the American military closed its Arkhangel'sk headquarters on 5 August.[218]

Once it became clear that departing soldiers would not be replaced by fellow Americans, Lively and his colleagues worried about what this meant for their efforts. In the end, the Red Cross mission did not stay in the region after American soldiers left it. This was despite strong lobbying on the part of Red Cross staffers. Lively wrote several letters to his superiors in Europe and the United States to urge them to reconsider their decision to withdraw the mission. He was "deeply interested in Red Cross work," he wrote on one occasion:

> .Russia offers a splendid field not only for the exercise of humanitarian impulse, but for holding fast and adding to that actual deep tooled friendship between America and this country. Russia is passing through a violent transition just now, but she will emerge in time and here is the greatest opportunity for the establishment of a pure social democracy the world has known. If America which now occupies that position or a great American institution can contribute to that end, and at the same time relieve hunger and want that has prevailed in a more or less degree for nearly five years, a double mercy will have been done. If the American Red Cross were to draw out of North Russia at this critical juncture it would not only create a profound feeling of disappointment but would give comfort and aid to the cunning exploiters of this vast commonwealth.
>
> It is my earnest hope that before the receipt of this letter you will have cabled that the American Red Cross should carry on in Russia.[219]

Lively was incensed at the order to depart. There was much important military work yet to be

[218]Willett, *Russian Sideshow*, ch. 13.
[219]Lively to Olds, 8 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.61 North Russia—Military.

done even if American troops were gone, he believed. And even the future well-being of Russia itself was potentially at stake.[220]

Lively's deep disappointment in the decision of the Red Cross's Central Committee—on 1 March the War Council had disbanded and authority was put back in the hands of the society's peacetime governing body—may be explained in part by his view of the larger significance of his efforts. Like many Americans involved in relief work in revolutionary and civil war Russia, he took a personal interest in Russian development. Lively viewed Russians kindly, if paternalistically, and found them to be similar to Americans in important ways. He emphasized their fortitude: "Discouragement seems to be an unknown quantity in the Russian mind. No matter what the conditions are or how beset with difficulties the task, there is always the belief that somewhere just ahead the sun is shining and that soon the clouds will be dispersed." Lively found the country was composed of a mixture of peoples, just like America. "The noble unrest of the men and women of this country finds a counterpart in America where always and ever there is a striving for better conditions, for cleaner government and for the ideal life." He saw in Russia "the true foundations of the world's purest democracy" and had faith "that it will be attained." He wanted to continue working in the country, moving from Red Cross work to agricultural endeavours, his specialty in civilian life. He wished to take up work "so that I might in ever so humble a way contribute my bit to the success of the world's most interesting experience in the building up of a nation that will not perish, in the establishment of a condition [that] will mean the greatest good to the greatest number, the very keystone in the arch of

[220]See, for example, Lively to Olds, 17 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports, and Lively to Farrand, 17 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.101 North Russia—Local Office.

democracy."[221] Loath to leave Russia entirely, Lively considered joining the Red Cross's Siberian commission.[222] Eventually, he did, and his stay in Russia outlived its existence (see chapter 8).

The American Red Cross hospital, along with much of its equipment, supplies, drugs, and one ambulance, was handed over to the Russian government on 2 July.[223] Lively gave a speech on the occasion. His words were full of the rich nationalist, militaristic, and quasi-Christian imagery so prevalent in Red Cross publicity during the war years: "Acting as I am today, I am the favored spokesman of more than twenty six million Americans who are banded together in an organization that has been typified as the Greatest Mother in the World. Visualize, if you please, this vast army of mercy standing as a solid phalanx radiating friendship for the people of Russia."[224] Lively genuinely "love[d] the Red Cross," but he knew that its work in northern Russia had not been without setbacks. In a report written from Vladivostok nearly a year later, he remembered two unfortunate incidents:

> In Archangel the Red Cross took over under vigorous protest a school for a hospital. It was secured almost one room at a time. Finally the head of the school said that if the Red Cross would accept the price of and secure the shipment of two Russian keyed typewriters for him he would give up two badly needed rooms. Proposition gladly accepted. Typewriters were ordered and ship[ped] to London where they stayed. Afterwards an orphan asylum secured funds and asked the Red Cross to secure a typewriter – Order placed. Word came back to use one of the two typewriters already shipped.

Lively was able to refund the orphanage, but the "school head refused to accept [the] return, saying he had been misled into giving up the rooms he had sacrificed and demanded the typewriters. Archangel was captured later and as far as can be determined the debt and the

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[221]Lively, report (first page missing), n.d., in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports.

[222]Lively to W. B. Wellman, 18 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.73 North Russia—Publications.

[223]Lively to Olds, 5 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.52 North Russia—ARC Hospitals. See also other material in this folder. The ARC left the Russian with an ambulance, drugs, a variety of medical supplies, and equipment, plus an improved hospital building.

[224]Text of Lively's address in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.52 North Russia—ARC Hospitals. For more on Red Cross imagery, see the pictorial essay in Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*.

bad feeling created are still existent. Do these two instances paint a moral? Instances could be multiplied, but they are unnecessary."[225] Lively knew that seemingly minor mistakes could undermine whatever good feelings Red Cross work otherwise engendered.

Fighting continued on the northern fronts. In the wake of the summer's battles, there was "destitution and fresh wounds, outraged women and burned homes, and no outside agency to help," Lively told the chief Red Cross publicity man in Europe. "Ours not to wonder why," he lamented. Against his better judgment but without recourse, he and his staff hurried to finish their work. Lively remained convinced "that if the strategy board which ordered us out could see our poor and needy here in this field when military operations take little heed of civilian wants, they would order the line held, for a time at least."[226] But his mid-July attempt to have the closure order reversed came too late, and he did not get his way. The organization sold what supplies it could and left enough food for two months' rations in Arkhangel'sk. At the end of July the mission turned supplies worth $500,000 over to the Russian Red Cross.[227] The American consul, Felix Cole, confirmed the mission's closure and the end of all Red Cross work in northern Russia in mid-August. There was nothing more to be done about it.[228] The nineteen American Red Cross mission members soon left to join the Commission of the Baltic States, taking with them left-over supplies.[229]

American YMCA secretaries stayed on after the troops went home.[230] Later that summer, when word came that the embassy was closing up shop in Arkhangel'sk, the British

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[225]Lively to acting commissioner, 25 May 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel.

[226]Lively to C. D. Morris, 19 Jul 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.73 North Russia—Publications.

[227]"Summary of ARC work in Archangel, Sept. 1918–July 1919," in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.08 North Russia—Reports. Other supplies were sold to the British army.

[228]Cole to Lively, 15 Aug 1919, in ANRC papers, box 867, 948.62 North Russia—civilian relief.

[229]Ford, "Historical Facts"; Felix Cole to R. H. Hoare, 9 Aug 1919, in NA, FO 175, vol. 26; ANRC, *Annual Report for the Year Ended June 30, 1919* (Washington, DC: 1919), 154.

[230]Anderson to Story, 29 May 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919.

requested that the association men be allowed to remain in place. Their work with British troops was important.[231] The entirety of the staff was permitted to stay on as long as the British would guarantee their safety.[232] Come early August there were still thirty male secretaries left, but not for much longer.[233] The last four YMCA secretaries—except for two men still held prisoner in Soviet Russia—left around mid-September.[234]

As for the intervention, it dragged on through the summer, but was soon over. In late July the British government decided to evacuate its personnel from Arkhangel'sk.[235] The region's Russian government, by this point a de facto military dictatorship, desperately urged that some Allied soldiers remain.[236] This wish was not granted. The French and American diplomatic missions left in mid-September.[237] Allied and Russian forces won a significant victory on 10 August;[238] it only prolonged the coming collapse. The looming departure of all Allied troops damaged soldier morale and fighting ability. A series of military mutinies occurred in July, and increasingly bad news and rumours from the Siberian fronts (see chapter 7) foreshadowed the future defeat of the northern Russian Whites.[239] Despite continued urging on the part of Russian officials to maintain Allied personnel in the region, the military evacuation continued. The British destroyed a vast amount of military supplies and equipment. They judged that with the departure of their forces, the Russian Whites would not hold out for long against the Red Army. By late September the Allied evacuation

[231]Cole to SecState, 18 Aug 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 3.
[232]Cole to AmConsul Murmank, 8 Sep 1919, in Russian Embassy papers, Telegrams Sent, box 3.
[233]Felix Cole to R. H. Hoare, 9 Aug 1919, in NA, FO 175, vol. 26.
[234]These were Areson and Coyle. Pierce to SecState, 15 Sep 1919, in NACP, RG 84, CP, Murmansk, vol. 3.
[235]Strakhovsky, *Intervention at Archangel*, 211–12.
[236]Ibid., 214–15.
[237]Ibid., 226.
[238]Ibid., 213, 218.
[239]Ibid., 206–7, 209–10.

was complete.[240] Anti-Bolshevik forces managed to hold out until early in the New Year. In February, the military command, members of the government, many officers, and some civilians who feared reprisals from the Soviets sailed from Arkhangel'sk and out of the reach of the fast approaching Bolsheviks. Before the month was out, northern Russia was in Bolshevik hands.[241]

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The Americans who arrived in northern Russia during the intervention period to do relief work had a different task ahead of them than their colleagues who worked elsewhere in the country at the same time. Some had been sent to the region aiming to assist civilians, but the reality of the Allied military venture scuttled these plans. There was no question it would, given the close relationship between the Red Cross, the YMCA, and the American military. The intense patriotism and fierce loyalty of civilian staff during the First World War made any other course impossible. With resources—men (and women), equipment, supplies, and finances—stretched thin, their efforts focused on soldiers. They served American troops first and foremost, but the integrated command and paucity of other support services meant relief workers came into contact with soldiers of all the different nationalities that made up the Allied force.

Yet some civilian relief work was undertaken. Williams and his team had been sent to do only that, and though they immediately turned their attention to military aid, civilian relief remained an important part of what the Red Cross men did. Appropriately distributed American charity, according to these men, would help foster good American–Russian

[240]Ibid., 228–29.
[241]Ibid., 252–57.

relations now and in the future. Helping out civilians was also important to the success of the intervention. The Allied military and civilian officials in Arkhangel'sk recognized this when they created the supply committee and set about ensuring northern residents received enough food to feed themselves through the harsh, long winter. Unfortunately, this scheme, like others, was only partially successful. And the YMCA was never able to set up the civilian programs Craig recommended early on in the intervention period. The Red Cross's school lunch program thrived for a time, but only until the end of the academic year. American YMCA secretaries and Red Cross men hoped to do more, but were constrained in their efforts by a lack of support from their respective headquarters and difficult working conditions in northern Russia. Whatever commitment to civilian relief existed was mostly cancelled out by external and internal complications. It was a failing of the intervention itself, exposing the half-hearted and inconsistent Allied commitment to defeating the Bolsheviks.

As the Red Cross commission wound down its work, what kept Lively almost desperate to continue his work was more than the sum total of instrumental interests, including American–Russian relations and the success of the Allied campaign in the North. It is clear from the ferventness of Lively's arguments to his superiors that these were not the only things on his mind. He hinted that the end of Red Cross work in Russia would benefit "the cunning exploiters of this vast commonwealth," that is, the current Bolshevik leadership. Those "exploiters" succeeded in taking hold of northern Russia before long. They had to wait a while longer before they expanded their realm throughout Siberia and the Russian Far East.

CHAPTER 6

"The men who today are destroying Bolshevism"[1]
Aiding Kolchak in Siberia, Fall 1918–Spring 1919

> We repeat our appeal:-
>
> Send the men and the funds. Gamble on Russia.[2]
>
> . . . that droning reservoir of misery and aspiration which men call Russia.[3]
>
> This is such a wonderful country if it could only be straightened out and the poor classes given a chance, they never will settle it themselves and the other countries just have to do it, at least that is the way it looks to me. The Red Cross is doing a wonderful work and I am surely mighty glad to have the privilege of being associated with it.[4]

In the fall of 1918 civil war raged in the former Russian Empire. Trainloads of refugees travelled along the congested railroads and set up temporary residence in train stations and other public buildings. Typhus, cholera, and other deadly diseases added their terrible toll to the list of terrors civilians and soldiers, Russians and foreigners could not avoid. Although it was primarily fought between Russians, the civil war was very much an international affair. The Czechoslovak corps was battling Bolshevik troops in Siberia; Allied forces had landed in Vladivostok and were beginning to spread along the railway into the interior; and hundreds of thousands of "enemy" (primarily Austro-Hungarian) prisoners of war were in limbo, awaiting repatriation.

The American Red Cross and YMCA were in Siberia already. They were little involved in the humanitarian disaster—their personnel and supplies were too few to make much of a difference. Their work focused on the Czechoslovaks, and, to the extent necessary,

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[1]Simmons, "General Report and Summary," 18 Apr 1919, in his "Report of the Special Mission," 42.
[2]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.
[3]Louis D. Kornfield, "The Wild Children of the Urals," *Red Cross Magazine* 14, no. 6 (Jun 1919): 3.
[4]Carrie Pickett to "folks," 23 Jun 1919, in HIA, Carrie Pickett papers, box 1, C.

the newly-arrived American force. The American commitment to providing support services to the Czechoslovaks—a group of men they thought needed and deserved their help—paved the way for more general support for anti-Bolshevik Russians. Some assistance had already been provided to Russian hospitals before the weather turned cold, but it was not until Kolchak was installed as "All-Russian" dictator that the Red Cross found itself informally allied with a White Russian government. Over the winter, spring, and into the summer, relief trains travelled regularly from Vladivostok to distribute supplies and personnel all over Siberia. A special typhus train went out in February; its focus was civilians and soldiers in western Siberia. The Red Cross organized, staffed, supplied, and maintained hospitals for soldiers in the main Siberian centres; specialized hospitals for fighting typhus and other diseases; dental clinics and sanitary stations; sanitary trains and the anti-typhus train; and medical facilities for noncombatants. Its medical presence extended from Vladivostok to Lake Turgoiak, a distance of more than four thousand miles.

In addition to work primarily for the armed forces—Czechoslovak, Russian, and American—the organization undertook relief work for refugees, and offered programs and services to civilians. Requests for assistance were investigated and, if deemed worthy, acted upon. "Wherever an American Red Cross train goes or an American flag flies," one contemporary publication noted, "both military and civilian populations ask for relief, knowing that Americans have come to Siberia to assist the Russians with relief supplies free of cost." Many different kinds of assistance were offered.[5]

The YMCA was less popular in Russia. Its raison d'être was not well understood, nor

[5]*Second Semi-Annual Report of the Siberian Commission American Red Cross January 1–June 30 1919* (Yokohama: The Box of Curios P & P, n.d., ca. 1919), 15.

was it actively involved in "emergency relief" as was the American Red Cross. Still, by the end of September, "Association activities alone have assumed such proportions that you would think they were wholesale importers, shipping merchants, government officials and Red Cross combined," noted one secretary.[6] The YMCA was subject to bad press and insidious rumours throughout its time in Siberia. It had a much harder time than did the Red Cross convincing Siberia's top leaders—and public opinion—that it could do good work for Russian soldiers. Many military commanders and Kolchak himself supported the association, but ultimately political troubles and military exigencies kept secretaries from doing as much as they might have. Still, beginning in the winter, YMCA men provided many services to members of the Russian armed forces, including at the front. The association embraced work for Russian soldiers as it had programming for the imperial Russian army during 1917–18.

This chapter covers the activities of the American Red Cross Siberian Commission and of American YMCA representatives in Siberia, Manchuria, and the Russian Far East from the fall of 1918 through the following spring. It focuses on the relationship between these organizations and the anti-Bolshevik Kolchak regime during a period of military success and optimism about the White ability to defeat Soviet power. Both the Red Cross and the YMCA dedicated themselves to Kolchak's cause. They made no attempt to seek out ways of reentering Soviet Russia to undertake work there. Like Americans generally, relief and social welfare workers believed Kolchak would soon enough rule over the entirety of Russia, once his armies defeated the Red Army on the battlefield with a little help from their foreign friends.

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[6]Diary, entry for 29 Sep 1918, in Duncan papers, box 1.

The political situation in Siberia after the Czechoslovaks helped wrest power from the Bolsheviks was complex. There were a few different governments in the region, some claiming "All-Russian" authority and others only interested in sovereignty over a smaller area. The Allied protectorate over Vladivostok did not extend very far past the city centre. In order to move troops—or, in the case of the relief organizations, supplies and personnel—to other parts of White Russia, the cooperation of a variety of authorities was needed. The permissions given the Red Cross and the YMCA by Kerensky's Provisional Government and Vladivostok's civil authorities only went so far, and sometimes not at all. Political chaos reigned in July and August in eastern Siberia and Manchuria, where there were rival claims to power. The YMCA and Red Cross both experienced frustrations and delays in getting the railway cars they needed and the permissions they required to travel westward. Only on 28 August, after weeks of lobbying, did the Red Cross receive permission to use a Russian Red Cross train, and only thanks to General Dmitrii Leonidovich Khorvat, the governor of the Chinese Eastern Railway and a close ally of the western interveners.[7]

By the time American relief workers first went west from Vladivostok in September 1918 representatives from the two main competing governments—one based in Samara and one in Omsk—were meeting in Ufa to try to create a united anti-Bolshevik government. While these discussions were ongoing, one of the leaders of the Omsk-based Provisional Siberian Government, Vologodskii, travelled to Harbin. He knew the Allies could potentially make or break any aspiring government. Vologodskii secured the loyalty of the provincial zemstvo, Khorvat, and another key political figure in the region, Petr Iakovlevich Derber. He also met with British High Commissioner Sir Charles Eliot, the head of Japan's diplomatic

[7]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

mission to Siberia, and other Allied representatives in Harbin and Vladivostok. From them he received promises of financial and military aid. The British were keen to see a unified anti-Bolshevik government in Siberia they could lend their support to. Importantly, to their mind, Vologodskii had the support of the Siberian Army. This anti-Bolshevik army organized by military men at Omsk already included forty thousand soldiers by late July. On 4 November Vologodskii was made head of the Provisional All-Russian Government.[8] His tenure was short-lived.

The man who would soon succeed him, Kolchak, arrived into the confused Siberian political scene in September, just as the meetings at Ufa were getting underway. The head of the British Military Mission, Major General Sir Alfred Knox, was pushing for a military government, British influence over Allied policy, and future economic and political rewards for his country. Knox cleared the way for Kolchak's arrival.[9] The newcomer was made war minister in Vologodskii's cabinet in October; thereafter, rumours of an impending coup swirled around Omsk. On the night of 17–18 November, one was indeed carried out. Kolchak emerged in charge. British representatives were pleased, and the new dictator appeared to Allied representatives to be democratically-minded.[10] The State Department's representative in Siberia, Consul General Ernest Lloyd Harris, was also happy with the turn of events, but for different reasons: Kolchak promised to uphold the financial commitments agreed to by previous non-Bolshevik governments. Harris soon recommended that

[8]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 31, 32, 37–39; Semion Lyandres and Dietmar Wulff, introduction to *A Chronicle of the Civil War in Siberia and Exile in China: the Diary of Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii, 1918–1925* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 30–33.

[9]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 75–76.

[10]Ibid., 108.

Washington support and perhaps grant official recognition to the new regime.[11]

Meanwhile, the Red Cross was already involved in the battles of the Russian civil war in an indirect way. By October the organization was running medical posts for Czechoslovak forces, working for American soldiers, and providing occasional support to Russian military and civilian groups on a case-by-case basis. Most of its efforts were in eastern Siberia. As the Czechoslovaks were leading campaigns much further to the west, the organization's leaders in Vladivostok wished to establish medical work closer to the fighting lines. Discussions between Red Cross personnel, the Czechoslovak National Council in Ekaterinburg, and Russian military authorities resulted in a decision to set up hospitals in Tumen' and Omsk. Dr. Teusler and a contingent of other Siberian commission staffers went to have a first-hand look at conditions and see what they should do in the region. (See chapter 3.) In mid-November their train stopped in Omsk, and then it was on to Tumen', Ekaterinburg, and Cheliabinsk.

Teusler arrived in Omsk just prior to the coup. The American met with members of Vologodskii's cabinet, including Kolchak, but refused to formally provide aid through the government. Teusler was privy to rumours, and knew change was coming. In addition, he did not wish by his actions to imply American recognition of the waning government. But he did want to help. Kolchak asked for Red Cross assistance in getting clothing for soldiers. They were, Teusler knew, "in great distress on account of the severe cold," and "very inadequately equipped to perform their duties." Teusler duly cabled Washington asking for permission to

[11]Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 179.

give out the needed items.[12] For him, providing clothing was a medical service, and did not break the Red Cross's neutrality provisions. Such thinking later earned Teusler and his organization the wrath of the American military commander, Graves. He became furious with Teusler and the Siberian commission for, in his mind, inappropriately supporting Kolchak's regime.[13] Looking ahead to the departure of the Czechoslovaks from the front, the Red Cross knew its next big challenge was to extend relief to Russian soldiers. Within weeks Teusler was "firmly convinced" his organization should help them "as long as we can clearly avoid the appearance of giving formal American assistance to the" government.[14]

At Ekaterinburg, a large garrison town near the front lines, Teusler proceeded to show Kolchak the Red Cross fully intended to aid his armies. In part to combat typhus, he had sanitation buildings, bath houses, and other facilities set up for soldiers and civilians; a dental clinic was established for Czechoslovak and Russian soldiers; and four hospitals received drugs, supplies, and equipment. Just as in Omsk, conditions were terrible, supplies low or non-existent, and the demand great. Many hospitals in western Siberia were "literally without drugs and hospital supplies, and, although we have done our best to get these things to them, the demand is so great that it is impossible to anywhere nearly meet their need with the crippled condition of the railroads."[15] Transportation troubles were a constant source of irritation, frustration, and despair for the American Red Cross (and the YMCA).

Many hospitals and smaller medical centres were established, equipped, supplied, staffed, or otherwise supported by the Red Cross from the early winter of 1918. Medical

[12]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[13]William S. Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure 1918–1920* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 85–86, 205–6, 316, 330–31. See also Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 71.
[14]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[15]Ibid.

facilities in Vladivostok, Harbin, Nikolsk, Petropavlovsk, Buchedu, Tumen', and Ekaterinburg were set up or assisted by the organization. Some were military facilities that served primarily Czechoslovaks and Russians; several targeted typhus patients, either soldiers, civilians, or both. One (in Vladivostok) was a dedicated refugee hospital, and Buchedu was home to an anti-tubercular hospital for a short while. The opening of an Omsk hospital was delayed by two months by the refusal of Cossack squatters to obey government orders to vacate the premises. The promised four hundred-bed hospital opened at the start of the New Year; it was enlarged to more than one thousand beds in the spring. Early spring saw the opening of a large hospital in Novo Nikolaevsk. In April the Red Cross took over the university clinic at Tomsk. It was run as a military and civilian hospital, and existing staff were kept on. Later that spring, a large military hospital was opened at Cheliabinsk to serve the needs of Kolchak's Western Army, which was then based at Ufa. Irkutsk, hundreds of miles to the east, got its own facility in early summer. Invalid, departing Czechoslovaks were treated at Teusler's hospital in Japan (St. Luke's), and soldiers in Siberia could visit the dental cars that travelled the railway.[16] Thousands of sick or wounded Czechoslovak and Russian soldiers thus benefitted from American aid. Only soldiers with self-inflicted wounds were not welcome at Red Cross hospitals.[17]

The YMCA did not make the transition to supporting White Russians as easily as did the Red Cross. The nature of association work got it into more trouble with conservative Russians wary of American progressives. Red Cross assistance—equipment, drugs, hospital

[16]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, in Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 18–21; *Second Semi-Annual Report*, 11–15; on the Omsk delay, see Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 300.

[17]"There were so many of these self-inflicted wound cases that we refused to let them occupy beds in the American Red Cross hospitals." Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 301.

supplies, personnel, and salaries—engendered relatively few political difficulties.[18] What the YMCA wished to do proved less easy for some Russian authorities to accept. The association's ultimate goal of expanding its work all across the country meant secretaries were more proactive than members of the Siberian commission when it came to advocating what they could do in western Siberia. Phelps met with Russian leaders in Omsk in October. The president of the (pre-Kolchak) "all-Russian" government, Avksent'ev, was interested in the YMCA. He wanted the association to extend its work in the army and among civilians. No doubt aware of the careful political balancing act someone in his position would need to master to remain at the helm, he stopped short of promising government support. Avksent'ev sent Phelps to see the commander in chief, General Boldyrev. Though he was politically moderate, the American found that the general was an "austere officer" with "all the ear-marks of a gentleman of the old school." Boldyrev made it clear to Phelps that he only wanted "clothing and material relief for the soldiers." Americans themselves were not welcome.

> He made it very plain that he did not wish any outside organization working in the new Russian Army. He pounded his desk and exclaimed – "We do not want American democracy in this army. Our recruits shall have nothing but discipline from morning until night." This conversation made it plain to me [Phelps] that there were divided councils in the Government and that we would probably have to face the influence of a powerful and, to my mind, dominant reactionary group at the head of the army.

Phelps responded that the association would not expand its work unless the Omsk authorities approved.[19]

Later that same late-October day Phelps "was given an intimation that a change in the Government was imminent." He heard that Kolchak, "a strong leader of Democratic

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[18]There is evidence that Red Cross and other American personnel were not welcome in Siberia. See Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 74.

[19]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2]; Smele, *Civil War in Russia*, 107.

tendencies," would replace Boldyrev. Perhaps all was not lost. Phelps chose to wait and see what happened before once again taking up the matter of YMCA work for the armed forces. Less than a month later, Kolchak was in charge of a new government. After hearing about the Omsk coup, Phelps sent the "strong, experienced" secretary Edward Heald to Omsk to represent association interests in western Siberia. Heald, who had been in Russia with the YMCA since before the October revolution, arrived in the Siberian capital to take up his new position in early December.[20] By then, the clubs set up at Cheliabink and Ekaterinburg for Czechoslovaks were also serving a large number of Russian soldiers. On 8 December, Kolchak's foreign ministry asked the association to extend its Czechoslovak work to members of the Russian army in a more direct way.[21]

To meet the demands put upon it by Czechoslovak, Russian, and Allied forces, the number of Red Cross personnel increased rapidly in the last months of 1918. The original contingent had been made up almost entirely of American missionary doctors or ministers from China and Japan.[22] By the end of December there were about one hundred Red Cross workers, including office assistants, male and female doctors, nurses and nurses' aides, and about one hundred fifty other employees (cooks, waiters, watchmen, warehousemen, janitors, etc.).[23] The commission's activity and personnel only continued to expand through the first half of 1919, particularly from April. Most of the recruits came from American communities and missionary hospitals in the Far East, the Philippines, and Hawaii. Here was a chance to participate in some small way in national service and have a bit of adventure. For young

[20]Phelps, "Annual Report of G. S. Phelps for Year Ending August 31, 1919," Part II, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

[21]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

[22]Charles A. Steward to Eliot Wadsworth, 8 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 978.08 General Reports.

[23]*First Semi-Annual Report*, 29.

America women, signing up for the mission meant an amount of freedom from their familial obligations back home. Men ineligible for the draft or who had not been called to the colours could still put on a military-like uniform in Red Cross service. The chance to patriotically take part in their home country's war effort, hitherto remote, or experience revolutionary Russia first hand, appealed to several hundred Americans during the course of the mission's tenure in Siberia.[24]

As was true of the Red Cross leadership in Vladivostok, YMCA secretaries were supportive of expanding their work to Russian troops. This was true even though the men on Kolchak's western front were all severely overworked: Between twelve and fifteen secretaries were doing the work of at least seventy-five men, Heald believed, and some of them were "beginning to show the strain." The Russian armies, "composed of raw peasant boys," were making "tremendous demands" on the association. Heald reported that the Russian armed forces, "already several times larger than the Czech Army," were "as yet incompletely equipped and greatly need[ed YMCA] services."[25] (In November, the total number of combatants and noncombatants in Kolchak's armies numbered one hundred sixty thousand men.[26]) By the end of the year there were twenty-five American secretaries in ten different towns west of Chita, a city near the Russian–Manchurian border. Most were

[24]Personal letters, including the ones written by a young Canadian nurse who signed up for Red Cross work after graduating from the Johns Hopkins nursing school, portray an interest in embarking upon new challenges across the ocean. See Mona Wilson's papers, in the Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island, especially Series 1, file 9. For more on Wilson, see Douglas O. Baldwin, *She Answered Every Call: The Life of Public Health Nurse, Mona Gordon Wilson (1894–1981)* (Charlottetown, PE: Indigo, 1997). Her time in Siberia is the focus of Baldwin's article: "The American Red Cross in Vladivostok: The Adventures of Nurse Mona Wilson" *Sibirica* 1 (1994–95). See also Florence Emilie Hoffman, "An American Nurse in the Russian Civil War," *Russian Life* (Nov–Dec 2002): 51. For a general discussion of the appeal of military nursing, see Jennifer Casavant Telford, "American Red Cross Nursing during World War I: Opportunities and Obstacles," (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2007), ch. 4.

[25]Heald, 27 Dec 1918, quoted in "Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia— General—Reports 1920 [2].

[26]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 146. See also Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 225–29.

actively serving Czechoslovak and Russian soldiers. They ran canteens that sold "tobacco, cigarettes, tea, biscuits, chocolate, candy, toilet supplies, coffee and thread to soldiers, [with prices] twenty times lower than [they were at] local dealers. In cases of extreme need they also furnish[ed] sweaters[,] boots and gloves." The American consul general at Omsk, Harris, believed that their role and numbers "should be greatly increased especially for service in [the] new Russian army now [being] recruit[ed] and among returning Russian war prisoners." He told the State Department that the activities of the YMCA and the efforts of its representatives were "greatly appreciated in Russia among those whose opinions give expression to views of the people generally"—i. e., Kolchak and other anti-Bolshevik leaders.[27]

During the fall and winter of 1918–19 individual Russian military commanders sought the assistance of the YMCA for the troops under their command. That they would do so is not surprising given the visibility of the work for the Czechoslovaks in front regions and the lax control Kolchak or his chief of staff, Major General Dmitri Antonovich Lebedev, had on the various army chiefs.[28] Kolchak and members of his general staff lacked the authority they would have liked over supposedly subordinate officials and commanders. Less senior officers asked YMCA secretaries to provide services to their troops. These officers included Gajda, in command of the Siberian Army, who wanted the association to extend its work to all his units; the heads of the Third Ural Corps, the Second Ufa Corps, and the Sixth Ufa Corps; Ekaterinburg garrison commander Major General Golitzine and members of his staff;

[27]See Harris cable, 30 Dec 1918, sent from Reinsch to SecState, 2 Jan 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19. The towns were "Irkutsk, Novonikolaevsk, Omsk, Cheliabinsk, Ekaterinberg, Ufa, Petropavlovsk, Miass, Tumen, and Ishin."

[28]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia,* 110, claimed the Siberia army chiefs had their own "fiefdoms."

General Sergei Nikolaevich Rozanov, then chief of staff in the Vologodskii administration; and officers in charge of Russian regiments near Vladivostok, who "constantly expressed similar desires." General Aleksandr Dutov, in command of the Orenburg Cossacks (who formed part of the Southern Army), asked the YMCA to serve Cossacks at the front and in the rear, including one hundred thousand men on the Orenburg and Ural fronts and another twenty-five thousand on the Semipalatinsk front. Dutov offered "all possible transportation facilities by railroad, automobile, camels, [and] horses."[29]

Not all requests were filled, but over the winter and spring, the YMCA extended services and provided inexpensive or complimentary goods and supplies to members of the Russian armed forces. The association's reach extended from Perm and Ekaterinburg to Vladivostok. Yet it faced many challenges that had little to do with practical difficulties. Politics was at the centre of the troubles. "As an indication of the balance of the forces for us and those against us in the Kolchak Government," Phelps noted, "it is interesting to observe that the Field Commanders, who had the responsibility for the morale of the troops, were heartily for us, while those connected with the political coterie at Omsk were almost invariably against us." Relations with Kolchak, his ministers, and some of his army commanders were problematic, to say the least. Phelps believed Kolchak's "natural attitude was one of sympathy and desire for co-operation from an American institution such as our own, but he was necessarily largely governed by the advice of his councillors. Among these

[29]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2]. The Cossack quote comes from Heald, 10 Jan 1919, which was quoted by Phelps. Phelps spells Golitzen, Smele spells Golytsin, is it usually Golitsyn (but the family itself spelled it, in English, Golitzine); Phelps wrote Romanoff when he must have meant Rozanov.

[the YMCA] had both friends and enemies."[30]

The Cheliabinsk affair highlights these difficulties, and particularly the opposition of the Russian general staff to the association. According to Heald, the top military brass remained mum when the YMCA first started serving Russian troops. The work "met with the warmest reception from the officers and soldiers on the front." It was only once it became "conspicuous," with "large clubs for the soldiers at Cheliabinsk and Ekaterinburg, [that] it became a target for the reactionary group." The first sign of trouble was the ordered closing of the club in Cheliabinsk at the end of December. The apparent reason was the "lack of official papers from the Kolchak Government." The Americans tried to get the closure decision reversed, pointing to the foreign ministry's request earlier in the month and documents issued by previous Russian governments. The commandant at Cheliabinsk remained unimpressed, and there was no immediate recourse for the association men. Kolchak, whom they believed strongly backed their work, was seriously ill and refused to see YMCA visitors. (Kolchak was suffering from influenza complicated by pneumonia, and was out of the public eye for many weeks.[31]) The negotiations thus "had to take their slow course through departments." The Russian general staff considered the association's work "temporarily inexpedient for the front region, owing to the advance." The only assistance it requested was clothing relief. And so the club remained closed.[32]

Yet, after the final order to close the club was issued, Kolchak was apparently disappointed the association had not extended its work to Russian soldiers in any systematic way. He asked Colonel John Ward, in command of a regiment of British troops stationed at

[30]Ibid.
[31]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 131.
[32]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

Omsk, to investigate why the YMCA had not done more for Russian soldiers. It was widely reported that the Cheliabinsk club was shut due to "mutinous and disobedient acts" of soldiers "provoked by [the YMCA's] Russian assistants who were suspected of Bolshevik propaganda." Such rumours did the association no favours in Omsk, the political and military centre of the anti-Bolshevik struggle. Upon realizing that key Russian and Allied military and civilian officials considered the report convincing and important, Heald and Kenneth Miller investigated the situation. The result of their efforts came in the form of a personal assurance from one of the Russians' top commanders. General V. M. Khanzhin, who headed up the Western Army, told them "he did not connect [the] organization in any with the disturbances which had happened to take place in the regiment in which we had our club, and he gave us a paper to that effect stating that the only reason for closing the club was the lack of papers from the Kolchak Government." He said he welcomed the association's work.[33]

Kolchak himself was very favourably disposed toward the YMCA, Heald and Phelps believed. Senior army commanders were on board by the start of 1919, too. It was not enough. The government and military leaders were split between progressives (Kolchak, Foreign Minister I. I. Sukin, the minister of war, and most of the other ministers) and reactionary monarchists in charge of the military and general staff. This was how Heald saw the situation, in any case.[34] The situation was enduringly fluid and complicated, but certainly there were significant fissures between and among military and political leaders. Kolchak himself was "generally conservative" and suspicious of democracy, according to historian

[33]Ibid. Heald heard about Kolchak's disappointment on the same day as word of the final closing of the Cheliabinsk work came.

[34]Ibid.

Norman Pereira.[35] Heald believed that the reactionaries opposed outside influence, including that of the Red Cross and YMCA. They were only interested in securing rifles, ammunition, and clothing from foreigners. The divisions were "reflected in the torturous course" that negotiations between the YMCA and the government took during the first weeks of 1919. Combined with a shortage of workers and severe lack of supplies—none arrived from Vladivostok during December and January—secretary morale was waning. These were "discouraging days" for the YMCA men in western Siberia, much as they had been a year earlier in another part of Russia.[36]

Still, progress was made. The chief of staff, Lebedev, soon removed his objections to the association; in fact, he now wanted to see many more American secretaries working in Siberia to assist Russian soldiers.[37] On 24 January, Lebedev and Sukin invited the association to work for the Russian army. There were four conditions: Only American secretaries (but not Jews[38]) were to work among Russian troops; the association was not to work in soldiers' living quarters; there would be no educational programs; and the YMCA must have all its activities approved by the military. Phelps wired his acceptance to these terms on 30 January.[39] His only reservation was that in order to maintain its canteen service, the YMCA had to have free transportation for its goods and any customs duties waived, privileges

[35]Pereira, *White Siberia*, 108–9. Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, is the fullest source on Kolchak and his ill-fated regime.

[36]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19. Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, is the fullest source on the Kolchak regime.

[37]Harris to Phelps, 27 Jan 1919, in HIA, Ernest Lloyd Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok—Jan–Mar 1919.

[38]Jews were widely associated with Bolshevism and anti-Semitism was rife in Siberia as elsewhere. The Siberian Commission did not employ Jews, even American ones, and its leaders shared the belief that "the Jews cannot be trusted." See Michael Beizer, "Restoring Courage to Jewish Hearts: Frank Rosenblatt's Mission in Siberia in 1919," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39, no. 1 (Apr 2009): 43.

[39]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

granted the association by the Kerensky regime.[40]

Another problem for the YMCA that had nothing to do with its own work or policies was the Prinkipo proposal. It emanated from the Peace Conference at Paris, and offered to mediate a peace settlement between the warring sides in Russia—all of them. There were several aspects of the proposal that raised the ire of the Omsk elite. Kolchak, who considered himself the leader of all the Whites—and, indeed, of all Russians—was not given advance warning or special standing. Worse, though, was that the invitation was extended to the Bolsheviks. The proposal reached Omsk in late January, straining Russian–Allied relations, and further hampering the YMCA cause. When the news spread, there was "quite a revulsion of feeling against the Allies in the upper society and semi official circles," according to Heald.[41] (Americans were shocked by the proposal, too.[42]) Later that month, US Secretary of State Lansing ordered William C. Bullitt to proceed to Moscow on a secret diplomatic mission. The Allied leaders courted Kolchak and other White leaders but had not yet given up completely on the possibility of resuming "more normal relations with Soviet Russia."[43]

The apparent change of heart toward the YMCA came at a difficult time for Omsk. Kolchak's armies took Perm on 25 December, but then lost Ufa a week later. Before January was done, they were being pushed back the entire length of the front by much stronger Bolshevik forces. At the same time, Cossack troops lost Orenburg and Uralsk, the two largest cities in their district. It may be that Russian leaders calculated that showing willingness to

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[40]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[41]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.
[42]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log, 1919," 61.
[43]P. H. Kerr to Bullitt, 21 Feb 1919, quoted in *The Bullitt Mission to Russia: Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate of William C. Bullitt* (New York: Huebsch, 1919), 36. For more on the Russian question at the Peace Conference, see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), ch. 6, and John M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).

accept YMCA work—without actually technically doing so—could improve their standing with the American government and lead to greater Allied military aid. The losses lowered morale among the Russians, as well as among the Czechoslovak and French troops in western Siberia. Heald found the atmosphere charged with Bolshevik propaganda. The military situation raised tensions in Omsk, a city that did not need an excuse for political strife.[44]

The association did not despair for long. On 1 February Sukin sat down with Heald. Sukin, then not yet thirty years old, had been a junior functionary in the Russian embassy in Washington when he first met Kolchak in 1917. He was apparently well-known in the American capital.[45] During his meeting with Heald, Sukin formally requested that the association send more American secretaries to Siberia. He wanted them to make an "effective demonstration to the Russian Soldiers and people everywhere of the play spirit, gaiety, cheerfulness, and healthiness that characterize American Democracy at its highest and best." He stressed the importance of all the work being done by American secretaries: "We do not want to lose the best thing the Americans can give us, namely their spirit, by delegating it to others." As for the limited or nonexistent Russian language skills any new secretaries would likely have—there was no time for serious study and practice—Sukin brushed aside any worries. "It is not necessary for Secretaries to know the language," he argued. "Send them with their personalities and let them mix with the people with their games and sports and other activities and they will be understood. We will co-operate in every way possible." Sukin's note pointed out, correctly, that such an undertaking required more secretaries than

[44]Heald to Colton, 2 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.
[45]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 133; Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 33.

were currently in the region, or reportedly on their way. This would be no small undertaking. Kolchak, the general staff, and other members of the government signed off on the request.[46] In mid-February an American secretary was appointed YMCA representative on Kolchak's staff.[47]

Phelps was not present for the negotiations. From his base in Vladivostok, he was not convinced the proposal reflected a genuine change in attitude on the part of some members of the Kolchak government. And indeed, a few days after receiving the appeal, he "learned through the courtesy of the Secret Service that Minister Sukin was really knifing Mr. Heald and our other secretaries behind their backs." Heald verified the information. The association's response was to agree to all requests for service as long as each secretary's status was "definitely determined and officially recognized." This was easier said than done. "Negotiations for such status were fruitless, and the hand of our enemies at Omsk soon became apparent in the refusal to follow up the flamboyant declaration" of 1 February, association officials discovered. Over the coming weeks and months, the promised cooperation never materialized, and secretaries "were hampered at every turn."[48] Phelps believed Kolchak was using the YMCA to play politics. After all, treating with the American agency might win him points with the US government, whose support he sorely wanted. Allied military aid was crucial if Kolchak's armies were to be appropriately equipped.[49]

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[46]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2]. A year later, when contemplating sending men to Soviet Russia, W. W. Banton from the Russian Division at YMCA headquarters in New York argued for the importance or secretaries having some facility in the Russian language and understanding of local customs before beginning work. Banton to Colton, 1 Mar 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–Mar 1920.

[47]Heald to Colton, 4 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

[48]Phelps, "Annual Report of G. S. Phelps for Year Ending August 31, 1919," Part II, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

[49]For details about British, French, and planned US military aid in early 1919, see Smele, *Civil War in*

There was soon more news: Sukin had no confidence in the Omsk secretaries and was repeating charges made against the association that had earlier been disproved. Phelps warned Heald of the "real situation." By mid-March he had ordered his men to stop their work until they received the promised government approvals and written permits from the general staff.[50] Sukin later confessed the ruse to Phelps, claiming that his genuine support of the association had been "thwarted by antagonistic influences and the opposition of certain bodies that had selfish interests at stake. [Sukin] hotly declared [to Phelps] that he was amazed that an organization of our standing and experience should have been so unwise as to undertake the canteen service." These YMCA shops, established with the best of intentions, raised the ire of local merchants and soldiers alike for undercutting competing retailers and charging, customers believed, too much.[51]

Despite all these challenges, YMCA secretaries worked among Russian, Czechoslovak, and American soldiers at the front and in the rear. In the first six months of 1919, seventeen men worked with American units in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Harbin, and Verkhne-Udinsk; fifteen were attached to Czechoslovak units; six were tied to the Russian army on the Ural front; and ten worked other Allied troops or out of the International Hut in Vladivostok, a large building which hosted soldiers from many different nationalities under its roof. Other secretaries did city or rural work, assisted railway workers, or performed other duties including lecturing, operating the cinema service, or working in administrative functions. All told, there were just over one hundred secretaries in Siberia, from Vladivostok

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Siberia, 209n79.

[50]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[51]Phelps, "Annual Report of G. S. Phelps for Year Ending August 31, 1919," Part II, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

to the westernmost White-held cities of Ufa and Ekaterinburg. In addition there were about two hundred Russian, Czechoslovak, and other foreign employees on staff. Members of the American force could visit ten dedicated huts as well at the International Hut. There was also a special club car for the 27th Infantry. Work for members of the AEF was performed at nineteen separate posts, and consisted primarily of "wholesome entertainments" and social events, cinema service, newspaper and magazine distribution, lectures, military sports, Bible classes, and religious addresses. Work for the much larger Czechoslovak force was more substantial: Fifteen clubs and eighteen canteen cars operated along a stretch of railway eighteen hundred miles long.[52] Soldiers representing eleven different countries were served; the International Hut and other association buildings drew visitors from twenty-eight nationalities.[53]

After Czechoslovak troops moved to the rear to guard the railway, YMCA secretaries on the front lines were left primarily dealing with members of the Russian armed forces. There were only seven American secretaries doing so, and they, with the assistance of many locally-hired workers, ran a dozen clubs. The club in Ekaterinburg hosted thousands of Russian soldiers each night, as well as local workers one or two nights a week. Some Americans experienced dangerous situations. One man at the Ufa front, for example, ran a tea service and distributed supplies to soldiers. He lost his baggage when the Bolsheviks took the town, but remained "with the Russian front troops during all the succeeding fighting and up to the recapture of Ufa." A group of about five hundred Orenburg cadets who escaped just prior to the Bolshevik capture of that city were given chocolate, biscuits, and cigarettes when

[52]Phelps to Mott, "Report of Work of the American YMCA in Siberia January 1 to June 30, 1919," 15 Jul 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19.

[53]Phelps to Mott, "Annual Letter," 1 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

they passed through Cheliabinsk and later Irkutsk. In each city, "the boys were so enthusiastic that they expressed their happiness in Russian fashion by tossing" the secretary in the air.[54] In these and other clubs, the YMCA organized a variety of entertainments for visitors, including musical recitals, comedic performances, and film screenings. Food and (non-alcoholic) drinks were served, and canteens sold goods at cost. Phelps later recalled that "some of the most appreciative letters which our expedition has received from any source came from these Russian Officers served at that time."[55]

Still, the YMCA was the object of much criticism for its canteen service as well as for a plethora of real and imagined faults. One secretary blamed the start of the association's public perception problems on its close relationship with the American military. Onlookers had reason to suspect army influence: All secretaries not doing strictly civilian work donned American military uniforms.[56] The US military was not well liked in Kolchak's Siberia because of General Graves's refusal to engage his troops in battle. Beyond being tainted by its ties to the doughboys, rumours about the association abounded. Heald summed up the situation in early April:

> No institution is more widely advertized the length and breadth of Siberia than the Y. M. C. A., unless it is the Red Cross. It has been regarded as a commercial organization, a forerunner of the American commercial conquest of Siberia. It has been regarded as a masonic organization - the inverted triangle is cited as the masonic emblem. It is frequently regarded as a pure propaganda institution, and often confused with the American Press Bureau. It has been regarded as a Hebrew organization. It has been branded seriously in the highest circles of society as an institution of the devil, the inverted triangle having the signification with a certain section of Russian society as the sign of the devil, the overturning of God.

Heald was struck by the "wide circulation" the latter idea had, even apparently troubling

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[54]Heald to Colton, 4 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

[55]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[56]Memo from Story to Hibbard and Colton, 16 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919. See also "Report on Notes taken in Conversation with Keeny of Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19 [1].

Kolchak himself. The association was seen to have "hostile designs" against the Orthodox Church and was charged with being pro-Bolshevik. "Rumors have even received credence in the highest circles," Heald noted, "that a car was seen operating in the front handing out guns to the Bolsheviks, and carrying the Association sign, (a very probable trick of the enemy's.)"[57] The YMCA also came in for criticism by association that spring. Americans were once again unpopular in Omsk because of the "two recent failures by War Trade Board and Compub and the increasing successful appearance of Anti-American propaganda here" (see below).[58]

When it came to the YMCA specifically, though, the main point of contention was that it was perceived as a closet commercial concern. Its canteen service was the primary culprit. Critics charged the association with profiteering. On the Russian side, cooperative societies, zemstvos, and local businesses accused the YMCA of taking advantage of free transportation privileges and waived customs fees to undercut its competition. Even the Russian Red Cross was apparently upset that the association was granted privileges denied it.[59] American soldiers levelled similar charges: The YMCA sold goods at higher prices than elsewhere, and its money exchange operation charged higher rates than it should have, some claimed.[60] Czechoslovaks complained about the canteen service, too. It did not help matters that "Russians felt the American Y helped the Czechs more than they did the Russians."[61]

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[57]Heald (Omsk) to Colton, 4 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

[58]Embry to Harris, 20 Apr 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Omsk—1918–19.

[59]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2]; Phelps, "Annual Report of G. S. Phelps for Year Ending August 31, 1919," Part II, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

[60]Marmaduke Clark to "Friend Jones" (i. e., Neason Jones), 26 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok 1918–19. Clark insisted most of the charges were "absolutely unfounded." See also Phelps, Memorandum for Lt. Gage, 10 Mar 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok 1918–19.

[61]Quote from "Report on Notes taken in Conversation with Keeny of Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia,

When the association took steps to combat misperceptions, other, worse ones sprang up. Russian "officers interpreted the new rulings as aimed against them, as intended as an insult, and as revealing the ulterior socialistic and Bolshevik aims of the Association." The result was "widespread unpopularity and suspicion."[62] Some accusations were not completely unwarranted—aiding the Czechoslovak corps *was* prioritized over service to Russian soldiers—but in the main critics misunderstood the challenges faced by the association, and its purpose in Siberia.[63]

Even when they felt them unfair, secretaries took these charges (and others) seriously, for they cut to the quick. Phelps implored one American officer to be more understanding of the situation facing the association and individual secretaries:

> There are fully sixty men and women on the Y.M.C.A. staff in Siberia who are giving their service for bare expenses alone. They receive no salaries and make considerable sacrifices in being here. They are men who are not liable to military service and therefore did not need to come except to satisfy their patriotic desire to be of some service to Uncle Sam's fighting men. Some of these "Y" secretaries are today on the fighting fronts with Russian, Czech, French, Italian and British forces and many have been under fire within the past few months. It is a shame for anyone to question the honor and integrity of these men whose sole purpose in being here is to serve and who would not be a party to any policy of dishonesty on the part of the Association, even though such a policy were possible. These men are the last persons on earth who would consciously cheat or suffer others to cheat any American soldier.[64]

Phelps and others did what they could to dispel false notions.[65]

In December, in response to both criticism and high costs, Phelps asked secretaries to start closing their canteen operations. In some areas, this did not happen for some time. Two

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box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19 [1].

[62]Heald (Omsk) to Colton, 4 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.

[63]But for at least one (former) secretary, association work in Siberia could be an important part of the economic reconstruction and development of that country and northern Asia. See Story, "Siberia," n.d., ca. late 1918/early 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19.

[64]Phelps, Memorandum for Lt. Gage, 10 Mar 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok 1918–19.

[65]"Report on Notes taken in Conversation with Keeny of Siberia," n.d., in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports—1918–19 [1].

months later, in response to a report noting "unfavorable reaction among Czechs because of lack of canteen goods," and taking increasing criticism and transportation costs into consideration, Phelps advised "gradually abolishing" all canteens leaving only tea service in place." And toward the end of March, all canteen service for American and Allied soldiers and civilians was ordered closed once warehouse stocks were depleted, and by 1 May at the latest. There would be only "limited buffets" after that.[66]

The Red Cross was always more popular among Russians than the YMCA. But it was not spared harsh criticism either. It, too, came under fire for aiding and abetting commercial activities, and for being rather more political than it claimed to be. The Siberian commission did not keep itself to strictly medical work, and its definition of what was appropriately "medical" differed from what the American commander, for example, thought. Graves, mostly correctly, pointed out that the commission "was acting as a supply agent for Kolchak." (More unkindly, he judged that Teusler himself "had no sympathy for the aspirations of the Russian people.")[67] Surviving documentation makes clear that the separation between the Red Cross and American military was not always apparent. There were rumours that one of the commission's trains "was part Red Cross and part composed of five cars containing high explosives and ammunition for Czechs." Harris forwarded this information to Teusler, reminding him that his trains "should contain only Red Cross effects." The consul pointed out that if the train did indeed carry "dynamite and ammunition," it was "a flagrant disregard of [the] Geneva Convention." Other reports

[66]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[67]Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure*, 205.

claimed "Czech cars contained merchandise for speculation."[68] Given the severe limitations of and strains on the railways, Red Cross trains did, at least on occasion, contain cars full of non-Red Cross goods or personnel. In the spring an American officer travelled aboard a Red Cross train as a guard. At Harbin, the train picked up eleven American soldiers under arrest for delivery to Verkhne Udinsk. "At Manchuria Station, April 13th, eight cars of military supplies and ammunition were added to the train, over the vigorous protest of [Red Cross representative] Captain Beckley. These cars were switched off at Irkutsk. From Irkutsk to Krasnoyarsk twenty-five cars were added to the train; these were white Meat Cars, contents unknown."[69] General Janin's car was attached for a short time to a Red Cross relief train that distributed "clothing, shoes, flour, tea and sugar" to railway employees east of Omsk.[70] Adhering to rules was simply impossible.

Perhaps because of reports of Teusler's mismanagement of what had become an enormous and unendingly complicated undertaking, Red Cross headquarters sent special commissioners to Siberia. Their task was to look into the situation and report back to the War Council/Central Committee about whether the organization should be in Siberia, and how extensive its work ought to be. The Siberian commission had been hastily cobbled together. There had not been time for Washington to come up with detailed plans, recruit specialists based on Siberian needs, or research what supplies would be most useful. Washington's agents—George W. Simmons, medical advisor Dr. Kendall Emerson, and three others—were in Siberia from 6 February to 19 May for meetings, consultations, and to visit Red Cross

[68]Harris to Teusler, 14 Feb 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok—Jan–Mar 1919. There is no evidence in the telegram that the rumours were accurate.

[69]Lt. Raymond M. Elliott, 31st Inf. to CO AEF Siberia, Report of officer in charge of guard on Red Cross Train No. 11, Vladivostok 14 June 1919, in HIA, Edith M. Faulstich Collection, box 12, Red Cross—ARC Relief Trains.

[70]Claire R. Rice, notes included with diary excerpts, in ibid.

work sites.[71] Simmons and Emerson travelled with Teusler and Riley Allen into the interior, as far west as the Osa front beyond the Urals. Between late February and mid-April, they went "farther west than any Americans ha[d] yet penetrated." At Omsk and Ekaterinburg the men discussed with members of the government, including Kolchak, Sukin, and Gajda, then commander on the north Ural front, what the Red Cross could do to ameliorate conditions.[72] Emerson found Kolchak and his officers to be "capital chaps . . . very much like good fellows anywhere." Though direct communication was impossible because of the language barrier, their "mental looks" corresponded, Emerson reported. [73] He and his companions left a meeting with Kolchak in mid-March "with a very satisfactory feeling that the government was in good strong hands."[74] Kolchak and others "made strong appeals for American Red Cross assistance in supplying underwear and drugs for hospitals and soldiers, stating that the ravages of typhus could not be successfully combatted without the use of quantities of new underwear." The struggling Russian regime also asked the organization to help it purchase medical supplies from the United States.[75] In effect, the government wanted the Red Cross to act as a purchasing agent.

Such a course of action had already been suggested to Simmons. Teusler urged it back in February, upon Simmons's arrival in Vladivostok. The newcomers had vetoed the idea. Red Cross policy was clear: It was not a commercial organization. But after their trip through western Siberia, Simmons realized Teusler had been right, morally and politically, if

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[71]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 26–27.

[72]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 6; quote from Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 42; on meeting with Sukin, see Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 33.

[73]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 75.

[74]Ibid., 34.

[75]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 6. For more details, see Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 35–37.

perhaps not according to organizational rules. He himself was now determined to assist the Russian government.[76] (Before Simmons's arrival the Red Cross had given away large quantities of supplies but had not assisted the Russian government purchase additional goods.[77]) He argued in no uncertain terms that "surely here is a proper field for [the] A.R.C." "Oh, what a crying shame upon the United States that we have not sent them [any] of our unneeded surplus of drugs, instruments and hospital equipment!" he wrote. These "desperately needed supplies" were completely unobtainable. "And these are the men who today are destroying Bolshevism and keeping it from our doors as surely as did the men of Belgium keep the Kaiser from America."[78] Simmons, coming as he did from the Red Scare-era United States, understood the importance—for getting what he wanted out of Washington—of equating the Kolchak regime with the wartime Allies, and the Bolsheviks with the Kaiser's Germany. He also undoubtedly believed his own rhetoric.[79]

Simmons's colleague Dr. Emerson agreed whole-heartedly. In a diary he kept while on his trip through Kolchak's Siberia, he recorded his observations and thoughts. He believed "the essential character of Bolshevism" was "cruel and merciless to a degree unbelievable in nations with the smallest opportunity for culture."[80] Emerson had "an instinctive dislike for the whole breed,"[81] and referred to Bolsheviks as "beasts"[82] and "barbarians" with an

[76]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 35.
[77]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 15–16.
[78]Simmons, "General Report and Summary," 18 Apr 1919, in his "Report of the Special Mission," 42.
[79]A virulently anti-Bolshevik cable of his from Siberia was published in "Urges Support of Kolchak," *New York Times* (22 Apr 1919). The article's subheading is "Major G. W. Simmons Finds Siberians Resolved to Destroy Bolshevism."
[80]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 17.
[81]Ibid., 40.
[82]Ibid., 17.

"incredible thirst for destruction."[83] They were even beyond spiritual redemption: "What mercy can await the arch apostles of mercilessness?"[84] If persuasion failed to change them, only "unlimited force" remained: "They will have to be exterminated and the educating process begun with the young."[85] The only two "good Bolsheviki" he came across "were hanging by the neck, one on either side of the [railway] line," suspended "from opposing telegraph poles."[86] He hoped Washington would get "her mind in order." "Meanwhile, the golden opportunity will slip by, probably chaos will be far more hopeless and, instead of a relatively little task, she will have an enormous and needless one on her hands."[87] Emerson quoted an American consular official, D'Ille, as saying that "America has the greatest chance a nation was ever given for altruistic, constructive work which would be welcomed, and as a matter of fact would pay as this Bolshevik question <u>is</u> America's own business."[88] His frustration only grew during his trip to the front lines, where he and his travel companions, including Teusler and Allen, were shown evidence of Bolshevik atrocities and heard testimony from those affected. The town of Osa, visited three weeks after Kolchak's soldiers took it from the Red Army, made a particular impression. Teusler took photographs of murdered victims and later brought them to Washington; Allen detailed what they saw in an article published later that year. "Why doesn't America believe these things and wake up to her responsibility toward her neighbour?" Emerson wrote in his diary.[89] All American

[83]Ibid., 68. See also p. 69
[84]Ibid., 83.
[85]Ibid., 17.
[86]Ibid., 83.
[87]Ibid., 18.
[88]Ibid., 26.
[89]Ibid., 43–44, see also 45, 55–65. On Teusler's photography, see John A. Embry, "Bolshevist Atrocities in Siberia," *Current History* 10, part 2, no. 3 (Sep 1919): 511. Allen's article is "Osa, the Martyred City," *North American Review* 210 (Jul–Dec 1919): 475–89.

consuls and Ambassador Morris agreed that Bolshevism was a "world menace." The United States was duty-bound to attack it.[90]

Emerson's hatred for Bolshevism (as he understood it) and its adherents is clear. But he distinguished between Bolsheviks and the majority of Russians. Emerson believed that the backbone of "present day Bolshevism" was "German but the brains [were] Hebraic." True Russians, he implied, were neither Huns nor Jews.[91] After speaking with an English engineer and others "in a position to know," Emerson concluded that "the Russian is naturally docile and harmless, and not at all inclined to pick quarrels or go to and fro looking for trouble. It is evident that they have changed from the normal through the causes that have surrounded them, and that the present state of mind in Russia is artificial and one of hysteria. The faith of their friends has not been shaken, and their revival is confidently expected."[92] Upon seeing a lone Russian soldier "striding into [a] driving storm with head unbowed, his blue frost ringed eyes facing the gale with unblinking calm and cool determination" toward the front, Emerson judged that the image represented the "New Russia." This soldier had "the spirit that bore the boys on the Western Front along to death and victory" as well as "something finer still": "individual courage unsupported by comradeship, a splendid omen that the new army of Russia has caught the vision and had learned its first lesson of National Idealism on which is laid the foundation of good government." Such a "new born, resistless force" was not to be trifled with, he added.[93] The "heroism" of Russian doctors, nurses, and feldshers (medics)

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[90]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 72. Two months later, another American, Dr. Henry Ware Newman, went to Ufa and "heard some good things said about the Red Government." See more details in Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 305.

[91]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 27. See also pp. 70–71.

[92]Ibid., 29.

[93]Ibid., 66. See also p. 58, for more on "patient, immobile peasants" doing "heroic work" in nearly impossible conditions. It "was an inspiring sight and spoke volumes for the energy and determination of the

despite grave lack of supplies gave reason for optimism, too. Emerson was sure that if "people at home could see one-hundredth part" of what he was seeing, "America would be here with her whole soul in one minute of time."[94] That was not the case at the moment.

Emerson's superior officer, Simmons, knew that the usual avenues through which the Russian government might have purchased needed goods were not available to it. Kolchak had few options when it came to getting American financial aid and non-military supplies. A Russian Bureau of the American War Trade Board had been set up in late 1918 to advance Russian–American trade. But despite efforts on the part of some American officials both in Russia and in Washington, it accomplished little. Without the US government extending official recognition to the Kolchak regime, government loans could not be extended, and Congress would not support—so officials at the State Department believed—any special appropriation for Russia, whether to pay for the maintenance and operation of Siberian railways or to extend credit to Siberian cooperatives. (Military supplies were an exception.) Monetary and other economic conditions in Siberia made the region a difficult sell for American officials and lawmakers. Nor was the Russian embassy in Washington in a financial position to help out as it had in the past: It would be bankrupt by mid-summer.[95] "In the absence of other evidence of American sympathy," Emerson claimed, "our Red Cross is standing to heroically and speaking for America's heart."[96] This army of mercy, so to speak, was assisting Kolchak while official Washington refused to fully commit itself. Only the Red

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minds back of it all."

[94]Ibid., 51. For more on feldshers, see Samuel Ramer, "Who Was the Russian Feldsher?" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 213–25.

[95]Bacino, *Reconstructing Russia*, 133–54. For earlier assistance from the Russian embassy to the Czechoslovaks, see *First Semi-Annual Report*, 27. The embassy was essentially a means for the US government to transfer money to Russia; see Maddox, *Unknown War with Russia*, 35.

[96]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 26.

Cross was saving America from complete disgrace, and, by extension, the world from the Bolshevik menace.

And so Simmons, with widespread support among the personnel of the Siberian commission, simply ignored the rules. He arranged to order the requested drugs, hospital supplies, and clothing from the United States and Japan.[97] Simmons stressed that the Red Cross would only be acting as a go-between, and pointed to the failure of the War Trade Board, whose job it had been to arrange such transactions. He justified his actions as a necessary measure based on conditions on the ground, despite official Red Cross policy. "In this way," Simmons claimed, "we contributed to the maintenance of the Army's morale, and would convince the people of our sincerity and ability to help in a practical way." Echoing the sentiments of other Americans in Siberia, he noted that allowing Russians to pay for their supplies was appropriate for another reason, namely, because "they resent Charity."[98] (Russian attitudes toward charitable giving in all its forms were more complex and divergent than this, but there was certainly a fear among some reform-minded individuals that handouts led to a variety of social ills.[99]) By mid-April Kolchak had formally accepted the Red Cross's offer to help his government buy medical supplies.[100] The Kolchak government put an order in for $1 million worth of drugs through the Red Cross. The commissioners decided to wait to see if the War Trade Board would handle the order. In the meantime, the Red Cross would continue to supply Russian hospitals and army needs "as far as lay within its resources."[101]

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[97]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 15–16.

[98]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 31.

[99]Adele Lindenmyer, "The Ethos of Charity in Imperial Russia," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 679–94, especially 686.

[100]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 35, 37.

[101]Memo of ExCom Meeting, 20 May 1919, Report to Finance Committee, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

The Siberian commission also "planned to enlarge [its] work to include a more active service to the Russian army."[102]

One part of these plans included specialized typhus-fighting measures. Typhus (*Rickettsia prowazekii*) was a major killer in Russia.[103] Now a rare disease, it is transmitted by lice, or "cooties" in contemporary parlance. Symptoms include "the sudden appearance of headaches, chills, a high fever, coughing, severe muscular pain, and a blotchy rash that appears on the fifth or sixth day after infection." The disease is also characterized by delirium and confusion in patients, and "untreated . . . may last up to 3 weeks, with a mortality rate of 30 to 70% under epidemic conditions."[104] Typhus outbreaks killed thousands of soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians during the First World War years in Russia, and millions more between 1918 and 1922.[105] Other diseases were also responsible for widespread death and suffering, but typhus was the most dreaded scourge. An American Red Cross doctor who contracted the disease himself while in Siberia noted that "a recovered patient once described typhus as a disease that takes away a man's reason, paralyzes his will, makes a beast of him, and, if it spares his life, leaves him a mere shell of his former shelf."[106] Outbreaks were most likely in the winter and early spring months, when cold weather forced people into cramped quarters. Without adequate sanitary safeguards, the disease could spread quickly.

In the fall of 1918, Allied troops and administrative and auxiliary personnel were in

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[102]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, part of Simmons's "Report of the Special Mission," 22.

[103]For more about typhus in Russia, see K. David Patterson, "Typhus and its Control in Russia, 1870–1940," *Medical History* 37 (1993): 361–81.

[104]Irwin W. Sherman, *The Power of Plagues* (Washington, DC: ASM Press, 2006), 121.

[105]Patterson, "Typhus and its Control," 373–81.

[106]Hal M. Davison, "Typhus in Siberia—Observations upon Myself and Others," *Journal of the Medical Association of Georgia* 11 (1921–22): 261.

Siberia in large numbers. There were tens of thousands of Japanese in the Far East and northern Manchuria; more than seven thousand Americans, most of them on guard duty along the railway; five thousand Canadians, primarily stationed in and around Vladivostok; two British battalions in the interior; and a few thousand other foreigners. Russian and Allied officials thus took a keen interest in avoiding and combatting typhus. Anti-typhus efforts were a major part of the work of the American Red Cross. In terms of numbers reached, the most significant medical operation the Siberian commission undertook was running the inter-Allied (and later simply American Red Cross) anti-typhus train.

The Red Cross was brought face-to-face with the horrors of typhus in civil war Russia in mid-November. An American railway man in Nikolsk informed the commission of a horrific situation enfolding around him. He had witnessed about one hundred fifty "sick prisoners" being taken off a train only to be left on the ground without food or medical attention. Because so many of them were dying each day, he suggested the Red Cross investigate. At about the same time, another plea for help came from a large group of long-suffering POWs under Japanese control in a Nikolsk camp. (POWs in eastern Siberia were under the guard and administration of either the American or Japanese military.) The next morning a handful of Red Cross men in Vladivostok gathered supplies (for the POWs) from the Swedish Red Cross, packed a train, and headed to Nikolsk to provide some relief and check in on what was happening at the rail yards.[107]

When the Americans arrived at the Nikolsk-Ussuriisk railway junction, where the Trans-Siberian offshoot, the Chinese Eastern Railway, began in the East, they were

[107]Alfred L. Castle to Davison, 21 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR—Oct 1918–Jun 1919.

confronted by quite a scene. A train of fifty boxcars had apparently just arrived after a five-and-a-half-week journey from Samara. The passengers, originally numbering twenty-one hundred, were civilian prisoners moved by the Whites ahead of the Bolshevik takeover of the city in October. By the time they reached Nikolsk, more than eight hundred of them had died of starvation, disease, or had frozen to death. The conditions in which the surviving thirteen hundred men, women, and children were living and dying were, according to Rudolf Bukely, "absolutely unspeakable."[108] The testimony of Riley Allen, another of the Red Cross men who went to see the "Train of Horror," confirms his impression.[109] "Of course it is not Red Cross province to mix up in internal prison affairs of a country," a Red Cross report noted matter-of-factly, "but here was a case presented of such indescribable conditions and such danger of spreading of epidemics throughout the country that it seems best to at least afford some emergency medical relief."[110] Once again, the Red Cross discovered humanitarian aid could rarely keep out of meddling in domestic political affairs.

American Red Cross officials stopped the train—thereafter commonly referred to as the "train of death"—from leaving the station, spurring Russian authorities to have it cleaned and better equipped. Hundreds of passengers were moved to a local hospital for treatment, and the Red Cross soon arranged to bathe all of them. Unfortunately, after the Americans left, the train continued to travel along the railways of Siberia and Manchuria; in mid-December it was still on the move. Bukely was convinced nearly all the prisoners would soon

[108]For a first-hand account, see ARC man Rudolf Bukely's edited diary entries: "The Train of Death," *Red Cross Magazine* 14, no. 4 (April 1919): 5–13. See also material in NA, FO 371, vol. 4113.

[109]Riley Allen, "The Typhus Train," *North American Review* 211 (Jan–Jun 1920): 532, and especially 534–43.

[110]Castle to Davison, 21 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR—Oct 1918–Jun 1919.

be dead. "It is all unspeakable."[111] "Life is the cheapest thing in Siberia," he concluded in an emotionally-charged article for the *American Red Cross Magazine*.[112] (Its publication, complete with photographs, was undoubtedly meant to appeal to Americans' humanitarian sympathies and thus ensure their continued support for postwar relief work in Russia.[113]) Meanwhile, the Siberian commission, using Allied funds, furnished a Nikolsk hospital with one hundred fifty beds for typhus patients, plus necessary drugs, equipment, and supplies.[114]

The typhus cases in Nikolsk worried the American Red Cross, Russian officials, and foreign military leaders. It was, geographically, the closest serious outbreak of the disease to Vladivostok since the arrival of Allied troops. But it was not the only one. Reports came in from several Siberian towns detailing the spread and virulence of typhus contagion. The Allies had to act, and soon, to ensure the safety of their own, Czechoslovak, and Russian soldiers. Because infected men and women were on the move along the Trans-Siberian Railway, Vladivostok and other centres throughout the region were threatened with a looming epidemic.

One project begun on the heels of the Nikolsk situation was the design and construction of a specialized medical and sanitary train. This Inter-Allied Anti-Typhus Train was organized by Allied medical officials, a variety of Red Cross representatives, and Vladivostok's medical health officer.[115] The Red Cross agreed to equip and staff it, with

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[111]Bukely, "Train of Death," 11.

[112]Ibid., 6.

[113]For a discussion of the Red Cross's use of emotion as part of its fundraising efforts, see Kevin Rozario, "'Delicious Horrors': Mass Culture, the Red Cross, and the Appeal of Modern American Humanitarianism," *American Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (Sep 2003): 417–55.

[114]"Report Medical Bureau Week Ending 21st December 1918," in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[115]The composition of the Inter-Allied Sanitary Committee. Clarke to Fotheringham, "Report re Medical Services, CEF(S)," 10 Jun 1919, in LAC, RG 9 II-A-3, vol. 374, ADMS 3-7.

expenses shared by the Allies. The train was meant "to act as a sort of standard bearer," bringing supplies, medical personnel, and special equipment to infected communities. Plans called for "little circulars" to be printed and "distributed along the line, telling the people of the necessity for bathing and keeping clean, and the general precautions to be taken against typhus." Although an "experimental" project, the Red Cross was thrilled to be taking part, believing it to be, "as far as reaching the Russian people is concerned, . . . about the best thing" it had yet done.[116] Similar "delousing" schemes were used by the western Allied armies during the war. While the infected were "made to cleanse themselves thoroughly," according to a contemporary news report, "their clothing [was] put through ovens, which destroy[ed] vermin by subjecting them to intense heat. The plan [was] to maintain a constant succession of candidates, some undressing, others bathing or being close cropped by barbers, and still others waiting for fresh raiment [i. e., clothing]."[117] The opportunity for the organization to reach a large number of Russians, providing important medical relief, and instruction about sanitation and cleanliness, was not lost on the Americans. The train was staffed primarily by representatives of the Red Cross and hired workers. Equipment and some supplies were paid for by the Allies, collectively. The Red Cross paid the salaries of the train's personnel, as well as for supplies needed to assist groups the militaries did not agree to help.

The train took time to prepare. In the meantime, Allied representatives discussed which parts of Siberia they wished it to work in. The six interested parties—the Americans, British (and Canadians), Czechoslovaks, French, Italians, and Japanese—had soldiers

[116]Report, 2 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR—Oct 1918–Jun 1919.
[117]W. E. Playfair, "Free Siberia from Typhus," *Toronto Globe* (8 Feb 1919): 13.

stationed in different parts of eastern Russia. The American and Japanese militaries were solely interested in the typhus situation in the country's two most eastern provinces, while the others had men much further afield. It was soon agreed that the train would first help clear up typhus cases in the provinces around Vladivostok, and could then move westward, though without the financial support of the United States or Japan.[118] The train departed Vladivostok for a short trial run in late December.[119] It went to deal with outbreaks at First and Second Rivers, where barracks housed both refugees and soldiers.[120] The trip did not go smoothly, and the train's director resigned his post upon returning to the city.[121] He was replaced by Captain Frederick Alfred Dallyn, a hydrological engineer borrowed from the Canadian army.[122]

There was no time to lose in making the train and its staff ready for service. Typhus cases among soldiers and refugees were on the rise in western Siberia.[123] Refugees lived in "terrific" conditions. Teusler saw for himself what the situation was like in western Siberia, and he reported as much to his colleagues in Vladivostok:

> At night, every station along the Trans-Siberian Railway, west of Novonikolaevsk is crowded with dirty refugees, many of them with body lice, and almost every day several typhus fever patients are removed from their midst to the city hospital or detention camps. For this reason the spread of the disease has been rapid and difficult to control. I have myself seen as many as fifteen patients of typhus in a building of Chelyabinsk, together with some 250 other occupants, all so closely crowded together that one could not walk between them.[124]

And no one was immune: Two American Red Cross representatives based in Tumen' died of

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[118]Entries for 9 and 16 Dec 1918, in LAC, RG 9 III-A-3, vol. 369, file A3 SEF Base H.Q. Misc. Records—War Diary, Col. J. T. Clarke.

[119]Playfair, "Free Siberia from Typhus," 13.

[120]Report Medical Bureau week ending 28 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C

[121]Joshua Rosett to the finance committee, 2 Jan 1919, in ibid.

[122]Report, Finance Committee meeting, 11 Jan 1919, in ibid.

[123]Diary, entry for 14 Dec 1918, in Duncan papers, box 1.

[124]Teusler to H. W. Lewis, 23 Jan 1919, in LAC, RG 9 II-A-3, vol. 375, ADMS 12-7 Sanitation—Anti-Typhus Arrangements.

the disease before 1918 was up. Poor living conditions facilitated the spread of disease locally, and soldiers and prisoners leaving the front moved it from west to east across Kolchak's Siberia. The Red Cross believed that medical assistance to those already infected would thus not stop the disease's spread. The keys to defeating typhus were distributions of clean clothing and other preventative measures, including large-scale bathing and delousing.[125]

Toward the end of January, with eastern Siberia deemed in the clear, the Red Cross and the Allies came to a new agreement about the anti-typhus train. The British, French, Italians, and Czechoslovaks agreed to direct and finance the train's efforts among Allied soldiers in western Siberia.[126] By then typhus had assumed epidemic proportions in nearly a dozen cities between the Ural region and Taiga, southeast of Tomsk. Almost all other large towns west of Novo Nikolaevsk reported typhus cases, too. In some places there was little hope of the situation improving anytime soon because of the dearth of needed drugs and other supplies.[127] The need for outside assistance was great. After financial, personnel, and other details were worked out, the anti-typhus train departed for western Siberia on 2 February.[128] Some of the train's fourteen cars included bathing, laundry, sterilizing, hair cutting, and dressing cars, as well as cars for supplies and personnel.[129] The train was also a great publicity tool for the American Red Cross. One Canadian officer came across the train in Cheliabinsk in early April. "Somewhat to our indignation," he noted, "the cars are all

[125]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 11.

[126]See material in LAC, RG 9 II-A-3 vol. 375 file ADMS 12-7 Sanitation—Anti-Typhus Arrangements.

[127]Teusler to H. W. Lewis, 23 Jan 1919, in ibid.

[128]Bukeley to ARC, 14 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.53 SC—Allied Anti-Typhus Train.

[129]*The Work of the American Red Cross during the War: A Statement of Finances and Accomplishments for the Period July 1, 1917 to February 28, 1919* (Washington, DC: American Red Cross, 1919).

labelled in small letters 'Inter-allied Typhus Train,' while in much larger letters appear the words 'OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS.'" It was "typical of much of the work of our good friends south of the 49th parallel," he added.[130] (Another witness also noted the Red Cross's propaganda efforts. He claimed that the American Red Cross office in Vladivostok was "a fine large office with about twenty desks in it. Each desk is labelled with what work it does. One had 'Soldiers' Comforts', another 'Russian Aid', and the rest of them 'Publicity'."[131] He likely did not realize that the Red Cross had many hundreds of employees spread across thousands of miles of railway track. The vast majority of them were not based in Vladivostok or sitting at desks.)

The anti-typhus train was financed by the four concerned Allies, and the Red Cross covered the cost of the campaign among civilians not deemed a threat to military forces. It travelled through western Siberia, and the train's staff members, numbering nearly forty in February, busied themselves bathing and disinfecting soldiers, dispensing drugs, and distributing underwear and other clothing. The train also dropped off doctors and other medical workers where they were needed. Primarily, the train worked to prevent typhus among the civilian population where Allied commands operated. Several hundred people could be bathed each day, including soldiers, returned Bolshevik prisoners, civilians, and (presumably) POWs.[132] By the end of May the train had finished its work for the Allies.

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[130][Ephriam Herbert Coleman,] *In the Footsteps of Robinson Crusoe* (n.p., n.d.), in LAC, Ephriam Herbert Coleman fonds.

[131]"One fellow," quoted in D. M. Brown to C. M. Brown, 16 Jun 1919, in Canadian War Museum, Douglas Marr Brown collection, Siberian C, file 5, item 125. "The A.R.C. has a good many employees here now,- supposed to be helping out destitute Russians but I do not think they are really doing a great deal." Brown was not intimately involved with the Red Cross's operations, but his belief is reflective of at least some soldiers' attitudes toward the organization.

[132]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 16–17; Bukeley to ARC (Vladi), 14 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.53 SC—Allied Anti-Typhus Train; Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, in Simmons, "Report

After awaiting orders in Omsk, it was ordered to Perm when a request for assistance came from the chairman of the provincial sanitary commission.[133]

Back in Vladivostok, the first typhus cases in the winter of 1918–19 were reported in December at the city jail. The Red Cross sent representatives to investigate: They found more than thirty typhus cases amidst "deplorable" conditions. After moving some of the infected men to hospital they did some structural work on and fumigated the prison, and bathed and provided new clothing to inmates. That month the Siberian commission also worked with city authorities to secure an isolation ward for infectious cases. The typhus situation in Vladivostok was one that concerned all the Allies because of the risk of infection to their soldiers and civilian personnel. As part of its efforts, the Red Cross detailed Miss Hoffman to be a "district nurse": "She visits the stations, cars, barracks and crowded refugee lodgings calling the Red Cross Ambulance, transferring all suspicious cases to the Isolation Hospital." Her Russian language skills and considerable experience in district nursing in New York made her the right choice for the job.[134]

The train was only one of the Red Cross's anti-typhus projects. To combat epidemics in the interior, Teusler recommended a number of measures. He wanted to see sterilizing stations in place to bathe soldiers and civilians, disinfect their clothes, and give out new underclothing as necessary; hospitals adequately staffed and equipped to handle typhus patients; and infected persons removed as quickly as possible "from over-crowded areas." He also called on military authorities to "coöperate in enforcing [the] policing of stations and

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of the Special Mission," 22–23.

[133]From Memo of Action by ExCom at meeting 29 May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920. Lt. Francis Connor was director of Perm Expedition.

[134]"Typhus Situation," appended to minutes of the finance committee meeting, 21 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

other public buildings."[135] Most of Teusler's recommendations were carried out. His organization used all its outposts—"hospitals, dispensaries, clinics, trains, and even its dental work-rooms"—to distribute "large quantities" of drugs and medical supplies.[136] A "bathing and delousing station at Ekaterinburg" gave thirty thousand treatments by the end of February.[137] In the spring the Red Cross opened a large anti-typhus hospital in Novo Nikolaevsk.[138] Many Siberian centres received funds, equipment, drugs, supplies, and medical personnel to assist in the fight against typhus. In the spring and throughout the summer, the Red Cross "took steps in cooperation with the Omsk Government to clean up the armies."[139] And American efforts did make a difference, at least in one place. At Petropavlovsk, with "no American help" and "enormous difficulties in his way[, an American doctor] treated over nine hundred cases of typhus and other severe diseases during the months of January, February and March." He found that eighty percent of the soldiers of the Russian army regiment in the vicinity were afflicted. The doctor's morality rate was only twelve percent, a "tribute to the skill and devotion of this Red Cross worker in Siberia." Simmons believed that "the story is worthy to go down as an epic in the war history of the American Red Cross."[140]

Americans thought education was also important to the fight against typhus. They recognized that extreme conditions were largely to blame but also believed that better sanitary standards would ensure a lower incidence of disease in the future. The Siberian

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[135]Teusler to H. W. Lewis, 23 Jan 1919, in LAC, RG 9 II-A-3 vol. 375 file ADMS 12-7 Sanitation—Anti-Typhus Arrangements.

[136]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 11.

[137]*Work of the American Red Cross during the War*, 85.

[138]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 20.

[139]Allen to M. G. Scheitlin, 30 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[140]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 19.

commission used its hospital and relief offices "to urge upon the Russians such preventive measures [as] delousing, frequent bathing, cleanly [sic] preparation of food, boiling of water, and quarantine of infected districts." Efforts to establish "scientific and rigid preventive measures" were not easy. The lack of clear authority posed a large problem.[141] So too did the Russian lifestyle. According to Emerson, "the average peasant cannot be convinced of the wisdom of bathing in the winter time. The lure of a new suit of underwear was sufficient to tempt his recklessness, however, and much good work was done."[142]

An "average peasant," as opposed to a Russian of the upper or working class, was often described by contemporary American observers as kind-hearted but sorely needing American tutelage in all manner of modern methods and habits. A similar understanding of most Russians as—in the words of the first Red Cross mission's Thayer—"ignorant and simple children," led to Americans thinking the country was crying out for "a strong leader."[143] Based on his experiences as a YMCA secretary in northern Russia, John Lewin McLeish concluded that

> these poor illiterates are sadly in need of a course of intensive training, first in Personal Hygiene and Sanitation, then in History, Civics, the Science of Good Government, Respect for Constituted Authority and the right of class to participate equally with class in affairs of State, ... Agriculture for the eighty per cent peasantry and the three R's for the unlettered hoi polloi of the towns. . . . Russians of all classes seem particularly receptive to American ways and methods, implicitly confident that our people representing a popular Government have no intention, need or desire to exploit them.[144]

A sympathetic but paternalistic view of Russians was common among Americans working for both the Red Cross and YMCA. "Let not the boys of this great Slav nation be forgotten," urged a YMCA report written about the fall of 1918. "They are in the hands of the

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[141]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 11.
[142]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, in Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 22–23.
[143]Thayer, typescript, 56.
[144]McLeish to Colton, 15 Aug 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, YMCA Files—Russian Work [2].

Association for moulding if we will."[145] "This is such a wonderful country if it could only be straightened out and the poor classes given a chance," nurse Carrie Pickett believed. "They never will settle it themselves and the other countries just have to do it, at least that is the way it looks to me." Just like contemporary American social reformers believed of their own poor, she thought that the country could have a bright future if Russians were provided (by foreigners) with opportunities for advancement.[146] Russia was a "droning reservoir of misery *and* aspiration," after all.[147] "The more I see and know of Russia and the Russians, the sorrier I feel for them, and I am glad we are here to do what we can do help things out," Pickett concluded.[148]

It was commonplace among Americans in Russia that education was crucial, and that "basic customs" needed to be tackled first and foremost.[149] Peasants, "so simple, so semi-civilized," according to the Red Cross's Benjamin Davis,[150] had been shaped by "centuries of Russian history," to quote Kendall Emerson. They were, the latter believed, more like animals than human beings. Their nature was "the reason for Russia's vast upheaval": "The peasant is instinctive not logical. He reacts to external stimuli much like the brute creation, and it is that easily explained attribute which makes him incomprehensible to the average civilised mind. Stroke him and he purrs, twist his tail and he may be an instant beast of prey.

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[145]Unsigned typescript (but seemingly written by Colton), n.d., ca. fall 1918, in YMCA Russia, box 2, C & R—ND.

[146]Carrie Pickett to "folks," 23 Jun 1919, in Pickett papers, box 1, C. See also Ernest Poole, "A Friend of America: Talks with a Russian Schoolmaster," *Red Cross Magazine* 13, no. 11 (Nov 1918): 3–9, and E. A. Yarrow, "The Bolsheviki in Siberia," *Journal of Race Development* 9, no. 4 (Apr 1919): 331. Yarrow had been in Siberia with the Red Cross, and upon his return to the United States, concluded that "Siberia is a wonderful country and has a splendid future before it but unless the Powers intervene with some drastic measures, its progress with be delayed years if not decades."

[147]Emphasis added. Kornfield, "Wild Children," 3.

[148]Pickett to "folks," 2 Sep 1919, in Pickett papers, box 1, C.

[149]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 15.

[150]Davis, "From the Notes," 5, in Davis papers, box 1, folder 3.

And this reaction is an instinctive and uncontrollable as blinking of the eyes in bring sunlight. To change it," he concluded, "will take more than one generation of wise education."[151]

Mostly, Americans believed only they could truly help Russians help themselves. Although "Russia has got to be cured from the inside," argued Colton in a summer 1919 speech, Americans could show Russians how "people belonging . . . to separate classes can compose their differences and live together." With "love enough and patience enough and wisdom enough"—traits present in the best of teachers—the United States could take care of some of the "abysmal needs of the Russian nation." The work being done by representatives of the American Red Cross and YMCA was "a solvent towards Russia's present difficulty." Russians were among "the plain people of this earth who trust America."

> How shall those of us who have seen it ever forget the gaze of those friendly, wistful, uncomprehending eyes; and those eyes, my fellow American, are turned to us. You cannot explain it, nor can I, but you pass in and about these Russian masses and somehow you find there the deep rooted faith – it is about the only hope that many of them have left – that somehow their deliverance is going to come from America.[152]

"The resurrection of the stricken Russian spirit, when it comes," Colton wrote a year earlier, "will be in response to the offers of genuine friendship, and President Wilson is its prophet."[153] American aid would result in the salvation of Russia, he implied. An editorial in the *Red Cross Magazine* echoed his thoughts (as well as those of George Bakhmeteff, quoted in the Introduction) but in more secular terms: "As the American spirit of helpfulness has done in France and in Italy, so and more it aims to do in Russia . . . . But whatever effort may be demanded, whatever expenditure of means or energy may be involved, they are infinitesimal compared with what this winning of Russian trust and understanding and

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[151]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 68.

[152]Colton, "The Claims of Russia upon America," speech delivered at Student Conference, 26 Jun 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919.

[153]Colton, "Why We May Not Slacken in Russia," 1918, in Colton papers, box 2, Russia "F" file.

fellowship means to the future of the world."[154]

Means and energy were expended on the fight against typhus. The doctors and nurses who worked on the anti-typhus train, or who were connected to the hospitals and clinics that treated the disease, were dedicated to the disease's eradication. In some cases, they contracted it themselves. Captain Dallyn and eleven of his *sanitars* caught the disease, curtailing the train's work.[155] Another of the train's directors, the young Captain Francis Connor, died of typhus later that year, as did nurse Edith Barnett.[156] Other nurses also succumbed. There was little anyone could do to avoid infection: "The only protection seems to be in greasing our bodies with kerosene but even that is not a sure protection," wrote Red Cross representative Edward H. Taylor.[157] Not all employees were equally selfless, though. One American doctor was sent home because he refused to enter wards where typhus patients were hospitalized.[158] Perhaps he was overly cautious because he had an inkling of the statistics.[159] Another American doctor later paid tribute to Russian nurses and physicians. Of the ones he and his colleagues worked with, he wrote: "They laboured under sanitary conditions unimaginable to us, without means of protecting themselves from infection. At times we found hospitals in which almost all of the personnel had had typhus. The mortality among the medical personnel was always higher than in others. Of the American Red Cross

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[154]"Faith in the Future of Russia," *Red Cross Magazine* 13, no. 12 (Dec 1918): 4.

[155]Emerson, "Medical Report," 20 May 1919, in Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 22–23.

[156]*Third Semi-Annual Report of the Siberian Commission American Red Cross July 1–December 31 1919* (Yokohama: The Box of Curios P & P, n.d., ca. 1920), 2, 19.

[157]Taylor to ?, 12 Feb 1919, University Archives, University of Kansas, Edward Taylor papers.

[158]Minutes, ExCom, 4 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[159]"Petrograd's physicians died of typhus at about six times the rate of the general population. In some hospitals and evacuation centres, as in Kharkov in 1920, all doctors, nurses, orderlies, and disinfection personnel contracted typhus. In 1919–20, 4,000 public health physicians got the disease and 800 (20 per cent) died. From 1918 to 1920, 1,183 of 3,500 Red Army doctors got typhus and 235 of these (19.9 per cent) died. Praise for the heroism of medical personnel was well deserved." Patterson, "Typhus and its Control," 379.

personnel in Siberia, thirteen had typhus and of these five died."[160]

Refugees were among the beneficiaries of the anti-typhus campaign. The Siberian commission also served them in other ways. The Red Cross discovered that refugee housing and services of all kinds were acutely needed in Vladivostok. Refugees arrived in the city in droves beginning in 1917. Housing was scarce. The appearance of Allied missions and soldiers made the situation worse because foreigners took over erstwhile-occupied buildings, forcing squatters to move elsewhere. The Red Cross began programs for refugees early on in its tenure in the city. Groups of Russians and others (Serbians, Armenians, and "Jews," whose nationality was not specified) were housed in barracks at First and Second Rivers, a few kilometres outside town. All told, up to fifteen hundred people at any one time were clothed, housed, and fed that winter and spring in the barracks. These men, women, and children were closest to being wards of the Red Cross, but assistance programs reached a much larger group of people. A report compiled in the spring claimed another forty-five hundred benefitted from "daily food distribution."[161] With turnover, the Red Cross figured a total of thirty-five hundred people were housed the first six months of 1919.[162] In addition, about two hundred families of "formerly well-to-do but now impoverished Russians" were put up in a separate barracks at Second River ("Decadent Elite Barracks Number 64"). This was a British-led project; Siberian commission personnel cleaned the building and provided supervisory staff, while all other expenses were covered by the British. "The American Red

[160]Davison, "Typhus in Siberia," 262. For another positive comment on the Russian medical profession, see Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 85.

[161]"The American Red Cross," n.d., ca. May 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[162]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 28.

Cross is looking up socially," commented Dr. Doremus Scudder wryly of the venture in an otherwise rather dry report.[163]

The Red Cross barracks offered more than basic necessities. Medical facilities, though not on site, were close at hand. The Siberian commission operated a dedicated 250-bed refugee hospital in the city.[164] There was a school for Russian children at First River (from January), and by the start of May, both day and night schools were running at Second River, as well as a kindergarten.[165] There was a larger project at work in these activities, as was true of the anti-typhus campaign. The Americans hoped to instil what they believed were proper sanitary practices and good work habits in their boarders, and fed them according to scientific nutritional calculations. Little distinction was made within groups of refugees living in barracks for the first few months, but by spring there was a change in policy. "Gradually families containing able-bodied adults were eliminated, and at the present time no family groups except widows with children, old people and invalids are receiving food from the Red Cross." Unmarried men and married men with small families were considered "improper charges" of the Red Cross. The organization was concerned about men "making practically no effort to become self-supporting."[166] The Red Cross estimated it assisted thirty four thousand people through its relief stations in Vladivostok in the first half of 1919.[167]

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[163]"Report of the Refugee Department for the Week Ending December 7, 1918," and Scudder, "Report of the Department of Refugee Relief of Eastern Siberia for the Fortnight Ending December 21, 1918," in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[164]*First Semi-Annual Report*, 9.

[165]Hall, "Report of the Acting Director of Refugee Relief for Eastern Siberia[,] Week Ending January 25, 1919," in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C; T. J. Edmonds, "Report for the Department of Civil Affairs for the week ending May 3rd, 1919," in ANRC papers, box 917, 987.118 Civilian Relief Reports 1919.

[166]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 29; Memorandum for Finance Committee of Business Transacted by Executive Committee During Week - May 20–27, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[167]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 27.

Employment services were also part of the Siberian commission's complement of programs for refugees. In December, after the city's labour exchange office had shut down its operations, Red Cross officials met with representatives from the local zemstvo to discuss options. "We shall have to become again temporarily an employment agency," a report ruefully concluded.[168] In addition to this, the Red Cross operated businesses of its own in an attempt to provide work and produce needed supplies. Such ventures included sewing rooms, a weaving establishment, and a tailor shop.[169] The commission justified its Vladivostok sewing room and a similar joint project with the Russian Red Cross by arguing that "the Red Cross is not a business institution but a charitable organization for the purpose of helping people who need work."[170] The awkward phrasing implies that not even Red Cross men believed their employment programs fit within organization guidelines. But the situation on the ground called for flexibility. All able-bodied refugees worked in the barracks or elsewhere so they could pay for their board. This "no work-no eat" program included women and girls.[171] The Red Cross's employment bureau boasted a weekly placement rate of ten percent of applicants, and a total of fifty percent overall during the first half of 1919.[172] The refugees in the barracks and work applicants also provided labourers for the Allied armies' auxiliary services.[173]

In the fall of 1918 Vladivostok was the Red Cross's main post. As winter approached,

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[168]"Report of the Refugee Department for the Week Ending December 7, 1918," in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[169]*Work of the American Red Cross during the War*, 86.

[170]ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C, 101–16, meetings held 31 July 1919-4 Dec 1919 about the Russo-American Red Cross Sewing Rooms (29 Aug meeting).

[171]T. J. Edmonds, "Report of the Department of Civil Affairs for the week ending April 26, 1919," in ANRC papers. Box 917, 987.118 Civilian Relief Reports 1919.

[172]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 28–29.

[173]"Report of the Refugee Department for the Week Ending December 7, 1918," in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

the organization looked to western Siberia. The plight of refugees and civilians, bad in Vladivostok, was much worse in central and western Siberia. The sheer numbers of men, women, and children of different nationalities who were living (in a fashion) in towns such as Omsk were staggering. Omsk's population grew from one hundred thirty thousand in 1917 to at least half a million in 1919.[174] Bishop Tucker was in charge of refugee work for the Red Cross in the early days of the Siberian commission. To investigate conditions, he went to Harbin in August. But after the Czechoslovak victory at the end of the month, the Red Cross was left having to change its plans. In late September, Tucker again headed west. He was tasked with investigating possible Red Cross work in western Siberia, and found many worthy recipients for any relief program that might be set up. He went as far as Ekaterinburg and Cheliabinsk, very near the front lines. He sent "urgent appeals" to his Vladivostok bosses "for material for winter clothing for thousands of refugees found in increasing numbers West of Irkutsk."[175] Based on the reports and recommendations of Tucker and others, in October two newly-arrived Red Cross officials realized "that one of the biggest jobs [the] Red Cross had to do in Siberia was in taking care of refugees."[176] Henry Thompson saw refugee work as "by far the most appealing and most urgent job that I have seen since I entered the Red Cross."[177] Administrative changes to the commission were made to reflect its dual purpose: military work and refugee aid.[178]

While the organization embraced working with refugees, from the beginning the commission's policy was more restrained than it might have been. Tucker himself, whose

[174]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 369. For more on refugee life in Omsk, see pp. 369–71.
[175]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[176][Thompson] to Eliot Wadsworth, 23 Oct 1918, in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.6201 SC—Refugees.
[177][Thompson] to Otis H. Cutler, 23 Oct 1918, in ibid.
[178][Thompson] to Eliot Wadsworth, 23 Oct 1918, in ibid.

urging and reports resulted in refugee relief being formally added to the complement of Siberian commission activities, was cautious about the scope and desirous of limiting the duration of this work. In his own mind, the main accomplishment of his trip to western Siberia in the fall of 1918 was "keeping the Red Cross out of a very extended refugee program which would have involved a great expense and a large force of workers, and which to [his] mind would have done more harm than good, both to the refugees and to the Russians in general." Tucker believed that Russians in Siberia, "at heart generous," lacked initiative, and would "undoubtedly do nothing" if an outside organization took over care of refugees.[179] An American YMCA man travelling with Czechoslovaks put it in slightly different terms: "The Russian folk are a charitable people giving direct without much system."[180] Whatever system had been in place prior to 1914 was subject to the same strains of war and revolution that everything else in Russia was.[181] The then Siberian government as well as town administrations had programs set up, with enough funds and private organizations assisting. Tucker believed that "the great difficulty is that as soon as the American Red Cross begins to speak of co-operation they, I presume, thinking of America as a country of unlimited resources, immediately begin to think of shifting a large share of the burden to our shoulders."[182] Such views were widespread among Americans. They drew a clear line between emergency relief and charity in their work.

One of the first centres of Red Cross refugee relief outside Vladivostok was Omsk. Dr. William B. Ludlow and Thompson visited a refugee camp and hospital near the Omsk

[179]Tucker to Scudder, 17 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[180]Diary, entry for 30 Mar 1919, in Duncan papers, box 1.

[181]For more on the Russian culture of giving and Russian charitable organizations, of which there were many, see Adele Lindenmyer, *Poverty is Not a Vice: Charity, Society, and the State in Imperial Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[182]Tucker to Scudder, 17 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

railway station in mid-November. At the hospital, "the whole picture was one of despair." The Americans distributed drugs and supplies, including mattresses, and cleaned the hospital.[183] When they looked into the presence and work of support agencies, Red Cross workers found an assortment of committees with limited agendas, but no organized efforts apart from "an inadequate typhus hospital, a soup kitchen for invalids, and several small orphanages. The city authorities and the local population were quite frankly tired of the refugees." Conditions were terrible, but they were not bad or widespread enough to consider the situation an "emergency," according to Anna Haines, an Red Cross refugee worker formerly with the American Friends Service Committee in Buzuluk. (She and her colleagues had joined the Siberian commission after the Quakers left Buzuluk in early October 1918.[184]) Yet after word spread that the American Red Cross was in town and interested in refugee welfare, its staff members were soon "besieged with requests of all kinds."[185] Even though the city paid some to leave—with some success—and others died as winter approached, Haines's colleague and fellow Quaker Nancy Babb noted that two thousand "of the most hopeless, helpless, shiftless refugees were still resolved to face the cold winter in eleven of these barracks not at all equipped for home life."[186]

There was a strange duality in some American views of the Russian refugee situation.

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[183]See A. I. Ludlow, "Report of Work for Refugee Hospital, Omsk, under auspices of American Red Cross," Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.5 Health Activities.

[184]Richenda C. Scott, *Quakers in Russia* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964), 220. For more on Haines and the Quaker work, see, in addition the Scott book, Haines's own *Health Work in Soviet Russia* (New York: Vanguard, 1928), and David McFadden and Claire Gorfinkel, *Constructive Spirit: Quakers in Revolutionary Russia* (Pasadena, CA: Intentional Productions, 2004). See also Mary Hoxie Jones, *Swords into Ploughshares: An Account of the American Friends Service Committee, 1917–1937* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1971), 43–44; Rufus M. Jones, *A Service of Love in War Time: American Friends Relief Work in Europe, 1917–1919* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 244–49; and A. Ruth Fry, *A Quaker Adventure: The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet, 1926), 156.

[185]Anna J. Haines, "Report of Investigations made among Refugees in Omsk during December 1918 and January 1919," 8 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.6208 SC—Civilians & Refugee Reports.

[186]Nancy J. Babb, "Report of work in the Omsk Refugee Barracks," n.d., in ibid.

Most observers were horrified by what they saw, and felt strongly that they should provide whatever assistance they were able. But they also believed that it was important to place strict limits on which groups and individuals received help. Many refugees had apparently been in Omsk for years, and Haines worried about the "a danger of their becoming over-satisfied with dependence on others for food and clothing." What they needed most was "a sturdy feeling of self-reliance" that came from "paying for what they get." "This attitude," she explained," the Red Cross workers "felt was not best developed by an over generous and unconsidered distribution of relief."[187] Babb agreed that existing charitable endeavours left something to be desired. "These peasants were so unaccustomed to city life and its occupations, finding no jobs to which they were accustomed, and charity bestowed upon them so freely, [that they] were becoming more demoralized all the time. They were less inclined to work and more pleased to beg."[188] Haines believed that what she and her colleagues did brought "relief to the refugees in as constructive a method as possible and . . . encourages in them a self reliance and independence which will be necessary in all the citizens of the new Russian state."[189]

The Red Cross did not want to duplicate existing efforts, and organized several programs, which ranged from employment assistance to medical aid to the provision of basic necessities. A labour bureau found "common labor for all applicants desiring it at a daily wage," enough for a man to support a family of five; set up a work program for wives whose husbands did not earn enough to cover family expenses; and began a home work program for

[187]Haines, "Report of Investigations made among Refugees in Omsk during December 1918 and January 1919," 8 Feb 1919, in ibid.

[188]Babb, "Report of work in the Omsk Refugee Barracks," n.d., in ibid.

[189]Haines, "Report of Investigations made among Refugees in Omsk during December 1918 and January 1919," 8 Feb 1919, and Babb, "Report of work in the Omsk Refugee Barracks," n.d., both in ibid.

de jure and de facto widows to provide them with enough income to support their dependants. Local facilities for handling typhus and other patients were "overflowing." Working together with Russian authorities, the American team helped expand medical facilities. It provided supplies, drugs, employed a doctor, and built a dispensary and "disinfecting barrack." Personnel referred the sick to new Red Cross-run and -equipped facilities, and gave milk to patients who could not afford to purchase it. The Omsk group also ran an orphanage, and distributed clothing to individuals in need. At Christmas "a Red Cross Santa Claus visited the barracks [and] highly entertained the children and presented each child with the rare treat of a package of candy." Finally, the Americans cooperated with city officials to build a seven-room school for young children, and the Red Cross paid the teachers' salaries. Though Haines believed that the organization was unable to do what would have been best for Omsk refugees—provide housing[190]—she and her colleagues were pleased with their efforts, and boasted about their success in making clear their intentions: "We have tried to be as helpful as possible, but have avoided any attempt to interfere with their established working plans. We also feel from the expressions of doctors, nurses, patients, and even servants, that this work, though not large, has been a means of showing to the Russian people that the American Red Cross wishes to be helpful but not dictatorial."[191]

Similar work was undertaken by commission personnel in Tomsk, home to a separate refugee relief and medical department. Applications for assistance were received and investigated, and recommendations for the distribution of clothing, housing, food, medical

[190]Haines, "Report of Investigations made among Refugees in Omsk during December 1918 and January 1919," 8 Feb 1919, in ibid.

[191]See A. I. Ludlow, "Report of Work for Refugee Hospital, Omsk, under auspices of American Red Cross," Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 920, 987.5 Health Activities.

aid, financial help, and employment were made. These were carried out as much as possible. The Red Cross operated several barracks to house refugees and railway workers, referred serious medical cases to the Red Cross hospital, and provided employment by offering work in the barracks, a sewing room, and a fifteen-acre vegetable garden. In late May a feeding station was opened in town. Thanks to financial assistance from the Siberian commission, the university hospital was kept open in the summer. By the end of May the YMCA "made arrangements to start a playground for the children in the barracks." It supervised the work and provided the necessary equipment and teachers for the playground. There were also plans in place to operate a large vegetable farm, about ninety acres in size.[192]

People in need elsewhere in the region also benefited from Red Cross relief. Work was done out of other cities in western Siberia, including Taiga, Novo Nikolaevsk, Kurgan, Cheliabinsk, Petropavlovsk, Ekaterinburg, and in other spots. In eastern Siberia, aid was given to groups, individuals, and institutions in Irkutsk, Harbin, Khabarovsk, Spasskoe, Nikolsk, Razdolnoe, Blagoveshchensk, and other towns.[193] Vladivostok remained the major centre of refugee relief in eastern Siberia. As much work was done there in the first half of 1919 as in the entire rest of the region.[194]

Calls for assistance came through or even directly from American officials—consuls, army commanders, or YMCA personnel all across Siberia and the Urals. Requests for help also arrived from local governments, hospitals, schools, the Russian Red Cross, and other charitable or service organizations. In explaining the reasons for extending aid to refugees in

[192]ARC Tomsk, "Report of the Refugee Department and Medical Department Covering Period from March 1/19-to-May 24/19," in ANRC papers, box 917, 987.118 Civilian Relief Reports 1919.

[193]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 29–30, 32; Report of the Refugee Dept for Eastern Siberia for week ending 30 Dec 1918, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[194]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 27.

Khabarovsk, one report argued doing so would help counter Bolshevism and political agitation against the United States.[195] Stated policy was "to help with clothing where we can and to contribute toward the cost of heating when we feel that the community is doing its part."[196] The Siberian commission gave large quantities of goods to other societies, so that an estimated total of fifty thousand people benefited in the first half of 1919. The organization believed that its relief work "resulted in the saving of many thousands of lives."[197] There was tension between a genuine desire to help people in distress and a strongly-held ideological belief that "self-help" was preferable to charity. The need to convince Washington headquarters to continue financing the work in Siberia was also important. According to Special Commissioner Simmons, aid to refugees was only provided in desperate situations, as a demonstration of proper techniques, and to show American goodwill:

> The civilian relief program will be continued more as a constructive illustration of how such work may be successfully conducted and as an evidence of the goodwill of the American people toward the refugees and the Russian people generally than with any idea of affecting a volume of actual relief at all commensurate with the direct unlimited field. We will continue the work now in hand, with the hope of persuading the Russians to take it over with their personnel and at their municipal or other expense some time before next winter. In other words, we will remember (and govern our actions accordingly) that the American Red Cross is an emergency relief and not a permanent eleemosynary institution. It is understood that no new program in civilian relief will be inaugurated but that during the summer we will probably continue those now in operation.[198]

One group of refugees received special attention. This was the so-called Petrograd Children's Colony. It included seven groups of children scattered between the Ural region and Samara—in total, about eleven hundred youngsters. As Teusler informed Davison, they

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[195]Short and Allen to the finance committee, "Special Report on Possible Refugee Work at Habarovsk," n.d., ca. Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

[196]Scudder, "Report of the Department of Refugee Relief of Eastern Siberia for the Fortnight Ending 21 Dec 1918," in ibid.

[197]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 29, 33.

[198]Simmons to Teusler, 17 Apr 1919, in Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 58.

were "all without winter clothing and many of them were almost entirely destitute."[199] The previous summer these mostly school-aged children had been sent by their parents to the Volga region from their homes in Petrograd. It was thought they would be safe from the war there, and would have access to plenty of food. By May, over eight hundred had been enrolled in the program, which was billed as a safe summer educational retreat. The children and their guardians packed accordingly, and the first group left the city later that month. Travel was slow and difficult due to congestion on the rail lines: military trains had priority. Soon enough, of course, the children found themselves caught up in the civil war thanks to Czechoslovak and White military successes. By fall most of the children were in White territory, unable to head back home and worried about the looming winter. Funds had run out and some of their caretakers had abandoned them. The children were living in different towns and villages, and relied on the generosity of local peasant families to secure enough food to eat.[200]

Representatives of the YMCA first heard about the children's from Czechoslovak soldiers. They believed their care would be an appropriate project for the Red Cross. Association men had met Tucker as his train arrived in Omsk, and told him about the youngsters. Tucker and others in the Red Cross were keen to restrict refugee work, but not when it came to children. The Siberian commission promised to provide for all the children.[201] Tucker put Alfred Swan, a Russian-born Englishman employed by the YMCA, in

[199]Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[200]Jane Swan, *The Lost Children: A Russian Odyssey* (Carlisle, PA: South Mountain Press, 1989), 4–12; Teusler to Davison, 18 Jan 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; *Second Semi-Annual Report*, 32.

[201]Swan, *Lost Children*, 24, 22, 27.

charge of the scattered groups on behalf of the Red Cross.[202] Over the course of the next several months, the Red Cross helped organize the various "colonies," provided needed supplies such as sweaters and blankets, and gave leaders money to pay for food, housing, and other expenses. Conditions improved for the children.[203] In the spring the Red Cross was overseeing colonies in Irbit, Tumen', Taiga, Petropavlovsk, Ufa, Irkutsk, and Utskaia-Stanitsa. At that point, the Red Cross expected that most of the youngsters would return to their parents before the onset of winter. If this did not come to pass, Simmons recommended that aid to the colonies continue through the winter of 1919–20 "as we cannot forsake these citizens of future Russia."[204] Assistance to them would be the Red Cross's small contribution to Russian state-building, relief workers judged.

In an effort to gather some of the groups together in a more appropriate spot, that spring the Red Cross established "an agricultural colony at Lake Turgoiak," located between Cheliabinsk and Ufa. It was "the westernmost outpost of American Red Cross work under the Siberian Commission—it was, in fact, in European Russia, across the line of the Urals."[205] The facility, which could house up to twelve hundred children, was secured with the assistance of several government departments.[206] Five hundred children eventually took up residence there. "Under the guidance and tutorage of Red Cross workers, they were, at the

[202]Tucker, "Report on Trip with Red Cross Sanitary Train No. 1," 14 Nov 1918, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. Tucker later claimed that "a Russian woman, a princess I believe," informed him "of large groups of children who had been sent to the border of Siberia for safety and who, as she expressed it, were practically running wild. She asked whether the Red Cross could do something for them." Tucker, "Siberia," 109.

[203]Excerpt from Allen to M. G. Scheitlin, 30 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[204]Simmons to Teusler, 17 Apr 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 Special Mission Report.

[205]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 32.

[206]Allen to Farrand, 5 June 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR—Oct 1918–Jun 1919

end of [June], receiving a training whose benefits were quick to show."[207] As was the case elsewhere in Russia, children were accorded a special place in American hearts. American soldiers at Spasskoe, for example, decided to serve a Christmas dinner and give gifts to one hundred children living in a nearby orphanage. Afterward, the soldiers agreed that it "was the most wonderful Christmas Eve [they] had ever known. In the midst of the long, cold winter, with suffering and despair everywhere about [them], the night stood out as a picture of happiness one could wish never to forget."[208]

The YMCA was not involved in relief work in any systematic way, but the association did have programs for Russian civilians. By mid-summer many of the 103 American secretaries and their two hundred local assistants were doing city or community service work in a number of places. The association had its own buildings in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and Harbin, and was offering services to townspeople in Irkutsk, Krasnoiarsk, Novo Nikolaevsk, Omsk, and Tomsk. Earlier work was done in Cheliabinsk and Ekaterinburg before those cities were evacuated ahead of the White military defeat. (See chapter 7.) There were similar activities in each location, including educational, recreational, physical, and religious programs. These ranged from moving picture screenings, athletic competitions, and boys' summer camps, to English classes, scientific and religious lectures, and teacher training. Association secretaries—Americans and Russians—worked with local schools, community leaders, governments, and church officials. They organized Boy Scout troops, and at least one of their wives formed a Girl Scout club. Showing off American culture, know-how, and engaging audiences in religious conversations were considered

[207]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 32.
[208]Sylvian G. Kindall, *American Soldiers in Siberia* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1945), 242–44.

important work by the YMCA. So too was working to develop in young men the association's particular ideal of manhood: religious faith, Protestant morality, hard work, and physical fitness. Most projects had almost no direct link to religious teaching, but secretaries were meant to try to introduce religion when they could. The secretaries were, generally speaking, interested in remaining in Russia permanently. In 1918–19 they were laying the groundwork for the future.[209] The "constructive" work they were doing was meant to better the Russian condition and demonstrate what the association could teach Russians, as well as what it might be able to accomplish if it were to extend its reach.

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The two American aid organizations undertook a variety of work from the fall of 1918 to the spring of the following year. From assistance to Czechoslovak and Russian soldiers, to aid for refugees and civilians, American representatives were involved in a large number of different activities. Members of the AEF and the other Allied forces were also served by the Red Cross and YMCA, but service to them took a back seat to work for the Czechoslovak and Russian armies. The Siberian commission's planned budget for the first three months of 1919 is telling of just how significant Red Cross efforts for Czechoslovak and Russian soldiers were compared to camp service for American servicemen. Expenditures on the former were more than fifteen times the amount planned for the latter.[210]

Politics necessarily permeated the work of both organizations. The YMCA and

[209]Phelps to Mott, Vladi, 15 Jul 1919, "Report of Work of the American YMCA in Siberia January 1 to June 30, 1919," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19; Hollinger to Colton, 15 May 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–May 1919; Gott, "Report of the City Department of the Y.M.C.A. for the Month of August 1918 at Harbin, Manchuria," in YMCA Russia, box 15, C & R 1918–24.

[210]"Medical Service" accounted for $325,000; "Czech & Russian Supplies & Relief," $100,000; and "Camp Service," $25,000. Even larger amounts were planned for civilian and refugee relief efforts. ARC Budget for Jan–Mar 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04—SC—C & C.

American Red Cross undertook activities that stepped on Russian toes. When they did not, Russian authorities sometimes used their presence and programs to their own advantage. Still, criticism was common and—in the case of the YMCA—even crippling at times. Russian military authorities gladly accepted clothing, drugs, equipment, and supplies, but saw much less need to put up with Americans themselves. American ideas—democracy and freedom—were accepted even less in Kolchak's Siberia. At the same time, though, local and district governments and institutions took American aid and advice more willingly than did the men in the highest political and military offices. The Red Cross and YMCA took different approaches to work in Siberia. Politically, the Red Cross allied itself closely with the Kolchak government. The YMCA was never able to come to accord with the regime's most powerful men. This period was a time of expansion for both organizations, and for figuring out, often by trial and error, how they wished to proceed. The Siberian commission found itself breaking the Red Cross's own rules. The YMCA was stymied by what Phelps believed were arbitrary restrictions.

Americans were, they believed, investing in Russia's future. The Red Cross's humanitarian aid and related services made a difference. Its practical efforts made the lives of many people a little bit healthier and more secure for a time. The Red Cross as well as the YMCA wished to build up goodwill toward the United States on the part of Russians, Czechoslovaks, and people of other nationalities. Americans also wanted to show politicians, local administrators, military commanders, professionals of various kinds, and community leaders how they could accomplish their own goals more efficiently and effectively. By demonstrating how to run children's playgrounds, and by organizing athletic meets, setting up specialized hospitals, running sanitary trains, managing refugee shelters, and showing

motion pictures, they hoped to lead by example. The future was promising, but only if Russians heeded American advice and embraced modern methods.

CHAPTER 7

"Demonstrating America's friendship for Russia"[1]
From Advance to Defeat with Kolchak, 1919

> We are going toward Irkutsk on the Sechass Express through the land of Nitchevo.[2]
>
> God help this country this winter.[3]
>
> The problem of Siberia is not for us to solve, but it is for us to make it easier for the people themselves to solve by taking from them as much as we can of their burden in ministering to the sick, clothing the naked, and in helping those who are mentally and spiritually groping in the dark to find the light for which they seek. . . . As the world progresses let us watch events with keen happiness, knowing that we have in a measure been instrumental in helping Siberia through the pains of renaissance into the new life of enlightenment and freedom.[4]

In the early summer of 1919 the American Red Cross had extensive operations throughout Siberia. From Vladivostok to Lake Turgoiak, more than forty-three hundred miles away,[5] the Red Cross was involved in an impressive variety of medical, sanitation, and welfare services. While professing neutrality, its extensive work had an important political goal: the preservation of the Kolchak regime. The Siberian commission remained loyal to Kolchak to the bitter end, and he was thankful for the assistance. The Russian administration and military leadership thought much less favourably of the YMCA. The association's efforts to expand its activities to the Russian armed forces in an official way had come to naught, but secretaries had plenty to do. They provided services and goods to soldiers of many nationalities in travelling club cars or stationary huts. City work secretaries were hard at

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[1]Hollinger to Mott, 14 Oct 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Oct–Dec 1919.
[2]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 80.
[3]Clark to "Old Pal," 19 Oct 1919, in HIA, Marmaduke R. Clark papers, folder 4.
[4][Riley Allen,] "The New Year," *New Year's Extra* 13, no. 23 (Jan 1920): 1. This was a special issue of the *Siberian Commission Bulletin*, and a copy is available in HIA, Mary Catherine Roberts, box 1, Scrapbook.
[5]*Second Semi-Annual Report*, 3.

work in Vladivostok, Harbin, and a handful of other places. The YMCA looked forward to expanding its complement of programs to new groups of people.

This chapter covers the work of the American YMCA and the Red Cross's Siberian commission in the latter half of 1919. It details some of the programs and services offered Russian soldiers, refugees, railway employees, American troops, former prisoners of war, and different groups of Russians resident in the towns and rural parts of Siberia and the Russian Far East. The chapter concentrates on the relationship between the two American organizations and the Kolchak regime during the White military retreat across Siberia. The Red Cross robustly backed Kolchak for humanitarian and political reasons. The YMCA began to settle into community work after having finally failed to convince the government that its services would improve the army's fighting chances. Both organizations were pushed further east by Bolshevik advances until they found their geographical reach severely restricted.

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In the spring and early summer Americans were confident Kolchak would prevail on the battlefield. They were not alone in this, for recent events gave reason for cautious celebration. Kolchak began his counteroffensive in early March. One of his armies attacked at Ufa, and successfully defeated the Bolshevik Fifth Army later that month.[6] In late April the Russian Army seemed poised to make the drive to Moscow and beyond.[7] Representatives of the Red Cross had faith in Kolchak's military capabilities during the first few months of the advance. Kolchak's military successes by early June were such that, although there had

[6]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 140–41.
[7]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 308–12.

already been some set-backs, "it was hoped that the American Red Cross, before the coming winter, might operate in Ufa, Perm and possibly Samara," with increased activities in Cheliabinsk, Ekaterinburg, and Tumen'.[8] And, indeed, supplies were sent from Omsk to Cheliabinsk in preparation for opening a warehouse in the latter spot.[9] Kolchak's government and military recognized the challenges then facing them, and gave the Americans control over all hospitals in Cheliabinsk.[10]

After the good news about Kolchak's military fortunes reached the ears of western statesmen, there was renewed activity on the Russian question in Paris, London, and Washington. Up to this point, the Allied leaders at the peace talks in Paris had made several attempts toward accord with Lenin's government. Soviet aloofness and Kolchak's military successes focused Allied attention on the Siberian leader. Western leaders seriously considered extending official diplomatic recognition to his regime. In early May, the US State Department urged recognition as long as Kolchak promised to institute democratic reforms and meet foreign obligations.[11] The Council of Four at Paris—President Wilson, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and Italian Premier Vittorio Orlando—considered what to do about the Russian situation over the next few weeks. In early June, they wrote to Kolchak, demanding assurances that change was coming before they sent more military aid, arranged financial support, or gave further consideration to extending recognition. Kolchak needed more economic and military aid from the Allies if his armies were going to defeat the Bolsheviks and his government survive.

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[8]C. McDonald, "Report Covering the Activities of the Western Division . . . ," 1, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408—Western Division—Letters Reports etc.

[9]Charette to McDonald, 22 Mar 1920, in ibid.

[10]Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 306.

[11]Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 141.

He replied a few days later; American, British, and French leaders were satisfied, and military aid continued for the moment. But recognition was no longer on offer. Word of White military defeats was the main reason why this was so.[12]

Kolchak's forces suffered some early losses in late April and May, but the first major blow came on 9 June, when Ufa, taken from the Bolsheviks in mid-March, fell to the Red Army. The Whites were unprepared and left behind large amounts of food and military equipment. By the end of the month Kolchak's armies were essentially back to where they had been at the outset of the spring offensive.[13] From its new base in the Volga region, the Red Army then drove through the Urals, taking Perm (1 July), Zlatoust (13 July), Ekaterinburg (15 July), and finally Cheliabinsk (24 July), given up without a fight. (White plans to trap Red forces there failed miserably.) The retreat of the Russian Army toward Kurgan and the Tobol River began on 2 August. By mid-month the two sides were facing each other across the Tobol.[14]

The Red Cross evacuated its staff, patients, and young charges ahead of the advancing Red Army. Plans to establish a semi-permanent home for all members of the Petrograd Children's Colony at Lake Turgoiak were abandoned. The several hundred children already at Lake Turgoiak were quickly moved in mid-July. They began a long journey to Vladivostok. Commission representatives decided it was safer to transport them east than leave them in Bolshevik hands.[15] The Kolchak government agreed.[16] Though the decision to move the children was later criticized, Red Cross workers felt vindicated when

[12]Ibid., 152; Thompson, *Russia*, 305.
[13]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 309, 316, 317.
[14]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 148–49; Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 482.
[15]Allen to Nichols, 1 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[16]See Davis, "From the Notes," 12, in Davis papers, box 1, folder 3.

White soldiers looted the colony's stores during their retreat. The hospital in Tumen' was evacuated on 18 July, and later so was the new hospital at Cheliabinsk, with all its 317 patients. The last Red Cross personnel apparently left Cheliabinsk less than twelve hours before the arrival of the Red Army.[17] The first few days of the evacuation were "hell" for at least one young American journalist. She was shocked by all the typhus-stricken refugees and soldiers on the railway behind and to each side of the American contingent. Dr. Henry Ware Newman and his colleagues were used to such sights, but he recognized that "for the new arrivals from America it did look like something of a visit to some lower region." The summer scenery, however, was beautiful.[18] Other Red Cross representatives wound down their work in Kolchak's western Siberia capital city, Omsk, in preparation for a quick evacuation, should it come to that. Remaining behind was not considered an option.

Earlier in the summer, before the losses piled up, President Wilson and his Allied colleagues still pondered what to do with Russia. In an effort to gather some reliable, up-to-date information about the situation in Siberia, the American president sent Ambassador Morris to Omsk. He was tasked with reporting on what he found, making recommendations about future American support, convincing Kolchak that reforms were necessary for continued aid, and coming up with an estimate of the costs of economic reconstruction.[19] With instructions in hand, Morris, joined by General Graves, arrived in Omsk on 21 July after a relatively quick ten-day railway journey from Vladivostok. Upon his arrival, Morris

[17]Swan, *Lost Children*, ch. 10; Allen to Nichols, 1 Oct 1919, and Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, both in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Allen to Farrand, 21 Aug 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; "Facts about the PCC," in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5; and "N.W. Division Secures New Department Head," *Bulletin of the American Red Cross Northwestern Division* 3, no. 14 (15 May 1920): 2, found in Davis papers, box 1, folder 1.

[18]Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 308.

[19]Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 155; Maddox, *Unknown War with Russia*, 105; Bacino, *Reconstructing Russia*, 147.

sat down with the young foreign minister. Sukin got straight to the point: He asked that the United States ship large amounts of military equipment to Siberia. Sukin's request annoyed the ambassador, but the bold foreign minister may be excused for believing he might get what he wanted from the US government. American officials at Omsk, including and especially Consul General Harris, supported the Siberian leader in concert with other Allied representatives. In the words of an annoyed Phelps, Harris and his colleagues "stake[d] everything on Kolschak." More meetings followed, first with Kolchak, then with other Russian government officials, Russian and Allied military leaders, and American representatives. Morris was in western Siberia for several weeks. By the end of the trip he was "fed up" with Harris and others for their all-out support for Kolchak.[20]

Morris came away from his meetings unimpressed with the government and not hopeful about its military chances. But he was unwilling to give up completely on Kolchak's armed forces and recommended they be sent several hundred thousand more rifles, uniforms, and rounds of ammunition, and a few thousand more machine guns. He called for Kolchak's regime to be officially recognized as Russia's provisional government if it survived the present military crisis, that $420 million in credits be extended, and that American troops replace Czechoslovak forces guarding the railway. This was asking too much. Instead, Secretary of State Lansing asked Morris to assure Kolchak that a shipment of previously promised rifles would be sent, and that other economic assistance was still on its way.[21]

American officials were not the only ones who could be accused of being pro-

[20]Maddox, *Unknown War with Russia*, 104–5; Saul, *War and Revolution*, 396–97; quote from Phelps, memo, 3 Sep 1919, in Phelps papers, C & R 1918–19 (30); "Smash Red Flotilla on Lake Onega," *New York Times* (6 Aug 1919).

[21]Maddox, *Unknown War with Russia*, 105, 121–22. For a full account of Morris and Graves's trip and their subsequent written reports, see Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*, 179–87.

Kolchak. The Red Cross leadership was equally so inclined. Representatives of the Siberian commission were in Omsk for meetings, too, including Charles McDonald, head of the western division work, and Dr. Fred P. Manget, recently arrived from Cheliabinsk and the commission's acting chairman.[22] The work the organization was doing—supplying, operating, and staffing hospitals; providing other health and sanitation services; and distributing crucial supplies to soldiers—was clearly significant for Kolchak's armed forces. The Red Cross had no intention of abandoning anti-Bolshevik Russian soldiers and civilians at this crucial time.

Teusler was one of Kolchak's most vocal supporters among Americans in Siberia. He was then in the United States, updating his superiors on his work, and trying to get more men and supplies for the commission. In addition, he reported to the State Department,[23] and took time to speak publicly about Bolshevism. In practice, he said, it was "murder, robbery, lust, tyranny, chaos." Kolchak, the man Americans should support, was "a splendid leader [who] impresses one with his integrity, frankness and genuine desire to serve Russia loyally and bring some stability out of the terrific chaos which exists [in Russia] today, thanks to the destructive and often brutal campaign of Lenin and his followers."[24] Teusler did not keep quiet about his Russian political preferences. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Simmons and Dr. Emerson shared his views. Others did too,[25] though with the passage of time

[22]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, and Allen to Nichols, 1 Oct 1919, both in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[23]Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*, 180.

[24]"Existing Bolshevism vs. Theory: Red Cross Commissioner in Siberia Says It Is Direct Attack Upon Civilization," *New York Times* (27 July 1919).

[25]See, for example, this article written by a leading member of the Siberian Commission: Doremus Scudder, "The Hope of Russia," *Atlantic* 124, no. 6 (Dec 1919): 831–37. Scudder referred to Bolshevik rule as "an abyss of hellishness absolutely unique in human history," and believed Kolchak to be and "honest democratic leader." Ibid., 823, 835.

differences emerged among Americans in Siberia as to the best course of action for the United States. Many, though, believed the Red Cross's place was in Siberia with Kolchak. In the words of a former YMCA secretary in Russia, writing in the summer of 1919, the Red Cross was "part of the iron ring which has been drawn about the Russian Soviet government."[26]

The Red Cross cut down its operations in Omsk over the summer, but relief workers were still in evidence in the capital. The anti-typhus train, based in the vicinity of Omsk since 11 July, was busy dealing with Russian sanitary trains coming in from nearby battlefields. Red Cross personnel cleaned the trains, bathed patients, and provided them with underwear, sheets, blankets, and medical supplies. Conditions were "often nothing less than frightful." More than twenty thousand wounded and typhus-stricken soldiers were attended to from then until 21 August.[27] After the government and city officials asked for assistance looking after large groups of refugees on the move near Omsk, McDonald quickly arranged for a team of Red Cross nurses, doctors, and other workers to care for them. They provided food and medical aid, "adding new strength to the people to continue their arduous journeys." Help was also provided to the military's medical department in the form of a sanitary train put together by Red Cross personnel. New projects elsewhere included a large hospital at Tomsk which opened in late July (staffed by Dr. Newman and others evacuated from parts further west), and a smaller one in Verkhne Udinsk.[28] According to commission secretary Riley

[26]William Adams Brown, Jr., "The Moral Issue in Russia," *Atlantic* 124, no. 1 (Jul 1919): 94.

[27]Allen to Farrand, 6 Aug 1919, and Allen to Farrand, 3 Sep 1919 (quote), both in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. The train's director contracted typhus himself and died on 26 August, the third American Red Cross employee who died while serving in Siberia: Allen to Farrand, 10 Sep 1919, in ibid.

[28]Allen to Farrand, 6 Aug 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 308. The ARC's sanitary train left Omsk for Vladivostok on 19 September carrying 385

Allen, the Red Cross's policy during the summer evacuations was "to administer relief to the maximum of our facilities even when armies were crumbling and the Government was tottering, and when the Russian sanitary as well as military organization was collapsing."[29]

Despite the organization's professed neutrality, relief was only ever given in White Siberia, not Red. There is no evidence that any of the Siberian commission's top men thought about working in Soviet Russia, and it would be surprising if they had. The Red Cross was unpopular in Lenin's territory because of its close association with the Kolchak regime. Dr. Frederick Barnum even heard that the Bolsheviks issued orders for Red Cross personnel to be shot on sight as enemies of the people![30] Clearly, whatever goodwill Robins, Wardwell, and Webster had earned was completely negated by subsequent events and the close association between the Siberian commission, the Czechoslovak corps, and anti-Bolshevik Russians in Siberia. The advance of the Red Army could only result in mission members moving east; the sole question at hand was one of timing. Even if working in the Soviet zone had at all appealed to the organization's representatives, in mid-July Harris, the top US diplomat in the interior, issued definite instructions that no Americans be left in Bolshevik territory.[31]

The military situation and Kolchak's needs over the next few months were the main topics of discussion among the Red Cross men at Omsk. An important side issue was what to do to keep American women safe from the advancing Bolsheviks. The women, in western Siberia and throughout Kolchak's Russia, were engaged in a variety of endeavours. They

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wounded Russian soldiers: Allen to Farrand, 3 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. Hospitals all along the railway east of Omsk were so crowded, that 150 patients were still on board when the train reached Vladivostok. Allen to M. G. Scheitlin (extract), 30 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[29]Allen to Farrand, 10 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[30]Diary, entry for 8 Oct 1919, in BA, Frederick Lee Barnum papers.

[31]Allen to Farrand, 6 Aug 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

worked as doctors, nurses, nurses' aides, and public health professionals; did refugee and civilian aid; and held administrative and managerial posts. They included young unmarried women as well as more experienced professionals from missionary communities in the Far East, and a few women who were in Siberia alongside their husbands. Some of them found in the Red Cross (and YMCA and YWCA) "an alternative to marriage, meaningful work, and emancipation from at least some of the gendered constraints of their culture," as has been written of female missionaries at this time.[32] One American woman came in for special praise for her tireless work as the "hostess" of a Red Cross barracks in Vladivostok. "Mother" Hannah B. Campbell was the subject of a spirited goodbye in verse.[33] Still, and despite the importance to the work of the Siberian commission, they were not free of contemporary attitudes. Women were considered to be more fragile than men, and more needing of protection. Furthermore, the Red Cross men could well have been worried about the negative publicity that would result if their women suffered harm.

To go over plans for their evacuation, Morris called a meeting with the Red Cross men, Harris, Graves, another AEF officer, and Colonel George Emerson, head of the Russian Railway Service Corps. The men were specifically concerned about the American female staff of the Red Cross then stationed in western Siberia. Because there were so many refugees "pouring down the tracks" ahead of the retreating White forces, Colonel Emerson feared Red Cross personnel would be stuck in Omsk unless they departed right away.[34] If that happened, they might find themselves at the mercy of the Red Army and Bolshevik officials.

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[32]Reeves-Ellington, Sklar, and Shemo, introduction to *Competing Kingdoms*, ed. Reeves-Ellington, Sklar, Shemo, 4.

[33]Riley H. Allen, "Mother," 14 Feb 1920, in Pickett papers, box 1, C.

[34]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Harris to Vladivostok, 24 Jul 1919, in Harris papers, American Consulate—Vladivostok Jul–Sep 1919.

This was hardly a happy thought, given evidence commission men saw of Bolshevik atrocities and fears about retaliation for the Red Cross's support for Kolchak. The railways of western Siberian were enormously congested just then, and conditions would worsen if the military reverses continued. According to the Siberian commission's Margaret Matthews, who was in charge of civilian relief in western Siberia, as many as sixty thousand refugees in one day had recently passed through Tumen', a town located on the railroad northwest of Omsk. On the road from Cheliabinsk to the south the situation was no better.[35] Still, McDonald and Manget disagreed with Emerson. They did not want the female staff sent away just yet. Harris backed them. The consul and the two Red Cross men believed there was no need to act so hastily. There would be plenty of time to move the women if the situation worsened, they thought. Harris had more faith in Kolchak's defences and did not think Omsk was in danger. He promised to take the women out of Omsk on his own train if necessary.[36]

Harris, Manget, and McDoland did not get their way. Morris's orders prevailed and most of the female personnel were moved. (Fifteen women remained behind, only to be sent away by Harris two weeks later.[37]) They were sent to Irkutsk and Verkhne Udinsk, and women-specific evacuation orders were also forwarded to Tomsk, Novo Nikolaevsk, Taiga, and Krasnoiarsk.[38] Members of the Russian government were unhappy about this turn of events. They believed "that the removal of the Red Cross workers is calculated to precipitate a panic at Omsk, where nervous tension already [was] running high." To minimize the

[35]Allen to Farrand, 6 Aug 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.
[36]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[37]Harris to Vladivostok, 24 Jul 1919, in Harris papers, American Consulate—Vladivostok Jul–Sep 1919; paraphrase of cable sent 8 Aug 1919 from AmConsul Omsk, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel.
[38]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

impact of the departure, Sukin asked that it be carried out in secret.[39] Most of the men left not long later, and by 23 August all "organized work" in Omsk was done and the warehouse was being emptied. This did not please Russian authorities, including Kolchak, Sukin, and the new commander in chief and minister of war, General Dietrichs. They wanted the Red Cross to continue its work in Siberia, and restart full operations in Omsk.[40]

Before August was up the women in Irkutsk were moved again, to Verkhne Udinsk; the large American military presence there should ensure their safety, the men believed. Morris was likely responsible for the decision.[41] As Dr. Frederick P. Keppel, the American Red Cross's director of foreign operations, put it in a note to Teusler, "it is evident that the Red Cross is not altogether a free agent in such cases."[42] It had never been, of course. These partial personnel evacuations did not completely end Red Cross work in these cities. Hospitals were kept open, served by American (male) doctors and Russian nurses. Russian employees and other volunteers kept up as much of the organization's other programs as they were able.[43]

What the women themselves thought of their forced departure is not known. But perhaps the reaction of Florence Farmer, the head nurse at Tumen', to the evacuation from that town in July is instructive. She had "refused point blank to leave it and it required the services of a British Officer, with mental as well as physical force, to persuade her to leave the hospital for the station." Teusler, in reporting the incident, stressed that she had not been

[39]"Red Cross Leaving Omsk," *New York Times* (26 Aug 1919).

[40]McDonald to ARC, part of Harris to Vladivostok, 23 Aug 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Jul–Sep 1919.

[41]Morris and Graves were then in Irkutsk. Albert W. Palmer, "A Summer in Siberia," 1919, transcript, entry for 29–31 Aug 1919, in YMCA archives, Palmer file.

[42]Keppel to Teusler, 28 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel.

[43]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

"insubordinate" and that "all of us admire her for her pluck and fine courage in the face of real danger."[44] In a letter to the Red Cross's director of nursing in Washington, Farmer understandably downplayed the event. She explained that "it was very hard to close such a beautiful place, after we had been working at it all winter and summer. We were all fond of it as if it was our real home."[45]

Siberia was not the "real home" of any of these Americans. But they made the best of their situations, and many enjoyed their experiences greatly. One nurse, in a letter written to the *American Journal of Nursing* while she on the railroad heading west, noted that although the trip from Vladivostok to Omsk took a long time, she and her companions had not tired of the journey. "We shall all be more than ready for work when we reach our destination, but in the meantime we are having a wonderfully interesting and unique trip, and we are enjoying every minute of it, and get as much in an educational way out of it." They spent their time aboard the train "reading, writing, knitting, sewing and crocheting to occupy us indoors, besides cards, and trying to learn something of this terrible Russian language. The words don't seem to make the same impression on our minds that the European languages do." Short visits to towns along the way provided amusement, and games of "bean-bag" and "three men tag," singing, and religious services also filled the time. Not everything was pleasant, of course. This particular nurse was saddened to see refugees "herded into the freight cars like cattle" despite "all this rich farming land and timber to build homes." She concluded her letter by commenting that "they say this extreme cold has much the same effect on the people as extreme heat does. They stay indoors so much to keep warm that they

[44]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, in ibid.

[45]Florence Farmer to Clara D. Noyes, 6 Oct 1919, in LAC, Florence Farmer fonds, C—1911–20 & 1968.

get listless."[46] Russians, the saying implied, were victims of their own climate; outsiders were better equipped to exploit the land.[47] After seeing parts of Siberia, Manchuria, and the Russian Far East, the Red Cross's Dr. William Bucher similarly exclaimed the entire region was ripe for conquest: "Surely there never was a more beautiful land, virgin, and sleeping with wealth untold—waiting to be despoiled by man"![48] This "man" presumably represented the United States. Once "despoiled," Russia, not quite like America or Europe, might become more like them.

Safety concerns were not unique to American women. Siberia was a dangerous place, and not just points west of Omsk where the Red Army might appear with little advance warning. Partisans and other bandits terrorized certain sections of the railway and countryside, and they blew up tracks and bridges, further crippling the already-overburdened transportation system. Cossack warlords could be even more vicious, to the point of murdering American soldiers.[49] There were "constant Bolshevik uprisings" that summer between Irkutsk and Vladivostok, claimed a YMCA man. This was surely an exaggeration, but was telling of how raids, urban revolts, and train wrecks were significant concerns for Americans.[50] Trains did not run at night for a time on the Khabarovsk line due to safety reasons.[51] While travelling through Manchuria in July Dr. Bucher "saw many spans of

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[46]"M.," letter to the editor, *American Journal of Nursing* 20, no. 20 (Nov 1919): 153–54. The letter is headlined, "Glimpses of a Trip through Siberia."

[47]Another American, Kendall Emerson, held the opposite view: "Relentless nature forges strong character." Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 58.

[48]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 82. Emerson similarly described Manchurian soil as having "a virgin fertility." Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 8.

[49]See Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 184.

[50]Jenny, letter, 28 Jun 1919, in "YMCA Service to American and Allied Armed Forces...," typescript, in YMCA archives, Arnold Eugene Jenny papers, box 102, file 6. For more on rumoured Bolshevik attacks, see Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 82.

[51]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entry for 28–29 Jul 1919.

bridges lined up along the tracks, twisted and blown into wry shapes, cars with whole tops blown off, and other evidences of Bolshevism."[52] (His equation of Bolshevism with terrorism was common, if inaccurate.) Specific incidents and safety precautions were not the stuff of an over-active rumour mill. A visiting YMCA lecturer surprised AEF troops by not carrying a revolver; all the secretaries the soldiers had met previously had done so.[53] Another YMCA secretary was shot in the jaw and shoulder by a stray bullet at the end of July at Pogranichnaia. A raid by "Chinese bandits" on the town was to blame.[54] "It makes one's very heart sick with all the crime and horror in this land of such perfect natural beauty," commented the Red Cross's Benjamin Davis of Siberia that summer.[55]

The physical and mental strain of working in the interior took a toll on relief personnel, some of whom had to head back to the United States earlier than intended.[56] One American secretary, Arnold Jenny, was particularly affected by the violence and misery all around him. His train was wrecked near Harbin in late July. All but the last few cars were "a mass of wreckage, with many dead and more seriously injured." Luckily, Jenny had been near the back of the train when it happened. In the days that followed, scouts reported signs of another imminent attack, including "Red flags and skull and crossbones flag displayed in a hillside clearing - ominous!" News of other "misadventures at the hands of Partisans [were] reported from other areas," too.[57] Jenny arrived in Vladivostok on 2 August, after several days spent worrying about whether he would make it back alive. "I hope never again to see

[52]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 60.
[53]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entry for 23 Jul 1919.
[54]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entry for 28–29 Jul 1919.
[55]Davis, "From the Notes," 5, in Davis papers, box 1, folder 3.
[56]Excerpts from letter, Benjamin B. Davis to Catherine Davis, 17 Dec 1919, in Davis papers, box 1, folder 3.
[57]"Timeline of travel and work...," in YMCA archives, Jenny papers, box 102, file 10.

nor experience the things of this 2,000-odd miles of travel," he wrote to a loved one. Although he was not physically hurt, the trip's events and sights left him requiring hospitalization. "Mad dreams" haunted his sleep for months to come.[58] Four months later, Jenny was still experiencing the aftereffects of his trip: "Every time I hear a locomotive's shrill whistle or see one of those clumsy Russian boots (and of course I see many every day), I cannot help reviewing the scenes of that night: the narrow valley, the rapidly approaching night, the rush of the engine and the fatal plunge, the noise, the shrieks, the groans and all the sad confusion."[59] Today, he might be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Jenny's organization, the YMCA, was never as close to the Kolchak regime as was the Siberian commission. Unlike the Red Cross, the association was not granted official status by the government. The YMCA's work was more hands-on than that of the Red Cross. Russian authorities, and especially the military leadership, preferred the delivery of needed medical equipment, drugs, and supplies to the active presence of American workers in the military and among civilians. Given that the Red Cross did send Americans all over Siberia and the Far East, it too was unwanted by Russians, according to Dr. Bucher. Writing about Americans in general, he noted his disapproval at them "being mixed up in this affair." "We are in no manner wanted," he believed. Even the American railway engineers "say themselves that their presence is an imposition as the Russians can run their railroads perfectly well without their help."

> It is one of our great faults and misfortunes to want to distribute our help before we are asked. It is one

[58]Jenny, letter, 10 Aug 1919; "mad dreams": Jenny to Mildred Ellis, 23 Nov 1919, both in "YMCA Service to American and Allied Armed Forces...," typescript, in Jenny papers, box 102, file 6.

[59]Jenny to Mildred Ellis, 23 Nov 1919, in Jenny papers, box 102, file 6.

> of the things every human animal resents. There is a spirit of independence in a child who will stop playing with a toy when you show him how to use it; he wants to learn for himself. There has never been a bigger mistake than our coming over here. Red Cross and all had better clear out and let them settle their own difficulties; when they ask us for help will be time enough to lend a hand in dealing out our generosity.[60]

Dr. Emerson, whose outlook was coloured by Kolchak's military successes and warm welcomes given him by army officials hoping for American assistance, also saw that a "court of condemnation [was] now in session in Siberia and sitting in relentless judgment on all things American." Still, he was hopeful that the efforts of American engineers, which gave "real promise of energising force for the railroad so sadly needed," and those of the Red Cross, might yet salvage "the vestiges of American reputation."[61]

Dr. Emerson did not mention the YMCA. The association had few genuine friends among top American civil and Russian military officials in Siberia. It was "in bad repute."[62] Though it had once been eager to cooperate with the government to provide services to Russian soldiers, the YMCA never accepted Kolchak's burdensome conditions and restrictions. The duplicitous behaviour of Omsk officials in early 1919 did not put an end to attempts at accord, but nothing ever came of future negotiations. By early April the general staff had ordered the association to end its work at the front. Sukin told secretary Edward Heald that although it was in better favour than it had been, "there was still much ignorance and suspicion about the Y.M.C.A." He explained that, because of the military offensive then just under way, "the next two months were going to be extremely critical. They staked their all on the Russian army. It was their gem, their precious jewel, and they were guarding it as a priceless treasure. They were afraid to risk any outside influences on the front during this

[60]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 74.
[61]Emerson, "A Trans-Siberian Land Log," 91. See also Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 29.
[62]Simmons, "Report of the Special Mission," 28.

critical time." Sukin was sure that if the YMCA's work in the rear was successful, it "would be wanted again on the front when the pressure and the crisis were past." The Omsk office instructed the seven secretaries working further west to end their efforts. The general staff offered to purchase left-over supplies.[63]

The closing of YMCA work at the front was a serious blow to association representatives as well as to the men they were serving. Heald was especially exasperated. He had already spent the past month and a half in "daily interviews and negotiations" in an attempt to secure the office quarters requisitioned for YMCA use in Omsk.

> Then to receive an evacuation order from the Government involving the closing of half a dozen clubs, the disposal of all non-transportable property, the hastened disposition of canteen supplies worth over half a million rubles owing to impossibility of getting them transported back to the rear, the closing of a sausage factory producing half a million rubles worth of supplies monthly, the closing of a bakery, the disposition of some fifty or sixty Association assigned cars, and the problem of what to do with a large staff of Russian and war prisoner helpers and assistants thus thrown out of work: all these details to be handled by seven American secretaries in a territory a thousand miles in length and two hundred in breadth. And this had to be carried on in a region where the officers and soldiers were beseeching the aid of the Association, where the needs were overwhelming as compared with the rear, and where the withdrawal of the Association was regarded as America's desertion in the hour of need. American consular, Red Cross and military representatives took the same view. Secretaries and consular officials wired in to the Omsk headquarters for a letter or statement which could be given to the local Cheliabinsk and Ekaterineburg papers giving the reasons for the withdrawal. And yet to have given such a statement would have been regarded by the General Staff as political activity to discredit the General Staff which had issued the order, and both Staff representatives and Russian friends and local military representatives warned against making any such statements, as likely to risk the entire work of the Association in the rear and the rest of Siberia.[64]

The Russian government was playing politics in its dealings with the YMCA. By choosing to silently comply with what they considered to be arbitrary orders, secretaries hoped to keep the peace between themselves and the authorities. But they also risked serious damage to the association's reputation among Russian soldiers and civilians. It was a dilemma foreign aid workers would encounter many times over the course of the twentieth century.

Ever optimistic, YMCA attempts to come to terms with the Omsk government

[63]Heald to Colton, 4 Apr 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Omsk—1917–19.
[64]Ibid.

continued. At the end of May Phelps sent Sukin a full run-down of his organization's work in Russia thus far, including information about the Kerensky permissions. He outlined "the activities which the YMCA is prepared to undertake in Russia as an expression of the good will and sympathy of the American people towards the people of Russia."[65] Harris backed Phelps's submission and Sukin seemed sympathetic. But the foreign minister's hands were still tied, he claimed. He advised the association that it could continue its civilian activities; the city work in Vladivostok, Harbin, and elsewhere as far west as Omsk was still ongoing. Sukin also recommended that secretary Clifford Hatfield speak with the ministers of agriculture, the interior, and education about his plans for a new type of activity, namely, rural work. The first two ministers supported him, and Hatfield went ahead with his plans. Sukin never formally respond to Phelps's submission. The result was that the YMCA was left without official status in Kolchak's Russia and was thus treated under law—and customs rules—as a commercial organization. The minister of finance ordered customs officials to collect duties from the association and for the railroad to charge for transportation. The YMCA paid a considerable amount in duty during the summer and fall of 1919 after not having done so for the previous year and a half anywhere in Russia. In addition to paying duty on goods shipped into the country, some items were held for two or three months in customs, and the association "suffered heavy losses from stealing."[66] (The Inter-Allied Railway Committee later granted the YMCA free rail shipping.[67]) American YMCA

[65]Phelps to Sukin, 30 May 1919, in LOC, Roland S. Morris papers, box 7, Red Cross YMCA.

[66]Phelps, "Annual Report of G. S. Phelps for Year ending August 31, 1919, PART II," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919; "Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2]; Phelps, "Suggested Message to the State Department regarding Status of Y.M.C.A.," 20 Sep 1919, in Morris papers, box 9, Miscellaneous reports etc. See also Phelps to Morris, 11 Jul 1919, in Morris papers, box 7, Red Cross YMCA.

[67]C. H. Smith to MacNaughten, 29 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok

secretaries were still very much at work, though. They were travelling with and serving Americans, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Yugoslavs, and others. Although Russian soldiers did not receive dedicated YMCA services, individual soldiers were welcome at association outposts in western Siberia set up to serve Czechoslovak and other Allied troops.[68]

The YMCA was seen by the Russian government—or at least by some officials in Omsk political and military circles—as more of a nuisance than anything else. Harris (and perhaps other American officials) also resented Phelps, the senior national secretary, for refusing to openly support the Kolchak regime. Kolchak and Sukin complained to Morris "that the 'Y' was a bete noir to them." The government's "American friends immediately took the position that in order to save the Kolschak government [the YMCA] should be removed from Siberia," Phelps believed.[69] Harris duly recommended that association personnel leave Omsk on 1 August; Phelps accepted the advice.[70] Though he was not subject to orders from the State Department's representative, once again Phelps had little choice but to comply with unwelcome orders. To ignore the recommendation would have been highly unusual given the general cohesion between the YMCA and the US government during this time. The Omsk staff departed the city on 12 August along with the association's Russian employees, their families, and a number of political refugees. As they travelled east, "A ribbon of trains, thirty in number, covering a solid stretch of track for ten versts [about eleven kilometres], was passed. Remains of wrecks, burned stations and houses, dynamited bridges,

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Reports—1920–23 & 1940.

[68]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia Covering the Period February 25th to September 20th 1920," 25 Oct 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[69]Phelps, memo, 3 Sep 1919, in Phelps papers, C & R 1918–19 (30).

[70]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

showed the turbulent state of the country."[71] A week after requesting the Omsk evacuation Harris advised that every secretary west of Irkutsk should head east, and once again Phelps followed suit, allowing only men serving with foreign regiments (of Czechoslovak, Polish, and Yugoslav troops) to stay in the field. He assumed the same advice had been given to all American relief workers in western Siberia.[72]

Once it became clear that the Red Cross's male employees had not been sent away, the departure of the YMCA secretaries put the association "in an embarrassing situation apropos the[ir] Russian friends." Only one association representative remained in Omsk; this was William Young Duncan, who was attached to a group of Czechoslovaks.[73] Phelps was "perfectly willing to withdraw our civilian work for the sake of our own organization, inasmuch as long ago I came to the conclusion that it would be better policy for us to get out of here and to enter from the other side with Moscow as a base, but [he told Morris in September,] I do not wish to be driven out by either Kolschak or" Harris.[74] While he bristled at his organization's lack of independence of action, he also believed that the support of the US state and war departments would improve the YMCA's standing in Siberia. Phelps told Colton that "the impression has gained ground among the Russians that we have no backing with our own government and of course that is fatal to us."[75]

Even when it came to working in the interest of foreign prisoners of war—the work

[71]"Changes in Our Personnel," *Y. M. C. A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 18 (15 Sep 1919): 2.

[72]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2]. See also correspondence in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Jul–Sep 1919.

[73]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[74]Phelps to H. S. Sneyd, 3 Sep 1919, in Phelps papers, C 1918–20. A month earlier Colton and Hibbard had paid a visit to Basil Miles, in charge of Russian affairs for the State Department. Miles agreed to cable Morris and Harris asking them "to defend the Association program and do anything in their power to further the work." Memo about "A visit to Washington by E. T. Colton and C. V. Hibbard on August 6th, 1919," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R May–Sep 1919.

[75]Phelps to Colton, 6 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, May–Sep 1919.

that had first brought American secretaries to wartime Russia several years ago—the YMCA faced Russian obstructionism and other difficulties. Now that the Great War was over, the peace signed, and reconstruction programs underway in Europe, American YMCA secretaries were no longer as reluctant to work for former enemy POWs as some had been a year earlier. "What a revelation of the tragedy and waste of war!" exclaimed Albert W. Palmer, a preacher who lectured on moral issues for the association that summer. "These men with their skill in peaceful activities first forced to the front as common fodder by the ruthless autocracy and then imprisoned for 4 years of dreary useless life, for these men had all been taken in the drive of 1915 when many of them had been at the front only a few days."[76] Help was sorely needed. The Russian government provided very little in the way of equipment, supplies, or programs. The detained men relied in the main on the efforts of agencies from their native lands and whatever extra help was given by Red Cross societies, the YMCA, and other, smaller groups.[77]

In May, after meetings in Vladivostok, Harris "suggested that there should be a thorough investigation of the condition of prisoner-of-war camps across Siberia." He decided to undertake the task, and invited Phelps and Elsa Brandström from the Swedish Red Cross to join him. YMCA secretaries, American Red Cross representatives, and others assisted in the investigation. The group visited camps in Chita, Irkutsk, Nikolsk, Novo Nikolaevsk,

[76]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entry for 30 Jul 1919. But compare with Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 19–20.

[77]There is very little published scholarly material on the prisoners of war in Siberia during after WW1: Gerald H. Davis, "The Life of Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914–1921," 163–96, in *Essays on World War I: Origins and Prisoners of War*, ed. Samuel Williamson and Peter Pastor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Davis, "National Red Cross Societies and Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914–18," *Journal of Modern History* 28, no. 1 (Jan 1993): 31–52; Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Richard B. Speed III, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), ch. 7; and Yücel Yanıkdag, "Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914–22," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 1 (Jan 1999): 69–85.

Omsk, and Tomsk, where the tour ended on 8 June.[78] In order for secretaries to take up work for former prisoners of war still detained in Siberia, they had to receive permission from Russian authorities and the US government. On 18 August the YMCA's Vladivostok office heard from the State Department that secretaries could serve POWs again.[79] Phelps asked Consul Harris for help securing permission from the Russian government for six men "to undertake this work on same lines as before nineteen seventeen."[80] In early October Harris informed the association that Raymond J. Reitzel had the go-ahead to visit the camps at Irkutsk, Kansk, Achinsk, and Krasnoiarsk.[81] This ended up being poor timing. Little could have been accomplished before the evacuations from western and central Siberia.[82]

Separate from this effort at going through official government channels, limited work was done. Further east, one American secretary, Walter Teeuwissen, "was able to break though the opposition of the Russian prison authorities" at Nikolsk in the fall, where at least two thousand men were detained. YMCA work was done there out of two large barracks over the next year; there was a full-fledged program that employed nearly two hundred workers. Teeuwissen offered religious services, including Bible classes and baptisms; attended educational and leaders' meetings; and offered other assistance. His work, as well as that done by the Red Cross, was crucial for the Nikolsk prisoners' well-being.[83] Teeuwissen's

[78]"Memoirs of G. Sidney Phelps: The Drama of the Siberian Expedition of the YMCA, 1918–1920," in Phelps papers, file 28.

[79]Phelps to Mary, 18 Aug 1919, in Phelps papers, C—Mary Phelps 1918–19; letter dated 1 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Verkhne-Udinsk 1919.

[80]MacGowan to Harris, 10 Oct 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok Oct–Dec 1919.

[81]Harris to Phelps, 15 Oct 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok Oct–Dec 1919.

[82]Niles and Niles, "Report on War Work in Siberia of International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, March 15, 1920," 30 June 1921, 7, in YMCA archives, Sonquist collection.

[83]R. J. Reitzel, "From Report on War Prisoners' Work in Siberia 1919 to 1920," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R 1921 [3]; MacNaughten to Hibbard, 5 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok

Hungarians "count[ed] among the happiest days of [their] captivity those [they] spent with [him]."[84] By the summer, many of the several thousand men in the camp were "losing faith, losing their mental poise, [and] completely discouraged by the long delay" in their repatriation.[85] According to historian Gerald Davis, camp life in Russia did not offer much in the way of distraction. "Boredom and overcrowding tested their patience and even their sanity," he found.

> The prisoners searched desperately for outlets of their physical and mental energy and ways to pass the endless stretches of idle time. Paradoxically, they had also to struggle against the lethargy which seized all of them, so that they often could not bring themselves to perform the simple acts required to combat the oppression of boredom. For this they despised and pitied themselves, resolved over and over to reactivate their waning mental vigor, and fell over and over again into lassitude punctuated by angry outbursts directed at their comrades. This eroded their social and professional skills and rendered most of the captives incapable of sustained attention or completion of lengthy tasks.[86]

Ultimately, it was this "barbed wire fever" or "prison psychosis" that YMCA efforts attempted to counter. Doing so was considered important because detainment was only a temporary condition. Soon, the men would be back in their homelands attempting to rebuild their lives and lands after the devastation of war. Their psychological well-being was thus important to ensuring the development of pro-American democratic republics in central and eastern Europe, Americans believed.

Existing humanitarian assistance left much to be desired. The Nikolsk area was occupied by the Japanese military, and it afforded some relief. Most aid, however, "came

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Reports 1920–23 & 1940.

[84]See the English-language translation in "Hungarian Prisoners of War Signatures Book," posted by Teeuwissen's granddaughter, Suzanne Teeuwissen, on her website, *The Teeuwissen Nassau Website*, available at http://suzanneteeuwissen.free.fr/Hungarian%20PoW%20Signatures%20Book.html; accessed 28 Oct 2011. A few photographs of Teeuwissen's work (and related images from his time in Siberia) may be found at "The YMCA Siberia Album," http://suzanneteeuwissen.free.fr/YMCA%20Siberia%20Album.html.

[85][MacNaughten] to Colton, 17 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Apr–Jun 1920.

[86]Gerald H. Davis, "Prisoner of War Camps as Social Communities in Russia: Krasnoyarsk 1914–1921," *East European Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Jun 1987): 154–55.

from the American Red Cross, the International Red Cross and the YMCA."[87] One special project began in Nikolsk in June 1920. The YMCA took over two coffee houses, cut prices in half, and provided free tea to the men. The cost to the association was high—$1,000 or more a month—but as Edgar MacNaughten, then the senior association secretary in Russia, argued, "it will be a lifesaver to many, and we could well afford to spend more."[88] In the spring of 1920 the YMCA started work in the camp at First River, another site under Japanese authority.[89]

In western Siberia, despite the restrictions, two YMCA secretaries served POWs in the latter part of 1919. Although his focus was on the Czechoslovaks, Duncan showed films several times in a prison camp at Omsk.[90] William Tucker conferred with representatives of camp committees out of his freight car as he travelled west of Irkutsk. Many of these committees had been originally set up by War Prisoners' Aid secretaries in 1915–16. There was also active work for about twenty-five hundred POWs at Berezovka thanks to the efforts of army work secretary Marmaduke "Duke" Clark and the support of the American commander in that sector. Clark allowed prisoners to take advantage of programs and services originally meant for members of the AEF. His intervention resulted in many men being employed by the US army. When American forces left the camp in January 1920, the POWs received additional equipment. Here, too, there remained evidence of earlier association work: "It is interesting to note that eighteen of the thirty-five instruments used by

[87]William Tucker followed in Teeuwissen's footsteps, going to Nikolsk the late summer of 1920. Dick Willever, "Another Time, Another War—Similar Problem," *Windsor-Hights Herald* (26 Apr 1973), clipping in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—William Tucker.

[88]MacNaughten to Hibbard, 5 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok Reports 1920–23 & 1940.

[89]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia."

[90]Diary, entry for 17 Aug 1919, in Duncan papers.

the popular Beresovka orchestra were supplied by our secretary in 1916." In Tomsk, another secretary discovered a group of invalid POWs earning extra money by making brushes using YMCA tools. Sometimes prisoners themselves took on the role of association secretaries. At a camp in Novo Nikolaevsk the local secretary was an Austrian prisoner who was once a Sunday school pupil in Chicago.[91]

The Red Cross, for its part, was little involved in relief or other work for POWs, even though the Russian government granted the organization more license to carry out activities than it did the YMCA.[92] The organization took an interest in the prisoners' welfare, but there was no large-scale program. Emergency relief, including clothing and money for food, was given to prisoners at a Nikolsk camp after a fire caused significant destruction. "These prisoners have been chronically on the point of starvation, and a cutting off of their food supply made immediate relief essential." But sustained effort on their behalf was too big a job for the commission to undertake, Vladivostok headquarters decided.[93] Cloth to make winter clothing was distributed in eastern Siberia, especially Nikolsk.[94] The most significant piece of work the Red Cross did to benefit POWs was assist in the transmission of their mail out of Vladivostok.[95] For a brief time in early 1920, the Red Cross handled money that was

[91] Reitzel, "From Report on War Prisoners' Work in Siberia 1919 to 1920," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R 1921 [3]; MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia." See also letter dated 1 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Verkhne-Udinsk 1919.

[92] MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia."

[93] Digest of Weekly Report for December 20, 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports (quote); Riley H. Allen to Farrand, 26 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. Clothing was provided to these same men in the spring. See Minutes, ExCom, 17 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920. Other supplies were given in June. See Minutes, ExCom, 7 Jun 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Apr–Jul 1920.

[94] Allen to Farrand, 23 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[95] Report of the Dept of Military Relief for week ending 8 Feb 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.

sent to specific men.[96] But the scheme was quickly abandoned because it proved difficult for the Red Cross to locate the intended recipients.[97] The plight of POWs also seriously concerned a representative of the ICRC who visited far eastern camps in the summer of 1919. He appealed for aid in a circular published by the ICRC in late November. This appeal was the departure point for the general collection in Europe which was taken up in favour of the Siberian prisoners, and the enlargement of the activities of the ICRC, together with the League of Nations, to secure their repatriation.[98]

In September, while limited efforts for these still-detained men were underway, the YMCA's Hatfield went ahead with his rural work plans. He was given a friendly welcome "by all the various organizations and institutions interested in Rural Welfare work." He received "generous permissions" to carry on activities in the Tomsk and Enisei *gubernii*a*s*.[99] The association's rural work plans, as well as programs aimed at Russians living in larger communities, found ready support among Russian administrators, educators, and other professionals eager to transform peasant life. Zemstvos were particularly interested in adult education.[100] In addition to zemstvo backing, the association was assisted by the Central Cooperative Association and several religious groups. Hatfield and other secretaries visited villages and towns, where they noted existing—and usually non-existent—gathering places, recreational facilities, libraries, school rooms, and learning supplies. The zemstvo cultural

[96]Minutes, ExCom, 27 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[97]Minutes, ExCom, 17 Mar 1920; Minutes, ExCom, 18 Mar 1920, both in ibid.

[98]George Montandon, *Deux ans chez Koltchak et chez les Bolchéviques pour la Croix-Rouge de Genève (1919–1921)* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1923), 20–22.

[99]Hatfield to Phelps, 3 Oct 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 19, Phelps.

[100]For more on adult education in Russia, see Seregny, "Zemstvos, Peasants, and Citizenship."

department already planned to do demonstration work in one village, and invited the YMCA to join in. The Americans met with leading town and village officials to speak about their plans. In these provincial villages there was, the YMCA men decided, an "appalling need for cultural and welfare work of every sort while the doors are wide open so far as the people are concerned." Hatfield and his colleagues believed there were great opportunities for association work.[101] They came up with a plan for demonstration work in Novo Nikolaevsk *uezd*. Boys and young men in the county would be served by educational, moral, recreational, social, and character-building activities, with a variety of supplementary community assistance programs provided in cooperation with Russian organizations and government departments.[102] Such "experimental, demonstrational and adoptive" work was also to be set up in a nearby county.[103]

In the summer YMCA city or community programs were still going strong in a number of locales, from Omsk to Vladivostok, and Khabarovsk to Harbin. The work at Omsk ended in August when secretaries were ordered to evacuate, and September saw the departure of association men from Krasnoiarsk. Elsewhere, YMCA secretaries and their many hired staff members and volunteers kept up an array of activities into the fall. Standard offerings included playground work, cooperation with Boy Scout troops, garden clubs, educational classes, lectures, summer camps, hikes, moving picture showings, and training for teachers and potential future Russian secretaries. English language instruction was popular. American secretaries cultivated good working relationships with local institutions, religious leaders,

[101]Hatfield to Phelps, 3 Oct 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 19, Phelps.

[102]Hatfield, "Suggested Program of the Rural Department of the Y.M.C.A. in Tomsk Gubernia," n.d., in Sonquist collection.

[103]"Exhibit A. Rural Department of the Young Men's Christian Association in Siberia," n.d., in Sonquist collection.

schools, and government officials in many of the towns they were stationed in.[104] Chester Alexander's Tomsk efforts came in for special praise. His work for university students and special educational programs for refugee children and mothers stand out as examples of how association secretaries adjusted their work to the needs of local communities.[105]

Novo Nikolaevsk was another busy site. English language classes attracted "some of the most prominent people" including the commander of the Russian forces. The local secretary also gave private lessons to the chairman of the board of education.[106] The mayor and local priest (and newspaper man) were also key allies. After renovating a local playground, setting up "a splendid field for base-ball and football, a running track, tennis courts, . . . a bowling alley, two horse shoe grounds, four croquet grounds, a basketball court and four volley-ball courts," the association was given control of three large city playgrounds. Work was done for wounded Russian soldiers convalescing at a hospital, and popular entertainments were staged weekly for children, adults, and soldiers. Relations with the local Boy and Girl Scout regiment were so good that one of the American secretaries was chosen to lead it. The Novo Nikolaevsk team had so much success that it refused to evacuate when first ordered to.[107]

The most substantial program was carried out in Vladivostok. Mostly, experienced Russian secretaries organized offerings. For several months the local association—known as the Mayak after the Petrograd institution—had only one American secretary assigned to it.[108]

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[104]"Report of the City Work in Siberia for Sept. 1919," in James Stokes Society, box 176, Mayak—St. Petersburg 1912–22.

[105]Alexander to Peterson, 12 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Tomsk 1917–19.

[106]"Notes on City Work in Siberia," *Y. M. C. A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 15 (31 Jul 1919): 4.

[107]John G. Cattron, "Seven Months 'Y' Work in Novonikolaevsk, Siberia," n.d., ca. Nov 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Novo-Nikolaevsk 1919.

[108]Hollinger to Mott, 14 Oct 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Oct–Dec 1919.

In May, the Mayak had almost 800 adult members and 335 boys enrolled.[109] By 1 October the total membership was 1,276.[110] In October a group of "active members" organized a Refugee Day to raise money to assist refugees.[111] The amount raised was "the largest sum ever collected in such a campaign in the city by any organization," a YMCA report noted.[112]

There were requests for YMCA work in cities beyond the handful where the association established itself, including Barnual, Blagoveshchensk, and Semipalatinsk.[113] The chairman of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee reported in October that he had "been asked by Russian friends all over Siberia to secure help from the Y.M.C.A. as it was doing a fine educational work much appreciated by the people."[114] And yet criticism of the YMCA in the Russian press and among government officials continued. In his annual report written in mid-October, senior city work secretary Ralph Hollinger reflected on "transition problems" and the coming end of the association's "period of 'demonstration'" work in Russia. In addition to preparing for permanent activities, the association men were also "demonstrating America's friendship for Russia." The next phase would be important for there was still much confusion about and ill-feeling toward the YMCA among Russians.[115] A few days later Phelps heard through an intermediary that Sukin, "in compliance with the dictates of public opinion," had decided to completely end YMCA work at the front and gradually end all its

[109]J. J. Somerville, "Activities at the Mayak," *Y. M. C. A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 19 (15 May 1919): 3.

[110]City Work Department, "Report for October and November 1919," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Oct–Dec 1919.

[111]"Refugee Day at Vladivostok," *Y. M. C. A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, nos. 21–22 (15 Nov 1919): 1.

[112]City Work Department, "Report for October and November 1919," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Oct–Dec 1919.

[113]Somerville, "Annual Report Letter for Civilian Work in Siberia," 9 Sep 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1918–19.

[114]C. H. Smith to SecyState, 28 Jan 1920, quoted in "Report . . . by G. S. Phelps," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[115]Hollinger to Mott, 14 Oct 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Oct–Dec 1919.

activities in Siberia.[116] The news would certainly have been a blow, but not a shock.

No matter the difficulties the association had with Russian officialdom, YMCA programming for American soldiers continued with the cooperation and support of the military brass. Work was done in the main base camps, while canteen cars, travelling entertainment troupes, and lecturers visited men further afield on a regular basis. In Verkhne Udinsk, "Duke" Clark ran two large and five small huts in the summer of 1919. He had, in addition, recreation rooms, athletic fields, basketball courts, and soccer pitches available. His facilities hosted an eight-team inter-company basketball league that played games in the evenings; afternoons were reserved for baseball. A travelling movie car brought films to soldiers and civilians in a variety of locations, and a seated outdoor theatre was filled to capacity each night.[117] Perhaps, as the Red Cross discovered in Irkutsk, audiences went wild for Charlie Chaplin.[118] His "A Dog's Life" was especially popular; it "was a great hit."[119] Clark ran a tea palour each evening featuring free tea and biscuits. On Sundays, doughnuts were served. There was a Sunday night service, and by August a "Manhood of the Master" Bible class was on offer.[120] Clark thrived on this sort of work. "I wouldn't swap places with the Czar of Russia or King of England," he joked to a friend.[121]

Even among Americans, YMCA secretaries found it difficult to carry out the religious work expected of them. This was generally true of wartime activities in Russia and elsewhere. Because of the greatly increased demands of the time, many secretaries recruited

[116]Sukin quoted in Smith to SecyState, 28 Jan 1920, quoted in "Report . . . by G. S. Phelps," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[117]Clark to Neason Jones, 6 Aug 1919, in Clark papers, folder 4.
[118]Pickett to "folks," 7 Oct 1919, in Pickett papers, box 1, C.
[119]Miller, "Carrying on with the Czecho-Slovaks," 3.
[120]Clark to Neason Jones, 6 Aug 1919, in Clark papers, folder 4.
[121]Clark to Christopher Scaife, 26 Jun 1919, in Clark papers, box 1, folder 1.

specifically for war service did not have the requisite skills or even religious convictions to put on an active religious program for soldiers and civilians.[122] At Berezovka, Clark tried to include religious work. After he was rebuked for neglecting this part of his duties, but claimed—perhaps too strongly—that he was focused on it. "I am definitely and absolutely committed to a positive religious program as part of our Association work," he wrote to his superior in October, echoing Herbert Gott's letters discussed in the previous chapter. "I sincerely feel that it will be one of the biggest factors in keeping these laddies straight this winter. I shall make this issue a Man's appeal, in a manly way and without apology. It shall be no flat knee doctrine."[123]

Sexual morality was one of the YMCA's primary concerns when it came to the AEF. Social hygiene education was, in fact, a crucial part of soldier training and preparedness on the home front.[124] Palmer, who lectured to troops in Siberia in the summer of 1919, was especially interested in the subject. He discovered that low morale was often accompanied by base morals. Rates of venereal disease were excessively high among American soldiers. The AEF's chief surgeon, Colonel W. F. Lewis, blamed the "low standard" of replacement recruits and "the temptations offered by Russian women possessing a peculiarly low standard of morals [as well as being] victims of distressing economic conditions."[125] Though he blamed poor recruiting and understood the role played by financial challenges, his comment also reflected his frustration at the moral baseness of Russian women. This characteristic was not simply due to present circumstances; rather, it was part and parcel of Russian culture,

[122]See also Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 109.

[123]Clark to Frank Torrell, 12 Oct 1919, in Clark papers, folder 4.

[124]In military camps at home, the Commission on Training Camp Activities tried to ensure soldiers did not fall prey to "the immoral influences popularly associated with military encampments and their surrounding communities." Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 1; see also pp. 19–35 for more on the social hygiene movement.

[125]W. F. Lewis to Graves, 5 Jan 1920, in NARA, RG 395, E-6018, History.

Lewis's note implied. Siberia was a "land of spiritual and moral darkness," another American claimed.[126] To solve the immediate problem facing the American army, Palmer preached abstinence. Perhaps taking his cue from fellow YMCA man Max Exner's contemporary pamphlet, *Friend or Enemy?*, which argued sexual activity was only appropriate "as an expression of mutual love in marriage,"[127] he urged soldiers to avoid temptations of the flesh while in Siberia.[128] He had "never heard so much sex talk since [he] came to Siberia," and "concluded that vital preaching would grasp the ever-present interest (almost an obsession) and lift it up into a cleaner atmosphere."[129] Back in February, when he had been stationed in Vladivostok, Clark had written to a friend in the United States to "ask Hdq. to rush loads of Friends or Enemy. We have never even had a copy and I only wish I could write now how they are needed here."[130] Clearly, sexual "low standards" were a significant problem in the AEF in Siberia, just as they were in military camps in the United States.

Americans apparently acquired a reputation in Siberia for their interest in Russian women. Secretary Tucker was approached by his Russian host, a former tsarist colonel, who "tried to set him up with a widow who was visiting his family for a few days." The ensuing exchange was reported decades later in a newspaper article about Tucker's experiences in Siberia:

> "What do you do for women? At your age you need a woman sometimes. That widow likes you and she is without disease," Rev. Tucker remembers the colonel saying.
>
> "Many of us in America wait until we are married," Rev. Tucker replied.
>
> "I happen not to have heard of many such Americans out here," the colonel said.[131]

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[126]Davis, "From the Notes," 5, in Davis papers, box 1, folder 3.

[127]Reproduced in M. J. Exner, "Friend or Enemy? To the Men of the Army and Navy," *Social Hygiene* 2, no. 4 (Oct 1916): 481–99.

[128]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entry for 29 Jul 1919.

[129]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entry for 13 Jul 1919.

[130]Clark to Jones, 26 Feb 1919, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok 1918–19.

[131]Dick Willever, "Another Time, Another War—Similar Problem," *Windsor-Hights Herald* (26 Apr

In Northern Russia, some American soldiers also found Russian women hard to resist. "More than one NCO's rank was sacrificed on the seductive altar of immorality," judged Private Donald Carey disapprovingly. "Commissioned officers, too, were not guiltless." "There were those who followed the straight and narrow path," he surmised, "but they were a minority." At a YMCA service Carey attended, the speaker "gave [soldiers] a scathing lecture and severely criticized [their] morals. 'Had I a daughter,' he said, 'I would do all in my power to prevent her marrying a soldier!'"[132]

The officer commanding the 27th Infantry, Colonel Charles H. Morrow, disagreed with Palmer's abstinence-only approach. Morrow argued that his men would not respect Palmer if the preacher took that route. "You simply can't expect them to refrain from sexual intercourse," he said. But Palmer insisted, intending to remind the men that they had wives and sweethearts back home. His initial meeting with Morrow had a strained ending. "I regret that he probably regards me as a foolish and disagreeable young man," Palmer recorded in his diary. "[Morrow] simply doesn't understand that no minister is meekly going to allow any man to tell him to muffle what he believes to be a vital Christian moral ideal." The commander did like the work Clark was doing at the base camp in Verkhne Udinsk. His activities kept soldiers close to home and out of trouble, Morrow believed. Although women from the surrounding community came to watch movies shown by the YMCA, they went home alone because there was not enough time between the ends of films and the soldiers' check time for any untoward behaviour to take place.[133]

1976), clipping in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—William Tucker.

[132]Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks*, 136, 138. See also p. 143.

[133]Palmer, "Summer in Siberia," entries for 24–26 Aug 1919.

Though the YMCA was not allowed to do work for Russian soldiers, and its work in western Siberia ended along with Kolchak's military defeats, the association kept up its efforts for foreign troops. Supplies, equipment, and personnel were in evidence in greater numbers than before. The largest number of YMCA workers to arrive at any one time (sixteen) came in late October 1919,[134] and in December there were sixty-two secretaries in Siberia. In January twenty-three secretaries worked at thirteen different points with AEF soldiers, while twenty-nine secretaries were busy with Czechoslovak and other Allied forces. Huts—there were seven for the AEF and ten for the other Allies—were filled to capacity and offered programs every day of the week. Special entertainment troupes and lecturers supplemented the regular association complement of classes, sports, film screenings, concerts, social events, and the provision of free goods. Club cars containing a tea counter, reading area, and graphophone were especially key for Czechoslovak units, who were on the move during much of 1919 and into 1920.[135]

The activities of the lecture and moving picture bureaux were among the most important of all association efforts in the minds of secretaries eyeing permanent work in Russia. Educational talks and film screenings of various sorts increased in number over the summer months. They reached all the association's constituents in Siberia and the Russian Far East: American, Czechoslovak, Russian, and other Allied soldiers and sailors; Russian civilians; refugees; and prisoners of war. Reitzel, the director of the lecture bureau, compared Russia to a "chemical laboratory" in which "a great variety of reactions and tests are in process." "Political ideas and social theories" were being tested in Russia, and YMCA

[134]"Changes in Our Personnel," *Y. M. C. A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, nos. 21–22 (15 Nov 1919): 3.
[135]Unsigned typescript, in NARA, RG 395, E-6012, box 3232, Societies.

activities were equally experimental. The lecture bureau organized scientific talks given by Prof. C. H. Robertson and others.[136] Robertson specialized in talks about recent technological advancements, and he included demonstrations and illustrations in his lectures on such topics as gyroscopes, aeroplanes, and wireless communication.[137] During a lengthy trip from Vladivostok to Ekaterinburg and many places in between, including Chinese centres, Robertson travelled nearly twenty thousand miles, and by June had spoken to almost fifty-five thousand people since the spring of 1918.[138] Other bureau secretaries lectured on the work of the association, health and sanitation topics, religious issues, and other educational subjects.

Reitzel was pleased with the response of rural communities to association lecturers. It augured well for the future of YMCA work in Russia—and for the future of the country itself, he thought: "The swarming of the audience around the lecturer after the performance is over, asking all sorts of questions, reveals the eagerness of the rural population for education, as well as their desire to analyze critically their own mode of life to the end that they may lift themselves to a higher plane of civilization."[139] While "leaders, factions and antagonistic groups struggle[d] for political supremacy," according to Reitzel, "the great mass of freedom-loving peasants and common people wait with a serene patience for the chance to have the domestic peace, justice and democracy, and an opportunity to 'get on' which has been their dream for many years."[140] It was to those masses that the association directed its

[136]R. J. Reitzel, "Report of Work of the Y. M. C. A. Lecture Bureau Siberia," *Y. M. C. A. Bulletin* (Vladivostok) 1, no. 11 (2 Jun 1919): 1–2.

[137]Robertson to "friends" (Quarterly Report Letter), 8 Apr 1919, in YMCA archives, Robertson papers, box 171, file 5.

[138]Reitzel, "Lecture Bureau," 1.

[139]Ibid., 3.

[140]Ibid., 1.

energies among Russians. Secretaries hoped to modernize Russia by taking a bottom-up approach. Given the political challenges they faced, it was the only viable option.

There was also a great demand in the cities for "educational films with a bit of comedy thrown in," Reitzel claimed. Films were shown in schools, to railway employees, soldiers, and local clubs, including the Boy Scouts. In explaining the value of films, Reitzel argued that "a picture thrown on the screen" was "a scientific short-cut in the problem of educating the [illiterate] peasant."[141] "Moving pictures showing educational films, travel-logs, industrial developments and high class drama" were all screened. "Modern machines and carefully selected films titled in Russian are now available and new films are being made in Siberia by this bureau," Phelps reported at about the same time. The films were made available to all YMCA departments.[142] The association employed "a force of twenty-five Russians engaged in the production of Russian-titled films, lecture outfits, etc." Similar work was undertaken by the Committee on Public Information, which brought screenings to villages throughout the far eastern province in cooperation with the zemstvo. Subjects included "industry, agriculture, mining, natural scenery, and community welfare" as well as the occasional "good clean comedy."[143]

YMCA efforts were most welcomed by Russian officials outside of Omsk; the Red Cross found much more ready acceptance in Kolchak's capital. This latter fact was made clear to

[141]Ibid., 3.

[142]Phelps to Sukin, 30 May 1919, in Morris papers, box 7, Red Cross YMCA.

[143]Reitzel, "Lecture Bureau," 3. For more on the CPI's work in Russia, see James D. Startt, "American Film Propaganda in Revolutionary Russia," *Prologue* 30, no. 3 (Fall 1998), available online in three parts, starting here: http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/fall/american-film-propaganda-1.html; accessed 6 Feb 2012. According to Startt, films "included dramas, comedies, scenic films, war pictures, newsreels, and educational pictures." Details are in part 2 under the heading "The Films and Their Purpose," and in notes 33–36, 38.

the Siberian commission once again in early September when Morris called on Teusler in Vladivostok. Morris declared that the organization's work had earned it the thanks and respect of the Russian government, and he urged it to continue its efforts.[144] Kolchak may well have been truly grateful for the commission's support at this difficult time: The British, who had provided his military with a significant amount of supplies, stopped doing so by 1 August.[145] Kolchak's expressed gratitude may also be explained in part by the presence of Teusler at the helm of the Siberian commission. Teusler was the first cousin of President Wilson's wife, First Lady Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, and was known to boast about the relationship. He imagined himself to have a larger political importance than he did.[146] For his part, Kolchak was no stranger to blatantly misstating the facts if doing so got him what he wanted, including Allied support.[147] Being solicitous could pay off. It was worth the effort.

Whether Kolchak exaggerated his praise or not, the commissioners in Vladivostok had no trouble accepting Morris's request that Red Cross activities continue. Irkutsk was set as the new western limit for substantial work, with women to be kept further east, at Verkhne Udinsk. Male personnel could work west of Omsk on special projects or assignments, including aboard sanitary trains or working in temporary delousing stations.[148] Riley Allen, in his weekly report to Washington headquarters on the Siberian commission's activities, argued on behalf of the members of the executive committee for the importance of continued

[144]Minutes, ExCom, 7 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920; Allen to Farrand, 3 Sep 1919, and Allen to Farrand, 10 Sep 1919, both in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[145]Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, vol. 2, *Britain and the Russian Civil War November 1918–February 1920* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 207.

[146]Saul, *War and Revolution*, 331n72.

[147]See, for example, Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 264.

[148]Minutes, ExCom, 7 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

efforts, despite the high cost and potential danger involved:

> If we can establish before such people of Siberia as we come in contact with that the American Red Cross neither shirks danger nor is balked by obstacles which are crushing other organizations or rendering their efforts futile, and that we are administering relief without fear or favor, we shall have gained, even in this time of disappointment when we have had to evacuate hospitals, give up refugee relief stations and see the structure built to extend beyond the Urals cut in half, an effect, and made a record, well worth the endeavor.[149]

If nothing else, building up goodwill for the organization in Russia would make the Americans' efforts worthwhile.

Halfway around the world, in the western capitals and unbeknownst to the Siberian commission or officials in Omsk, the Americans and other wartime Allies had changed course. They were now focused on General Anton Ivanovich Denikin, the White leader in southwestern Russia. He was just starting his offensive; there was still hope. (The American Red Cross even dispatched a whole new commission to southern Russia in July. It distributed supplies to the refugees that had fled to the Kuban area from Soviet Russia.[150]) Kolchak's military ineptness, his lack of control over rogue elements, the disastrous state of the railway, rampant corruption, governmental mismanagement, and the obviously brutal, politically reactionary nature of his regime left almost nothing to admire in the man.[151] Even Knox, the accused kingmaker himself, abandoned him. So did General Janin, commander in chief of the Czechoslovaks. Among the top American officials in Siberia, only Harris remained in the pro-Kolchak camp by the end of August.[152] At the White House in Washington, Russian issues took a backseat to Wilson's domestic political troubles and his worsening health. Though he had ordered the Omsk trip, the president never responded to any of Morris's

[149]Allen to Farrand, 10 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.
[150]Dulles, *American Red Cross*, 208.
[151]For a masterful treatment of Kolchak's regime, see Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*.
[152]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 485; Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 196. Knox later supported Kolchak again: Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, 2:245.

despatches, nor to memos from the State Department about Russian matters. On 25 August, Wilson left on a speaking tour to promote American approval of the Treaty of Versailles, signed in June by the Allies and Germany.[153] By then, Kolchak's military situation had worsened. Tumen' and Kurgan had been abandoned without resistance earlier that month. At the end of August, Red Army forces were seventy kilometres from the Ishim River. Once they crossed it, the way to Omsk would be clear.[154]

The bulk of Red Cross workers were gone from Omsk by September. Those men left behind watched over the organization's hospital, functioning with a staff of Russian doctors and orderlies.[155] All was not yet lost. A White counterattack—Kolchak's last, it turned out—saw some success early in the month. On the strength of these victories, McDonald wrote to his colleagues in Vladivostok. He and others believed Morris's and Graves's reports about Kolchak's fortunes had been overly pessimistic. He hoped the Siberian commission would not change its policies without consulting him and Manget.[156]

Still a Kolchak loyalist, Teusler, accompanied by Allen, set out to get a feel for the new situation in the interior.[157] They left Vladivostok on 14 September to meet with Manget in Irkutsk, and arrived five days later. In addition to discussions with Red Cross personnel, meetings were held with the minister of the interior and other government representatives about relief work in Irkutsk and Tomsk.[158] In early fall the organization was running a two hundred fifty-bed hospital in Irkutsk and was in talks to get another building to hold up to

[153]Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 158, 167, 166.
[154]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 521.
[155]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[156]Harris to Vladi (McDonald to Strong), 8 Sep 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Jul–Sep 1919.
[157]Minutes, ExCom, Sept 23 1919, Irkutsk, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 SC—C & C.
[158]MacClintock to Farrand, 17 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

seven hundred more patients. Allen was shocked to find Irkutsk "overflowing with refugees":

> Train after train comes from the West with wounded and diseased soldiers who are dying in the cars; the city had, at our visit, not less than 4000 cases of typhus, and living conditions are deplorable. Fifteen schools had been closed to be transformed into hospitals. The railroad yards were blocked with trains filled with refugees who could find no other homes. The prison camps nearby, where German, Austrian and Bolshevik prisoners were confined, are going from bad to worse.

In an effort to help out, the Red Cross "put a staff of doctors, nurses and civilian relief workers, as well as office men and transportation men, to work." By October this group was "already accomplishing a large amount of relief."[159] As was true of all Red Cross refugee relief work in Siberia, they aimed to provide assistance "so that [refugees] may get upon their feet without being pauperized."[160]

Extensive refugee relief work was also done in and around Novo Nikolaevsk, along the railway to Barnaul, and in Taiga and Krasnoiarsk. The Red Cross's Russian workers aided refugees in Omsk and Tomsk, too.[161] In Krasnoiarsk, one of the civilian relief workers found he had several cases of layettes—"little outfits for prospective mothers"—to distribute. They were "beautifully made" by American women. The relief worker doubted he would be able to offload them. "To the poverty-stricken people of Krasnoyarsk such things are unknown. A few days passed before he was able to bestow an outfit, and then it was given to a woman who applied for warm clothing for some well-grown children." The "next morning this worker . . . was literally besieged by a crowd of more than 150 women, all soon to be mothers. . . . He could easily have disposed of a thousand such layettes - and with the lack of comforts for the little newcomers in these needy families, the layettes are the salvation of

[159]Allen to Nichols, 1 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[160]Riley H. Allen, "Siberia," *Survey* 43, no. 19 (6 Mar 1920): 699.
[161]MacClintock to Farrand, 15 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

many a life."[162] In relating this "touching incident," Allen implied that even in the midst of chaos, Russian women remained focused on providing for their children, and recognized the role of the Red Cross in helping them be better mothers. They embraced these American products, quickly understanding their purpose and seeing their benefit. It was, Allen and his Red Cross colleagues may have believed, telling of how well Russians would take to American ideas and other (cultural and actual) imports in the future. That future was promising because of the essential similarities between Russians and Americans.

The leaders of the Siberian commission were keen to provide as much medical support to Kolchak's armies as their organization could manage given its limited budget and the challenges of working in war-torn Siberia. There were still active operations in several Siberian towns. In addition to Irkutsk, busy hospitals were running at Verkhne Udinsk and Novo Nikolaevsk.[163] The Red Cross also operated a travelling dental car, the anti-typhus train, and hospital supply distribution trains. These latter trains travelled the railway "between Omsk and Irkutsk, distributing medicines, gauze, bandages, cotton, instruments, etc. to Russian military and civil hospitals." Allen and the other commissioners judged the work "among the most effective in all our experience."[164] Further west, Russian-operated hospitals and sanitary trains received large quantities of clothing and supplies, including several months' worth of drugs and surgical dressings.[165]

Teusler and Allen only planned to visit Irkutsk, but while there they received encouraging news from Omsk. A trusted colleague, presumably McDonald, sent word that

[162]Allen to Nichols, 1 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[163]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ibid.
[164]Allen to Nichols, 1 Oct 1919, in ibid.
[165]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ibid.

the situation had "very much improved." He was confident the Red Army would be held at the Ishim River, and that Kolchak's government would hold, too. And so Teusler, Allen, and Manget left for Omsk on the night of 25 September to meet with McDonald and Harris.[166] Teusler discussed with Russian government authorities the possibility of the commission setting up quarantine stations along the railway. He believed they would be "the most important work we can do to relieve the situation." He was also sure "that the collapse of the Sanitary Department of the Government [was] largely responsible for the failure of Kolchak's armies at the front." The "terrific unsanitary conditions along the Trans-Siberian Railway" meant for a demoralized army and civilian population, neither of which would willingly support "a Government which continues to countenance such suffering."[167] Red Cross aid could thus fortify Kolchak's political staying power. (White troubles in Siberia went much deeper than Teusler realized.[168]) Russian government officials wanted the Red Cross to return its personnel to Omsk and restart its work in full force. Considering recent military successes were but small ones, the commissioners in Vladivostok did not think this was a good idea. They awaited Teusler's and Manget's findings.[169]

Teusler renewed his organization's commitment to keeping Kolchak's army hospitals supplied. At the same time, the Russian government stepped up its relationship with the Red Cross and agreed to reimburse the Siberian commission all its rouble expenses since 1 September.[170] The quarantine stations were agreed upon, to be located at Omsk,

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[166]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, in ibid. (quote); MacClintock to Farrand, 8 and 15 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[167]Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[168]See Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, ch. 11.

[169]MacClintock to Farrand, 24 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[170]C. McDonald, "Report Covering the Activities of the Western Division . . . ," in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Western Division—Letters Reports etc.

Petropavlovsk, and Ishim, and potentially in three or four other places as well. Each station, to consist of eight or nine large wooden buildings, would examine passengers travelling on all trains coming from the West. Those with typhus would be moved to hospitals, the train would be cleaned, and new underclothing given out as needed. Large hospitals would be set up at each site; in the meantime, mobile hospital units would fill in.[171] In October the Red Cross began sending special hospital supply trains to the West. Distribution was sped up by joint handling of supplies provided by the Red Cross and the Russian Army's sanitation department. The Red Cross already operated supply trains for Russian hospitals between Irkutsk and Omsk, but the new arrangements allowed for supplies to reach medical facilities closer to the fighting lines. The first train left Omsk to supply hospitals on the front west of Petropavlovsk. Supplies were also sent by water to the army units stationed northwest of Omsk. In a report to Washington headquarters, Allen stressed the medical necessity of these trains, which brought supplies to "hospitals in the most acute distress from lack of medicines, instruments, dressings, etc. and will help combat the spread of typhus by providing fresh underclothing and medicaments."[172]

With plans in place and work underway, Teusler and his colleagues returned to Vladivostok on 22 October.[173] They remained hopeful about the future, though much was still uncertain. On 25 October Harris, still based on Kolchak's capital, informed Teusler that there was "absolutely nothing alarming in [the] present situation." He hoped the American organization would carry out its plans as agreed upon.[174] In fact, White forces had been in

[171]Allen to W. A. B. Nichols, 29 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.4 Supplies.
[172]Allen to Farrand, 23 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.
[173]Ibid.
[174]Harris to Teusler, 25 Oct 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok Oct–Dec

retreat from the Tobol River since 18 October, and had abandoned Tobolsk four days later.[175] The Red Army was quickly closing in on Omsk.

Beyond what the Siberian commission could do with its limited resources, Teusler took a keen interest in the military aid extended (or not) to Kolchak. Just before he left for Omsk in late September, he wrote to Dr. Kendall Emerson, the former special commissioner in Siberia who now directed the American Red Cross's medical service in Europe. Teusler believed that a recent legislative amendment authorized the US secretary of war to transfer to the Red Cross medical supplies and foodstuffs in Europe that were no longer needed by the army. Teusler assumed his commission would thus receive surplus AEF stores in Siberia. But, he told Emerson, the force's adjutant general disagreed with his interpretation. Teusler warned Emerson about "the serious consequences [that] would result" should Wilson, Secretary of War Newton Baker, and Acting Secretary of State Frank Polk renege on their promises to the Red Cross. He further claimed Americans had a responsibility to aid Russia, one that had been "definitely assumed by the leading members of our Government and it will be impossible to explain to the Russian people if we do not now make good in this affair." Based on news of the amendment, the Omsk government had been expecting to receive "several million dollars worth of surplus medical supplies from the A.E.F." for military and civilian use. Kolchak and members of his cabinet had been "very much pleased" by this news.[176] As it happened, the bill was held over until the winter, and goods outside the United States could not have been turned over under its provisions. Red Cross headquarters in

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1919.

[175]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 542.

[176]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. For more on this bill, see "Red Cross Fall Campaign," *New York Times* (11 Aug 1919).

Washington stepped in to help out in late November, providing the Siberian commission with funding to purchase supplies.[177] By then it was too late for them to be of any use to Kolchak.

Teusler's letter to Emerson is worth considering in more detail. Like Thompson and Robins, he inserted himself into US–Russian relations in a more direct way than he was authorized to. Just as Robins acted for a time as a successful go-between for the American ambassador and the Bolshevik leadership, Teusler was an ally of Harris when it came to his support for Kolchak, and he tried, through the Red Cross, to influence US policy. He even wrote directly to President Wilson in October describing conditions along the Trans-Siberian Railway and the urgent need for clothing in large quantities for military and civilian use.[178]

Teusler wanted the Red Cross and the US government to keep its promises to Kolchak despite the latter's "much weaker condition compared to last spring." Losses at the front did "not invalidate the necessity that we keep our faith and promises made to [Russians] in Paris in June, and later, made through the American Red Cross in July, in Washington," he argued. Teusler advocated pushing the issue as far as possible. "If we fail, it will not only seriously injure the American Red Cross, but it will do the greatest harm to the whole cause of the American people here in Russia, and condemn us to the severest criticism from all who are only too willing to injure America's cause in Siberia." Americans were "well hated in Eastern Siberia" but the Red Cross was "in good favor from Vladivostok all the way through, and the further west one goes the stronger and more heart-felt is the praise and approval of our work from the Russian people."[179] An American nurse working in Irkutsk that fall

[177]Allen to AEF chief surgeon, 25 Nov 1919, in NARA, RG 395, E-6012, box 3235, Supplies.

[178]See Teusler to McDonald, n.d., ca. Oct 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok Oct–Dec 1919.

[179]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. Allen later

experienced this approval first hand: "Our Red Cross is a passport any place and we are certainly treated royally by every one over here."[180] Other foreign witnesses also agreed about the organization's popularity. The Red Cross had an excellent reputation in Siberia, according to one (then former) Canadian soldier. He praised its work in a press interview:

> By the way, there's one [good] thing I do want to say about the Americans. People say they're given to bragging. Well they've got one thing to brag about and to brag hard about—and that's the American Red Cross in Russia! It's the best thing ever. It's fine. I wish you'd make a note of that. Tell people that if the boys of all the Allied forces could drop their arms and enlist under the American Red Cross they'd do it like a shot—every man-jack of them.[181]

"Frankly," Teusler told Emerson, "the saving grace in this situation is the work of the American Red Cross, and we simply cannot fail the Russian people at this crucial moment." By this he meant that if Bolshevism was to be defeated in Russia, American aid was crucial. Finally, he stressed the importance of providing relief as winter approached. Proper sanitation and medical care were crucial to the army's success on the battlefields:

> In the last analysis, the cause of the reverses to the Kolchak Army is directly the result of the fearful sanitary conditions in the camps and barracks and the so-called hospital service. Wounded men are left out in the fields unprovided for. Typhus patients are left to die along the railway tracks, and the suffering of the families of the soldiers in many instances is as severe as the soldiers themselves have to endure. All through the country runs this frightful streak of sickness and poverty, and, of course, the reaction on the morale of the soldiers is disastrous to their best usefulness. Until proper hospital and sanitary arrangements can be made for the care of the army and the civilians no government will stand in Siberia. The depreciation of the rouble has destroyed trade, but the collapse is primarily due to the unsanitary condition of the army and the railway.[182]

Teusler's analysis was simplistic but poor conditions certainly did nothing to help Kolchak's cause.

The Siberian commission was doing what it could. During the summer the Red Cross

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reported that negative propaganda had "reached a stage of remarkable bitterness." Riley H. Allen to Farrand, 7 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[180]Carrie Pickett to family, 7 Oct 1919, in Pickett papers, box 1, C. See also quote at the start of chapter 6.

[181]Stewart Byron McCullogh, quoted in "Back from Siberia," *British Columbia Federationist* (9 Jan 1920): 5.

[182]Teusler to Emerson, 24 Sep 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

significantly cut back on refugee work on orders from Washington; military relief was the priority.[183] In the fall there were further decreases in civilian relief work in Omsk, Tomsk, Novo Nikolaevsk, and Vladivostok as Red Cross staff members focused their energies (and finances) on the needs of the military.[184] The Siberian commission was loath to do so, knowing hundreds of thousands of refugees were on the move. So too were large numbers of wounded soldiers, and Russian officials at Vladivostok were ill-prepared to deal with the onslaught.[185] Though the members of the executive committee decided in early October that "from necessity and in order to save lives during the winter, we shall have to increase our refugee work," "the emergency in the West" took up most of the Siberian commission's resources.[186] Humanitarian concerns were only part of the problem. Civilian suffering also had Americans worried about "the stability of the situation between Omsk and Vladivostok." By late October "an active anti-Kolchak movement" was already in evidence in Vladivostok. Allen reported that "it is not impossible that the next few weeks will witness persistent efforts to overthrow the present Government." The discontent among civilians was increasing and so were the numbers of refugees coming from the West.[187]

Kolchak's hold on western Siberia was in serious trouble by the beginning of November. The military situation had rapidly turned ugly. The Red Army took Petropavlovsk on 31 October, and four days later secured the Ishim River. Trotsky's soldiers then set their sights on Omsk, 150 miles to the east.[188] With the Red Army in hot pursuit of Kolchak's

[183]The ARC hoped the Russian Red Cross and Union of Towns would take over its refugee work. Teusler to Farrand, 22 Sep 1919, in ibid.
[184]Allen to Farrand, 29 Oct 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.
[185]Allen to Farrand, 3 Sep 1919, and Allen to Farrand, 7 Nov 1919, both in ibid.
[186]MacClintock to Farrand, 8 Oct 1919, and Allen to Farrand, 14 Nov 1919, both in ibid.
[187]Allen to Farrand, 29 Oct 1919, in ibid.
[188]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 543.

forces, the Red Cross gave up on its plans for work west of Omsk and evacuated its one thousand-bed hospital, patients, and personnel from the endangered city on the night of 7 November. Only a supply train was left in the area, while plans for three large anti-typhus quarantine stations, on which work had already been done, were left up in the air.[189] In a "long conference" between Harris and Kolchak in Omsk early in the month, the Russian leader apparently stated that without the "magnificent services" rendered by the Red Cross, "it would have been impossible for him to have continued operations until now."[190] The Siberian commission was still managing, equipping, and supplying hospitals in Tomsk, Irkutsk, and places further east.[191] And at the government's request, the Americans agreed to provide dressing stations along the railway between Omsk and Irkutsk.[192]

Omsk fell into enemy hands only days later, on 14 November. Kolchak suffered enormous losses of military equipment and supplies, and many thousands of soldiers were taken prisoner by the Red Army. The White leader, increasingly unpopular with Siberian residents and the Czechoslovak force that had made his regime possible, fled east toward Irkutsk a few hours ahead of the capture of his capital city. Many other Omsk residents, including Kolchak's ministers and the Allied missions, had already boarded trains or otherwise begun their trek away from the advancing Reds.[193] Kolchak's position was weaker

[189]Harris to Vladivostok, 30 Oct 1919, in HIA, Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok Oct–Dec 1919; Allen to Farrand, 7 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. In explaining why this hospital was (and others were) evacuated, Allen argued that not doing so "would have amounted to abandonment of our duties." Allen to Farrand, 17 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. See also C. McDonald, "Report Covering the Activities of the Western Division . . . ," in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Western Division—Letters Reports etc.

[190]Harris to Vladivostok, 2 Nov 1919, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok—Oct–Dec 1919.

[191]"N.W. Division Secures New Department Head," 2–3.

[192]Allen to Farrand, 7 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[193]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 148–49; Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 548–50.

than ever. The Siberian commission quickly set up more hospitals in Irkutsk and Verkhne Udinsk to make up for the loss of the Omsk facilities.[194]

After the fall of Omsk, the Red Cross sent most of its remaining female personnel from Irkutsk to Verkhne Udinsk, where American troops were stationed.[195] Once again, as in Omsk in August, Harris opposed the evacuation, and even threatened to advise the State Department to withdraw all of the Red Cross's female staff members from Siberia if the evacuations continued.[196] He believed "that to leave the hospital at Irkutsk without the assistance of these forty nurses would be a criminal act"; moreover, he greatly regretted that they had been sent away from Omsk, Tomsk, and Novo Nikolaevsk in the first place. To move them again would create "an exceedingly bad impression." The State Department backed its representative's decision to keep the women at Irkutsk, feeling strongly "that Harris is familiar with the situation and that he is a sensible man."[197] Harris was not the only one upset by the moves.

The unexpected evacuations—and perhaps mismanagement of a difficult situation by members of the Siberian commission's leadership—left a large number of staffers without anything to do, riding the railway for weeks and months with little clear direction. One group of Americans arrived at Irkutsk for their first assignment only to find that "there [was] utter disorganization, or rather lack of any organization. Utter confusion reign[ed] and there

[194]"N.W. Division Secures New Department Head," 3.

[195]Allen to Farrand, 19 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. The latter location was considered a safer spot for the women to be: not only would they be protected by the presence of the AEF, but Verkhne Udinsk was located to the east of tunnels that wrapped around Lake Baikal. Should the tunnels be blown up, Irkutsk would be cut off from points further east.

[196]Allen to Farrand, 27 Nov 1919, in ibid.

[197]W. R. C. [State Dept] to Keppel, 28 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel.

seem[ed] to be no head."[198] The crises that arose during sudden departures only exacerbated the "lack of organization."[199] One of the Red Cross women forced from Irkutsk in November told YMCA secretary William Duncan she and her colleagues "were not children and didn't come here for 'pink tea'"—i. e., a tea party—"and if there were any danger they wanted to face it and not be moving to safer distances all the time."[200] Some nurses and doctors spent months being ordered from place to place without accomplishing very much. On top of disorganization within the Red Cross, inefficiencies were inherent on the civil war-era Trans-Siberian Railway. "We are going toward Irkutsk on the Sechass Express through the land of Nitchevo," commented Dr. Bucher, using two Russian words all Americans quickly learned to understand: *seichas* (technically "presently," but in reality "anywhere from an hour to a year," according to Bucher) and *nichego* (roughly, "never mind" or "it does not matter").[201] The former term was the subject of a brief poem published in a Red Cross news bulletin:

> What is the difference between temptation and seechas?
> Temptation is a wile of the devil,
> And seechas is a devil of a while.[202]

A significant number of Red Cross workers eventually sailed away from Vladivostok embittered and deeply disappointed.[203] "*Nichego*!" their less unhappy colleagues might well have thought to remind them.

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[198]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 86. Also: "It may be unjust to give vent to criticism of the Red Cross, such as one hears hourly from the personnel, but comments are being made about how the money is being spent on people who do not want us here, and the general mismanagement due to lack of a head. Young striplings who probably were counter jumpers have charge of important positions, going around with the air of Prussian officers. The selection of material for their overseas work—cripples, old men, nurses that have not nursed for twelve years, and a psoriasis case have caused bitter comment." Ibid., 65.

[199]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 88. For another critical account of the ARC leadership see Fred Barnum's diary.

[200]Diary, entry for 20 Nov 1919, in Duncan papers.

[201]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 80, 62. Bucher only provided the translation for *seichas*. See also John Foster Fraser, "'Nichevo!'—Russia's Motto of Don't Care," *New York Times Magazine* (17 Mar 1918): 89.

[202]E. Judge, in "Nuts and Whine," *New Year's Extra* 13, no. 23 (Jan 1920): 8.

[203]Allen to Farrand, 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

The YMCA's Duncan also left Siberia thoroughly unimpressed with the organization he represented. "The more I see of the Association administration here and its methods the less respect I have for them. Talk, talk, talk - lifeless talk." To make matters worse, he had to leave his dog behind. Manorka, "an affectionate little spirit," had accompanied him and his Czechoslovak regiment to Vladivostok from western Siberia.[204] In a letter to his association colleagues Ray Reitzel and Gail Berg, by then married to each other and both working in Irkutsk, he complained: "You don't know what a comfort it is to have an intelligent dog to talk to after spending a few hours in the administration headquarters at Vladivostok."[205]

In Vladivostok, the air was thick with rumours of an impending coup. Rumours of a Bolshevik uprising were commonplace, a phenomenon nurse Mona Wilson termed the "spirit of Vladivostok."[206] "This is the original 'rumorville,'" commented Dr. Bucher.[207] In the fall of 1919 it was not Bolsheviks but SRs who took action. The malcontents waited only for news of Omsk's fall before striking, and shortly after noon on 17 November, the uprising began. Gajda, the young Czechoslovak general and former commander in chief of Kolchak's Siberian Army, was the man responsible for this revolt against General Rozanov, who ruled over the city as Kolchak's local representative. Gajda had broken with Kolchak in the summer, and he hoped his localized revolt would trigger a pan-Siberian movement that would overthrow the regime.[208] Backed by zemstvo and SR leaders, his forces fought a bitter

[204]Diary, entry for 8 Dec 1919, in Duncan papers, box 1. He got the female dog in Omsk: entry for 2 Jul 1919, in ibid.

[205]Duncan to Gail and Ray, 8 Dec 1919, in Duncan papers, box 1. For more on Reitzel and Berg, see Raymond J. Reitzel, *All in a Lifetime*, incl. Gail Berg, *Shifting Scenes in Siberia* (Burlingame, CA: Advance Print Shop, n.d., ca. 1971).

[206]Baldwin, *She Answered Every Call*, 73.

[207]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 52.

[208]Allen to Farrand, 19 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 474–77.

battle at Vladivostok's rail yards against troops loyal to the government and Rozanov. Industrial, port, and naval workers in the city went on strike at the same time, in sympathy with the uprising. But it was no use. Less than a day later, Gajda and his followers were defeated, and Gajda himself was captured. The "revolution" was brutally put down, most of its leaders were killed or jailed, and many participants were brought before courts-martial. Phelps claimed he saw "fully a thousand captives marched over the hill to be shot." (Gajda was spared and subsequently ordered to leave the country. He "received a hero's welcome upon his return to Europe."[209]) According to Jenny, senior secretary at the American base camp near the harbour, many of the bodies of those executed or otherwise killed in the crossfire lay on the streets for days before being removed. In the aftermath, there were persistent rumours of new uprisings in Vladivostok. "Siberia may be on the verge of a general upheaval," noted Allen on 27 November.[210] The Red Cross's top men in Vladivostok were "exceedingly doubtful" of the government's ability to survive despite Rozanov's success against the rebels.[211]

During the fighting, the Red Cross cared for the wounded of both sides as well as civilians caught in the cross-fire. Following Allied policy, the Siberian commission deemed it important to be strictly neutral in their relief and assistance.[212] Now that Kolchak was all but a lost cause, the foreign militaries had little reason to involve themselves in localized political squabbles. It is perhaps not unfair to point out that Americans did not know which side would emerge victorious. Allen boasted that "the abortive revolution in Vladivostok,

[209]Kelly, "Would-Be Führer," 165.

[210]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 475–77, 567–70; Allen to Farrand, 27 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Phelps to Mary, 18 Nov 1919, in Phelps papers, C—Mary Phelps 1918–19; Arnold E. Jenny to Billy, 14 Dec 1919, in Anderson papers, box 25, Arnold E. Jenny.

[211]Allen to Farrand, 19 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[212]Allen to AEF head, 24 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

while only a flurry, gave an occasion for the Red Cross personnel to demonstrate its readiness for quick action, and the result has already brought warm praise from the Russians who saw the Red Cross ambulances flying through the streets bearing their loads of wounded to the hospital and who have visited the hospitals."[213] The assistant commander of the Allied garrison was so impressed with Allen and the rest of the Red Cross team during the coup that he recommended them all for military decoration.[214] Perhaps the efforts of the Red Cross personnel help explain why the organization was also decorated by the provincial governor at the end of the year.[215] Other reasons may be the supply trains that continued to be sent west throughout the fall,[216] and the emergency relief given railway workers, coal miners, and civilians in eastern Siberia, Manchuria, and the Far East.

In November, members of the Siberian commission's executive committee considered whether to extend relief to railway men, from whom it received many appeals for warm clothing.[217] The Red Cross had earlier assisted railway employees in the winter of 1918–19. This help made for good relations between the relief organization and the men whose work was so important to its operations. According to an American officer posted as a guard aboard a Red Cross train in June 1919, the relationship between the two groups "insure[d] the passage of trains without useless delay and with the best co-operation. The railway employees [had] not forgotten the favors conferred upon them [the previous winter] by the Red Cross, as [was] evidenced by prompt and willing service at all stations. Except for

[213]Allen to Farrand, 19 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919
[214]Major Samuel I. Johnson to Teusler, 26 Nov 1919, in Faulstich collection, box 10, Organizations.
[215]Allen to Farrand, 12 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[216]Allen to Farrand, 4 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.
[217]Allen to Farrand, 14 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919. See also Minutes, ExCom, 4 Nov 1919, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[one] incident . . . there was not the slightest friction engendered."[218] "Favors" only went so far. The railway administration did not pay the eighty thousand workers on the Trans-Siberian on time.[219] Given the situation, "in order to keep a train on the move and to secure the right of way," the Siberian commission found "it was necessary in many cases to bribe the railroad officials, which was usually done with cigarettes, foodstuffs, or clothing. These officials," noted C. F. Rowland, "received very small salaries and they relied mostly upon the bribes they would get to keep them and their families alive."[220] Although not much mentioned in contemporary reports, the Red Cross resorted to bribery on other occasions to get what it wanted. Once, the organization was unable to secure material to make blankets by going through official channels. Red Cross representatives were told there were shortages. They then went directly to the official in charge of manufacturing the cloth they were after. "We had no difficulty in getting from him as many thousand yards of it as we asked for—for a cash consideration, of course," reported Dr. Newman.[221]

By December, the lack of clothing among railway employees was serious enough that it was significantly interfering with railway transportation at Irkutsk and elsewhere.[222] Late in the month the Red Cross packed a special train with clothing for fifteen thousand railway workmen and their families. The clothing was distributed along the Chinese Eastern

[218]Lt. Raymond M. Elliott, "Report of officer in charge of guard on Red Cross Train No. 11," 14 June 1919, Faulstich collection, box 12, Red Cross—ARC Relief Trains.

[219]Col. Ward, quoted in Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 361.

[220]C. F. Rowland, n.d., ca. 1921, "Memorandum Pertaining to Operation of American Red Cross Supply Trains by the Siberian Commission," in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Reports. See also Yarrow (formerly of the Red Cross's Siberian Commission), "Bolsheviki in Siberia," 325, which implies the Red Cross was considering supplying "trainmen" with clothing so they fulfil Red Cross needs.

[221]Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 300.

[222]Allen to Farrand, 4 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

Railway.[223] The Siberian commission also gave out supplies to railway employees in Vladivostok.[224] A thousand miners near Taiga were given clothing in late 1919. These men were worth assisting because coal shortages interfered with train travel.[225] In January, a second distribution train of fourteen cars was sent to hand out supplies at Harbin and between the eastern Manchurian border and Vladivostok.[226] Although in February the Siberian commission's executive committee decided not to send any more relief to railway employees and their families so they could concentrate on civilian assistance,[227] in March another large shipment of clothing was sent to Harbin for distribution among railway workers.[228]

The near-anarchy that prevailed on Siberia's railways was among the many reasons why the Czechoslovaks were tired of fighting the Russian civil war. On 13 November, at Irkutsk, they announced their abandonment of the White cause. Kolchak could no longer rely on their military support, and in December Czechoslovak units began moving east, in some cases without the express permission of their commanders. The Czechoslovak departure had tragic consequences for refugees west of Novo Nikolaevsk: more than a hundred echelons of refugee trains, including many hospital trains, were unable to continue their journeys, and were quickly overtaken by Red forces. The evacuations and military defeats continued through December and January. After the fall of Novo Nikolaevsk in mid-December, the

[223]Allen to Farrand, 2 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920; Digest of Report for Week Ending December 27, 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports; Allen to Farrand, 15 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[224]Allen to Farrand, 2 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[225]Allen to Farrand, 4 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[226]Allen to Farrand, 21 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[227]Minutes, ExCom, 17 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[228]Minutes, ExCom, 5 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

"Russian Army simply disintegrated."[229]

The chaos in middle Siberia affected one YMCA secretary more than most. This was L. A. Convis, assigned to the Polish troops. He witnessed "an unending, pitiable, miserable procession the like of which I never want to see again." The military defeats followed by the total collapse of the Kolchak army and government, and the ongoing movement of refugees eastward, resulted in a humanitarian disaster of monstrous proportions.

> The conditions in the Russian sanitary trains simply defy description. The most horrible sights were daily occurances. Dead piled on the platforms and on flatcars, people peering from the windows in the most horrible states of disease and emancipation. I went into one or two of these trains and the stench was frightful. We even saw men in the last gasp of life brot [sic] from the trains, naked and piled on top of the dead and left to die by freezing because clothing and places were needed by the sick who possibly had some chance in life. Yet I believe the Russian nurses were doing the best they could or knew. Conditions were simply impossible.[230]

Typhus raged like never before in Siberia. "The habit of wearing clothes taken from corpses" only contributed to the spread of the disease, according to a British observer.[231] Extreme measures were taken to keep the Polish troops free of disease: "Orders were issued that no Russian soldier be allowed to enter our cars." To add to the horror, train wrecks were common. Convis estimated he saw the remains of more than two hundred wrecks on the line west of Irkutsk. One of Convis's club cars was destroyed at Achinsk in an explosion that killed hundreds of soldiers and civilians. "The explosion made kindling of that club car," he noted.[232]

In early January 1920, Convis and his Polish soldiers were at a town just east of Krasnoiarsk. After the Red Army entered that city on 8 January, the Polish commander urged

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[229]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 551, 599, 600, 589.

[230]A copy of L. A. Convis's letter, dated 18 Feb 1920, is in YMCA Russia, box 30, Hopwood file.

[231]Francis McCullagh, *A Prisoner of the Reds: The Story of a British Officer Captured in Siberia* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1922), 18. For more on typhus, "the crowning horror" of the White retreat, see 31–35.

[232]Convis, 18 Feb 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 30, Hopwood file.

Convis to escape. This he did, travelling on foot and by sled toward Irkutsk, dodging Czechoslovak bullets all the while. "The Czechs began firing upon us, thinking I suppose that we might be some of Kappel's men, a few of whom had been passing. Twelve times during that wild ride the bullets came zipping across the snow." Kappel' was the Russian commander in that sector. In their determination to leave Siberia, and in the massive confusion that characterized the evacuation, the Czechoslovaks and Russians (and their supporters) were outright enemies for a time. Convis boarded a train on 10 January and arrived back in Vladivostok several weeks later.[233] A number of other foreigners did not escape the clutches of the Red Army, including eight American railway men, sixteen British officers, and a few American Red Cross representatives (see chapter 8).[234]

A handful of other Red Cross men also found themselves behind enemy lines as one town after another went Red. In some places workers' uprisings overthrew pro-Kolchak officials even before the arrival of Soviet forces. Most Americans left on evacuation trains ahead of the arrival of the Red Army. A few men were almost stuck without any means of escape, and had to make their way slowly back to Vladivostok "by the simple but difficult process of jumping one train after another." Red Cross hospitals in Novo Nikolaevsk, Tomsk, Irkutsk, and Verkhne Udinsk could not be evacuated as the American facilities in Cheliabinsk and Omsk had been. Instead, they were turned over to the Russian Red Cross, the government's sanitary department, and other organizations. The "great emergency"—serious railway congestion; problems acquiring freight cars; food, coal, and other fuel shortages; and severe winter weather—meant Red Cross personnel had no choice but to

[233]Ibid. For the date the Red Army entered Krasnoiarsk, see Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 592.
[234]Telegram, 22 Mar 1920, in NA, FO 371, 4099.

abandon the hospitals. It also made the evacuations and subsequent re-establishments further east "one of colossal proportions."[235]

Just keeping its trains moving east was "one of the heaviest tasks" facing the organization in the interior.[236] Enough space was found on one Red Cross car to accommodate some of Kolchak's closest confidants, including his finance minister and Sukin, all of whom Harris ordered the Red Cross to welcome.[237] Sukin apparently managed to avoid detection by fleeing Irkutsk disguised as an American Red Cross nurse.[238] Two days prior to leaving Irkutsk in January, Dr. Bucher pondered the amount of goods his organization has distributed in the city. "It might well be believed, as one Russian said, that practically every home in Irkutsk has something from the Red Cross. I hope that is true, and that they will remember America as their friend."[239] In its dying days, the government conferred the Order of St. Vladimir, fourth degree, on Teusler "for distinguished and self-sacrificing activity rendering help to the wounded of the fighting forces and relieving the suffering of the civil population."[240]

After desperately attempting to salvage what was left of his collapsing regime, Kolchak accepted the inevitable and stepped down as "Supreme Ruler" on 4 January. On 22

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[235]Allen to Farrand, 17 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; *Third Semi-Annual Report*, 1–2.

[236]Allen to Farrand, 26 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

[237]Pickett to family, 3 Mar 1920, in Pickett papers, box 1, C.

[238]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 625. There is no mention of the disguise in ARC records, but Sukin did escape the west aboard a Red Cross train. He later tried to get the organization to reimburse him for losses incurred when a fire on the train's baggage car damaged his property. Minutes, ExCom, 27 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920. For mention of the finance minister's property, see "Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.

[239]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 106–7.

[240]Teusler was also awarded the Czechoslovak War Cross. Allen, "Siberia," 105–6. For a list of other awards bestowed, see "List of Decorations Awarded by the All-Russian Government to Members of the Siberian Commission, American Red Cross," 1920, in ANRC papers, box 411, 340.061 Siberian Awards.

January, Czechoslovaks turned Kolchak over to (Bolshevik) Irkutsk authorities. In early February, after a rushed interrogation, the former leader was executed. Later that day, the Czechoslovaks signed a neutrality agreement with the Irkutsk Bolsheviks. The Red Army entered the city in early March, thus completing Moscow's takeover of western and central Siberia.[241]

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The Siberian commission continued its close relationship with the Kolchak regime until the government and its military ceased to exist. It found a ready ally in Consul General Harris, who was equally committed to supporting Kolchak. When his armies began to retreat eastward across the Siberian steppes, the Red Cross chose to evacuate its personnel and supplies. Most American female personnel were moved eastward well ahead of the advance of the Red Army, and most men made it out in good time, too. The YMCA had by that time only a few of its secretaries located anywhere near the front lines. These men also evacuated ahead of feared Red Army advances. Harris, much less keen on the association, ordered its representatives to leave before requesting Red Cross men to do the same.

The different aims of the two American welfare associations come to the fore in an examination of their activities in Kolchak's Siberia. The Red Cross did what it could to provide medical aid and other assistance as requested by the Russian authorities. Giving emergency relief to refugees throughout Siberia was also an important part of its work. For the YMCA, removed from front work by the Russian military, service for Russian civilians increased in importance even as secretaries continued to serve non-Russian soldiers in

[241]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 623, 666, 667. For more on "the fate of Admiral Kolchak," see 626–65. See also Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 231–32.

eastern Siberia and the Far East. These differences will become even clearer in the next chapter.

But both the Red Cross and YMCA also maintained their work in Siberia to build good relations between the United States and Russia. Apart from the support given Kolchak by Teusler and his commission colleagues, and the attempts made by Phelps and others to convince Russian leaders that the YMCA was on their side, Americans were keen to show Russians that they had their best interests at heart. As late as the fall, as the military situation grew worse with almost every passing day, Americans continued to offer their assistance to those in need, screen motion pictures for them, and teach them American sports. It was all considered to be "constructive" work. Of the leaders of the relief organizations, it seems that only the Phelps ever seriously considered that Kolchak and the anti-Bolshevik cause was doomed. As it happened, he was correct. Siberia had gone Red as far east as Lake Baikal. It would be some time yet before Lenin's government would establish its authority between there and the eastern edge of Russia.

CHAPTER 8

"Hanging around the fringe of Russia"[1]
The Russian Far East, 1920–24

> As we think of the future of the world movement of the Y.M.C.A. we can picture no more gratifying work than this for the war prisoners, as many of them are going back believing still in Christian fellowship and friendship rather than accepting hatred as their doctrine in life. America will benefit by this.[2]

> These healthy, active, open-minded, intelligent and talented children are the sort who now are the hope and in years to come will be the moulding factor in future Russia. . . . One and all, in this critical time of absence from their parents, they have found a home with the Red Cross and have received an indelible impression of Red Cross motherhood.[3]

> Two pictures in the [Vladivostok Mayak] foyer attracted me. One oil of a lighthouse in a stormy night—almost nothing visible but the light through deep clouds—the gift of the artist, a member, to his Lighthouse Society. And they say that to this artist the Miyak has meant just what his picture expresses. The other is a poster-like panel showing a robust youth pointing toward a distant lighthouse as though explaining to his companions—a workman, a small boy, a woman student, and a clerk. Allegorically expressing the feeling people have for their association.[4]

This chapter concludes the discussion of the Siberian commission and the work of the American YMCA in Siberia and the Russian Far East. As 1919 turned into 1920, the Red Cross had several ongoing projects. Care and maintenance of the Petrograd Children's Colony was the most significant of its work in the Far East. Other efforts included refugee and civilian relief, distributions of warm clothing to railway workers, and medical aid, including anti-typhus work. The YMCA had been forced out of most of its city and rural work outposts. It maintained programs only in Vladivostok and Harbin. Mostly, though,

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[1]George M. Day, "Annual Report to the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations for the Year Ending October 31, 1920," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jul–Dec 1920.

[2]MacNaughten to Hibbard, 5 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Reports 1920–23 & 1940.

[3]"The American Red Cross in Siberia," included in Allen to M. G. Scheitlin, 30 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[4]Lewis to Banton, 18 Jan 1923, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Reports 1920–23 & 1940. This is a fictionalized account of a visit to the Mayak.

association secretaries were engaged in providing support services to the many foreign troops still awaiting repatriation, and in doing some work for POWs.

For at least a year the Red Cross's representatives in Siberia had been among Kolchak's strongest American supporters. YMCA men had been more circumspect, but the political changes that took place beginning in late 1919 impacted the work of both organizations. Interestingly, the increasingly socialist bent of Siberian politics in the winter improved the ability of the two organizations to work in those areas still available to them. Russian authorities forgave the Siberian commission its strong support for Kolchak. As they prepared to pull out or severely restrict their activities, the Red Cross and YMCA were in a position to reflect on what they had accomplished. Personnel remained optimistic about Russia's future and confident their efforts had not been in vain. Their "constructive" efforts had left a lasting, powerful impression on the minds of thousands of Russians, Czechoslovaks, and others. Men, women, and children would not forget the kindnesses shown to them, and the particularly American-style projects undertaken. Americans believed that as Russian and European (and American) societies rebuilt after the war, citizens would remember what they had seen of American modernity and—because it made good sense—would put what they had learned into practice.

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The foreign military intervention was all but over. It was never effective at doing what Wilson hoped it would. The Canadians withdrew their force of five thousand men in the summer, and the two British regiments stationed in the interior departed in September and November, respectively. The Czechoslovaks and the other Allied forces that had fought in the interior were also on their way out by the start of 1920. Woodrow Wilson, essentially

physically incapacitated since mid-September,[5] never followed up on his always unclear Russia policy. But in late December, with the likelihood of Kolchak's complete defeat becoming clearer every day, Baker, Lansing, and a recovering Wilson agreed to evacuate the AEF from Siberia. They realized that there was little the United States could do to effect change in Russia, and knew that Congress would not support a renewal of the troop commitment.[6] On New Year's Eve General Graves heard from the War Department that withdrawal orders were on their way. He received them on 5 January. Two days later, the orders were published in Washington, and the next morning the announcement was made in Vladivostok.[7] It would be another few months before the American evacuation would be complete.

Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks had made large territorial gains in Siberia. By late January Moscow had direct or indirect control over all of Kolchak's former dominion west of Lake Baikal. In Vladivostok and elsewhere east of this impressive body of water, White elements, including the Cossack chieftain Semënov, who had been appointed commander of Kolchak's armies by the beleaguered admiral earlier in the month, still held on. But not for long: Political change was coming even without the looming threat of a Red Army invasion. For the moment, though, the presence of Japanese, Cossack, and what remained of other White forces kept the Red Army at bay. The Soviets bided their time. There was no rush.

The exodus of American relief workers continued. Dozens of Americans were on the railways between Irkutsk and Vladivostok attempting to evacuate as quickly and safely as

[5]Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 166–67.
[6]Davis and Trani, *First Cold War*, 194.
[7]Melton, *Between War and Peace*, 205; Allen to Farrand, 15 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

possible, and with all their—and their organizations'—belongings intact. The vast majority of men and women made it back to Vladivostok physically unharmed. A few did not. An American doctor died of typhus that winter, a casualty of a severe outbreak of the disease in central and western Siberia; a YMCA secretary succumbed in February.[8] Shockingly high rates of typhus infection and subsequent death were but one of the many horrors of the White retreat, during which hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians travelled east any way they could during a bitterly cold winter. "No retreat in history equals in misery the sufferings of Kolchak's men and of the refugees who accompanied them," historian George Stewart observed.[9]

In December the Red Cross Central Council in Washington ordered the Siberian commission to end its work. The organization was stretched thin, and the demands on its (postwar) European commissions were only increasing. The wartime missions had been originally meant to conclude their operations by 1 March 1919, but this had not always proven feasible. In addition, two new commissions were sent to the Baltic region in May 1919, and an office was opened at Narva (Estonia) in the fall. Washington leaders knew that "the reconstruction of war-devastated Europe was obviously far beyond the capacities of the American Red Cross, and its activities were viewed as only stop-gap aid until government relief resources could be more effectively mobilized." Moreover, the generosity of American donors could not be relied upon as during the war years. "The postwar reaction that was to lead to American rejection of the League of Nations was first reflected in a steadily declining

[8]Five American relief workers died while in Siberia, including one in mid-December 1919. Allen to Farrand, 15 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920. One YMCA secretary also died of typhus in late February 1920. Edgar MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia Covering the Period February 15th to September 20th 1920," 25 Oct 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].

[9]Stewart, *White Armies of Russia*, 319.

interest in all foreign relief."[10] The closing of Teusler's commission was thus in keeping with the organization's change in direction to peacetime activities: reconstruction and emergency aid only as necessary and if possible.[11] Long-term commitments were to be avoided.

The men in Vladivostok decided they would be able to close the commission by 1 May 1920.[12] Before that could happen, there was an enormous quantity of supplies to distribute, and arrangements had to be made for returning the Petrograd children to their homes. Given the radically changed nature and geographical reach of Red Cross work, a significant percentage of the commission's large staff was no longer necessary. At the end of December it included 1,429 people, of whom at least 330 were Americans.[13] Over the coming weeks and months employees were let go and American staffers set sail for home. The first group, mainly composed of female nurses, nurses' aides, and clerical staff, left in mid-January.[14] Local Russian and prisoner of war employees were let go in large numbers, so that by mid-May there were only 540 people on the Siberian commission's payroll.[15]

Most of the nearly two hundred American staff members who left in January and February were unhappy to go. They were deeply disappointed that they had not been able to do much more during their time in Siberia.[16] Many of these individuals had only been in

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[10]Dulles, *American Red Cross*, 195–97; Kenneth Andrew Steuer, "Pursuit of an 'Unparalleled Opportunity': The American Y.M.C.A. and Prisoner-of-War Diplomacy among the Central Power Nations during World War I, 1914–1923" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1998), 412.

[11]*Third Semi-Annual Report*, 3.

[12]Allen to Teusler, 2 Jan 1920, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Vladivostok 1920; Allen to Farrand, 15 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[13]Burle D. Bramhall, Summary of numerical statistical report of personnel, 31 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.308 Report of Personnel. This was perhaps the high-point; at the end of the previous July, there were 850 staff members, including at least 380 Americans. Bramhall, 31 July 1919, in ibid.

[14]Allen to Farrand, 21 Jan and 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920; Bramhall, personnel report, 10 Feb 1920, and Bramhall, personnel report, week ending 28 Feb 1920, both in ANRC papers, box 918, 987.118 Personnel.

[15]Personnel report, 18 May 1920, in ANRC papers, box 918, 987.118 Personnel.

[16]On personnel attitudes, see Allen to Farrand, 21 Jan and 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916,

Russia for a few months. Daniel Lively, who joined the Siberian commission after closing the northern Russia commission, was just as unimpressed with these individuals as they were with Teusler's commission. Some Americans balked at the transportation offered them and then spent thousands of dollars of Red Cross money making other arrangements. Lively blamed this behaviour on poor personnel choices and inadequate training. "There should be inculcated in all members of the organization something of the missionary spirit," he recommended, "so that instead of looking upon overseas work as a sublimated joy ride they would accept discomforts and hardships without murmuring." "Had these men and women been properly imbued with the sacredness of Red Cross funds," he continued, "they would never have made such reckless use of charity money, but would have accepted the three or four weeks discomfort that the trip entailed, with the knowledge that the money thus saved would have gone toward alleviating the suffering of less fortunate beings." It was "common knowledge," Lively claimed, that "the Red Cross has been looked on as a bird to be picked." Looking back, he believed that "with the cessation of the war, emphasis could have been laid upon the added call for sacrifice from those who represented the heart impulse of the people of America."[17] He was frustrated at the selfishness of these supposed humanitarians. Lively expected them to accept the hardships attendant upon their work. He believed missionaries made such sacrifices, and be demanded the same of relief workers: The Red Cross was "sacred" too.

The cost of work in Siberia was due to more than individual wastefulness, and here

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987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[17]Lively to acting commissioner, 25 May 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel. This report is full of pointed criticisms of personnel attitudes and behaviour, recruiting methods, troubles receiving ordered (and necessary) equipment and supplies, and other related difficulties.

missionaries were not to be emulated. Writing of the early months of the Red Cross's Siberian efforts, the commission's auditor, Alfred Davies, thought commission leaders had taken on too much responsibility from the start. After "the call—the great call—and [information about] the crying need from interior Siberia" reached their ears, "out of the warmth of their hearts the men in charge jumped but did not count the cost." "With a hue and a cry, they swept from Vladivostok and dropped their tents in Omsk, sechassing a little at Harbin and Buchedu." He was "convinced [there was] no deliberate sitting down at table and budgeting the cost, calmly surveying the human material and the inanimate, with a view of ascertaining whether or not the men then on the spot were qualified, or whether to jump forward in this way would be biting off more than they could chew." His interpretation was a caution to all future relief organizations: have a workable plan in place, "calmly" survey available resources, and make a realistic budget before beginning any projects. The Siberian commission's "hit and miss method . . . undoubtedly cost many thousands of dollars."[18] Instead of doing as missionaries would, Davies implied, relief workers should conduct themselves more like businessmen.

The closing of the commission offered an opportunity for reflection on what had been done and how. It also came at an extremely difficult time for Russia, when foreign aid was practically nonexistent but still very much needed. The situation in Siberia was perhaps worse than it had ever been, in humanitarian terms. That the Red Cross was not primarily a humanitarian organization comes into stark relief in consideration of this fact. The White retreat—the movement of soldiers and civilian refugees ever further east—resulted in almost unimaginable strife. "My narrative of the horrors I saw," reported pharmacist Edward H.

[18]Davies to Allen, 12 Jun 1920, in ibid.

Charette, "would include inhuman acts of military reprisal and such terrors as the collision of a train of refugees with a dynamite-loaded car at Achinsk, which we reached on New Year's Day. These tragedies are incapable of description."[19] Charette's travels took him through Siberia during the "Icy March," that is, the fighting retreat of Kolchak's forces during the early months of 1920. A former AEF man in Siberia remembered the scene decades later:

> Meanwhile, afoot and in sleighs, fragments of Kolchak's defeated army, together with thousands of fleeing White refugees, had joined in that longest and most tragical retreat of which history has any knowledge, compared with which the return of Napoleon from Moscow was a mere withdrawal. It began at the shattered Ural front, crossed three thousand miles of snow-covered steppes, at the border of the coldest region in the world, and did not end until the country beyond Lake Baikal was reached. At every step of the way starvation and pestilence pursued the long columns of wretched humanity. It has been said that upon this one retreat more bodies dropped by the wayside to be buried in the snow than fell in battle throughout the four years of the American Civil War.[20]

The Red Cross was little involved in ameliorating conditions, but not for lack of compassion. Eastern Russia was simply too chaotic to allow for aid endeavours to make any difference. There was no government or military or other authority to ensure the safety and success of relief efforts. Assistance could not take place without assurances of protection for relief workers. Nothing could be done in such a situation. And, in any case, the commission had orders to follow. A large-scale emergency relief campaign was not to be.

Unlike the Red Cross's Washington headquarters, the YMCA's stateside bosses did not intend to end right away the limited work its secretaries were still doing for Russians in the Far East. The association's men and women—an average of ninety Americans served in Siberia during the latter half of 1919[21]—were not ordered to put a stop to their activities. One reason why was that service for Allied military forces, the focus of efforts since the fall, was

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[19]Edward H. Charette, "On Red Cross Duty amidst the Great Stampede," *Red Cross Courier* 8, no. 13 (2 Jul 1928): 17. A copy of this article is in the Faulstich collection, box 12, Red Cross.

[20]Kindall, *American Soldiers in Siberia*, 246.

[21]National War Work Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States, Financial Statements, Part I, Statement as of December 31, 1919 (New York City, 15 Jan 1920), in YMCA archives, Armed Services Department, box 1, Army & Navy Dept Historical 1920–29 (B).

increasing. Another reason was that YMCA's Russian department still had its sights set on permanent work in Russia. At the moment, programming existed only in Vladivostok and Harbin. After YMCA executives including former senior Russian secretary Colton, and Hibbard, the head of the Russian department in New York, heard about the departure of the AEF, they decided not to change course. Edgar MacNaughten, tapped as Phelps's long-awaited replacement, agreed. In January MacNaughten and eleven other association representatives sailed across the Pacific as planned to replace secretaries whose tenures in Russia were up.[22]

By the time MacNaughten arrived in Vladivostok in February, important political changes had taken place there and elsewhere in the Maritime province (*Primorskaia oblast'*). Rozanov, who had so successfully (and murderously) put a stop to the Vladivostok socialists' premature uprising in November, fast lost his hold on the city in the New Year. By late January, the situation was very different. Nearby towns were coming under socialist control, leaving the mood in Vladivostok "very tense." On the twenty-sixth, partisans entered Nikolsk and took over the reins of power. On 28 January Vladivostok was put under martial law; later that day, a delegation from Nikolsk arrived to give Rozanov an ultimatum: resign or fight. Before the month was through, Spassk and Grodekovo were in SR hands. Vladivostok was surrounded by anti-Kolchak forces.[23]

What the Americans called a bloodless "revolution" came to Vladivostok the morning of 31 January. Rozanov was removed from power, and a new regional government was set

[22]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia."

[23]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 13, 15, 16; Allen to Farrand, 29 Jan and 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

up, namely, the Provisional Zemstvo Government of the Maritime Province. Its titular head was the chairman of the Vladivostok Zemstvo Board, a member of the SR party named Aleksandr Semënovich Medvedev. But the government was in actuality "under de facto Bolshevik control."[24] Even though Moscow was suspicious of the new authority—the Soviet Central Committee had eliminated all zemstvos in late December—Soviet officials calculated that a moderate zemstvo–SR government would be acceptable to the Japanese. Direct Soviet rule would not.[25]

The American Red Cross already had a good relationship with the Vladivostok Zemstvo Board. The new regime, knowing the American and Japanese militaries were watching it closely, was far from radical. Little property was confiscated, and private trade and commerce were not hampered. Foreign banks were allowed to continue their operations.[26]Given the new government's moderation and its desire to avoid friction with foreign elements, commission members did not have much to fear from the new authority. For "many months" the Siberian commission had provided supplies to zemstvo hospitals and other Russian institutions in need. Its civilian relief work in Vladivostok in the winter of 1918–19, primarily clothing distribution, relied on the cooperation of the local zemstvo and other organizations. Several thousand people benefited from these jointly administered efforts each week, including school children in and around Vladivostok.[27] Only days before

[24]John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 139.

[25]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 13–14; N.G.O. Pereira, *White Siberia: The Politics of Civil War* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1996), 152; Michael T. Florinsky, *Russia: A History and An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (1947; repr., New York: Macmillan, 1959), 2:1460.

[26]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 20–21.

[27]Allen to Farrand, 6 Feb 1920, Allen to Farrand, 29 Jan and 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920; Allen to Farrand, 26 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Digest of Report for Week Ending January 17, 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports;

the revolution, Medvedev met with Riley Allen and expressed the zemstvo's desire that the organization maintain its work.[28] Perhaps he had known change was coming and wished to assuage any fears Americans might have about their personal safety and ability to keep their programs running.

In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, Medvedev and the zemstvo's attitude toward the Red Cross did not change. The organization "operated normally,"[29] and the new government was anxious that it stay on. Establishing good relations with the new authorities was important because the Red Cross had to cooperate with them if it wished to accomplish its goals. Allen explained that although direct distribution to hospitals and needy individuals was possible, "all our operations require[d] contact and dealings with the prevailing form of government." To get freight cars and operate relief trains, the Siberian commission needed the cooperation of "officials who now serve under the red flag."[30]

Fortunately, Red Cross representatives were impressed with the new government. The organization found "that in some respects [it was] able to operate more freely than under the Kolchak regime." The Siberian commission could get trains in Vladivostok easier and more often than before. "Zemstvo organizations have taken a new lease on life," judged the executive committee, "and cooperate with us effectively in organizing committees for relief work." The Red Cross only worried about whether the zemstvo would remain in place after the Bolsheviks took control, a change committee members believed would only be a matter

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Allen to Farrand, 29 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920

[28]Confirmation of their conversation is in a letter from zemstvo representatives to Allen, 28 Jan 1920, attached to Allen to Farrand, 29 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[29]Allen to Farrand, 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[30]Allen to Farrand, 3 Mar 1920, in ibid.

of time.[31] Though in the weeks after the revolution Americans came in for harsh public denunciations, the Red Cross did not detect active opposition to its operations. American welfare organizations, including the Red Cross, were occasionally denounced, but Russian leaders were not among the nay-sayers. Allen reported that it was daily made clear to the organization that the zemstvo government earnestly wished the Red Cross to continue its work.[32] American military authorities also had good relations with the government. General Graves later recalled that he "never saw anyone try harder to be fair and just to everyone than did these people."[33]

Despite the desire of the new government that the Siberian commission continue its efforts, the Red Cross was not in a position to make any promises. It still planned to close down as soon as it was able to distribute its remaining supplies, sell or give away its assets, and send the Petrograd children home. This would not happen immediately: There were large quantities of supplies in Red Cross warehouses, brought in from the west or received from overseas before the rapid, massive reduction in the organization's area of operations. And so Red Cross relief work, and thus cooperation with the zemstvo government, continued. During the first week of February, the Siberian commission assisted hundreds of "political prisoners" who were given their freedom after the government changeover. Many of the men were suffering from typhus and most had no winter clothing.[34] In mid-February, once the commissioners were satisfied that the "most urgent cases" had been handled, a refugee

[31]Allen to Farrand, 26 Feb 1920, in ibid.
[32]Allen to Farrand, 12 Mar 1920, in ibid.
[33]Quoted in Maddox, *Unknown War with Russia*, 131.
[34]Allen to Farrand, 11 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920. See also Siberian Commission, Digest of Report for Week Ending February 7, 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

clothing distribution station that they had opened in December was closed.[35] By then outfits had been distributed to "more than fifty thousand people" and "very many more" were indirectly helped.[36]

In an effort to relieve suffering further afield and whittle down Red Cross supplies, distributions outside Vladivostok occurred, too. In early February, the Siberian commission sent two distribution trains to districts north of the city. The railway up to Khabarovsk had been closed for the past several weeks because of raids, but once most of the region was under the zemstvo's authority, the violence stopped and repairs got under way.[37] Now that the railway was open, one Red Cross train went to Khabarovsk, while the other distributed supplies between there and Nikolsk.[38] Most of the supplies were handed over to zemstvo organizations for further distribution.[39] The American commission trusted local authorities to make appropriate decisions when giving out the goods.

Primorskaia was not the only Russian area accessible to Americans. Semënov still held out at Chita, and the Chinese Eastern Railway through Manchuria remained in pro-Allied hands. But the situation was far from stable. The Transbaikal "was without law or order," in the words of historian George Stewart.[40] In early January Teusler received an appeal from Semënov "begging" his organization to provide assistance to "the civilian population and refugees in Chita and vicinity." Up until that time, there had been almost no

[35]Allen to Farrand, 26 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919; Minutes, ExCom, 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[36]Allen to Farrand, 11 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920. See also Siberian Commission, Digest of Report for Week Ending February 7, 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[37]Allen to Farrand, 6 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[38]Allen to Farrand, 19 Feb 1920, in ibid.

[39]Allen to Farrand, 26 Feb and 3 Mar 1920, in ibid.

[40]Stewart, *White Armies of Russia*, 323.

Red Cross activity in the region. The only significant distribution was in October 1918; work nearer the front had taken priority. And, of course, Americans were not fans of Semënov, who was at the very least a nuisance and at worst (and in reality) a murderous, thieving warlord.[41] Other than three carloads of supplies sent in December 1919 for railway and mining employees, the Siberian commission distributed no relief until Semënov's desperate request. It came at a good time: A Red Cross evacuation train carrying Margaret Matthew and a group of her refugee workers, plus nurses, doctors, and nurses' aides, arrived in Chita on 14 January.[42]

Over the next week, all Americans in the vicinity, including consular officials, soldiers, and railway engineers, in cooperation with local authorities, got as many of the supplies distributed as they could. Every day "great crowds of people gathered before the doors begging assistance." Many women and children waited between six and eight hours in temperatures averaging -40°.[43] During that week, 3,325 applications were received, covering 11,355 people. All told, nearly forty thousand garments were distributed, and more were given out later by a few men who remained behind after the evacuation train left.[44] This and the earlier efforts were both "purely humanitarian" and "very effective in removing much misunderstanding and prejudice in that section regarding the intentions and interests of

[41]Gen. Graves and Col. Morrow later testified before a US Senate committee in an attempt to keep Semënov out of the United States: US Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Deportation of Gregorie Semenoff: Hearings Relative to the Deporting of Undesirable Aliens, April 12–18, 1922* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922). Semenov did not endear himself to the British either. See E. S. MacLeod Prinsep, "Knox's Mission, Siberia, 1919–1920: The Personal Reminiscences of One of its Members," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 81, no. 1 (Oct 1960): 60.

[42]Alice C. St. John to Teusler, 29 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.4 Supplies.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Matthew, "Report of Week of Special Distribution American Red Cross," 26 Jan 1920, in ibid.

Americans in this country."[45] Americans were never popular in Siberia and the Russian Far East. Bolshevik sympathizers did not appreciate their part in the military intervention against Soviet Russia; White supporters wished the US military had done much more than it did to assist their cause.

In February, after returning from Chita, Matthew and her team of "experienced civilian relief workers" went to distribute clothing in Harbin. The city, located in the heart of northern Manchuria, was a popular stopping point for refugees fleeing the West. "Their condition is becoming serious," Allen observed.[46] It was an understatement. Siberian winters are bitterly cold, and civilian refugees as well as the remnants of Kolchak's armed forces were all headed out of central Siberia. One group, known as the Kappelites (after their now-deceased leader, General Kappel'), arrived in Semënov's territory in February after their "Icy March" from the front. Many of the soldiers had their families and other refugees in tow, and they were all in dire straits.[47] By the end of the month, when the Red Cross distribution work ended, more than six thousand people had received clothing.[48] Matthew recommended more clothing be sent, and four more cars of supplies were sent in March, enough for two thousand railway families.[49]

Apart from the supplies that may have been given out while Red Cross personnel were en route to Vladivostok during the evacuations, no relief goods were distributed west of Lake Baikal after the closure of the Irkutsk work. Siberia was then "practically or entirely

[45]Teusler to Keppel, 9 Feb 1920, in ibid.
[46]Allen to Farrand, 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[47]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 28.
[48]Allen to Farrand, 3 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[49]Minutes, ExCom, 4 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920; Allen to Farrand, 12 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

Bolshevik."[50] Given the ongoing American economic blockade of Soviet Russia,[51] and Harris's previous instructions that no Americans go into Soviet territory, commissioners were unsure how to deal with the rapid political changes beyond Lake Baikal. As early as mid-January, Teusler advocated sending relief into western Siberia. He did not think Red Cross workers had anything to fear, writing to Washington headquarters that the Siberian commission was "well known now all through Siberia and by far the greater part of our assistance has been given to men who to-day form the rank and file of the Bolshevik forces and government." Former Kolchak backers threw their support behind the Bolsheviks for either ideological or practical reasons. To support his claims, Teusler pointed out that the Irkutsk SRs had been "prompt and courteous in granting the requests of the Red Cross men in charge of our evacuation" before the American departure. It was, he wrote, "thoroughly recognized in Siberia that the Red Cross is here to help the people themselves irrespective of their political convictions."[52] This was not necessarily true (see below).

But what a change from just a few weeks earlier! Teusler, who had argued strongly that Red Cross aid was a significant reason for Kolchak's military successes, now advocated sending supply trains into western, increasingly Soviet, Siberia. He was "satisfied that the assistance would be very welcome," and "that the organization "would be given every facility." Harris, who as late as November had still been pushing his government to back Kolchak, was keen for the Red Cross to head back west. He believed Soviet authorities would permit humanitarian distributions. "In all probability they would be only too glad to

[50]Allen to Farrand, 12 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[51]This was undeclared, but made clear to Americans interested in doing business with Bolshevik Russia. See Foglesong, *America's Secret War*, 284; White, *Commercial Relations*, 67. It was only ended in July 1920. McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 330.

[52]Teusler to Keppel, 15 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel. Teusler also wrote that Bolsheviks were better behaved in Siberia than they were elsewhere.

safeguard the Red Cross in all its operations until the work should be completed." Despite his dislike for Bolsheviks, Harris did not think evacuating the stockpile of supplies in Vladivostok was the right move. "Such an inhumane act even if caused by our possible antipathy to the Bolsheviks would not be sufficiently strong to condone the act in the eyes of millions of Russians who are certainly as much opposed to the Bolsheviks as ourselves and who are the immediate sufferers."[53] Harris asked Teusler to "authorize [the] distribution of Red Cross supplies in Omsk and further West." The Red Cross commissioner would not do so until instructions came from headquarters and he received word of State Department thoughts about "relief and economic assistance within the Bolshevik lines."[54]

With Kolchak now definitely out of the picture and the unpopularity of his regime clear, it seems formerly pro-White Americans decided to change their tactics from supporting Kolchak's military campaign to more widespread assistance. This shift in attitude and policy of the men based in Russia anticipated the famine relief aid that Americans would undertake in Soviet Russia in the early 1920s. Humanitarian aid had been aimed at White Russians, but now relief workers wished to use it in Bolshevik Russia as a means of undermining a hated regime and improving America's image. The change of heart also begs the question, What was the true aim of Americans in Siberia? The answer is a combination of secular and religious modernization inspired by America but specific to Russia. Anti-Bolshevism, as sincere as it had been, was but a by-product of this broader goal. Once the demise of the Soviet government seemed much less likely than it once had, it was not difficult for Americans in Russia to shift the focus of their efforts.

[53]Harris to State, 22 Jan 1920, in Harris papers, box 3, American Consulate—Harbin—1920.
[54]Teusler to Keppel, 15 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel.

Auditor Alfred Davies's take on the situation, written the following summer, also sheds light on this shift. Davies argued that the Siberian commission made a "serious mistake . . . in having a distinct political bias."

> It cannot be denied that the American Red Cross in Siberia, in the early days, was a sort of foreign army medical corps for the Kolchak Government. Just why this was, and who was responsible, is perhaps beside the point, but in a civil war of the nature involved here, there is so much to be said for both sides, and even without anything being said as to the question being one for Russians and Russians only, and apart from the fact that the names "White" and "Red" did not change the character of the fighting, not the cruelties, nor the graft, nor of the hatred, nor, in fact, change anything at all, but left each side as they began – Russian people – the Red Cross, to my mind, nullified much of its goal by so generously supplying medicine and clothing to the Kolchak troops without trying to get further and give the helping hand to those further along the line who, as human beings, suffered just as much from a sword or bullet wound, or the raging fever of typhus. If a suggestion be possible along this line, it would be that future work be entirely non-political, on the ground that the funds of the organization are contributed by people of many religious faiths and political creeds, and that a mother stands over ready with open arms no matter what the derelictions of her child, and so the "Greatest Mother in the World" should, to my mind, stand ready with the cruse of oil and the balm of Gilead, regardless of the rags or silk of those that call for help.

In this suggestion, Davies pinpointed a major dilemma inherent in international humanitarian assistance, one practitioners and policy makers grapple with any time they decide to alleviate foreign suffering. Davies, and presumably his colleagues, learned other important lessons from the experience of the Siberian commission and the passage of time. Was the Red Cross "doing the best by forcing, as it were, the helping hand," he wondered? He remembered all the buildings that had to be requisitioned and the ensuing fights with Russian officials "to retain such requisitioned places, to get them cleaned, etc. Then it [was] necessary to pay every inch of the way, and to pay, in some instances, quite heavily. This may be quite a common experience with organizations of this nature," Davies noted, "but it has seemed to me, if the Russian people as a whole had wished the A.R.C.'s help, they would have been more ready to co-operate and to place at our disposal such facilities as they had." He suggested that "a regard for this phase of the situation would be well to keep in mind." The Red Cross Central Council would do well to ascertain "whether or not this is a common

feature of relief work."[55] Another central dilemma in aid is whether to assist those individuals and groups who object to the way help is provided.

One place the Red Cross was wanted in the winter of 1920 was in western Siberia. Teusler was not alone among Red Cross men wishing a return to the West. As political changes continued apace after January, he and the other commissioners were more receptive to Soviet proposals than they once would have been. All areas of Russia were under Bolshevik, SR, or zemstvo authority by mid-February except for a small area around Chita controlled by the Japan-backed Semënov. Nikiforov, Vladivostok's leading Communist and head of the government's finance department, was confident the current "transitory" regime in the city would give way "within a few weeks" and come under Moscow's direct rule. (Contemporary sources eschewed "Bolshevik" for "Communist" at about this time.) Given the seeming certainty of his prediction proving correct, the commissioners concluded that they would have to work with the increasingly Communist government, or end their Russian activities entirely. Cooperation was feasible. The Communists, according to Nikiforov, supported the Red Cross as long as it was clearly separate from the US army. Over the next few weeks the Siberian commission tried a few times to learn more about official American policy toward Communist Russia as it applied to its own work, but to no avail.[56] Wilson's government wanted nothing to do with Soviet Russia. Lenin's regime, on the other hand, was much more willing, even eager, for American economic relations, and continued to be in the

[55]Davies to Allen, 12 Jun 1920, in ibid.

[56]Siberian Commission Digest for Week Ending January 31, 1920 (And Weekly Letter Dated February 6, 1920) Activities, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports. The SC asked Washington about whether it could send trains deeper into Siberia, beyond the Transbaikal. Allen to Farrand, 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

ensuing years.[57]

In mid-March the Vladivostok office had still not heard back about whether the economic blockade meant the Red Cross was unable to distribute supplies west of Semënov's territory. Until word came from the United States, clothing distribution (apart from the previously-mentioned supply trains) was "virtually at a standstill." Time was of the essence, and not only because suffering was worst during the winter—fast ending—but also because waiting meant it would take the Siberian commission longer than planned to complete its work.[58] A relief train sent west waited in Manchuria from early February for permission to work further west.[59] The commissioners were increasingly frustrated at not having instructions from Washington. Sending supplies into western Siberia would have been welcomed by the Soviets. The Siberian commission knew as much because it had heard it from Soviet representatives as well as one of their own men captured by the Red Army, Edward Charette.

Charette and a few other American Red Cross personnel were taken in January 1920. The group had been near the front lines, distributing supplies to Russian sanitary trains and hospitals. Because of the nature of their work, the Americans stayed as long as Charette believed it was safe to do so. But his timing was off. When Charette decided it was time to evacuate, he and his men got stuck at Novo Nikolaevsk, and had to abandon their train. (A Red Cross man who had earlier left the group of his own accord claimed Charette had held the train at Novo Nikolaevsk "in order to purposefully get himself captured by the

[57]David C. Engerman, "Economic Reconstruction in Soviet Russia: The Courting of Herbert Hoover in 1922," *International History Review* 19, no. 4 (Nov 1997): 840.

[58]Allen to Farrand, 12 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[59]Allen to Farrand, 6, 19, and 26 Feb 1920, in ibid.

Bolsheviks so that he might have an interesting story to tell when he got back to America."[60]) The Americans only managed to keep five of their own cars, which were subsequently attached to a train of departing Polish troops.[61] The Polish train left on 10 December[62] and on 10 January made it just past Krasnoiarsk. It then found itself being unable to go any further. The Red Army was fast approaching; American Vice Consul John H. Ray advised Charette and his men to pack up and walk to a village a few miles away, where a Czechoslovak echelon could offer them transport. Unfortunately, there were two sick men on Charette's team, including an American doctor, William H. Ford. Given their condition, it was too dangerous to move them, and Charette elected to remain behind with them. Four other Red Cross men also chose to stay.[63] Ray, accompanied by a British factory owner and his wife, took his own advice and walked. They were apparently the last foreigners to leave the town before the Red Army arrived two days later.[64]

The Red Cross group was blocked from travelling east by the arrival of the Red Army. After several days passed, the Americans were taken back to Krasnoiarsk, where they arrived on 18 January. On 21 January, Charette went to speak with a military commissar. The latter informed Charette that he and his colleagues were now prisoners of war.[65] When Charette asked why representatives of a "neutral organization, simply in Siberia to give

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[60]See Minutes, ExCom, 4 Mar 1920, including attached memorandum, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920. It seems at least one man employed by the Red Cross did later brag about being taken prisoner, something which may have never happened—I found no evidence of it in the archives. See "Winnipeg boy has Kolchak's silver belt," *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg) (31 Jan 1921): 6.

[61]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.

[62]Allen to Farrand, 26 Dec 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919

[63]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.

[64]Telegram, 22 Mar 1920, in NA, FO 371, 4099.

[65]Charette to McDonald, 22 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Reports.

relief," were being so treated, the commissar responded with a sneer.[66] "You have helped Kolchak sufficiently well, we take it," he said. The commissar accused the Red Cross of aiding the White army by providing supplies. "We consider the Red Cross one of our worst enemies." Charette defended his organization. "When I admitted that we had helped the sick and wounded of Kolchak's army, I said we did it for humanity's sake. But the Commissar said he knew our record; and, if neutral, why did we pull our supplies out of Omsk? To this, I could only plead hysteria."[67] The Bolshevik official had a point: The Siberian commission had not been politically neutral, and made no attempt to work beyond the borders of White Siberia until after Charette's capture. For Charette, the encounter was a lesson in the personal consequences of politicized relief.

In a bid to appease his captors, improve relations, and demonstrate Red Cross neutrality, Charette offered to assist in hospital work in any way possible.[68] Perhaps he might have also tried a line one captured British officer offered a scowling commissar—possibly the same man as Charette's interrogator—"who lectured [him] truculently on the supplies his country had sent to Kolchak." The officer "disarmed the wrath of the lecturer, a Commissar, and transformed his dark scowl into a pleasant smile by simply remarking, 'Well, it seems that you have got most of it!'"[69] This tactic might have worked for Charette, too. A great

[66]The commissar pointed out that the Red Cross had supplied the Kolchak government. Charette countered by claiming this was because Kolchak's representatives "were the only officials then existing in Siberia and that as a matter of fact we had been giving relief to people regardless of factions." The commissar was unimpressed. "Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.

[67]Charette, "On Red Cross Duty," 19.

[68]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.

[69]McCullagh, *Prisoner of the Reds*, 69.

quantity of American Red Cross supplies were captured by the Red Army, after all.[70] And there was at least one instance of Red Cross supplies being directly handed over to the "Bolshis."[71]

Charette met with representatives of the Moscow government the next day, and with them arranged to retrieve medical supplies from Irkutsk to help relieve some of the distress in Bolshevik territory. Krasnoiarsk, and indeed the entirety of Siberia, was in the midst of a terrible typhus epidemic, and despite the large amount of Red Cross supplies left behind during the evacuations, much more aid was required. With an agreement reached, Charette headed by train and sled for Irkutsk. He was accompanied by Aleksandr Mikhailovich Krasnoshchekov, a leading Communist and long-time associate of Trotsky who had been among the Russian émigrés who returned to Russia from the United States during 1917. Krasnoshchekov was the most prominent of the returned émigrés in Siberia. After his return, he became active in Bolshevik politics. By the time he and Charette met, he was accredited by the Soviet government as an official representative. Krasnoshchekov was also given full authority to create a buffer state between Semënov and the Japanese in the East, and the Soviet state to the west. In April 1920 he would successfully form and be the first premier of the Far Eastern Republic, a short-lived nominally independent state.[72] Charette was unaware that his travelling companion was, as he put it later, "one of the high chiefs of the Soviets."

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[70]According to a British report, "American Red Cross supplies captured amounting over ten millions": Telegram, 22 Mar 1920, in NA, FO 371, 4099.

[71]When they asked the British captain responsible why he had done so, "he replied that it was for any who were sick and suffering." When the Bolsheviks "said they thought the British were helping the Kolchak regime. The officer said the Red Cross was helping sick people." Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 110.

[72]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5. Charette to McDonald, 22 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Reports. On Krasnoshchekov, see Stewart, *White Armies of Russia*, 379–82; Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 25–26.

He knew the man spoke excellent English, and claimed to have spent fifteen years in the United States. Krasnoshchekov told Charette "he was the personal representative of the Moscow government, and he made things easy for us."[73]

The pair arrived at Irkutsk in mid-February after a three week journey. Once there, Charette was pleasantly surprised to find the Red Cross hospital still operating with its Russian staff intact. Krasnoshchekov had another proposal for Charette: He wanted the Red Cross to supply medicines to help fight disease in Siberia, especially typhus.[74] At this time, the organization was only distributing supplies as far west as the Chita district, on the other side of Lake Baikal from Irkutsk.[75] Charette agreed to the proposal, and he decided to present the idea to Dr. Henry Owen Eversole, who was in charge of Red Cross work in the Transbaikal region. Krasnoshchekov could not cross the border into Semënov's territory, but sent a Bolshevik envoy named Paul Bausse to accompany Charette. (Bausse travelled disguised as an "interpreter.")[76] The two men arrived in Chita to confer with Everole on 25 February. Eversole was not in a position to make any decisions, and so Charette and Bausse continued on to Vladivostok.[77]

The Vladivostok office had yet to hear what had happened to Charette and his associates. Indeed, the commissioners did not even know for sure which men had been captured. The most logical way of finding out—contacting Bolshevik officials in central Siberia—was no easy task. Not even the Vladivostok government could get directly in touch

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[73]Charette, "On Red Cross Duty," 19.

[74]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5. Charette to McDonald, 22 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Reports.

[75]Allen to Farrand, 15 Jan and 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[76]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.

[77]Charette to McDonald, 22 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Reports.

with officials in Krasnoiarsk or Irkutsk because Semënov, who controlled the territory in between, did not allow their messages to go through. Instead, the government had to radio Moscow and ask officials there to pass on any messages to the Siberian Bolsheviks.[78] The closest link the Siberian commission then had to Soviet Russia was Nikiforov. Teusler and Allen went to see him. They asked about the Soviet government's attitude toward the Red Cross and the possibility of getting in touch with their men in the interior.[79] Nikiforov was helpful, and the Americans left the meeting with their fears allayed. Nikiforov signed off on a message to Moscow inquiring about the status of the American personnel and requesting their release if they were still detained. The message claimed the men "were not on a military or political mission but on purely humanitarian service and should be given assistance and passage to Vladivostok."[80] In March word came from I. N. Smirnov, the president of the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee at Verkhne Udinsk, that the Americans were fine.[81] Allen replied, asking that the men come to Vladivostok "at once" and that Smirnov arrange for their transport.[82] The Red Cross men would not have known that it was this same Smirnov who had sanctioned Kolchak's execution several weeks earlier.[83]

By then, Charette and Bausse were in Vladivostok. They both duly passed on Krasnoshchekov's request that the Red Cross return to central and western Siberia for "a

[78]Allen to Farrand, 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[79]Minutes, ExCom, 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 Executive Committee Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[80]Allen to Farrand, 26 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[81]Telegram, 2 Mar 1920, included as appendix A in Allen to Farrand, 19 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920. The English translation of the note available in the Red Cross archival material implies that the men were not prisoners, but were simply "staying in Siberia."

[82]Allen to Smirnov, n.d., ca. 16 Mar 1920, included as appendix B in Allen to Farrand, 19 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[83]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 662.

large sanitary campaign."[84] The Red Army had been welcomed in Irkutsk on 8 March, and the entire region was now officially part of Soviet Russia.[85] Charette told the members of the Siberian commission's executive committee that relief was urgently needed, especially for the fight against typhus.[86] But the commissioners did not have the authority to either accept or decline the proposal. Once again, the Vladivostok office asked Washington headquarters for permission to operate in Bolshevik territory.[87]

Another request for assistance from Soviet Russia was received by Eversole at around the same time. It asked him to return to Irkutsk to carry out the Red Cross's earlier plans to quarantine the Trans-Siberian Railway against typhus fever. Eversole was in Chita directing supply distributions and closing the work in the district when he received the request. He surmised that Soviet authorities had discovered copies of the quarantine plans in government offices after they took Irkutsk.[88] The typhus situation was especially bad in Irkutsk *oblast'* that winter.[89] Based on reports from medical officials, which showed typhus numbers as high as seventy percent of the population of some towns, the Siberian commission was certain western and central Siberia was "in the grip of the worst typhus epidemic in recent history."[90]

This was no surprise. In June the Red Cross had started preparing for an increase in infection that it knew would come once the cold weather arrived.[91] Typhus cases spiked during the White evacuation from western Siberia. Travelling conditions for refugees along

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[84]Allen to Farrand, 12 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[85]Smele, *Civil War in Siberia*, 667.
[86]"Statement before the Executive Committee . . . by Captain E. H. Charette . . . ," 10 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 1, folder 5.
[87]Charette to McDonald, 22 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.408 Reports.
[88]Eversole to Caldwell, 22 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[89]See translation of Gusarov (Manager of Irkutsk Provincial Department of Health) to ARC, 19 Mar 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.
[90]Allen to Farrand, 22 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[91]Allen to Farrand, 11 Jun 1919, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jul–Dec 1919.

the railway, and the difficulties of maintaining sanitary environments for large groups of people on the move, caused the disease to spread rapidly. The anti-typhus train had been out of commission since at least September.[92] There were frustrating delays in getting the train repaired. In early January Allen complained that "repairs on our Anti-Typhus Train have taken three or four times as long as should have been the case and we are just now preparing for its dispatch early next week."[93]

The anti-typhus train was finally ready for service in mid-January. Although the typhus situation in the Transbaikal was "especially bad,"[94] the train did not head back west. Rather, its first job was disinfecting American soldiers in and around Vladivostok who were ready to board ships for home.[95] By the beginning of March "the typhus epidemic [was] at its height in Vladivostok." Allen explained what the train was then doing:

> Our Red Cross Train is stationed where all of the trains from the West pour in and is delousing, disinfecting and bathing many thousands of people. Its special work is to bathe and disinfect the clothing of all the Czech soldiers coming in on crowded echelons from the West. The Czechs are evacuating about fifty thousand men from Siberia and most of these will be bathed by the American Red Cross Anti-Typhus Train. The Train is also bathing thousands upon thousands of civilians and many soldiers of other nationalities, including Russians and Serbians; also numerous prisoners-of-war. This Train is the only agency to prevent the spread of typhus which operates in Vladivostok on any considerable scale. It is safe to say that it is doing more good in the present epidemic than all of the hospitals and the small disinfestation plants of the city and vicinity put together.[96]

Under the terms of the agreement between the Red Cross and the Allies, the anti-typhus train reverted back to the control of the foreign militaries at the end of May. The Red Cross recommended that it "be sent to middle and western Siberia, after it has served the purposes of the Allies at Vladivostok. This train is now the largest travelling anti-typhus station in the world, and it would be a misfortune if it should be broken up and its special equipment

[92]MacClintock to Farrand, 24 Sep 1919, in ibid.
[93]Allen to Farrand, 8 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[94]Ibid.
[95]Allen to Farrand, 15 Jan 1920, in ibid.
[96]Allen to Farrand, 3 Mar 1920, in ibid.

disassembled."[97] To the dismay of the Red Cross, the Allies voted instead to turn the train over to the Japanese.[98] As "the Japanese have no troops coming in from districts where typhus is raging,"[99] the commissioners were not hopeful that it would go to where they believed it was most needed. While under Red Cross management, the train had bathed 105,000 people, disinfected 1 million pieces of clothing, and handed out 500,000 garments.[100]

The proposals received by Charette and Eversole were preceded by earlier Soviet requests for help sent to other western organizations. British Quakers were permitted to enter Soviet Russia in December 1919, and supplies were shipped into the country early in the New Year.[101] Despite the commissar's disgust with Charette because of his organization's ties to Kolchak, it is possible that the Soviet government was serious about wanting Red Cross help. After all, Soviet policy still favoured the United States,[102] and there were signs that relations between the Russian government and the former Allied powers were improving.[103] But the Siberian commission did not seriously consider accepting the proposal addressed to Eversole. This was despite believing that if its original plan for quarantine camps was carried out, it would "some day make Siberia comparatively free from" typhus, a "ruthless malady."[104] Even if the Red Cross had not been closing down its operations, it

[97]Allen to Farrand, 25 May 1920, in ibid.
[98]Allen to Farrand, 1 Jun 1920, in ibid.
[99]Minutes, ExCom, 17 May 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Apr–Jul 1920.
[100]ANRC, *Annual Report for the Year Ended June 30, 1920* (Washington, DC: n.d., ca. 1920), 131–32.
[101]Trott, "Soviet Medicine," 144–45.
[102]Richard K. Debo, *Survival and Consolidation: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1918–1921* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1992), 150. On Soviet economic approaches to the United States during 1919–20, see McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, ch. 11.
[103]Trade relations were being investigated by early 1920, and a prisoner exchange agreement was reached between the British and Soviets in February. See Ullman, *Anglo–Soviet Relations*, vol. 3, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 39, and the rest of ch. 1.
[104]Allen to Farrand, 25 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920; Allen to

would not have been able to carry out the request. Political changes put a stop to the impending consolidation of Soviet Russia. The Far East remained cut off from Siberia and the rest of the Soviet Russia for much longer than anticipated (see below).

At the end of March, though, it was Washington's silence that upset or delayed the Siberian commission's plans. There was still no word from headquarters about whether the Red Cross could distribute supplies west of Lake Baikal. In the absence of instructions, but with time running out, the commissioners made plans to send up to ten trains to central and western Siberia. They assumed they would be given clearance from headquarters to carry out distributions in Soviet territory.[105] In the meantime, Dr. Ford returned to Vladivostok, and so did the four other American men captured along with him and Charette. They all reported being well treated.[106] According of one of the men, almost all of the people he met "spoke highly of the operations of the American Red Cross."[107] One final Red Cross employee who had been taken prisoner, a British man engaged in refugee relief work, arrived back in Vladivostok in May. He too was unharmed.[108]

The flying of red flags over Vladivostok did not hamper the work of the Red Cross commission. The same was true of the American YMCA. The zemstvo government equally wanted association representatives to continue their efforts. Within a day of the uprising, Phelps received three different requests from government officials asking his organization to immediately expand its activities in Vladivostok and anywhere else the zemstvo might

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Scheitlin, 30 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[105]Allen to Farrand, 30 Mar 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[106]Allen to Farrand, 25 Mar and 22 Apr 1920, both in ibid.

[107]Bonzo, "While in the land of the Soviets," in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

[108]Allen to Farrand, 25 May 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

assume control.[109] Medvedev requested that the association assist in vocational and educational work.[110] In Phelps's words, the government wanted the YMCA "to help [it] educate the soldiers and people in the meaning of true democracy!"[111] This was to be in addition to programs offered by the Vladivostok Mayak. Phelps was both pleased and relieved. He took the requests as a public vote of confidence in the work his oft-beleaguered organization was doing.[112]

When MacNaughten and his team arrived in the Far East in February, the new senior association man faced disagreement among American secretaries and officials about whether the YMCA should remain in Russia. Back in the United States, YMCA officials, including some secretaries returned from Russian service, had their sights set on reentering Soviet Russia. They planned an extensive program of work at a special conference held in Newark, NJ.[113] Secretaries in Vladivostok generally favoured a complete evacuation. Harris and American Admiral Albert Gleaves wanted to see them leave "due largely to the political aspects involved," reported MacNaughten. (Gleaves also advised the Vladivostok consulate to close.[114]) But Graves urged the organization to stay "to demonstrate to the Russians the friendship of the American people." MacNaughten later explained that

> Coming fresh to the field, with a knowledge of Dr. Mott's conviction as well as the conviction of the other secretaries of the Russian Division that we should hold on to our efforts in Russia, awaiting a more favorable turn, we came to the conclusion that we should by all means retain as much of our work as possible. In fact this section of Russia, if Siberia is to be considered Russia, was the only place where we were actually at work, for in Southern Russia our work had not gotten under way, our nearest approach being at Constantinople, and our efforts in North Russia had ceased with the

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[109]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[110]Phelps to Mott, 9 Feb 1919, in Phelps papers, C & R 1918–19.
[111]Phelps to Hibbard, 4 Feb 1920, in Phelps papers, Papers 1918–38.
[112]"Report . . . by G. S. Phelps . . . ," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—General—Reports 1920 [2].
[113]"Findings of the Russia Conference," 21–23 Feb 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–Mar 1920.
[114]Albert Gleaves, *The Admiral: The Memoirs of Albert Gleaves, USN* (Pasadena, CA: Hope Publishing House, 1985), 206.

> complete evacuation of all forces in that region. We therefore concluded in consultation with the various secretaries that we should carry out a full-fledged program during the evacuation of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, sending home with the out-going transports secretaries who had been working with the American troops, Czechs, Yugo-Slavs and Poles.

MacNaughten and his associates chose to keep up as much work as possible: the civilian work in Vladivostok and Harbin, cooperation with the zemstvo departments of cinema and education, and maintaining the POW department and rural unit in case they were needed later on. MacNaughten also decided the YMCA should investigate the possibility of extending its programs to new areas.[115]

Work with soldiers was still important, and had only been increasing for the association since American soldiers had begun guard duty on the Trans-Siberian Railway in the spring of 1919. The Allied evacuations brought large numbers of troops from the West into Vladivostok, where they waited for boats to take them home. All these newcomers were potential targets of YMCA programming, and many were reached by association secretaries during their stays in and around Vladivostok. When they did board ships for home, many of the transports also carried American secretaries. Twenty-two of them sailed with the Czechoslovaks, two with the Polish troops, and two more with the Yugoslav contingent. MacNaughten believed YMCA work aboard Czechoslovak transports would "have a telling effect, particularly upon the efforts of the Y.M.C.A. in establishing a national movement throughout the new country of Czecho-Slovakia."[116] In fact, the association did begin work in Czechoslovakia in 1919.

In their reports on association work among POWs, Reitzel and MacNaughten also stressed its lasting importance. Reitzel claimed the secretaries "kept [their] faith with these

[115]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia."
[116]Ibid.

men and they appreciated it, and they are going home to tell the half which has never been told about the war prisoners' work." Similar arguments were made about the non-American secretaries who were viewed as key players in the association's POW work. A few of them would head back to their home lands "to become vital forces in their respective countries."[117] Prisoner employees would, declared MacNaughten, "never fail to tell the story of the breadth and depth of the Association movement in its service to all classes of mankind." That the YMCA left a positive lasting impression in the minds of these POWs would benefit, MacNaughten believed, American relations with the countries of central and eastern Europe. "The State Department could not have found a better agency for the promotion of national friendship than the Y.M.C.A.," he boasted.

> With every out-going transport we receive evidences of great appreciation of America's friendship and of America's spirit to minister and to serve. Throughout the hamlets and villages of Hungary, Austria, and even Germany there will be friends who will not carry hatred but will bear testimony to the democracy of America and to its highest ideals as represented in an all too small way by the Association as it had sought to cope with the tremendous task of relief to the war prisoners.[118]

Many secretaries represented America well. Still, the nationalism of association representatives did not always endear them to the men they served. Polish commander Roman Dyboski remembered the "ceaseless advertising of everything that is American, from God and the Constitution to what they have to eat and the way their homes are run" as "the most boring and universal mark of every conversation you ever have with Americans." Convis, the YMCA secretary with the Polish troops, "whom I still respect and who is an estimable man, bored me to death with this refrain," Dyboski recalled. "Though such 'braggishness' has in it something that to us Europeans seems uncultured, it is hard,

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[117]Reitzel, "From Report on War Prisoners' Work in Siberia 1919 to 1920," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R 1921 [3].

[118]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia." See also the MacNaughten quotation at the beginning of this chapter.

nevertheless, to deny that it does make you stop and think."[119] It may be that Americans managed to convince some of the foreigners they came into contact with that life the American way was indeed better than the alternative. They certainly thought they did.

The YMCA hoped to leave more than simply a lasting impression in Russia. The association cooperated with Russian authorities in education activities, including by loaning six complete motion picture outfits and more than two hundred films that were used on a circuit of smaller villages and outlying sections. In Vladivostok, secretaries set up playgrounds, and in the spring organized garden clubs and demonstration gardens for children aged 10–15. In May there were seven hundred children enrolled in fourteen different clubs.[120] "The hope of Russia is in these children," proclaimed MacNaughten with reference to the garden clubs and playgrounds. The association men were "eager" to "live up to the opportunity which [was] placed in [their] hands day by day for these children."[121] The YMCA came in for criticism in Russian papers, especially after the government granted the association the Kerensky privileges in May, but it earned praise for its garden clubs and playground activities. MacNaughten wanted to see the clubs "extended to the entire country of Russia and Siberia."[122]

Though Harbin and Vladivostok were not typical Russian cities, the association believed that the programs carried out in these centres were important for instrumental reasons as well as for future benefits. When MacNaughten left Vladivostok in September 1920, there were 1,578 members of the Vladivostok Mayak, and sixty percent of them were

[119]Roman Dyboski, *Seven Years in Russia and Siberia (1914–1921)*, trans., ed., annotated by Marion Moore Coleman (Cheshire, CT: Cherry Hill Books, 1971), 71.

[120]Harvey Smith to parents, 21 May 1920, newspaper clipping, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Harvey George Smith.

[121][MacNaughten] to Colton, 17 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Apr–Jun 1920.

[122]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia."

refugees from all over Russia and Siberia. Given this, he and his associates were "hopeful that there will be friends in many parts of Russia after the turmoil has ceased and that these friends who have seen the Association during their days as refugees, will be supporters of our movement." Even though their efforts were severely restricted at the moment, only time would tell how far and how deep their roots would take hold. Limited or extensive, there was always value in association work, as in missionary endeavours, according to secretaries. Plans were in place to expand boys' work, and two "promising" Russian secretaries had recently been sent to the United States "for fellowship study."[123] After training in Cleveland (with Hollinger), they returned to work at the Mayak.[124] Despite many difficulties and distractions, MacNaughten claimed that the "more permanent objective" of Association work—"to plant a larger work throughout Russia and Siberia, the beginnings of which had been undertaken in Petrograd in 1900"—was never lost sight of.[125]

Planting the seeds of a "larger work," that is, the spread of YMCA programs and teachings in an effort to construct a different kind of Russia, was the goal of YMCA headquarters in the United States. Individual members of the Russian department differed as to the best way of achieving this. Phelps believed "it would be much better for the future of the work in Russia to entirely withdraw this military expedition and to enter European Russia after a government has been recognized and on a purely peace civilian basis."[126] He wanted to see all activities ended save for those of the rural and cinema departments "to carry on a service helpful to Russian organizations." If the decision were up to him, he "would then

[123]Ibid.

[124]Robert E. Lewis, "The Point of View," *Cleveland Red Triangle* 36, no. 25 (20 Feb 1922), clipping in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Reports 1920–23 & 1940.

[125]MacNaughten, "Report of the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia."

[126]Phelps to Galen Fisher, 22 Jan 1920, in Phelps papers, Papers 1918–38.

establish the permanent work in old Russia."[127] Hollinger, who left Vladivostok in early November 1919, was similarly "convinced . . . that we must face a period of work in a bolshevist land." "Our approach to the Russians of Siberia seems now thru Moscow, not Vladivostok," he wrote to Colton in February.[128] In a letter to an association man in Japan, Phelps claimed he and the other secretaries were "profoundly thankful" the AEF was departing. "It is the only thing to do in view of the failure of the inter-allied policy. The plain fact is that the Kolchack government was universally believed to be reactionary and it had to fall. It would have gone long before had not foreign bayonets sustained it."[129] Phelps's contention was not far off the mark. The Allies, primarily Britain, "supplied virtually all bullets fired by Kolchak's troops . . . and the same was true for the rest of their ordnance and even for their uniforms."[130]

Phelps and Hollinger reflected in part the attitude toward Russia shared by other members of the association's Russian department. In the early months of 1920, the American YMCA was hopeful that its workers might soon be able to go back to Russia. The reason for this optimism was not White military victories: Denikin, the Allied hope of the early fall, was no longer a factor in the war. His troops had raced toward Moscow in October, but were checked by the Red Army by the end of the month and White collapse came quickly thereafter. Allied military support for anti-Bolsheviks throughout Russia was over.[131] Only the Japanese remained involved in the Far East. At first, YMCA officials were likely thinking, rather, of the lifting of the Allied economic blockade of Soviet Russia in January,

[127]Phelps to C. V. Hibbard, 4 Feb 1920, in ibid.
[128][Hollinger] to Colton, 11 Feb 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jan–Mar 1920.
[129]Phelps to Galen Fisher, 22 Jan 1920, in ibid.
[130]Pereira, *White Siberia*, 172.
[131]Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, 219, 223.

and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Estonia in early February. The latter development "marked the beginning of 'normalcy'" and "opened regular channels of commercial intercourse with the rest of the world."[132] Moscow might soon welcome American YMCA secretaries, Phelps and his colleagues thought.

In late April Colton and Phelps, then done his Siberian work and in the United States, met with representatives of the State Department in Washington to see where the association stood with respect to work in Soviet Russia. They were told that though the department was not issuing passports for Americans going to Russia, it would not outright oppose American travel there. The association, pleased with this response, planned to send either Hibbard or Mott to Moscow in May for discussions with Soviet officials. Paul Anderson, Donald Lowrie, and Jim Somerville, all years-long veterans of Russian service, prepared to head to Europe to await the (hopefully successful) outcome of the talks.[133] Twenty-five more men were selected to head to Russia "as soon as favorable word arrive[d]." Transportation arrangements were made, supplies purchased and shipped to Reval (now Tallinn, Estonia), and literature was produced. A second group of twenty-five workers was set to enter training ahead of Russian service.[134]

By mid-year, New York headquarters was mailing out applications for Russian work to men it thought might be interested in heading to Russia to take up a variety of activities throughout the country. "It is our belief," William Banton wrote in early June, "that we shall

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[132]Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–67* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 105–6.

[133]Colton to Hibbard, and Colton to Hollinger, both 26 Apr 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Apr–Jun 1920. This folder also contains material pertaining to the YMCA's "Suggested Charter" in Russia (3 May), "Conditions to he considered in asking for a charter from the Soviet Government" (5 May), and "Rights Which Should be Safe-Guarded by the Government."

[134]Colton to Mott, 9 Jul 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jul–Dec 1920.

be in a position during the first ten days in July to make very definite answers as to whether we can or not during the fall and winter of this year, send out groups of secretaries for service" in Russia. If possible, the association planned to establish "work in fifteen cities of primary importance equipped with a staff of American secretaries and also to attempt service of a demonstrative character in two provinces of the type known in America as County or Rural work."[135] A group of American YMCA secretaries waited in Stockholm for the go-ahead to proceed to central Russia, and another waited in Vladivostok for news about whether they could go to Chita and points further west. These men were tasked primarily with POW relief and repatriation.[136] Their confidence in being able to soon return to Soviet Russia was perhaps further fed by the news (in June) that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee had signed an agreement with the Soviet government.[137]

Come early July, though, the future of YMCA service in Soviet Russia was as unclear as ever. This was despite two promising developments that month, namely, the removal of American restrictions on trade with Bolshevik Russia,[138] and the Quakers being allowed to set up shop in Russia.[139] But neither Hibbard nor Mott attempted to go to Moscow. Anderson, Lowrie, and Somerville took up work in Germany and the Baltic states for Russian POWs yet to be repatriated. These overseas developments "combined to jolt us rather hard here," Colton confessed to Mott. He believed that the men in Europe had followed the advice of American officials "to play safe." Colton was critical of Washington's "isolationist policy" toward Russia. "Association policy is not isolationist as I understand it

[135]Banton to H. L. Haag, 8 Jun 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Apr–Jun 1920.
[136]"Conference with Hurlbutt, Sonquiest, Stembier and Tucker Previous to their Departure for Chita and the West," 15 Jun 1920, in ibid.
[137]Beizer, "Restoring Courage to Jewish Hearts," 36.
[138]McFadden, *Alternative Paths*, 330.
[139]Trott, "Soviet Medicine," 144–45.

but to get to the Russian people wherever they are accessible."[140] Although preparations for Russian service continued,[141] by the fall the country remained "so abnormal and inaccessible that the Association [was] forced to pursue the policy of 'watchful waiting.'" According to George Day, who had served Russian soldiers in France, the Soviet government was willing to have the YMCA work "in Russia upon the same conditions that foreign capitalists, engineers, and promoters" were allowed to operate, that is, as long as "no attempt [was] made to interfere with the present political and social regime." The trouble at the moment was the US State Department, not the Soviet foreign affairs bureau, he surmised. Day was disappointed that association men had not been "at the heart of things during the past six years of upheaval" in Russia. "If, for instance, it had been possible to do in Russia what the American secretary engaged in the war-prison work in Germany . . . accomplished, the Association would now be in Russia as it is in Germany, rooted and grounded in the affections of the people." At the moment, YMCA secretaries were "hanging around the fringe of Russia waiting to return, doing valuable work, yes, but not where the supreme need" was.[142]

As far as the Siberian commission was concerned, supreme need for its services was to be found west of Lake Baikal. But the Red Cross was hamstrung by lack of news from Washington about what it could and could not do. Though Americans remained uncertain of

[140]Colton to Mott, 9 Jul 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jul–Dec 1920; Lowrie to "Folks," 18 Jul 1920, Letter no. 8, in Lowrie papers, box 1, May–Jul 1920. For more on the work in Germany, see Steuer, "Pursuit of an 'Unparalleled Opportunity,'" 415–19, and the rest of ch. 18. Lowrie went to Moscow at the end of 1920, but as a representative of a different organization: Russian Department, News Letter No. 3 (1 Jan 1921), in YMCA Russia, box 20, Newsletter—Russian Dept 1921.

[141]See letter to C. A. Alexander, 16 Jul 1920, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jul–Dec 1920.

[142]Day, "Annual Report to the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations for the Year Ending October 31, 1920," in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R Jul–Dec 1920.

their ability to work in Soviet Russia, there was one important matter that required commissioners in Vladivostok to have contact with Soviet officials, even if only indirectly. This was the homeward journey of the members of the Petrograd Children's Colony. It was one of the topics taken up by Allen and Teusler during their February meeting with Nikiforov.[143] Most of the groups under Red Cross stewardship had been evacuated from the Ural region and western Siberia ahead of the advancing Red Army. The youngsters and their guardians—groups from Lake Turgoiak, Kurgan, Tumen', Troitzk, Irbit, and Tomsk—arrived in Vladivostok beginning in August 1919. Once in Vladivostok the children were placed in converted barracks on Russian Island and at Second River, a few miles from the city centre. The full colony consisted of nearly eight hundred children aged between three and eighteen years, as well as a dozen American doctors, nurses, and other specialists; about one hundred fifty Russian matrons, teachers, and interpreters; and POWs employed to do a variety of tasks.[144]

The Red Cross wanted to provide as healthy and enriching an experience for its young charges as possible. After all, children were, in the words of Dr. Bucher, "the salvation of Russia."[145] The children attended schools, did vocational training, and could participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities and special entertainments. The vocational training offered to boys included carpentry, shoe-making, tailoring, and book-binding. Fifteen of the oldest girls undertook nurses' aide training in an American Red Cross hospital, and all girls over fifteen years of age were given instruction in hygiene and convalescent care. Colony

[143]Minutes, ExCom, 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[144]"Facts about the PCC," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 869, 948.621 PCC—Repatriation Reports & Lists; Liperovsky to Davison, 19 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 2, Second River Section of the PCC.

[145]Bucher, *Surgeon Errant*, 60.

members received medical attention at the Russian Island hospital and other commission facilities.[146] A YMCA secretary joined the team of Americans administering and caring for the children. He was responsible for providing playground facilities and supervising activities.[147] All told, the colony cost the Siberian commission about $35,000 a month to maintain.[148] At the end of February Allen proclaimed that he believed "practically every member of our personnel who has had an opportunity to see the work of the Commission over a period of months and in its various fields of operation believes that the care of these children is our best piece of work."[149] "These healthy, active, open-minded, intelligent and talented children," he later declared, "are the sort who now are the hope and in years to come will be the moulding factor in future Russia." That "they have found a home with the Red Cross and have received an indelible impression of Red Cross motherhood" could only benefit the United States.[150]

The caretaking project offered, moreover, a "rare chance for impressing on plastic Russian minds things that they would have missed in their regular schooling." Such thinking—Special Commissioner Kendall Emerson's in this case—made plain that it was a small-scale opportunity for social engineering. The experiment to be tested was whether Americans could show Russians "the values of western civilization without tarnishing the charm of their own." It was, in other words, a test of the suitability of Russians for

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[146]"Facts about the PCC," n.d., in ANRC papers, box 869, 948.621 PCC—Repatriation Reports & Lists; Liperovsky to Davison, 19 Mar 1920, in Davison papers, box 2, Second River Section of the PCC; Helen L. Bridge, Bureau of Nursing Education report, n.d., in ANRC papers, box 918, 987.118 SC—Department of Nursing.

[147]Minutes, ExCom, 27 Feb 1920; minutes, ExCom, 5 Mar 1920, both in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[148]Keppel to Munroe, 17 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 869, 948.621 PCC—Russian Island.

[149]Allen to Farrand, 26 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[150]"The American Red Cross in Siberia," included in Allen to Scheitlin, 30 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 General Reports.

modernity. If the experiment was successful, "we will have introduced a strain of virility that may expend to Russia's lasting benefit." Upon visiting one of the children's colonies in Petropavlosk in April 1919, Dr. Emerson found an admirable outlet for American energies:

> The Old World spoke eloquently in the instinctive courtesy, so rare in the New, with which we were greeted, the unconscious responsibility as host or hostess so utterly unknown to our young at home and so different to graft on our more angular civilization. Strengthen that with the western sincerity, sometimes lacking in Eastern charm, and the combination should go far. It would seem that this unselfish work for the children of Russia could not fail to build at least a foot bridge across the sea of misunderstanding which separates the hearts of the two great countries and serve as one means of communication between the two that may someday furnish a tangible bond of sympathy and mutual comprehension. It is a work that should continue and should be expanded by every means in our power.[151]

More generally, in their "observations of Russians in the mass," Emerson and his companions had discovered "bright faced and not unintelligent" children alongside "rather heavy and uninteresting" adults. "The hope is in the training of the younger generation as it is in every country under the sun."[152]

A year later, the Red Cross was continuing its relationship with the children's colony. There was no question that the Siberian commission should bring the children back to their parents. As Allen explained to Washington, many commissioners thought it would be "almost criminal—and this [was] said with a full realization of the sense of the word" for the Red Cross to not send "the children [back] to their parents or their friends remaining in Petrograd."[153] Teusler and the other members of the executive committee believed it was the least they could do.[154] The Red Cross planned on sending the children back to Petrograd by rail. After taking the matter up with Nikiforov and the zemstvo government, the Americans concluded that local political and military matters would not get in the way of trains leaving

[151]Emerson, "Trans-Siberian Land Log," 74.
[152]Ibid., 38.
[153]Allen to Farrand, 26 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[154]Allen to Farrand, 28 Jan 1920, in ANRC papers, box 869, 948.621 PCC—Repatriation—Mar–Aug 1920.

Vladivostok for Petrograd in April or May. Once the Czechoslovaks were done with their evacuations, the railway would be clear. The Red Cross also began investigating the possibility of sending the group home via steamer, perhaps aboard one of the Russian fleet vessels.[155] The organization felt duty-bound to protect and care for the children, and Red Cross staff had come to feel deeply for them.[156]

The Red Cross commissioners were understandably concerned about the railway. General disorganization, congestion, sporadic fighting, worker strikes, fuel shortages, and severe delays in the Czechoslovaks' eastward movement did not auger well for getting the children home by train. The situation was so bad that many Czechs were *walking* east![157] (The last contingent of Czechoslovaks left Vladivostok only in the fall.) A month later, though, as the railway situation improved, the Siberian commission decided that a train trip was likely and began preparations in earnest. The Red Cross men believed the children could leave Vladivostok by 1 May, and assumed authorization would come soon from Washington to allow American caretakers to travel with them through Soviet Russia.[158]

By then, Bolshevik rule was closer to reality in the Russian Far East than it had been since the summer of 1918. Medvedev remained in power, but he was increasingly beholden to local Communists, and they themselves started following Moscow's directives on 29 March. The government was instructed to add more Communist representatives to its ranks.[159] The Americans had some inkling of this new behind-the-scenes reality. They believed the Medvedev government and Moscow were of "general purpose," and that the

[155]Allen to Farrand, 19 Feb 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[156]Allen to Smirnov, n.d., ca. 16 Mar 1920, included as appendix B in Allen to Farrand, 19 Mar 1920, in ibid.
[157]Allen to Farrand, 26 Feb 1920, in ibid.
[158]Allen to Farrand, 25 and 30 Mar 1920, in ibid.
[159]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 27.

sole obstacle to their political unity, Semënov's tenuous hold on the Transbaikal, would soon be eliminated. Once he was removed from power, train travel across Siberia would again become possible.[160] The commissioners tasked Arthur C. Lyon with going west to investigate. He began preparations to go to Petrograd as an advance agent of the children's colony.[161] And some news from Washington had finally arrived. The State Department apparently had no objection to American YMCA secretaries going west of Lake Baikal for prisoner repatriation work. The Siberian commission thus reasoned that the department would have no objection to the colonists and their American companions travelling overland to Petrograd.[162] Lyon left Vladivostok with a small group of men on the morning of 4 April.[163] Later that day, the Vladivostok office decided to return the children by rail, and to make up trains to distribute the commission's left-over supplies. The first set of trains for the colony's trip was nearly ready for departure. But just a few hours later came a surprising and unhappy turn of events for the Americans and most everyone else in the region.[164]

The Japanese, whose troops were still in evidence throughout eastern Siberia, allowed the results of the 31 January coup to stand for a little over two months before they took action. Using recent events at Nikolaevsk[165] to justify a more militant policy in the Russian Far East, and annoyed by increased partisan activity that threatened their hold on the region,

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[160]Allen to Farrand, 22 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[161]Allen to Farrand, 30 Mar 1920, in ibid.

[162]Minutes, ExCom, 2 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[163]Bramhall, Department of Personnel, weekly report, 6 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 918, 987.118 Personnel.

[164]Allen to Farrand, 8 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[165]Japanese citizens were massacred in a series of events in Nikolaevsk between Mar and Ma 1920. A full, early Russian account of these and other events in the town from late 1919 until the Reds razed it the following year, has been translated into English: A. Ya. Gutman, *The Destruction of Nikolaevsk-on-Amur: An Episode in the Russian Civil War in the Far East, 1920*, trans. Ella Lury Wiswell, ed. Richard A. Pierce (Kingston, ON: Limestone, 1993).

the Japanese launched an offensive throughout the province.[166] In Vladivostok, it began the night of 4 April. The attack was well-timed—it was Easter weekend; US forces had left on the first of the month—and the Japanese encountered almost no opposition. "By the early hours of April 5," according to historian Canfield Smith, "all major governmental institutions and means of communications had been seized, all Russian forces remaining in the city had been disarmed, and many Russians, including government and Party leaders, had been arrested."[167] The zemstvo–Communist government had been popular in the city, and the Japanese encountered significant non-military resistance.[168] No Americans were harmed, but commission "personnel were in more real peril than during any other period since the Red Cross has come to Vladivostok," Allen claimed. The possibility of more fighting between Russians and Japanese troops increased tensions in the city.[169] Following the coup, railway workers let very few trains through.[170] The children's trip might have to be postponed or abandoned.

Railway troubles were trumped by other news that arrived mid-month. The State Department did not want American citizens to go into Soviet Russia after all.[171] The Siberian commission's plans to send hundreds of cars of supplies west had to be given up.[172] In the meantime, Lyon had been recalled from Manchuria Station. He returned to Vladivostok.[173] A

[166]Smith, *Vladivostok between Red and White Rule*, 35; Debo, *Survival and Consolidation*, 379.
[167]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 40. For more on the attack, see pp. 41–43.
[168]See, for example, "Capt. J. S. Atkinson returns to Siberia," *St. Thomas (Ont.) Times-Journal* (12 Nov 1920): 1.
[169]Allen to Farrand, 8 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.
[170]Minutes, ExCom, 9 and 10 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 Executive Committee Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.
[171]Minutes, ExCom, 14 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920; Wireless, Amcross to Washington, 14 April 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987. Special Commission to Siberia 1920.
[172]Barge to Keppel, 30 Jun 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987. Special Commission to Siberia 1920.
[173]Allen to Farrand, 22 and 29 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

relief train full of supplies that had been stuck at Manchuria Station since February was also sent back east.[174] Other foreign missions were able to travel further west at this time. A British-Canadian Red Cross train was able to go to Chita, and hoped to proceed into the Far Eastern Republic, as Danish delegates aboard a Chinese mission train had succeeded in doing.[175] Their success would only have added to the American commission's frustrations with events and decisions beyond their control.

Soon there was a new plan for the Petrograd Children's Colony's homeward trip: a steam journey. The Siberian commission's executive committee decided on 19 April to send the group home by ship.[176] The Americans did not relish waiting very long to leave. The Red Cross decided to take "vigorous steps to extricate the Commission from its local embarrassment, liquidate [its] supplies and responsibilities and get out at the earliest possible date."[177] After several false starts, by early June a suitable commercial ship was secured for the trip.[178] Finally, on 13 July, the Japanese steamer *Yomei Maru* sailed from Vladivostok. It was ultimately destined for Finland. On board were the Russian children, their teachers, about seventy-five POWs, and fifteen Red Cross personnel—almost a thousand passengers in all. After an eventful trip, the children were returned to their parents or other relatives during the first few months of 1921.[179]

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[174]Brown collection, train diary, entry for 13 Apr 1920. Montandon claimed the Japanese blocked the train's passage: Montandon, *Deux ans chez Koltchak*, 117–18.

[175]Brown collection, train diary, entries for 16 and 17 Apr 1920. See also Polk, "Canadian Red Cross and Relief in Siberia," 175–79.

[176]Minutes, ExCom, 19 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Mar 1919–Apr 1920.

[177]Allen to Farrand, 15 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920; Allen to Farrand, 29 Apr 1920, in ANRC papers, box 916, 987.08 WR Jan–Dec 1920.

[178]Minutes, ExCom, 5 Jun 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987.04 ExCom Minutes—Apr–Jul 1920.

[179]There is a wealth of documentation on the children's journey and eventual homecoming in ANRC papers, box 869. The *Yomei Maru* log may be found in box 870. For more about the colony, see, in addition to sources listed elsewhere in this dissertation, Floyd Miller, *Wild Children of the Urals* (New York: E.P. Dutton,

Upon the ship's departure, the Siberian commission was nearly finished its liquidation and final closing. A handful of Red Cross representatives remained in Vladivostok to sell or give away its leftover supplies, equipment, and turn over the Russian Island hospital building, the children's colony facilities, and other holdings to local institutions. Lively stayed to head up an American prisoner repatriation committee. Dr. Ford and seven other former commission staffers were also members.[180] This Siberian War Prisoners Repatriation Fund was entirely separate from the Siberian commission, though the Red Cross did contribute $500,000 to its operations. Other organizations, including the YMCA and the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee, donated smaller amounts. In the latter part of 1920, the fund financed the repatriation of eight thousand former war prisoners.[181] Lively remained in the Far East into 1921. He still hoped democracy would take root throughout Russia.[182]

After the Japanese coup, the Provisional Government of the Maritime Province maintained its position, albeit with its prestige damaged and sphere of activity limited. On 6 April, Krasnoshchekov proclaimed Verkhne Udinsk the capital of a Far Eastern Republic. In mid-May, Chicherin, still Soviet commissar for foreign affairs, recognized the new state. In

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1965), and Irwin, "Humanitarian Occupations," 138–42. A recent, semi-fictionalized Russian-language book is Vladimir Lipovetskii's *Kovcheg Detei, ili Neveroiatnaia Odicceia* (St. Petersburg: Azbuka Classika, 2005). A better, scholarly source is Olga Molkina's *Nad nami Krasnii Krest'* (St. Petersburg: Ostrov, 2005). Alexander Ostroff's *The Russian Ark* (Alcove Entertainment, 2001) is a short documentary featuring some historical footage and interviews with colony survivors. It is available on the internet at http://vimeo.com/12311720.

[180]Minutes, Special Commission meeting, 29 Jun 1920, in ANRC papers, box 915, 987 Special Commission to Siberia 1920.

[181]Gaston Lichtenstein, comp., *Repatriation of Prisoners of War from Siberia: A Documentary Narrative* (Richmond, VA: William Byrd Press, 1924), 6, 175.

[182]Lively declared in March (when he was in Chita) that he was optimistic that should democracy be established in the Far Eastern Republic, that it would spread throughout Russia: Paul Dukes, *The USA in the Making of the USSR: The Washington Conference, 1921–1922, and "Uninvited Russia"* (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 88.

theory, it was meant to extend from Lake Baikal to the shores of the Pacific, but Semënov, the Kappelites, and the Japanese blocked it from achieving its full goals.[183] On 22 October, partisan forces entered Chita, forcing the Whites to leave. Thousands of White troops, their families, and supporters headed east toward the Maritime province. In November, the Far Eastern Republic moved its capital to Chita, Semënov's former stronghold, and in December the government based in Vladivostok started to transfer power to the Chita authorities. The Whites entered Manchuria beginning in late November, and Semënov himself, with the help of the Japanese, relocated to Grodekovo, a few miles inside the Russian–Manchurian border. Unable to keep them out, the (increasingly Communist) Vladivostok authorities let the Whites into Primorskaia in December. Some relief was afforded them in the first few months of 1921.[184]

Communist attempts to curry favour with the Whites failed, and their presence in Primorskaia bolstered anti-Communist resolve. Finally, in late May 1921, the Whites launched their attack. The Japanese supported them, and on 27 May Vladivostok was once again in White hands.[185] The new Provisional Priamur Government was backed militarily by the Kappelites. It had power in Vladivostok and a few other places in the farthest eastern reaches of the former Russian empire. The Japanese military presence enabled its survival. This was made abundantly clear after White forces launched an offensive in November to expand the area over which the government ruled. They were successful in rooting out partisans in parts of the south, and managed to secure Petropavlovsk, Nikolsk, and

[183]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 42, 45, 48. For more on the origins and establishment of the Far Eastern Republic, see Debo, *Survival and Consolidation*, 378–89.
[184]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 65–79.
[185]Ibid., 95–96.

Khabarovsk. But by mid-February 1922 Communist fighters had overturned some of these victories, and a month later the Whites were back to where they had started before the offensive. The continuing Japanese occupation of the Far East meant the lines held for the moment. No major change could come before the Japanese withdrew their troops.[186] Lenin once again urged restraint.

The YMCA outlived the American Red Cross in the Russian Far East. Tucker's extensive POW work at Nikolsk was on-going, as were educational and recreational programs for children and youth in Harbin and Vladivostok: garden clubs, playgrounds, English language instruction, motion picture screenings, and cooperation with various local and regional institutions. All foreign servicemen, except sailors on the various American cruisers that were docked in the harbour from time to time, were gone. Only POWs awaited repatriation to their European homes. A number of European commissions had been negotiating with various Russian authorities and providing relief for some time now. The YMCA provided food, hot drinks, and even accommodation for prisoners awaiting transportation home from Vladivostok.[187] The last prisoners were sent home in the summer of 1922.[188]

YMCA city work continued in Vladivostok and Harbin. These were the only two Russian, or primarily Russian-populated, areas still open to the association. The Russian department in New York had by early 1921 come to the conclusion that discussions about "a definite policy or program for" Russian work were not possible. While "maintaining an

[186]Ibid., 125–33.

[187]Russian Department, News Letter No. 4 (1 Feb 1921), in YMCA Russia, box 20, Newsletter—Russian Department 1921.

[188]Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, 4.

attitude of watchful waiting," the department decided that "the Siberian work should by all means be continued as a demonstration of what we can do in a Russian community on Russian soil." The Mayak was thus the association's main activity in Vladivostok.[189]

American and Russian secretaries worked together. Activities were offered in four different areas, namely, educational, physical, social, and religious. The planned boys' work was organized. The Mayak operated out of the old International Hut, suitably remodelled. One report, which covered activities from December 1920 through October 1921, bragged that the Mayak "made an actual living place for itself in the hearts of the members and it can truly be said in the hearts of the majority of the people of the city." The association stayed out of political discussions, and taught "principles of justice, truth and morality of a very high degree." "It came to be known as the organization in which could be found a spirit of optimism, a spirit of doing things, a spirit of service for our fellowmen. It has long been recorded as the only place where men could come amid clean and wholesome surroundings and spend a quiet hour or rest in peace free from the toil of political discussion."[190] Instruction in the English, German, French, and Russian languages was offered. Other courses included mathematics, accounting, bookkeeping, typewriting (English, Russian), and stenography (English, German, Russian). Gymnastics and other gym activities were available, as well as special training for association leaders.[191]

Special activities included membership drives; English-language practice sessions for

[189]Russian Department, News Letter No. 4 (1 Feb 1921), in YMCA Russia, box 20, Newsletter—Russian Department 1921.

[190]"Report of the Y M C A (Obo Mayak) Vladivostok from Dec. 1, 1920 to Oct. 1, 1921," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Reports 1920–23 & 1940. The report does not indicate what specific kinds of films were shown.

[191]Translation of *Messenger of the Miyak* 1, no. 10 (9 Sep 1922), in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Periodicals (Russian Language) 1918–19.

Russians; acting instruction, plays, and concerts; weekly film screenings of "high class movies," "worked out as a cooperative proposition with the schools" starting in the fall of 1921; a fourteen-team basketball league with a championship tournament; and an international track meet for Mayak members as well as soldiers, sailors, and representatives of other organizations. One report noted that "many [Mayak members] worked and studied Association principles for some day they believed they would return to their native homes in Russia proper where each was anxious to take with them the spirit of the Obo Myak and some time be useful in helping to organize a new organization in their native cities and towns."[192] American sailors were welcome at the Mayak until bad behaviour got them uninvited. Their drunkenness and general rowdiness, plus their appearance at dances with Russian prostitutes, did not endear them to members of the governing Russian committee or to American secretaries.[193]

If the Mayak was functioning just fine, Vladivostok itself was a different story. The city was never politically stable, and the White government was increasingly unpopular with both the civilian population and the military. In June 1922, Brackett Lewis, the senior American secretary at the Mayak, noted that the city was in "a chaos of unemployment and salaries unpaid for months in arrears." "The government's overthrow has been expected from one quarter of another for months," he added.[194] In August, General Dieterichs was made military dictator of the Provisional Priamur Government.[195] He declared his loyalty to the Romanov dynasty and announced the formation of a *zemskii sobor*, a relic of seventeenth-

[192]"Report of the Y M C A (Obo Mayak) Vladivostok from Dec. 1, 1920 to Oct. 1, 1921," in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Reports 1920–23 & 1940.

[193]Memo, Banton to Hibbard, 9 Aug 1921, in YMCA Russia, box 3, C & R 1921 [2].

[194]Lewis, Extracts from Vladivostok Diary, entry for 1 Jun 1922, in YMCA Russia, box 20, PA—Brackett Lewis.

[195]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 153.

and eighteenth-century imperial Russia! These bizarre moves were only trumped by more of Dieterichs's absurd, fool-hardy, and utterly reckless decisions over the next few months. He "announce[d] in all seriousness," Lewis related, "that Peter the Great was a heinous revolutionary and that Russia must turn back before him." Podstavin, the president of the Mayak (and the local university), was appointed a member of an educational commission that took "some backward steps." It ordered schools to teach the old (imperial) system of orthography, and to train children in the "spirit of Monarchy." Lewis worried that Podstavin was "coming out so reactionary that I am afraid we shall have to replace him as president of the Y when the change in government comes—as it is sure to before long."[196]

Lewis would have to wait a few weeks yet. For the moment, Dieterichs's forces were on the offensive, though almost no one believed they would succeed in ousting Communism from the Far East.[197] Not even the Japanese cared anymore. They began their evacuation in early September. In a last-ditch attempt to salvage the situation, Dieterichs announced a conscription campaign to boost his forces. The "city [was] in an uproar" over the news, and about orders that came at the same time to close theatres and raise taxes.[198] Mayak staffers did all they could to avoid military service, from hiding out in the woods to securing foreign passports, special union memberships, and papers stating their (fake) employment in key positions.[199] One of the men secured a certificate calling him "58% physically unfit for service." All it had cost him was "100 yen judiciously distributed among the four doctors and one clerk of the commission." The same five men had "pronounced him entirely fit for

[196]Lewis, Extracts, entry for Jul/Aug 1922.
[197]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 159.
[198]Lewis, Extracts, entry for 27 Sep 1922.
[199]Lewis, Extracts, entry for 30 Sep 1922.

service" two weeks earlier. In the meantime he had learned his lesson and visited them again, bribe money in hand.[200]

By mid-October the White campaign was at an end, the armed forces in complete disarray, and Dieterichs himself gone from the scene. Vladivostok was caught up in "evacuation fever," according to Lewis, who had no plans to leave himself. Podstavin along with his entire family left on 19 October. Lewis did not think their lives were in danger, but reasoned that Podstavin's departure was good for the Mayak.[201] On 25 October, Communist forces entered Vladivostok. It was a relief for most of the city's residents and their neighbours elsewhere in the region. "This is perhaps the only city which Reds have ever taken which really wanted them to come," Lewis judged. "Everybody is tired of the suspense and suspicion," not to mention "the lawlessness of the Whites."[202] Within weeks, the Far Eastern Republic was dissolved and the entirety of eastern Siberia and the Far East—save Sakhalin Island, occupied by the Japanese until 1925—was united under Soviet rule. In December the Soviet Union was official established.[203]

The Mayak continued to function through all the social dislocation, economic deprivation, political chaos, and the early months of Sovietization in Vladivostok. Lewis imagined the club, as represented by a painting that graced its foyer, "as a lighthouse in a stormy night." Representatives of the Komsomol, the Communist youth league, "voted to petition the government to close the Miyak, requisition its property, and turn it all over to their club." But they soon realized that the YMCA was "the very place for them to learn their

[200]Lewis, Extracts, entry for 3 Oct 1922.
[201]Lewis, Extracts, entries for 15–20 Oct 1922.
[202]Lewis, Extracts, entry for 25 Oct 1922.
[203]Smith, *Vladivostok under Red and White Rule*, 161–65.

own business," Lewis reported. The head of the boys' work division was appointed a member of the Komsomol's Boy Scout council, and was also "invited to edit a department in their weekly paper."[204] Lewis remained in Vladivostok until November 1923, the lone American secretary attached to the mostly Russian-run and largely American-financed Mayak.[205] The American consulate had closed the previous May, and after Lewis's departure, only one American citizen remained in Vladivostok. This was Eleanor Lord Pray, who had lived and worked in the city for thirty-five years.[206] When Lewis left, Phelps related decades later, "It was with somber emotions that our secretaries, both American and Russians, contemplated the fate of our devoted Russian colleagues and the thousands of men and women once aroused by hope for the future, left behind across Siberia. We can not believe that the seed sown has all died without fruit."[207]

In Harbin, Russian exiles and their families could still visit an American-run YMCA until 1935, when the Japanese occupation of Manchuria prompted the departure of the American in charge.[208] Programs continued in charge of Russian staff, and under the direction of the Japanese YMCA, until Chinese Communist forces seized the building in 1947.[209]

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[204]Lewis to Banton, 18 Jan 1923, in YMCA Russia, box 18, Siberia—Vladivostok—Reports 1920–23 & 1940.

[205]"Minutes of the Meeting of the Overseas Committee of the International Committee, 8 Nov. 1923," in YMCA archives, Armed Services: World War I, box 3, Minutes—Overseas Committee of the International Committee Jan 1923–Dec 1924.

[206]Dorothy Findlay to mother, 21 Nov 1923, in "Letters from Vladivostok, 1918–1923," edited by Dorothy Galton and John Keep, *Slavonic and East European Review* 45, no. 105 (Jul 1967): 530.

[207]Phelps, Memoirs, "The Drama of the Siberian Expedition of the YMCA, 1918–1920," 4/1/1954, in Phelps papers.

[208]The story of the Harbin YMCA, and indeed of the association's other work for Russians in the interwar years, would make a fascinating study. Some material on the Harbin work may be found at the YMCA archives: Howard Lee Haag papers, part of the YMCA biographical files collection, box 78. Haag's personal papers are at Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library.

[209] Miller, *American Philanthropy among Russians*, 1:103–4.

One small American Red Cross presence in Vladivostok outlived the Siberian commission, the subsequent POW work, and Lewis's tenure at the Mayak. This was a local chapter set up in December 1918 by three American women—Mrs. Hollinger; Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of the American consul; and Eleanor Pray, whose husband was a vice consul. The chapter, which was under the jurisdiction of the Red Cross's Fourteenth Division (Foreign and Imperial Possessions), was entirely separate from the Siberian commission, though the two coexisted. It received donations of funds and supplies from a variety of individuals and institutions in the Far East, and provided food, clothing, seeds, medicine, milk, and school tuition for a few children. Its work was not extensive, but was kept up for several years.[210]

In May 1923, four and a half years after its establishment, the president and general secretary of the Russian (Soviet) Red Cross wrote to the ICRC in Geneva. He spelled out his objections to the existence of the small American chapter in Vladivostok. It had no official sanction from the Soviet government or the Russian Red Cross. Soviet officials objected, he said, to the existence of an American Red Cross outpost in their own country when the Russian Red Cross faced many difficulties in its operations in the United States. (A Russian Red Cross office opened in New York in September 1921.[211] It continued limited fundraising activities in the United States through at least 1935.[212]) The American Red Cross national office, not wishing to create an international incident—and presumably realizing that no Red

[210]The archives of and other material related to the Vladivostok branch are in ANRC papers, box 674, files 798.7 Vladivostok—1919–24 and 798.7/2ah—Vladivostok History. The information in this paragraph, and most of what is in the one below, is taken from these files.

[211]"Accuses Dubrowsky of Hindering Relief," *New York Times* (12 Feb 1922).

[212]This was when the head of the American office, Dr. D. H. Dubrowsky, resigned his post. See Dubowsky's testimony in United States Congress, 78th Congress, 1st Session, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States: Hearings before A Special Committee on Un-American Activities*, Vol. 8 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), 5169, 5241.

Cross society was permitted under international law to operate abroad without the permission of the native agency—requested that Pray shut down her operations. Pray received word in mid-August; she was astonished that her work had raised the ire of the Soviet Red Cross. In March 1924 she finished distributing what supplies she had left, and mailed the branch's founding charter to American Red Cross headquarters, as required. She herself left Vladivostok during 1930, when the business she worked for, the German firm Kunst & Albers, was forced to close.[213]

Outside Russia, the American Red Cross was involved in dealing with one of the international repercussions of the Russian civil war, namely, the plight of political refugees. Russians fleeing Bolshevik rule were assisted by a variety of US officials and institutions, including the Red Cross.[214] Thousands of these refugees were resettled in the United States despite restrictive immigration quotas.[215] Dr. Kendall Emerson, formerly a special commissioner to the Siberian commission, was among the supporters of such moves. He "believed White Russian émigrés who were 'familiar with the genuine brand of Bolshevism' would provide a counterweight to socialists at home."[216] Lingering feelings about the American duty to help out former allies, genuine humanitarian suffering, and belief that aid could "solve" the refugee crisis once and for all made it difficult for the Red Cross to end its efforts when solutions proved elusive despite years of assistance.[217]

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As surprising as it would have seemed only months earlier, and to most of their compatriots

[213]Birgitta Ingemanson, "Eleanor L. Pray's Vladivostok: A Portrait, 1894–1930," *Sibirica* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 84.
[214]Little, "Band of Crusaders," 196–203.
[215]Ibid., 200–1.
[216]Ibid., 201. Little quoted a letter from Emerson to Farrand written in November 1920.
[217]Ibid., 202–3.

back home, Americans accepted the looming Sovietization of the entirety of Siberia and the Russian Far East with not so much as a private protest. Despite their own personal objection to Bolshevik policies, they accepted the coming of Red rule and had no wish to stand in its way. The incompetence and extreme unpopularity of the White government, which Americans experienced firsthand, and the welcome extended them by socialist officials who facilitated their efforts, explains why representatives of the Red Cross and YMCA in Russia took a rather different view of Communism and its consequences than did their friends and families in the United States. Dr. Newman was "certain that among the people now inhabiting Siberia there is enough leaven of common sense and true democracy to raise the common lump ultimately from a state of destructive, ignorant communism to a plane of decent, socialistic democracy." He thought the latter would "be the final outcome of the Russian mess."[218] Another way of seeing this "mess" was, in the words of one Red Cross nurse, that "they are all Russians so what does it matter?"[219] Both the Siberian commission, created to give aid to forces fighting the Reds, and the YMCA, whose officials had been arrested and its property seized in Soviet Russia, worked fairly well within the new political realities. The foreigners found socialist Russians more accommodating than they had the difficult Whites, and grew increasingly angry at the Japanese in solidarity with their Russian neighbours.

There were limits to how much the Red Cross and YMCA could exploit their positions. The Siberian commission was ordered closed by its Washington bosses and that was that. The YMCA, still extant, reached only a few thousand Russians in any direct way

[218]Newman, "Siberia under Kolchak's Dictatorship," 309.
[219]Mona Wilson, quoted in Baldwin, *She Answered Every Call*, 76.

between the years 1920 and 1923. The small Vladivostok chapter of the American Red Cross provided only a relatively minuscule amount of aid, appreciated though it must have been. During 1920, the organizations had to focus much of their remaining resources on the departing foreign soldiers. The anti-typhus train remained in Vladivostok and its surrounding suburbs to ensure evacuating soldiers did not bring disease back to their homelands, or incoming refugees to the city proper. Except for activities for prisoners of war in Nikolsk, about sixty miles north of Vladivostok, and in that city itself, the YMCA simply ceased to have a presence anywhere in Siberia or the Russian Far East. Red Cross clothing and other relief distributions no doubt afforded worthwhile assistance, but they paled in comparison to the region's humanitarian challenges.

The Red Cross withdrew from Siberia at a moment of massive humanitarian calamity. The leaders of the Siberian commission—and, indeed, many of its American staffers—were not happy about this. But they were not free agents. The end came because of orders from the State Department and its representatives. Before that, though, during the long months of subsequent withdrawal from the Urals, western Siberia, and finally central and eastern Siberia as well, economic, political, and social disorder prevented aid work from occurring. By the time the leaders of the Siberian commission learned from their political missteps and had time to reflect on how their work might have been much better organized, it was too late. Although socialist and Communist Russian authorities were willing to give these Americans a second chance, the commission was in its dying days. The Red Cross's experience mirrored contemporary instances of private American openness to Soviet Russia. Soviet officials desired relations with the United States, but Washington refused to have any dealings with Soviet Russia. The YMCA equally got caught up in American policy toward Lenin's

revolutionary state. The association's Vladivostok and Harbin outposts stayed alive because they were primarily run by Russians themselves, not Americans. Secretaries remained hopeful and continued to take small steps in the direction of achieving the association's goal—one that never changed—to sow the seeds of permanent American-style programs organized by native workers. Subsequent Russian political developments did not allow those seeds to sprout in Soviet soil.

CONCLUSION

"Once more youth is at the front and the aged have been pushed aside." Thus Riley Allen summed up the present international crisis at the outset of 1920. "Nowhere has [youth] greater opportunities for world construction than here in Siberia," he claimed. "The old regime has passed; the present generation is struggling in the pains of labor, and a child is being born to the family of Nations that will personify the spirit of Democracy." He declared that the American Red Cross, "pursuing its policy of Neutrality and Humanity[,] is unconsciously taking a greater part in the prenatal influences that shall shape the character of this child than the personnel, perhaps, is aware." Allen might just as easily have been writing about American YMCA secretaries. The prevailing rhetoric in their letters and reports made plain they believed their work was guiding Russian development at the dawn of a new age. Allen called on his colleagues, "representatives of the greatest democracy in the world," to put their "hearts and souls into" everything they said, wrote, or did. Their spirit and their actions were important. They had "in a measure been instrumental in helping Siberia through the pains of renaissance into the new life of enlightenment and freedom."[1] Allen, playing the optimist and writing to fellow members of the Red Cross's Siberian commission, may be excused some exaggeration. But his words, as the preceding chapters have shown, genuinely reflected American attitudes toward Russia and Russians during the years of revolution and civil war. American optimism in Russia's future and faith that the country would develop into a great, unique democracy never wavered despite unendingly difficult conditions, clear opposition, and human suffering on a massive scale.

[1][Riley Allen,] "The New Year," *New Year's Extra* 13, no. 23 (Jan 1920): 1–2. Another excerpt from this comment is included at the beginning of ch. 7.

In recent years scholars have shown how multifaceted American involvement in revolutionary and civil war Russia was. The present study adds significantly to what is known about American humanitarian aid, relief efforts, and social service projects. Red Cross and YMCA representatives were motivated by contemporary American concerns, from the defeat of the Central powers to the betterment of American–Russian relations and long-term visions of a modern Russia. They believed revolutionary Russia offered a wonderful opportunity for them to help guide Russian development on a small and large scale. From cultural habits and social mores to political persuasions, they thought Russians could become more modern (and more American) under their watchful eyes. Americans based in Russia remained optimistic about the country's future even as Bolshevism entrenched itself in Soviet Russia. Some were convinced the Bolsheviks would soon be overthrown; others held that their more extreme policies and practices could only give way sooner or later to ones friendlier to international concord and wide-ranging cooperation with America and Americans. In the meantime, the presence of American men and women, acting as cultural ambassadors alongside their specific duties, had merit for humanitarian, military, and political reasons.

Representatives of the American Red Cross and the YMCA in Russia, whose organizations were both closely tied to the US government during the Great War, embraced diplomatic roles. These self-proclaimed foreign humanitarians set up shop with the express aim of achieving military and political goals in another country. More broadly, they undertook to support what they believed were US interests in general. Although differences arose, and at times Americans had to choose between which US officials to support, they saw their mission as an American one. Red Cross and YMCA representatives largely held the

same views as did official envoys. Beyond their shared national identity, they shared information, ate meals together, and rode the same railway cars. In addition to their purely instrumental value, they saw their relief work and socio-cultural endeavours as a means to an end. Americans wished to extend the Open Door to Siberia and support Russian politicians who were on board with the Wilsonian project of "making the world safe for democracy"—that is, including Russia in the postwar liberal (capitalist) international order.[2] The sometimes strained, sometimes happy relationship between Red Cross mission members and YMCA secretaries on the one hand, and US officials in Russia and Washington on the other, prefigured the close partnership between philanthropy and diplomacy that marked US foreign relations after the Second World War.[3]

Many Americans believed Russia had a great, uniquely Russian future ahead of it; they espoused Russian exceptionalism. The cultural imperialists of the YMCA shared with their Red Cross colleagues a desire to see the country through to its post-tsarist, post-revolution greatness. All the necessary elements were there, Americans believed, for Russia to become a great nation. American guidance would help the country achieve its destiny. Americans attached to the Red Cross and YMCA were thus keen on the revolutionary project in Russia. Some of them thought it would lead Russians down a slightly different path than the one their own country had followed since the American revolution. Although these Americans did not fully support Bolshevik policies, they did see a chance in Russia to create,

[2]The "ultimate Wilsonian goal may be defined as the attainment of a peaceful liberal capitalist world order under international law, safe from traditional imperialism and revolutionary socialism, within whose stable liberal confines a missionary America could find moral and economic pre-eminence." N. Gordon Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), vii.

[3]See Volker R. Berghahn, "Philanthropy and Diplomacy in the 'American Century,'" *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 393–419.

as Lively put it, "a pure social democracy" or "the world's purest democracy." Robins agreed. "He would rather spend the next three years in trying to help Russia thru to the right kind of social order and government, than to be anywhere else on the globe," a fellow American quoted him as saying. The result would be, Americans believed, the logical political conclusion to innate Russian character.

The work YMCA secretaries were able to do in cooperation with reform-minded Russians spoke to their own interest in being on the ground floor of developments. The Volga exhibition was conceived as the start of much grander rural welfare work in Russia. The hands-on activities of dozens of association men directed at Russian civilians and soldiers were collectively known as "demonstration work," because they offered Russians examples of what could be accomplished once larger-scale efforts were put into place. The "chemical laboratory" (Reitzel's metaphor) that was Russia in these years was home to "a great variety of reactions and tests." It was an exciting time for Russians and Americans working for the betterment of the human condition.

The internationalist outlook of the Progressive Era drove humanitarian and reform activities. The American approach emphasized assistance rather than outright takeover; showing the way instead of bullying; and persuasion, not threats. Education, broadly understood, was considered by Red Cross men and YMCA secretaries to be the key to ensuring the success of post-tsarist Russia. It took many forms, including publicity programs, Bible classes, sharing technical and scientific findings, imposing sanitary standards, and teaching Russians, POWs, Czechoslovak soldiers, and other European refugees English or how to play American sports. The mere presence of Americans had an impact. As "tangible, pulsating chunk[s] of democracy," they led the way to the future simply by being there. A

heavy personal responsibility fell upon representatives of the Red Cross, Davies commented. "They sought to prove to the oppressed, ignorant, sickened masses of Siberia that the civilization of the West was something higher, better, nobler, more worth while, and that as they were, so might the people of Russia if the example were followed."[4]

There were differences of opinion among Americans as to what exactly needed to happen in Russia, and the various visions of the country's future differed in their specifics. There were important commonalities. Most Americans believed the Czechoslovaks were ready to take control of their own political destiny. The same was not true of Russians. Despite the supposedly inherently democratic nature of the Russian people, a strong leader was considered crucial to the success of the post-tsarist experiment. This seeming paradox explains US support for dictatorial regimes, including the Soviet government, the anti-Bolshevik authority in the North, and Kolchak. These would help bring Russia and "her" peasants into the modern era. They would be assisted by Russia's technical, scientific, and administrative experts, the professionals who so impressed American observers. Their advanced knowledge, skills, and dedication to improving peasant lives was apparent to members of the Red Cross and YMCA throughout the period of American involvement in revolutionary and civil war Russia. The Russian revolutionary project would result in a better, more Russian, form of government in the end. This government, if it was truly, legitimately Russian, would naturally be favourably disposed toward the United States, Americans reasoned. This rational outlook justified (and explains) American optimism in the face of Bolshevism's ascendance. Faith in Russia's democratic spirit is important to understanding the commitment Red Cross and YMCA representatives had to continuing their

[4]Davies to Allen, 12 Jun 1920, in ANRC papers, box 919, 987.3 Personnel.

efforts beyond the point of diplomatic, military, political, and widespread humanitarian utility.

This faith or optimism was also a mark of the "American Century" more generally. It was not just in Russia or an emergent Czechoslovakia that Americans found promising pupils. The American global mission extended to all parts of the earth beginning in the late nineteenth century.[5] Humanitarian assistance and YMCA programming evolved out of nineteenth century religious morality and the American missionary movement. The reformist spirit of the Progressive Era and advancements in technology and communications opened much more of the world to Americans looking to share their way of life with people around the globe. It comes as no surprise that the men and women whose stories make up this study often came directly from the missionary world; even when they did not, they were driven by a secular evangelism that was little different from that of their pious Protestant colleagues. As Julia Irwin has noted, donating their time or money to international humanitarian causes provided Americans with the "opportunity to engage with the world community and to negotiate their place and the place of their nation in the international sphere."[6] More so than the missionary movement or outright imperial adventures, international relief opened the door to many different kinds of foreign activities. Over the course of the twentieth century, this religiously-tinged expansive impulse to assist others gave way to a wide variety of cultural, economic, military, and political imperialism, all branded as benevolent and modern.

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[5]This is the argument that frames Fogleson's *American Mission*. See his Introduction. "American Century," a term coined by Henry Luce in an issue of *Life Magazine* (17 Feb 1941), is used by scholars and other commentators to denote American cultural, economic, military, and political dominance on the world stage during much of the twentieth century.

[6]Irwin, "Humanitarian Occupations," 6.

Russia was a fascinating and frustrating project for Americans because of its unique blend of similarities to and differences from the United States. Its large frontier foretold of a future of national greatness; its abundant natural resources ensured economic power; its God-fearing, ethnically white people were strong, smart, and hardworking. They only needed a respite from cruelty—autocracy, war, disease, Bolshevism—and a magnanimous teacher to start reaching their full potential. Figuratively speaking, vigorous, virile Americans came across virginal, victimized Russians and thought they knew what to do to help them develop. The fact that not only Russians, but Czechoslovaks and men from more than two dozen other nations came in contact with Americans and their supplies, equipment, and services, only made work in revolutionary and civil war Russia that much more appealing. Prisoners of war, refugees, and soldiers from many places would go back to their homelands having benefited from American largesse. The future of Russia was only part of what was at stake. The men and women who worked for the Red Cross and YMCA had the future of the entire world in mind, or, at least in the back of their minds.

The Americans who wanted to keep working in Russia came up against domestic US political realities. Many of their families and friends back home were less interested in international work than they were. The rejection of the Treaty of Versailles by the US Congress and the government's rejection of international commitments and projects after the war left those individuals dedicated to spreading the American dream in Russia without official backing. The Red Cross, so closely tied to the state and busy with reconstruction work in Europe, was unwilling to continue Russian efforts. There was a drastic reduction in donations to the Red Cross after the end of the war, and the organization was simply unable to fund work in as many places as its staff members desired. The YMCA, on the other hand,

historically an evangelical, missionary organization, maintained an internationalist outlook. With its different past and much different future from the more domestically-oriented Red Cross, the association still saw value in programs for Russians, including training future Mayak leaders. After the end of the work in Vladivostok, the Harbin office continued to thrive for some time. The YMCA's efforts also turned to other Russians residing outside the Soviet Union. During the interwar years the association was active among the Russian diaspora, running an important Russian-language publishing house (in Paris) and organizing a number of other activities.[7]

Despite the strength of the political and cultural convictions that made American relief and social service activities in Russia possible, these efforts were never supported to the extent participants wished them to be. External challenges and internal conflicts kept the results of these often piecemeal efforts limited and mixed. Glowing reports boasted of Russians' embrace of American aid in Siberia. Still, private letters and diary entries make clear that, at least according to smattering of Americans whose papers have survived, Russians did not welcome US intervention. In general, the foreign presence was grudgingly accepted. At best, Russian authorities used American aid to further their own ends. At worst, American meddlers were officially shunned. Given their views on the shared elements of American and Russian culture, Red Cross and YMCA representatives could not understand and could never really accept that Russians rejected the American way. This fueled their optimism and explains why Americans in Russia, daily confronted by the realities of the present Russian situation and in contact with Russians desirous of their assistance, could wish to continue their efforts after the collapse of anti-Bolshevik regimes in the North and

[7]See Miller, "American Philanthropy among Russians."

East, or despite the rapid Sovietization occurring in central Russia. They had an equally hard time understanding why their US-based bosses would refuse to support their efforts. The oft-repeated claims that work had important repercussions now and into the future were used in the hopes that US- (and UK-) based overseers of Red Cross and YMCA efforts would support what was being done in Russia. They are evidence that overseas personnel knew they had to justify their activities in political terms as well as appeal to the hearts of administrators and military men. The appeals failed more often than their authors hoped.

Although judging the effectiveness of Red Cross and YMCA programs is beyond the scope of this study, it is clear that their ultimate goal—a close relationship between a great America and a great Russia within a liberal world order—remained elusive. Little trace of American humanitarian aid and social services remained in the years following the departure of the last Americans from Vladivostok. American beneficence in the first few years after tsarist rule was relatively unknown in the United States and the USSR outside the memories of surviving participants and grateful recipients of aid. Instead, the Allied intervention was vilified in the Soviet Union, while Americans quickly forgot about the episode. (President Ronald Reagan even declared in his 1984 State of the Union address that Americans and Russians had "never fought each other in war.") Proponents of modernization in Soviet Russia cheered the developments of the interwar years (and beyond). Official diplomatic relations were not established until 1933; except for a military alliance in the early 1940s, US–Soviet relations were strained for many decades. During the cold war, these strains threatened not only international peace and security, but humanity's very existence. Such an outcome would have shocked the men who lived and worked in Russia between 1917 and the early 1920s. Some of those men had urged American–Soviet accord in the decades after their

time in Russia, including Robins and Wardwell. Others, including Jerome Davis, turned to serving Russians outside Russia. None had much influence over US policy: Their ideas fell too far from accepted doctrine.

Under the guise of humanitarian aid and ameliorative service, American relief and social welfare professionals aimed to reform Russia. They were proponents of modernization, and believed Russians were good candidates for development. Such views do not take away from genuine desires to improve living conditions. But they help explain the fact and timing of American interest and the forms beneficent activities took. After all, human suffering was (and is) all around. What made revolutionary Russia such a fascinating, compelling case for American progressives was the opportunity it presented for them to explore their theories and affect widespread societal change. Short-term goals were significant motivators, too. Even then, though, the defeat of Germany and the crushing of the Bolsheviks—the two most important military or political aims Red Cross and YMCA men set their sights on—were perceived by Americans to have significant long-term consequences for international peace and security. The well-being of the United States and the entire international system was at stake. Many Americans believed Russian events were crucial to determining whether or not the postwar world would be open to American culture, commerce, and diplomacy. Medical aid, morale-boosting programs, and humanitarian efforts were an important part of American attempts to keep Russia (and the world) on the correct path.

Patriotism, militarism, and progressivism were clearly at work in the activities of the Red Cross and YMCA. Scholars of international humanitarian aid recognize the relationship between politics and relief, state interests and private charitable endeavours. It is clear that, in

the case of American aid to Russia during the revolution and civil war years, these ties were very close, sometimes by official order and many other times simply by virtue of the proud patriotism of Americans overseas. The latter reality—the voluntary subjugation of seeming humanitarianism and internationalism to nationalism—is especially worth considering (and debating) by historians and others engaged in exploring topics in this relatively new field of study. The international relief and social welfare work detailed here was part and parcel of the American global mission. The men and women who undertook it were well-meaning missionaries of modernization dedicated to progress, the unity of all mankind, and religious salvation. They espoused a combination of secular and religious modernization inspired by America but specific to Russia, and at no point did their faith in the righteousness and success of their efforts fail them.

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