

## **The Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War: The Myth of Western Anti-Communism**

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The White armies in the Russian Civil War received not a cent from the west. Not a shell, not a rifle reached any faction of the White forces from the west. The west was not anti-Bolshevik. Furthermore, the western powers actively supported the Red forces during and after the Civil War. While the western financial and technical support for the building of socialism has been treated in another paper, it begins with the subject of this one: the western backing of the Red forces consistently from 1918-1921. The sole and exclusive reason for western intervention is to ensure that no aid would ever be given to Germany from Russia and that assets owned by western powers not fall into the hands of Germany.

### *The Elites in Favor of the Reds*

Famously, Colonel Edward House, the main adviser to Woodrow Wilson, wrote:

That day Colonel House asked me to call upon him. I found him worried both by my criticism of any recognition of the Bolsheviks and by the certainty, which he had not previously realized, that if the President were to recognize the Bolsheviks in return for commercial concessions his whole “idealism” would be hopelessly compromised as commercialism in disguise. I pointed out to him that not only would Wilson be utterly discredited but that the League of Nations would go by the board, because all the small peoples and many of the big peoples of Europe would be unable to resist the Bolshevism which Wilson would have accredited (Quoted from Bolton, 2010).

General William Graves was a firm backer of the Red cause. In an excellent article on the subject, Kerry Bolton states that Graves and many others actively sought to destroy the White movement. He refused to deliver 14,000 rifles ordered and paid for by Kolchak. Another 15,000 rifles were blocked from the White Cossack forces by this same General. Most of all, Graves, in full communication with the economic elite in the US, had the Japanese stand down from their attacks on Red forces in the east.

In November of 1918, the Allies signed an agreement with the Reds for full support in exchange for financial concessions. While the Allies initially sought only Russia's continual action in the war, their attention soon wandered. Once the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, the west permitted the Reds to re-organized old Russian debts, open Russia to world grain markets and, as the treaty stipulated, hand over the more industrialized parts of Russia's west. Kolchak countered by also accepting old debts, initiating a Constituent Assembly and guaranteed the independence of Poland. It was rejected. That Denikin refused to sell off Russia in exchange

for aid sealed his defeat (Foglesong, 2011).<sup>1</sup>

Both Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George recognized Trotsky as the “legitimate” Russian government. Since the Red was the only alternative to the “tsarist whites,” they were recognized. George stated that a unified Russia would be the “greatest threat” to the British empire. Gen. Denikin states in his memoirs that their sole source of supplies were those taken after Red defeats. Red officers had regular salaries and a full staff, strongly suggesting western aid (Gardner, 1976).

The mission of William Bullitt led to an agreement with Lenin and, as always, a total rejection of the Whites. The memorandum asked for the lifting of all embargoes on the Soviet government and for its immediate recognition. Full free trade with the Soviets was also demanded, with the final and most important proviso that all debts to the west be paid (Thompson, 1966)

Western newspapers spoke harshly of the whites, equating them with landlords and “reactionaries” something coming from Bolshevik propaganda. Great Britain sank the Black Sea Fleet while the French, in the memoirs of Kolchak, fought the Volunteer Army. Yet, even with their shortages of ammunition and basic supplies, the White armies fought the Reds to a standstill and began routing them by the Spring of 1919. However, the west had made up its mind. Kolchak had to go (Bolton, 2011).

The White armies during the Civil war confuse many. The common myths are that they were royalist, and served the “landlord” class. Few royalists were part of the White forces and the “landlord” class were the peasants themselves, who by the start of the war owned almost 95% of all Russian land. A false conservative-radical dichotomy is drawn. The Whites were largely loyal to Kerensky and the Assembly. They were hostile to Cossack autonomy and Ukrainian separatism. The “unified Great Russia” was one of the few slogans they all agreed upon.

General Graves was a spokesman for the American ruling class. His work on the situation at the time shows not only his support of Bolshevism, but that of the US government. Few had any idea what “Bolshevism” was. About as many knew what “Marxism” was. Today, educated people have a vague idea of these concepts. Back then, it was just as dark and void as the rest of Russian life. Graves writes in his memoirs about what he wrote to the State Department about Admiral Kolchak:

The Kolchak Government cannot possibly stand and if the Allies support him they will make the greatest mistake in history. The Government is divided into two distinct parts, one issues proclamation and propaganda for foreign consumption stating that the Government favors and works for a constituent assembly, other part secretly plans and plots a restoration of monarchy. This is perceptible only to those who are part of the Government. It is a hypocritical government which attempts to convince the peasants that their cause is being fostered and yet looks for the psychological moment to restore monarchy. Kolchak has surrounded himself with old regime officers whose only salvation for future existence depends on restoration of monarchy (Graves, 1941).

None of this was true and Graves knew it at the time. Immediately upon reading this, one

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the title of his book, it is really about how the west backed and supported the Red forces consistently throughout the Civil War.

is struck by the fact that insisting on the restoration of monarchy was sufficient to destroy the moral nature of Kolchak's cause in Washington. Second, that this alleged desire is only "in secret," so it cannot be verified. Finally, since there is no evidence of such a desire anywhere, the need to impute it to him begs the question.

### *The Ineffectiveness of the White Armies*

In 1918, there were three centers of battle:

First, the southwest where the Volunteer army worked with the Cossacks against the purely urban, Jewish red forces. The newly formed Polish army, Ukrainian Rada militia and the Makhno organization made this the most complex theater of the war. The Polish forces were quite effective, and at a crucial moment where the Red forces would have been destroyed, Pidsulsky turns against the Volunteers and saves Trotsky from destruction. The key moment was the massive war between Wrangel's 350,000 men and Trotsky's 200,000. As Denikin had abandoned the cause and left Russia, the confusion in the high command and the use of Makhno from the rear caused a major white loss. A massive force of 150,000 Whites escaped to the west from Crimea.

Second, the Siberian republic. This was a successful political unit from 1917 to 1922 under the command of Kolchak. The press, often portrayed as state-controlled, was highly critical of the Whites. Its economic growth was impressive and local governments were active. His military forces was equally impressive, consisting of 35,000 Cossacks and 80,00 Japanese. The total fore was over 400,000.

Third, the Northwest under General Yudenich, including an Estonian army of 10,000. Britain promised him some aid only under the condition that Estonia be declared independent. Britain, however, became the primary enemy of Yudenich's army as it threatened St. Petersburg. The Red government, threatened for the first time, saw total inaction from the British troops at Arkhangelsk.

The problem was that these three centers were commanded by generals of different political opinions and strategies. There was no overarching command in the way Trotsky centralized control over the Red forces. Egos, ideology and attitudes towards the monarchy all created fissures in the white movement of such severity that it can hardly be called a single movement at all.

In the Russian language work of Valery Shambarov, the condition of the White armies is made clearer. Just prior to the beginning of the Civil war, the Reds emptied the prisons, promising them freedom in exchange for terrorizing the white and local peoples. Crime had been very low under Nicholas II, but soon shot up 500% by 1917.

Contrary to myth, very few of the White officers came from the old nobility and almost all had no landed property. About 15% of the total had some noble ties or acquired property of any kind. Once Brest was signed, this meant that the Reds were de facto allied with Berlin. Britain sought a White-Red alliance to continue the war. When the Whites refused, Britain abandoned them, calling them "extremists" and the worst of all, "nationalists."

In July of 1918, MA Morav'yev defected from the Red camp and brought 10,000 men with him. Yekaterinburg fell to the Czechs. Panicked, the Reds sacrificed the tsar and his family in exchange for the promise of victory from infernal powers. Kappel's men penetrated as far as Kazan, where he captured Russia's gold reserve worth 50 million rubles. Unfortunately, nothing was for sale. With this immense fortune, the west was unwilling to sell weapons to the Whites.

Food aid and weapons, not to mention tremendous “loans” from The Schiff clan in New York poured in for the Reds (Shambarov, 1999, original text in Russian).

The Whites never developed a firm chain of command and, even worse, the Cossacks had no interest in integrating with regular white structures. Denikin estimated that, at a minimum, 1 rubles were needed for a single month of operations. Kornilov sought the possibility of a military government, earning him the eternal hatred of the west. More than anything else, the west rejected the idea of a strong, unified Russia. Anyone promoting this was rejected without consideration.

The White governments had little real power. The staff of the high command was almost non-existent. The Northern Army had roughly 25,000 men with 600 offices. Because of the total lack of western aid, they were forced to live at the expense of the local population.

The lack of any real identity or ideology of the White movement was one of the essential flaws in it and a major cause for its defeat. Part of this was made possible by the dogmatic belief that a “Constituent Assembly” will be called upon the defeat of the Reds and all pressing social problems will then be addressed. In the meantime, only the military situation mattered.

The urban wealthy were almost to a man, dedicated to the Social Democrats and Kerensky. This included the oligarchs Lv'iv, Guchkov, Ryanbushinsky, Konovalov and Tereshchenko and, once Kornilov rejected Kerensky, these elites rejected the White Armies.

The west blocked all White radio transmissions to the public and the Red forces had miraculous recoveries after each defeat. Both Kolchak and Denikin realized that any aid from the west meant the sale of Russia and the plundering of her natural resources. Trotsky was willing to do this at the behest of his banking contacts. The whites would not. The result was the comment of William Bullitt, head of US intelligence in St. Petersburg, that Trotsky was “our man” in Russia. The French assistant military attache in Russia, Captain Jaques Sadoul, was firmly in Trotsky's camp (Munholland, 1981). He was also a founder of the International and a communist. Eventually, he tired of this intellectual fad and abandoned the ideology in 1919.

Herbert Hoover saved the fledgling USSR with generous food aid while American companies developed the first five year plan for the Soviet Union. In 1917, declassified papers from the US Department of State clearly demand that American media outlets stop referring to the Reds as “enemies.”

### *The Last Hope: Hetman Skoropadsky*

In Ukraine, the sole hope for stability was the Cossack Chieftain Pavel Skoropadsky (1873-1945). Universally rejected by western historians, his record was impressive. Though ruling only from April to November of 1918, the Reds feared him and Petliura, a high level occultist and a member of the same lodge as Trotsky, was mobilized to fight him. Skoropadsky was pro-Russian but did not believe in being a part of the empire. In his short reign he reformed the armed services, limited land ownership, clipped the landlord class and lowered taxes. Achieving recognition from the Vatican, Austria, Denmark, and more than 30 states, Ukrainian independence had finally become the norm worldwide. Suspiciously, the “Ukrainian nationalist” movement fought him (cf Sagaydak, 2011).

The Hetman was supported by Bishop Nikodemus, labor and the peasantry in general. Imitating the policy of Emperor Alexander III, he chartered the peasant land bank, making it easier to buy or reclaim land. Each peasant family was assured a minimum of 25 hectares that no debt could remove. Grain prices were fixed so as to avoid market fluctuations. Domestic demand

was given priority and hard currency was earned with about 35% of all grain exported. Yet this miracle, an independent Ukraine in close union with Russia, was intolerable.

Skoropadsky is the unsung hero of the White idea. Dismissed with almost no consideration by western historians, he proved himself a political genius under the worst of circumstances. Liberal constitutionalism was a suicide pact under the unsettled conditions of war, moral degeneracy and foreign occupation. As Pavel was a distant relative of the Hetman Ivan Skoropadsky (1646-1722), it is fair to say that the Hetmanate had been legitimately restored with his accession.

With almost no money, he succeeded in creating eight army corps of competent fighting strength. Strangely, the Rada state failed to even begin this process. The socialists, not even approaching the fairness of the Hetman's land policy (even in theory) launched a war against him. This same group that refused to create a military force under the Rada suddenly had the ability to field an army against the Hetman (Kaganets, 2007).

Within Austria-Hungary, the Hetman had multinational and multi-confessional support. The German army was in negotiations with the moderate left as the Hetman took over and had no interest in supporting Skoropadsky. At the time, his enemies said that England, not Germany, was his sponsor. His opponents approached Germany to fight the Hetman, not support him. His land reform was to benefit small landholders, a group he considered to be essential to rebuilding. He was in the process of putting together a representative ruling council at the time of his absurd dethroning (Kalynchuk, 2013).

The artificial and forced nature of the socialist and “nationalist” opposition to Skoropadsky was such as to bring them to levels of absurdity. He advocated gradual Ukrainiaization of the military and government services. This was ignored by Petliura. His cabinet contained such luminaries as Doroshenko, Kistakovsky, Naumenko, and Stebnytska, but all of this was deemed insufficiently Ukrainian (as Petliura made an alliance with Poland).

During his short reign, his moderate pro-Ukrainian stance converted many Russians nationals living on the territory. Ukrainian independence, achieved both de facto and de jure by Skoropadsky, was permanently destroyed upon his overthrow. Vasyl Lypkivsky and the Hetman were allies, and he successfully mediated a reconciliation of the UAOC and the ROC on his territory. He sought a fully autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church with its own patriarch. His successes were so sudden and so significant that he even received Uniat support, given that he was the best hope for stability in the region in Vienna's opinion. Living in Germany after the war, Skoropadsky refused all offers to cooperate with Hitler's government. He was a man of rare principle in a violent and unsettled age. There is no excuse for the awful treatment this man has received from historians, and the attacks on him from Petliura and the Poles should strongly place his support for Ukrainian independence in doubt.<sup>2</sup>

It goes without saying that, in the west, all myths created by the Red forces about the Hetman were believed without criticism. Without regard to any facts, he was referred to as a German partisan and hence totally impossible for the Allies to support. A strong Ukraine, anti-communist, yet independently pro-Russian, would have been an immense help to the anti-communist cause.

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2 A comprehensive bibliography of the Hetman can be found here:  
<http://msmb.org.ua/biblioresursi/bibliografiya/osobistosti/skoropadskyiy-pavlo-petrovich-ostanniy-getyman-ukraini/>

### *Conclusion*

The west did everything in its power to ensure the Red takeover of Russia. It had its tentacles into the major banking houses in New York thanks to Trotsky. It was an atheist and thus materialist movement that saw men as nothing more than matter in motion, hence, mass killing had no clear or obvious sanction against it. The Red armies were falling apart in 1918, Skoropadsky was creating a prosperous Ukrainian government in Kiev, and Kappel had a fortune that could maintain the White forces indefinitely. None of this assisted the Whites (Bunyan, 1976).

The American financial community demanded a centralized, materialist and Jewish Russia and this they received. Today, Vladimir Putin is threatened with World War III on a daily basis. Sanctions seek to strangle the Russian economy. This is because Putin is a nationalist. Nothing like this was ever imposed on the USSR. Nationalism, especially the nationalism of a country as large as Russia, was the primary enemy of the banking elite then and now. This is the sole reason the Reds won the Civil War and had the liquidity and investment to continue in power once it was granted to them. There is no farce more saddening than the history being written for pay in American universities.

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