THE ALLIED MILITARY EXPEDITION TO NORTH RUSSIA: 1918-1919

by

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ABSTRACT

The Allied military expedition to North Russia in 1918 is an historical event unknown to most Americans. However, Soviet historiography on the subject is extensive and at least one Soviet leader has cited the event as a fundamental cause of the consistently poor relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers.

This paper seeks to examine the reasons for the expedition and to evaluate its effect. The records of the Supreme War Council of the Allied Powers were examined to determine the military reasons advanced for dispatching the expedition, and the records of the American contingent were reviewed to develop the record of the operations in which it engaged.

The conclusion of this thesis is that the Allied anabasis failed to attain any of the diverse objectives set for it and that, because military force was applied without a clear-cut central purpose, the expedition was an utter failure.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

IN RUSSIA'S FIELDS
(After Flanders Fields)

In Russia's fields no poppies grow
There are no crosses row on row
to mark the places where we lie,
No larks so gayly singing fly
As in the fields of Flanders.

We are the dead. Not long ago
We fought beside you in the snow
And gave our lives, and here we lie
Though scarcely knowing reason why
Like those who died in Flanders . . . 1

The Allied military expedition to North Russia in 1918 is one of the least-understood aspects of the long and difficult relations between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. Conceived during World War I as an essential step in the life-or-death struggle with the Central Powers, the dispatch of military forces to Russia was profoundly influenced by the revulsion and alarm which the Allied Governments felt over the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia. This combination of factors found the Allies justifying intervention in terms of threats which did not exist and goals which could not be achieved, and led to a

continuation of military operations in Russia even after the war against the Central Powers had ended.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the circumstances which led to the landing of Allied forces in North Russia, to trace the military operations of these forces, and to evaluate the extent to which these forces were successful in attaining the goals which their governments established for them. Although the North Russian expedition was viewed as an "indispensable corollary" of the Allied intervention in Siberia and Southern Russia, the Allied operation in North Russia was unique in several respects. First, the intervention in North Russia involved the use of Allied forces which were supported by White Russian forces, while in Siberia and the South military operations were carried out by the White Russian forces supported by the Allied forces. Secondly, the specific reasons for intervention were different in the different areas despite certain broad similarities. For example, the reconstitution of the Eastern Front against the Germans was an important objective of the Allied Governments. While this might have been possible to accomplish from bases around the White Sea, it was clearly impossible to accomplish from Vladivostok. Finally, since the Americans were reluctant to undertake any intervention except at the request of the Russian people, and since the other Allies did not wish to intervene without
United States support, the willingness of the anti-Bolshevik Soviet to accept Allied military and economic aid seemed to create a favorable condition for intervention in the North that did not exist elsewhere. For these and other reasons, the North Russian intervention can be regarded independently of the other military operations in Russia.

This paper seeks to discuss both the reasons for military intervention in North Russia and the military operations themselves. Therefore, different sources have been used for the different sections although there is, of course, considerable overlap. In Chapter II, which discusses the conditions in Russia that seemed to make military intervention necessary, the United States Department of State's Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Russia, 1918, and the two volumes by Leonid I. Strakhovsky, who was present in North Russia before and during the intervention, were most useful. In Chapter III, which discusses the deliberations of the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, the use of the records of those representatives, found in the Modern Military Records collection of the National Archives, permits a different and, I believe, unique approach to the subject of why military intervention was decided upon. Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII are based largely on the records of the American
North Russian Expeditionary Force, also found in the National Archives, and on the memoirs of several members of the Allied expedition including its British Commander, Major General Sir Edmund Ironside, and four American officers, Joel R. Moore, Harry H. Mead, Lewis E. Jahns (whose memoirs are combined in one book, *The History of the American Expedition Fighting the Bolsheviki*), and John Cudahy, whose *Archangel* presents a moving, first hand account of several of the battles, as well as a penetrating analysis of the effect of the expedition. Chapter VIII, which deals with the withdrawal of the Allied forces, is based largely on the pamphlet, "The Evacuation of North Russia 1919," published by the British War Office in 1920. Chapter IX contains certain conclusions concerning the Allied expedition which, for good or for ill, are based on my own analysis of the material presented in the earlier chapters. These conclusions point out, I hope, the very obvious truth that while military force has a very important place in the world, it must, like other destructive forces, be judiciously applied to the attainment of well-defined goals.
CHAPTER II

CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA

Collapse of the Russian Army. By early 1917 the inability of the Russian Army to continue the struggle against the Central Powers was apparent. Not very well organized to begin with, poorly equipped, and suffering under the traditionally chaotic command of inept officers, the Russian Army had, nevertheless, fought bravely from the opening days of the war. Its disastrous defeat at Tannenberg in August, 1914, where the German Army killed or captured over 110,000 Russians, was a setback from which the Russian Army never fully recovered. Nevertheless, the enormous scope of this battle caused the German high command to divert two corps from the Western Front to the Eastern Front at a time when Germany seemed on the verge of defeating France. As a result of this decision these corps were absent from the battle of the Marne and, except for their absence, the " Miracle of the Marne" might never have occurred. The French Chief of Intelligence acknowledged this by saying, "Let us render to our [Russian] allies the homage that is their due, for one of the elements of our victory was their debacle."1


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Widespread war-weariness and the general feeling that the war was being mismanaged by the government of Nicholas II contributed to the collapse of his regime in March, 1918. However, the liberal and democratic elements of the Provisional Government which took its place were ideologically devoted to the cause of the Allies and sought, therefore, to honor the Tripartite Agreement of 1914 in which Great Britain, France and Russia had pledged not to make a separate peace with the Central Powers. Kerensky directed the reorganization of the Russian Army and planned a new offensive which was intended to restore the morale of the army and hasten the defeat of Germany. Ordered to attack on 1 July, 1917, when many soldiers were actually unarmed, the Russian Army revolted, panic spread, and the Eastern Front disintegrated. With the failure of General Kornilov's attempted military coup d'etat in September, 1917, any practical possibility of continued military operations against the Central Powers also disintegrated.

The Bolsheviks and the Germans. From the beginning of Bolshevik rule in November, 1917, the feeling that the Bolsheviks were collaborating with the Germans was widespread in the Allied Nations. This feeling intensified as Russo-German peace negotiations progressed at Brest Litovsk. The New York World, commenting on Trotsky's "no peace, no war" statement, observed that "Trotsky and Lenin have done
their best by the Kaiser, whether actuated by money, or lust for power, or the insanity of class hatred.² On 21 February, the American Ambassador in Russia, David R. Francis, cabled the Secretary of State,

Soviet Government demoralized. . . . Petrograd garrison numbering 50,000 or more refused to oppose German advance.

Lenin, Trotsky may possibly not have been Germany's agents continuously, but if had been could not have played more successfully into Germany's hands. Last revolution has materially set back cause of democracy in Europe and if Allies cannot prevent will result in making Russia virtually German province. . . .³

Francis also reported that he was "exerting influence discreetly" to have the Moscow Soviet reject the proposed German peace terms,⁴ but, despite his efforts, the treaty of Brest Litovsk was signed on 3 March, 1918.

The Brest Litovsk treaty was widely regarded as a sellout to the Germans. The New York Times of 4 May observed that,

When the revolution occurred, a little more than a year ago, the Russian people were filled with joy. . . . But the organizers of Russian liberty were not men of sufficient strength and resolution to guard and maintain it. In a few months they were overthrown. . . .

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⁴Ibid., p. 390.
The new government was anti-social. . . . It is hardly possible any longer to doubt that Lenin, at least, was acting under German direction, in the German interest. There were many others like him, and their influence was very great in the successive acts and policies, beginning with the disorganization and disbandment of the army and ending in the complete surrender of Russia into the hands of the Germans at Brest Litovsk.\(^5\)

Some observers, such as the Assistant United States Military Attaché in Russia, Captain E. Francis Riggs, and the British Special Representative in Moscow, Bruce Lockhart, reported that the Bolsheviks were more hostile to the Germans than to the Allies but in the fury and frustration of the closing months of World War I, it became quite easy for many in the Allied countries to equate the Bolshevik with the hated German.\(^6\)

After Brest Litovsk. It should not be overlooked that, in early 1918, the Central Powers, like the Allies, were in desperate condition after nearly four years of war. High on the list of German priorities was the requirement to eliminate the Eastern Front so that she could concentrate her military efforts against the Allies in the West. Therefore the terms of Treaty of Brest Litovsk required the Soviet Government to recognize the independence of the Ukraine, Finland, Estonia and Livonia which the Central


Powers occupied. This partitioning of the Russian Empire served the overall purpose of reducing the danger of a united Russian action against the Central Powers, but served other important purposes as well. In the Ukraine, the German occupation permitted a massive transfer of that area’s immense agricultural output to bolster the faltering German economy. In the north, German forces were landed in Finland to train and support Finnish White Guard units, which, under General Mannerheim, soon routed the mixed force of dissident Russian soldiers, Finnish Bolsheviks, and Finnish Red Guard units which had spread terror throughout Finland and had seized power in Helsinki. This partitioning and occupation of Russian territory not only reduced the possibility of further Russian action against the Central Powers and served to bolster the war potential of those powers, but also gave them a basis for future military action in the east if necessary. General Erich von Ludendorff, for example, wrote later that the presence of German troops in Finland,

... enable us to advance on Petrograd, in order to overthrow the Bolshevik government or prevent the English from reaching there from Murmansk. ... The [re]formation of the Eastern Front was prevented, or at least almost indefinitely postponed.8

Allied Forces in Russia. Ludendorff was right about the presence of British forces in Murmansk, but the size of these forces was very small. During the early years of the war, when Russia's Baltic ports were cut off by Germany, and her exit from the Black Sea was sealed by Turkey, Russia received supplies from the Allies through the North Russian ports of Archangel and Murmansk. Archangel, icefree only from May to November, was the larger port and, in 1916 alone, over 600 Allied ships unloaded two and a half million tons of coal, food and munitions on her docks. To the northwest, lay Murmansk, a small, ramshackle town on the Kola inlet, which, because of the warming influence of the gulf stream, is icefree all year. With British assistance, the Russians were able to build port facilities for ocean-going ships and to link Murmansk with Petrograd by a makeshift railway line. These arrangements were not completed until 1917, and were only beginning to be operational at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. Archangel, however, was fully operational during its limited season and, by 1918, considerable quantities of war supplies had accumulated in that port.

The German Navy made every effort to disrupt Allied shipments to Russia by dispatching submarines to the Murmansk Coast and the White Sea. The Russian Navy, unable to cope with the situation, asked the British Navy for help. The British dispatched naval forces, under Rear Admiral Kemp, to North Russian waters in 1915 and further strengthened these forces in 1916 and 1917. By the winter of 1917, the British force consisted of the battleship Glory, the cruiser Vindictive, and six mine-sweepers. These vessels shared Murmansk harbor with a battleship, a cruiser, four destroyers and several smaller vessels of the Russian fleet but, by February, 1918, these ships had been commandeered by their revolutionary crews.

Kemp's missions were to maintain an Allied presence in North Russia, to conduct operations against German submarines, to protect Allied nationals and other refugees who were fleeing northwards, to prevent the war materials which had accumulated in the cargo-discharging areas around Archangel from falling into German hands and to "stiffen local resistance" to the Germans.\(^{10}\) To accomplish these missions,

Admiral Kemp had command of the ships' crews, 200 British Marines and some Royal Engineers who had been sent to Murmansk to perform demolitions in the event of an evacuation.

Admiral Kemp's force was hardly of a size or composition to permit the reconstitution of the Eastern Front or the seizure of Petrograd that Ludendorff feared, and Kemp, recognizing the vulnerability of Murmansk and the Murmansk-Petrograd railway to attack from Finland, telegraphed London in February, 1918 that a British expeditionary force of at least 6000 was needed to prevent the base at Murmansk from falling into German hands. This request was refused because of the urgent necessity to send all available troops to the Western Front, but an additional British cruiser, the Cochrane, was dispatched to Murmansk and the British Government asked the French and Americans to send ships also. The French immediately dispatched the cruiser, Admiral Aube, but it was not until May that the American cruiser Olympia arrived in Murmansk.

In February, 1918 the fear of a German-Finnish attack on Murmansk and the Murmansk Railway, the reported breakdown of the Russo-German peace talks, the renewal of the German offensive on Petrograd, and the hostility of the Bolshevik

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sailors on the Russian ships in Murmansk harbor, led the local Soviet to seek closer ties with the Allied force under Admiral Kemp. Prior to doing so, however, it sent the following telegram to the central government in Petrograd on 1 March:

The renewal of the offensive by the German imperialists and capitalists endangers the Murmansk region. . . . Representatives of friendly powers, the French, American and English missions stationed at Murmansk continue to show themselves well disposed towards us and are ready to furnish aid ranging from food supplies to active military force, inclusively. . . . The Murmansk Soviet hesitates to take upon itself the decision concerning the defense of the region and of the railway, and therefore requests instructions particularly insofar as acceptance of material and military help from the friendly powers is concerned. . . .

Trotsky, who probably was confused as to the true nature of the situation, and who, also, was staggered by the rapaciousness of the German demands at Brest Litovsk, replied the same day:

Peace negotiations are apparently broken off. Danger looms over Petrograd. . . . The Germans are advancing in small groups. Resistance is possible and obligatory. . . . You are obliged to accept any help from the Allied

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Trotsky’s impassioned plea to save the country seemed to make cooperation with the Allies a matter of honor as well as an obligation. As a result, agreement was reached on 2 March that (1) the Murmansk Soviet would be the supreme power in the Murmansk area, (2) a military council would be formed with one Soviet, one British, and one French representative, and (3) the French and British, while agreeing not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Murmansk region, would do all in their power to supply the region.

13 Strakhovsky, op. cit., p. 29. Underlining supplied by Strakhovsky. There is some controversy as to what factors led Trotsky to conclude that the peace negotiations had been broken off. He knew that the revised German terms were far more demanding than those which he had rejected in January. The secretary of the Russian delegation to the Brest-Litovsk negotiations had wired for a train to bring the delegates home without revealing the outcome of the negotiations. It seems reasonable that Trotsky might have concluded that negotiations had collapsed, but it also seems that Trotsky replied to the Murmansky Soviet from his own conviction without really knowing the outcome of those negotiations. Kennan points out that this message was largely responsible for Stalin’s later denunciation of Trotsky. (Kennan, op. cit., pp. 46-47) However, it would seem from his use of the word “mission” that Trotsky may have intended that the Murmansk Soviet should work with the one or two members of the staffs of the Allied Military Missions in Russia who were accredited to the Russian Government and who were present in Murmansk.
with food and other materials. On March 9th, the British Marines and the French Marines from the *Admiral Aube* were put into barracks ashore. Thus, the first landing of Allied troops had taken place—apparently with the full approval of the Soviet Government. As we shall see, these landings took place well before any joint Allied agreement on intervention was reached.

Upon landing, the British Marines organized the Slavo-British Legion, which was recruited from among the Russian and Polish laborers who had been brought to Murmansk to build and maintain the Murmansk-Petrograd railroad. The Allied forces were further bolstered by the arrival of about 2500 men of a Serbian battalion which had been fighting in Russia and was seeking to reach the Western Front, and by a French artillery unit which had fought on the Rumanian Front and was also endeavoring to reach France. In addition, the Finnish Legion, a detachment of Red Finns who had been driven out of Finland by Mannerheim's White Finns, also joined the Allied forces in Murmansk. Finally, to round out this international group, the American cruiser *Olympia* ...

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14 Kennan, *op. cit.*, p. 49. Kennan points out that there is no evidence that the British Government approved this agreement although the Murmansk Soviet appeared to accept the agreement as "wholly valid." The U.S. was not involved although a member of the U.S. Military Mission, Lt. Hugh Martin, was present in Murmansk.

15 Strakhovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
arrived on 25 May, and put ashore a landing party of eight officers and 100 men on 8 June. More importantly, the Olympia also brought Brigadier General Frederick C. Poole of the British Army to Murmansk. Poole had been dispatched by the British War Office to assume command of the forces in Murmansk and to occupy Archangel. As we shall see, this unilateral commitment by the British to action beyond the defense of Murmansk would cause the British to advocate an Allied policy of intervention most strongly, both in the Supreme War Council and through diplomatic channels.

**War Materials in Russian Ports.** In May, 1917 the Russian Minister of War, Gouchkoff, appointed a committee under the Russian general, Michelson, to control and coordinate the flow of Allied shipments of war materials into

16 Lt. Chester V. Jackson, USN (Ret.), "Mission to Murmansk," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, No. 292, Vol. 95, No. 2, February, 1969, p. 84. The international flavor of the forces in Murmansk was later described by a British soldier thusly: "The [situation] . . . was perfectly simple. White Russians were associated with us, so Red Russians wanted to turn us out. But Germans and White Finns also wanted to turn us out, so Red Finns were on our side, more or less. This brought Red Russians and Red Finns onto opposite sides. Lapps and Karelians might be described as benevolently disinterested. It sounded like Bedlam to which the motley array of Allies added the note of Babel." A. W. Abbott, "Lapland 1918-1919. The British Army's Farthest North," The Army Quarterly, Vol. LXXXIV, No. 2 (July, 1962), pp. 236-243.

Russia. The creation of this committee had been recommended by the senior Allied military representatives in Russia and these representatives were appointed to the committee as members. Almost immediately, however, it became apparent that the Russian Army was collapsing, and the question became one of "how to get the supplies and materials away from the front and out of Russia in view of the help they would be to an invading German army." Accordingly, the commission was dissolved and in January, 1918, the Allies formed an organization known as Tovaro Obmien, an Allied trading company chartered under Russian law, which sought to maintain control of Allied war materials in Russia and "to block the German\textsuperscript{8} from purchasing and securing supplies by means of securing options or by purchase.\textsuperscript{9} In addition, when


\textsuperscript{9}Memorandum for General Churchill Covering some of the Activities Other than Routine of the Military Attache to Russia and the American Military Mission," prepared by Colonel J. A. Ruggles, Military Attache and Chief of the American Mission to Russia, Springfield, Massachusetts, 6 December, 1919. Located in Box 1 of the records of the American North Russian Expeditionary Force in the Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), 1917-1923, Records Group 120, National Archives. Hereafter these records are referred to as "ANREF Records."
evacuation of war supplies was impossible and the danger of the material falling into German hands became acute, "reliable agents were secured who would see to the destruction of same." 20

In February, 1918 the Bolsheviks, fearful of the continuing German advance toward Petrograd, established the Russian Evacuation College which was designed to direct the evacuation of war supplies from that city. However, lack of funds brought the operation to a virtual standstill until the chiefs of the Allied Missions offered their services and funds. Work proceeded from the middle of May to 1 August, 1918 during which time 189,000 short tons of war supplies and other strategic materials were evacuated from accumulation points on the periphery of Russia to the interior. 21 Prior to the arrival of the Allied intervention forces, 50,000 tons were evacuated from Archangel alone, and by July, 1918 the Bolsheviks were removing supplies from that port at a rate of 3000 tons per week. 22 According to Ambassador Francis, the small arms evacuated by the Bolsheviks from Archangel through 21 June, 1918 included 23,000 bombs, 6000 rifles, 76000 grenades and over 125,000,000 cartridges.

20 Ibid., p. 4.

21 Ibid., p. 2.

of various kinds. Thus, the war supplies which had been shipped to Russia by the Allies, and which Admiral Kemp had been ordered to keep out of German hands, were fast disappearing from the areas where either the Germans or the Allies might hope to control them. Their removal to the interior of Russia was greatly facilitated by the Allied Military Missions whose assistance made it possible for the Bolsheviks to use these materials to equip the Red Army which later fought against the Allied intervention forces. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the British Military Representative to the Michelson Commission and the Tovaro Obmien in 1917 and during the early months of 1918 had been none other than Brigadier General Frederick C. Poole, the Commander of the Allied expeditionary force to Russia.

The Czech Legion. Prior to the revolutions of 1917, an army had been formed in Russia from Czech and Slovak prisoners of war who, for the most part, had deserted from the Austro-Hungarian armies. This army became known as the Czech Legion. Part of the Legion's officers, including its commanding general Sokorov, were Russians, part were tsarist officers of Czech origin, and part were Czechs.

23Telegram #293, Francis to Lansing, FR 1918 Russia.
The Legion had participated effectively in many of the battles of the Eastern Front, and was one of the few units to advance during Kerensky's ill-fated offensive of July, 1917.

With the collapse of the Russian armies, and the advance of the Central Powers, the situation became desperate for these stateless warriors. Despite the offer of Emperor Charles to grant them amnesty if they laid down their arms, the members of the Legion decided instead to leave Russia for France in the hope that they could join the autonomous Czechoslovakian army already in action against the Central Powers on the Western Front. To this end, the Supreme War Council in Paris officially organized the Czech Legion as a regular element of the Allied Armies. The Legion was made subordinate to the French High Command and negotiations were begun with the Soviet Government to evacuate the Czechs through Vladivostok. Relations between the Czechs and the Bolsheviks were cordial at first, and the Soviet Commander

24From the report of Captain Hurban to the President of the Czechoslovak National Council as quoted in James Bunyan, Intervention, Civil War and Communism, April-December 1919: Documents and Materials, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), p. 78. See also the translation of the memorandum "The Operations of the Czechoslovak Army in Russia in the years 1917-1920," prepared by the historical branch of the General Staff of the Czechoslovakian Army in Russia and presented to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U. S. Army, by the Czech Minister in Washington in 1922. ANREF Records, Box 1.
in Chief in the Ukraine praised the "fraternal help which
the Czechoslovak Corps has rendered the working people of
the Ukraine in their struggle against the imperialist
looters."25

Despite the fact that the Czechs did not wish to
participate in internal Russian affairs, and despite the
fact that the Allies were anxious to get them to France as
soon as possible,26 the Bolsheviks became uneasy about this
large armed group as it proceeded eastward across Russia.
On 22 March, 1918, fearing that the "Czechoslovaks might be
used by counterrevolutionists and imperialists against the
Soviet Government," the Omsk Soviet was directed by Moscow
to stop the Czechs, confiscate their arms and evacuate them
through Archangel. Although Stalin, then Commissar of
Nationalities, later changed the order to permit the Legion
to continue to Vladivostok, he directed the removal of its

25Bunyan, op. cit., p. 80.

26The most prominent writer on the British aspects of
intervention in Russia, R. H. Ullman, offers the view that
the French, having developed a "Western Front mentality,"
were insistent upon the transfer of the Czech Legion to
France while Britain, having a broader world view of the
struggle against Germany, doubted "the worth of the enormous
effort and diversion of resources necessary to bring the
Czechs to the west," and came to believe that, based either
in Siberia or Archangel, the Czechs could form an effective
nucleus around which anti-German efforts could be developed.
Ullman, op. cit., pp. 153-156. See below, pp. 32-34 for the
deliberations of the Supreme War Council on this matter.
"counterrevolutionary" leaders. On 5 April, a party of 500 Japanese Marines was landed at Vladivostok and this, together with the news of counterrevolutionary Cossack activities in Eastern Siberia, caused Soviet apprehensions concerning the Czechs to increase. On 21 April, the Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin issued the following order to the Siberian Soviets:

Fearing that Japan will advance into Siberia, Germany is categorically demanding that German war prisoners held in Eastern Siberia be removed at once to either Western Siberia or European Russia. Please take all necessary measures. The Czechoslovak detachments must not go farther east.28

Meanwhile the Czechs, fearful that the plan to evacuate them through Archangel was a plot to split them and make them more vulnerable to capture by the Germans, decided that, "it is impossible to count on reaching an agreement with the Soviet Government." They, therefore, adopted a resolution on 14 April, 1918 in which they reaffirmed their desire to remain neutral in Russian affairs but in which they restated their intention to embark for France from Vladivostok even if it should be necessary to fight their way there. Fighting did break out at several points along the Trans-Siberian Railroad when the Czechs encountered and attacked a train-load of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, and again when

27Bunyan, op. cit., p. 81.
28Ibid., p. 87.
Red Guard units endeavored to disarm the Czechs. On 25 May, Trotsky ordered that the Czechs be disarmed and directed that, "every armed Czech found on the railway is to be shot on the spot." By the end of May, the Czech Legion was divided into four sections and was spread out over 7,000 kilometers of the railway between Rtiscev (west of Penza) and Vladivostok. Those Czechs who had arrived in Vladivostok returned westward to assist their comrades, and generalized fighting broke out between the Bolsheviks and the Czechs all along the railway. Ambassador Francis instructed the Consul General to inform the Bolshevik Foreign Minister that disarmament of the Czechs, whom he correctly regarded as part of the Allied army, would constitute an "unfriendly act inspired by Germany," but the Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin responded that, in the view of the Soviet Government, the Czechs' "counterrevolutionary armed rebellion" was "most obviously and decidedly intervention in the home affairs of Russia."

29 Ibid., pp. 86, 87. See also FR 1918 Russia, Vol. II, pp. 184, 185.
30 Bunyan, op. cit., p. 91.
32 Ibid., p. 211.
The Imminence of Intervention. Ambassador Francis was a salty Midwestern businessman and politician who made no effort to conceal his contempt for the Bolsheviks or, for that matter, Russians in general. In his wire of 21 February, in which he reported the imminence of a German takeover, Francis urged an Allied occupation of Vladivostok, Archangel and Murmansk, and added that,

History shows Russians incapable of great movements or great achievements as whatever creditable has been accomplished can be traced to foreign inspiration and leadership. Now is the time for the Allies to act.

Later, on 22 June, 1918, Francis reported that the successes of the Czechs had proved the "weakness of the Soviet Government," and added that the "Russian people are confidently expecting Allied intervention and will welcome it," that the "Russian people are expecting America to lead in the intervention," and that, "failure to intervene will prolong the war." Nor was Francis alone in these feelings.

Large segments of public opinion in the Allied nations also favored intervention. As early as November, 1917, the conservative London Morning Post noted the chaotic conditions in Russia and observed that, "it remains only for the Allied nations to reach by some means the heart of the Russian people themselves and those elements in Russia which

33See above, p. 7.

are loyal to the cause of the Allies. Despite the serious reservations of the American Government, some American newspapers took up the plight of the Russians in rather bellicose tones. The New York Times of 17 March, 1918 editorialized that,

It is the duty of the Allies to save Russia, not for Russia's sake so much as for the sake of the endangered world. But they must not count on any help from the Bolsheviks in saving Russia.

Russia must be saved without them; saved in spite of them.

Again, on 4 May, The New York Times stressed the need for military action to overthrow the Bolshevik regime and to defeat the Germans. Pointing out that the revolution had failed to live up to its promises, and noting the chaotic and repressive conditions of Bolshevik Russia, The Times urged that,

... If the Allies could by any means reach the great mass of the Russian people, they could forestall Germany, they could initiate movements that would overthrow the Bolsheviks, they could lay the foundations of a movement that would deliver Russia from the grasp of Germany... It would be a task of very great difficulty... Necessarily it would be a work undertaken through channels of civil communication, with military support.

35The London Morning Post, 9 November, 1917, p. 8, col. 2.

36For the best account of the attitudes of the American Government toward intervention, see Kennan, op. cit.


Sentiment favoring intervention continued to grow in Britain also, and The Times of London, noted that, although the Bolsheviks had claimed to be the "absolute power" in Russia, other Russian parties, such as the Cadets (the Constitutional Democrats), "would apparently welcome . . . allied assistance without any conditions at all." The editorial continued that,

. . . we do not see— that the Allies need await a formal invitation. It should be good enough for them to have good grounds for the conviction that the Russians long to be delivered from the calamities which the Brest negotiations inevitably brought upon them. . . .

. . . The Allies . . . have no concern in the domestic controversies of Russia. They will sympathize with those who show strength of will in resisting temptation, determination to free Russia from the German yoke, eagerness to restore her position in the world, and perception that this end is unattainable without the political and military assistance of the associated democracies.39

Support for intervention found expression in official circles also. On 22 June, 1918, Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for War, presented a note to the Imperial War Cabinet which outlined the policy which he thought would lead to victory. "There are two perfectly simple things to do," he wrote,

. . . (1) Above all things reconstitute the fighting front on the east; (2) make a plan for an offensive battle in France in 1919. . . . If we cannot reconstitute the fighting front against Germany in the East no

end can be discerned to the war. . . .

No less an authority than Alexander Kerensky himself, speaking before a British Labour Party Conference in London on 27 June, 1918, stated that Russia suffered under a dual terrorism and that the Bolsheviks were the "vanguard of triumphant German militarism." Kerensky continued,

"Perhaps, abandoned by all, Russia will perish. But she will never of her own will submit to the humiliation and shameful treason of Brest Litovsk. It is for you, the oldest and most mature democracies of the whole world, to settle the question of whether it is or is not possible to remain a calm spectator of that unheard of tragedy [loud cheers]."

Kerensky's former Vice Premier, Alexander Konovaloff, added to the pressure by stating, on 1 July, 1918, that "we still have hundreds of thousands of patriots, veterans of this war, who will be glad to rally around the military contingent accompanying any Allied commission" to Russia.

Finally, The New York Times expressed its impatience with the failure of the Allied governments to take action. Noting that, "opportunity is extraordinarily indulgent," the Times called out for intervention:

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41As reported in The Times of London, 28 June 1918, p. 7, col. 6.

Eternal parleying will give the Russians no help, it will give the Allies in the West no relief. The time has long been ripe for action, for any further delay there can only be bad excuses.\textsuperscript{43}

Thus, by July, 1918, public opinion, at least in Britain and the United States, favored military intervention as a means to hasten the defeat of Germany and to establish democratic rule in Russia. Intervention seemed imminent and even the Soviet Foreign Minister sent an envoy to ask Ambassador Francis whether or not the Allies had finally decided officially to intervene.\textsuperscript{44} However, for the Allied military leaders, who were faced with the herculean task of defeating Germany on the Western Front, the matter of diverting forces to the East raised some difficult questions.

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{FR 1918 Russia}, Vol. II, p. 221.
CHAPTER III

MILITARY DELIBERATIONS

As early as September, 1917, the British Military Attache in Petrograd had urged his government to secure Japanese intervention to save the Eastern Front. On 16 December, he telegraphed that nothing but the application of foreign force in Russia could save the situation.¹

In December, 1917, the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council² submitted a Joint Note to the Council


²According to the American Military Representative, General Tasker H. Bliss, the Military Representatives were "the competent advisers of the Supreme War Council on general military policy." These advisers studied the military situation in its broadest aspects and made recommendations to the Council. General Bliss described the Joint Note Process, by which the Military Representatives announced their recommendations, as follows: "The Joint Notes . . . must be unanimous. To secure unanimity each representative sometimes must yield points which he does not consider of vital importance. When a Joint Note is agreed upon each representative cables it to his government for further action. Our notes relate only to the military phase of a question although that question may involve political and diplomatic phases. In the latter case it is assumed that the governments concerned take up the political questions.
which expressed their unanimous opinion that,

_all national groups /in Russia/ who are determined to continue the war must be supported by all the means in our power . . . /but/ this resistance /can/not be sustained for an indefinite time unless it should prove possible to open a more direct communication between the Allies and our friends in Russia._

On 19 February, the Military Representatives issued Joint Note number 16 which stated their decision that the occupation of the Siberian Railway from Vladivostok to Harbin by a Japanese force would be advantageous from a military viewpoint. Although General Bliss signed this note, he cabled the Secretary of War that he had certain reservations concerning the wisdom of the recommended action. The Secretary of War replied on 23 February stating that the Military Representatives should "regard the matter as involving political and diplomatic questions to be settled by governments, and to that end will refrain from urging the

among themselves through diplomatic channels. After that is done each government informs its Military Representative . . . that it approves the Joint Note or that it disapproves it. . . . If a Joint Note is accepted by all Governments concerned, it shall, from that date, be treated as a decision of the Supreme War Council." Cablegram from Bliss to the Acting Chief of Staff and the Secretary of War (number 36, dated 25 February, 1918), SWC Records.

_3_Minutes of the Military Representatives, (4 December, 1917 - 28 October, 1918), SWC Records._
views set forth in Joint Note 16. Bliss, in turn, informed the Secretary that although he had transmitted the Secretary's views to his colleagues,

there seems to be among military men generally as well as politicians a very strong feeling that some sort of intervention in Siberia will be necessary . . . the English are especially anxious for intervention.5

Although the subject of Siberian intervention continued to be a subject of frequent discussion among the Military Representatives during March, it remained an unresolved issue because of the American insistence that it was a political matter. As a result, General Bliss declined to sign Joint Note 20, dated 8 April, 1918, in which the British, French and Italian Representatives stated their opinion that, "no serious military resistance to Germany can be expected from Russia unless there is an immediate intervention in that country."6 Instead, Bliss informed his colleagues that he would forward their recommendations, which dealt exclusively with Southern and Siberian Russia, to his government for information.

Only a few days earlier, on 23 March, 1918, the

4Cablegram to Bliss from Adjutant General, USA (number 25, received in Versailles on 23 February, 1918.), SWC Records.

5Cablegram from Bliss to the Acting Chief of Staff, USA, and the Secretary of War (number 36, dated 25 February, 1918), SWC Records.

6Minutes of the Military Representatives (4 December, 1917 to 28 October, 1918), SWC Records.
Military Representatives had discussed the situation in the Northern ports and had taken note of the fact that, although 400,000 tons of supplies at Archangel might fall into German hands "in a month's time," the dispatch of Allied troops to these ports was "inadvisable" and that Admiral Kemp's forces in that vicinity might be adequate to "preserve the supplies now in Northern Russia or [at least] to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Germans." On 12 April, Bliss cabled that he had joined his colleagues in recommending that while,

military resources are not available for expeditions to either (Archangel or Murmansk) . . . [the] naval steps being taken there with respect to Murmansk [should] be continued in order to retain the place for the Allies as long as possible. Thus, insofar as the Military Representatives were concerned, matters in North Russia could be considered independently of the politically sensitive Southern and Eastern Russian matters because Allied forces—admittedly small ones—were already there.

On 27 April, the Military Representatives met to consider, among other things, the situation of the Czech Legion. The subject was brought up because of the

7Ibid.

8Cablegram from Bliss to the Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and the Acting Chief of Staff, USA (number 85 dated 12 April), SWC Records.
"difficulties" it was experiencing in crossing Siberia and because these difficulties might warrant its being moved instead to Archangel and Murmansk from whence it could be shipped to France. The French Representative stated his view that these forces should be brought to France and, "made use of as quickly as possible" but conceded that it would be too difficult to reroute the 6000-odd Czechs who had already passed Omsk on their way to Vladivostok.

Accordingly, Joint Note 25 was issued in which the Military Representatives stated their agreement that those Czechs who were still west of Omsk should be transported to Archangel and Murmansk where, "they could be profitably employed in defending Archangel and Murmansk and in guarding and protecting the Murman Railway," while waiting to be embarked. In his cablegram informing the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War of this decision, Bliss noted that the British Government had agreed to undertake arrangements for the "transportation of Czech troops already at Vladivostok or on their way there, and [would] request [the] Russian government to concentrate other Czech troops at Murmansk and Archangel." The French Government, which had several hundred

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9Minutes of the Military Representatives, (1 December, 1917 to 28 October, 1918) SWC Records.

10Cablegram from Bliss to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War and the Acting Chief of Staff, (number 103, dated 3 May) SWC Records.
French advisers attached to the Czech Legion, would retain, "general charge of the Czech troops until embarked."11

Although the matter of intervention in Siberia became a more frequent subject for discussion at Versailles, the problem of the Northern Region continued to be handled separately. On 26 May, Bliss reported to the Secretary of War that the French Representative, "probably under direction of his Government," proposed to bring up the Siberian question at the session scheduled for 30 May, and to urge military intervention as the only possible action, "to reform an Eastern Front against the Central Empires. . . ."

Bliss, noting that the French proposal was based, among other things, on the German threat to Petrograd and the Northern ports, and adding that, "all opposition parties (i.e. to the Bolsheviks) are unanimous in demanding foreign action against Germany," asked what general policy he should follow. In this cablegram, he expressed his personal opinion that, "the only thing that will prevent the proposed Siberian intervention from proving an ultimate disaster for the Entente Allies will be its cordial welcome by the Russian people," but added that, "I distrust everything I hear on this subject here," and that, "it is only from the old Russian regime that come declarations in favor of

11Cablegram from Bliss to Secretary of State, Secretary of War and Acting Chief of Staff (number 103, dated 3 May, 1918), SWC Records.
intervention. Nevertheless, Bliss, having asked for guidance from his government on the subject of intervention in Siberia, surprisingly added that,

In another Joint Note to be discussed on May 30 the British, French and Italians will probably agree to an occupation of the ports of Murmansk and Archangel by British Navy and a land force of not more than four or six battalions of British, French and possibly Americans. In view of the pressing danger to these ports I propose to agree with my colleagues unless instructed to the contrary.\(^{13}\)

Bliss' guidance arrived on 29 May, 1918 in the form of a message from the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, who informed him that,

The President's attitude is that Russia's misfortune imposes upon us at this time the obligation of unswerving fidelity to the principles of Russian territorial integrity and political independence. Intervention via Vladivostok is deemed impracticable because of vast distance involved, the size of the force necessary to be effective, and financing such an expedition would mean a burden which the United States at this time ought not to assume. In order to be effective . . . such an intervening expedition would have to penetrate into European Russia. . . .

. . . However the President is heartily in sympathy with any practical military efforts which can be made at and from Murmansk or Archangel, but such efforts should proceed, if at all, upon the sure sympathy of the Russian people. . . .\(^{14}\)

\(^{12}\)Cablegram from Bliss to the Secretary of War (number 115, dated 26 May), SWC Records.

\(^{13}\)Ibid.

\(^{14}\)Cablegram from the Chief of Staff, USA, to Bliss (number 59, received at Versailles on 29 May, 1918), SWC Records.

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Two days later, the U. S. Secretary of State informed the British Ambassador that, "this government is entirely willing to send troops to Murmansk providing General Foch approves."15 Thus, for its own reasons, the U. S. Government was also able to consider intervention in the North independently of intervention elsewhere in Russia.

Although the French representative postponed introducing his proposal on Siberian intervention, the subject of the Northern ports came up again at the 3 June meeting. Lord Milner, then British Minister of War, who accompanied the British Military Representative to the meeting, stated that the British had furnished food, ships, equipment, uniforms—"in fact, everything"—for the British and French forces in the Northern ports, as well as food for the civilian population. Now, complained Lord Milner, the British War Office had been requested to furnish all the supplies for the Czechs who were to arrive at those ports and who, "had nothing." Milner added that Admiral Kemp had done "all that a naval man could do," but that, in view of the danger to the ports, "there must be someone to organize a land force and to complete protection by land."16 Since


16Minutes of the 34th meeting of the Military Representatives, SWC Records. All of the following quotations in this paragraph are from this source unless otherwise indicated.
General Poole was already in place at Murmansk, and was well qualified in Russian affairs, Milner demanded that command of the area around the ports be vested in him. The French representative contested the appointment of a British commander on the grounds that the arrival of the French-led Czech units would mean that the preponderant number of land forces would be under French direction and that, therefore, a French general should command all land operations. Bliss sought to return to the central theme by observing that, although "at first it had seemed that the occupation of these ports would require more men than were available," the projected arrival of, "fifteen battalions or so of Slavs," would reduce the total Allied contribution to, "only four to six battalions" which he assumed would be sent. The other representatives agreed and, although the jealousy over command still smouldered, the Military Representatives, on 3 June, 1918, issued Joint Note 31 which, for the first time, recorded the opinion of the top Allied military planning staff that Allied troops should be sent to North Russia. Bliss, in reporting the contents of the note to the Secretary of State, cabled:

Supreme War Council adopted Joint Note 31 passed by the Military Representatives today which contained the following recommendations:

First. That a Military effort be made by the Allies to retain in their possession, first in importance, the port of Murmansk; afterwards or even simultaneously if possible the port of Archangel.
Second... that it would be desirable to obtain from the National Czecho-Slav Council [In Paris] approval of the principle of retaining in these regions during the necessary time some Czech units... it being understood that the remainder would be sent to France as previously agreed.

Third. Provided that the assistance defined above is obtained, the effort to be made by the Allies can then be limited to the sending (A) of some English, French, American or Italian battalions, four to six in all; (B) of officers and specialists from the Allies or Czechs in France to complete the Instruction and cadres of the Serbo-Czech troops and to provide for the general supply of the garrisoning force; (C) of the material and supplies which cannot be found there.

Fourth. That... command will be exercised by a commander-in-chief designated by the British Government until such time as the Supreme War Council may otherwise direct.¹⁷

Thus, the initial plan of action was predicated upon a condition—the arrival of the Czechs—which never came to pass, and contained the seed of a controversy—that of British command—which was to blossom in the deep snows of the North Russian winter. In addition, although the French Representative had, on 27 April, stressed the urgent need for transporting the Czechs to the more critical Western Front, Joint Note 31 reflected the British view that at least some of the Czechs could be more profitably employed in the East.

On 16 June, 1918, General Bliss received a message from the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General March, which stated that the President had received an "urgent request" from Lord Milner to send,
3 battalions of infantry and machine guns, 2 batteries of field artillery, 3 companies of engineers and the necessary administrative and Medical services, aggregating more than 4000 men, to be placed under the command of the British General Poole. . . .

Noting that Milner had stated that the matter had been discussed with the Supreme General Allied Commander on the Western Front, General Foch, General March informed Bliss that the President wanted him to see General Foch to determine if he really believed that, "it would be wise to divert the troops . . . and the shipping in question to Murmansk, rather than send these troops to France." 19

Bliss visited Foch on 17 June. Foch reiterated his support of the conditions expressed in Joint Note 31 and stated that he had not discussed the request for American troops with Milner. Bliss reported to the Secretary of War that Foch also stated that Lord Milner's request, is apparently based on the assumption that the Czechs will not arrive at Archangel and Murmansk and that therefore Milner must have in view a much larger Allied expedition of unknown ultimate strength . . . /and/ that if such be the case he /Foch/ objects to one of the parties in the Supreme War Council making a new Allied Plan without the knowledge or approval of the others; that this plan would commit the French to he does not know what. 20

18 Cablegram from General March to Bliss (number 61, received at Versailles on 16 June, 1918), SWC Records.

19 Ibid.

20 Cablegram from Bliss to the Secretary of War (number 135, dated 18 June, 1918), SWC Records.
Bliss added that Foch would object if American artillery or more than two battalions of infantry were to be allocated to the North Russian expedition. For his part, Bliss cautioned that Milner's request,

... may be based not only on the assumption that the Czech troops will not arrive, but also on the assumption that no other troops but American will be available for the expedition. If this be so... the question... must be carefully studied... because we may be committing ourselves to a more serious enterprise than appears at first sight.21

Bliss' message concluded by adding that since, "... the total force of Americans... would be only about 1000 or at most 2000 in a force of 30000 troops I did not see my way to demanding command for an American.22 Later, in an additional message on the subject, Bliss stated that,

In my opinion ports of Murmansk and Archangel can not be retained by the Allies without an unwise expenditure of military effort unless the major part of forces required for the purpose be drawn from Czech units now in Russia or from Russian sources; and further, that until definite assurance is had that such assistance will be obtained the Allied forces maintained at these ports should be sufficient only for defense against small enemy operations or in the event of major enemy operations to insure removal or destruction of stores and destruction insofar as practicable of port facilities that would be of service to enemy in establishment of submarine base.23

21Ibid. Foch's objection to the furnishing of American artillery is important since the arrival of American troops in Northern Russia without artillery support was, as we shall see, to have important consequences.

22Clearly this total was intended to include the Czechs.

23Cablegram from Bliss to the Chief of Staff, USA, (Number 137, dated 22 June, 1918), SWC Records.
Thus, to the French and American Military Representatives, the expedition to North Russia was to be of minimum size, was to have limited objectives, and was to be dependent upon the arrival of Czech units, which Bliss estimated to include, "15 battalions or so," and of which a portion was to be retained in North Russia. It appeared, however, that the British Representative might have had something more in mind. Because of this apparent difference of opinion concerning the nature of the expedition, the United States Government rejected the British request for American troops on the grounds that the President could not consider such unilateral requests from single nations unless they came through the Military Representatives at Versailles, who represented the military interests of all nations.

The differences among the Allies regarding intervention caused a certain amount of tension, impatience and irritation in governmental as well as military circles. Up to this point, as we have seen, President Wilson was interested in such a venture only if it was based on the, "sure sympathy of the Russian people." Such assurance was not yet

24Unit sizes differ, but this estimate would probably place the expected strength of the Czech units at 15,000 to 20,000.

25This decision, made by the President personally, was reported to Bliss by cablegram from General March (number 64, dated 24 June, 1918), SWC Records.
apparent. In Britain, the sense of urgency was greater. Churchill, in presenting his recommendation for the reconstituted Eastern Front to the Imperial War Cabinet, wrote that, "... we must not take 'No' for an answer either from America or from Japan." At the end of June, the British War Office circulated a memorandum within the Government which stated that, "... unless Allied intervention is undertaken in Siberia forthwith we shall have no chance of being ultimately victorious." and, on 2 July, 1918, the British presented, for Supreme War Council approval, an appeal to President Wilson asking that the United States give its approval and support to the concept of Allied intervention in Russia.

The appeal, which was approved and forwarded to President Wilson, stated that the Supreme War Council, after, "having carefully considered the military situation," had concluded that intervention was, "imperatively necessary" to:

(a) ... prevent the unlimited military and economic exploitation of Russia by Germany in her own interests;

(b) ... to stimulate a national uprising in Russia against German domination which will have an immediate effect in renewing German anxiety in regard to the

26See above, p. 23.


28As quoted in Ullman, op. cit., p. 211.
East, and compel her to refrain from removing further troops westwards, and, perhaps, to move troops back to the East;

(c) To shorten the war . . . .

(d) To prevent the isolation of Russia . . . .

(e) To deny Germany the supplies of Western Siberia and . . . Vladivostok . . . \(\text{and}\)

(f) To bring assistance to the Czecho-Slovak forces which have made great sacrifices to the cause for which we are fighting.

The appeal added that, in order to assist Russia effectively, the Allies should seize Murmansk and Archangel, "to retain bridgeheads into Russia from the North from which forces can eventually advance rapidly to the center of Russia," and should also, "control Siberia to the Urals."\(^{29}\) Thus, the British proposal, which was approved by the civilian elements of the Supreme War Council (i.e., the Prime Ministers) contemplated military operations in the North which were well beyond the scope visualized by the Military Representatives in Joint Note 31, which had spoken only of retaining possession of Murmansk and, "if possible," Archangel.

In the meantime, General Poole had asked for reinforcements. On 5 July, General Bliss reported that the Military Representatives had been asked to consider the British

\(^{29}\)Annexure (A) to the Process Verbaux of the Three Meetings of the Seventh Session of the Supreme War Council, held at Versailles, July 2-4, 1918, p. 46, SWC Records. See also FR 1918 Russia, p. 241.
commander's request for six additional battalions of infantry, two battalions of artillery and three companies of engineers, together with the necessary administrative and support troops. General Poole had originally requested these troops from the British War Office, but since the British could not spare them Lord Milner had directly approached President Wilson on the matter. President Wilson's refusal to consider the request had led Britain to refer the matter to the Military Representatives. Bliss reported to General March that he had discussed it with General Pershing who had approved the release of the infantry battalions and the engineers from the Western Front. However, Pershing made no mention of the artillery support. Bliss informed March that he recommended "concurrence as to our participation in the general plan, and suggested prompt decision." The American President responded to the Supreme War Council's appeal on 6 July, 1918 by announcing that, although the establishment of an Eastern Front was "impossible," the Americans would send troops and equipment to

30 Cablegram from Bliss to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff (number 143, dated 5 July, 1918), SWC Records.

31 See above, pp. 38-39.

32 Cablegram from Bliss (number 143) cited above.
Vladivostok to assist the Czech Legion provided the Japanese would cooperate. No mention was made of the Northern Sector of Russia. On 9 July, however, the Secretary of War cabled Bliss,

General March and I have been in conference with the President about the Murman expedition. As we understand it, the Permanent Military Representatives are unanimous in recommending that the expedition as now proposed be duly undertaken. None of us can see the military value of the proposal and assume that other considerations moved in favor of it. Please cable us for the President fully your personal views, military and otherwise, on the subject.33

Bliss replied immediately. He reiterated his position that the bulk of any forces raised for operations in North Russia should be "raised in that country from friendly Russians," (presumably this included the Czechs) and added that "a small force of at most six and possibly only four battalions distributed among the four Allies," would be sufficient to hold the northern ports during the coming winter. Bliss continued by observing that possession of the northern ports would enable the Allies to "retain access to Russia" both for humanitarian reasons, if it were determined that "peaceful American intervention," in the form of food, medicines and Red Cross assistance, should be attempted, and

33Cablegram to Bliss from the Secretary of War (number 68, dated 9 July, 1918), SWC Records.
for military reasons if full scale military intervention were decided upon. Bliss concluded by restating the domin­ant Franco-American position that the major task was to defeat Germany on the Western Front, but offered his per­sonal opinion that,

... there will be an undercurrent of resentment if we take no part. Moreover refusal on our part will decid­edly add to the chances of failure of expedition. On the whole, I think we should be represented but only by our fair part.34

On 17 July, 1918, the American Government issued an aide mémoire to the ambassadors of the Allied nations which had been drafted by the President himself. This aide memoire was prepared as a reply to the appeal from the Su­preme War Council, and reflected most of the advice that had been offered by General Bliss. "The whole heart of the American people," it began, "is in the winning of this war." To this end the United States felt that it was able "to do a great deal in France," but asked its associates "to accept its deliberate judgement that it should not dissipate its force by attempting important operations elsewhere." The document continued,

It is the clear and fixed judgement of the Government of the United States ... that military intervention ... would add to the present sad confusion in Russia ... and that it would be of no advantage in the prosecution of our main design, to win the war against

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34Cablegram from Bliss to the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff, USA (number 148, dated 13 July, 1918), SWC Records.
Germany. . . . Military action is admissible in Russia . . . only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and get into successful cooperation with their Slavic kinsmen and to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance. Whether from Vladivostok or from Murmansk and Archangel, the only legitimate object for which American or Allied troops can be employed . . . is to guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces and to render such aid as may be acceptable to the Russians in the organization of their own self-defense. For helping the Czecho-Slovaks there is immediate necessity and sufficient justification . . . and the Government of the United States is glad to contribute the small force at its disposal for that purpose.35

The size of the "small force" to be committed to the North Russian expedition was decided personally by President Wilson. Three battalions of infantry and three companies of engineers were authorized, but the inclusion of artillery was specifically forbidden by the President, perhaps because of General Pershing's failure to approve such support.36

Thus, the final piece was reluctantly put into place. On 9 August, the 339th Infantry Regiment, the 1st Battalion of the 310th Engineers, the 337th Field Hospital and the 337th Ambulance Company, all from the United States 85th Infantry Division, were alerted "for service on the Murmansk Expedition . . . to report to the Commanding


36Cablegram from March to Bliss (number 72, received in Versailles on 23 July, 1918), SWC Records.
Officer, British Forces, that place, for duty under General Poole." On 10 August, the British War Office issued instructions to General Poole which, because of their relevance to the theme of this thesis, deserve quotation at some length.

Poole's "main object," the instructions pointed out, was

... to cooperate with restoring Russia with the object of resisting German influence and penetration, and enabling the Russians again to take the field side by side with their allies for the recovery of Russia.

To accomplish this objective, Poole was told that,

... your immediate aim should be to establish communication with the Czechs, and assisted by them to secure control of the Archangel-Vologda-Ekaterinberg railway and the river and railway line of communications between Archangel and Viatka.

In addition, Poole was charged with promoting resistance to the enemy by all available means, including:

(a) Organization of armed forces to resist the Germans,
(b) The support of any administration which may be disposed to be friendly to the Allies,
(c) The affording of relief to the civil populations,
(d) Judicious propaganda.

37 Confidential Order Number 1, dated 9 August, 1918, located in the "Report of the Expedition to the Murman Coast," ANREF Records, Box 1.

38 Poole's instructions were reported by Bliss to the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff in Cablegram Number 184, dated 18 August, SWC Records. The following quotations from these instructions are extracted from that cablegram.
As an item of information, Poole was informed that, "16,000 Bolshevist troops with 60 guns" controlled the Siberian railway from Perm to Ekaterinburg between Poole's forces and the Czechs, but no suggestions were offered as to how Poole should deal with this force. In addition, Poole's instructions noted the improbability that any friendly forces other than the Czechs would reach Western Siberia and also noted the probability that the Czech troops "now in Western Siberia will turn eastwards for safety rather than stretch out to you via Perm and Viatka." Finally, the War Office offered Poole the comforting news that, "it will not be possible to send you more fighting troops this season than those already notified," but instructed him to concentrate his efforts on the defense of Archangel and the attainment of the other, less strenuous, objectives if a linkup with the Czechs proved impossible.

Thus, Poole's instructions added several new reasons to the already extensive list of reasons for sending troops to North Russia. In 1915, Admiral Kemp's naval forces had been sent to the Murman area to guard Allied shipments to the northern ports from German submarine attacks and to destroy the ports and supplies if the German advance threatened them. Ambassador Francis had urged intervention because the Russian people needed and expected it and because it was necessary to prevent Russia from becoming a German province. The Military Representatives of the
Supreme War Council felt that the dispatch of four to six battalions was justified to hold the ports provided the Czechs arrived in those ports to supply the bulk of the fighting force. General Bliss felt that occupation of the ports would remove the danger of the Germans using them as submarine bases and that the ports could be used as a "means of access" to Russia for humanitarian or military purposes.

The Supreme War Council, which viewed intervention in North Russia as an "important corollary" to intervention elsewhere, stressed the need to render "effective assistance to liberal Russia," and the need to reconstitute the Eastern Front as a means to force the retention in Russia of German troops, which might otherwise be used in France. President Wilson reluctantly permitted the use of American troops to help the Czechs, to assist Russian efforts toward self government, and to guard the military supplies which had accumulated in the port areas so that they might be used by the Russians in their own self defense. Finally, General Poole was directed to drive inland, to seize the lines of communication controlling a large portion of Russia, to support "any" administration that might cooperate with the Allies, to extend relief to the civil population and to conduct propaganda.

The reasons for intervention in the north were numerous, diverse, and in large part contradictory. They were, however, entirely anti-German or pro-Russian. At no time did these official reasons involve any direct effort to
depose the Bolsheviks although, as we have seen, there was a strong undercurrent of feeling that the Bolsheviks were the allies of the Germans and did not represent the true feelings or aspirations of the Russian people. Thus, as time passed, it became relatively easy to blend anti-Bolshevism with anti-Germanism and, as we shall see, the Allied military invasion of North Russia went well beyond the limited goals set for it by President Wilson, General Foch, and General Bliss, and lasted well beyond the defeat of Germany.
CHAPTER IV

THE LANDINGS

At Murmansk. As we have seen, the fear of a German advance had led the Murmansk Soviet to request the assistance of the small Allied forces in the Murmansk area in establishing a defense. These forces had advanced down the Murmansk Railroad and had stationed small detachments in Kandalaksha, on the opposite side of the Kola Peninsula, and in Kem, 150 miles farther south on the western shore of the White Sea. Further reinforcements, in the form of 600 men, whose physical category was so low, "as to render them unfit for duty in France," arrived on 23 June with General Maynard of the British Army, who was to assume command of the Murmansk Front.¹

Meanwhile, the Germans became uneasy about the presence of the Allied troops in Murmansk. On 22 April, the German Ambassador to the Soviet Government protested the reported landing of 6000 French and English troops in that port which had been announced in the Moscow newspapers. Moscow denied that the landings had taken place, and informed the Germans that the editors of the offending newspapers had been arrested and brought to trial for

circulating falsehoods. Moscow did, however, admit that, "a number of French and British military specialists" were in Murmansk because they had been there during the war, and their evacuation "could not have been carried out right away."2 Unimpressed, the German Ambassador informed the Soviet authorities that, "if British and French troops do not at once evacuate the Murmansk peninsula . . . it will be necessary for Germany to undertake military operations occupying further territory in the direction of Murmansk or elsewhere."3

The threatening attitude of the Germans, together with the rather apparent possibility that Germany might win the war, led the Soviet Government to adopt an apparently more hostile attitude toward the French and British. Notes protesting the landings were submitted to the French and British governments. Several of these notes, which were submitted to the British Special Representative in Moscow, R. H. Bruce Lockhart, were also published in the Moscow press. However, Lockhart stated later that the Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin had informed him that these notes

2 The text of the Soviet reply was printed in Izvestia, No. 88 (352), 3 May, 1918, and is quoted in Strakhovsky, op. cit., p. 22.

should be put "in your waste basket." Nevertheless, on 25 June, Lenin and Trotsky telegraphed the following to Yuriev, the head of the Moscow Soviet:

English landings must be considered an inimical act against the Republic. Their direct aim is to unite with the Czechoslovaks and, in case of success, with the Japanese, in order to overthrow the power of the workers and peasants and to establish a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. We have ordered the dispatch of troops necessary for the defense of the Murmansk railway against the violators.5

When Yuriev sought some clarification of this bewildering change from the policy expressed by Trotsky in March, he was told by Lenin, on 26 June, "If you still do not want to understand Soviet policy equally hostile to the English and to the Germans, blame it upon yourself."6 But the Murmansk Soviet, perhaps because its on-the-spot view of the situation was clearer, adopted a resolution on 30 June which stated that,

I. The orders of Lenin, Trotsky and Nasarenus (Lenin's personal representative in Murmansk) . . . are not to be obeyed.

II. The Allies must remain here and assist the highest local Russian power, the Murmansk District Council, to defend the country against the Germans and the Finns, to organize a Russian Army, and improve our economic condition.

4Lockhart, op. cit., p. 250.
5Strakhovsky, op. cit., p. 58.
6Ibid., p. 59.
III. The highest power of this territory is the Murmansk District Council, in the hands of which must remain all of the initiative, the Allies assisting it but not interfering in internal affairs.7

Chicherin made one last effort to dissuade the Murmansk Soviet from cooperating with the Allied forces and, in a direct-wire conversation with Yuriev on the night of 1 July, advised him that,

In the struggle against both imperialist coalitions the Soviet Army will do its duty to the very end . . . We shall fight with all our power against any imperialist invasion, whether German or Anglo-French . . . We reject the aid of the Germano-Finns and likewise the aid of the Anglo-French . . .

To which Yuriev replied,

Comrade, has not life taught you to view things soberly? You constantly utter beautiful phrases but not once have you told us how to go about realizing them . . . there is no need of lecturing us. We ourselves know that the Germans and the Allies are imperialists, but of the two evils we have chosen the lesser.®

The resolution of the Murmansk Soviet was read at a public meeting in Murmansk on 30 June before a crowd of about 2000 who, "practically to a man, raised their hands in token of approval."9 The meeting was attended by General Poole, and speeches were given by Admiral Kemp, Captain Petit of the Amiral Aube and Captain Bierer of the Olympia.

These representatives of the Allied Military forces in North Russia all expressed their intention to stand by the Russians in defending and developing the Murmansk region. The following day, the British troops who had arrived with General Maynard, and a battalion sent by the French in compliance with the recommendations of the Supreme War Council, were disembarked and paraded as evidence of this support. However, the inadequacy of these forces for any serious military operations must have been apparent, and Ambassador Francis reported to the Secretary of State on 7 July that there was an "immediate" need for troops at Archangel, and added that "Poole /is/ at Murman with forces wholly inadequate . . . "10

At Archangel. As we have seen, the leadership of the Murmansk Soviet was, for the most part, favorably inclined toward the Allied forces which arrived there in the early months of 1918. In Archangel, however, control of the town rested in the hands of the Bolsheviks. Their control was not unchallenged, however, and the British endeavored to exploit the pro-Allied sentiment in the city. In April, two British transports, accompanied by the armed icebreaker H.M.S. Alexander, arrived in Archangel loaded with food and supplies to relieve the suffering townspeople. The British

10FR 1918 Russia, Vol. II, p. 496.
Consul in Archangel was instructed that the ships' cargoes were not to be unloaded unless the local Soviet agreed to stop the shipment of Allied war supplies from the city to the interior and surrendered them to the British for evacuation in the same ships that had brought the food. The population of Archangel was in favor of this proposal but the Bolshevik "Extraordinary Evacuation Commission," whose responsibility it was to supervise the evacuation of the supplies, resolutely refused to agree even if the population of the city starved.\footnote{11Kennan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 246-250. See also Ullman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 173.} This event turned many of the inhabitants against the Bolsheviks who, nevertheless, managed to maintain control and who demanded the removal of Allied "war vessels" from Archangel harbor.

The Bolsheviks also dispatched a representative of the Council of People's Commissars, Kedrov, whom Ambassador Francis described as "one of the most violent and unscrupulous members of the Bolshevik Party," to Archangel "for the purpose of strengthening the power of the local Soviet there."\footnote{12\textit{FR 1918 Russia}, Vol. II, p. 502-3.} Tension rose when the Bolsheviks captured and threatened to shoot two small parties of British agents who

\footnote{11Kennan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 246-250. See also Ullman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 173.}

\footnote{12\textit{FR 1918 Russia}, Vol. II, p. 502-3.}
had landed in small boats near Archangel, but the predominately pro-Allied sentiment in the city seemed to indicate that the moment for intervention was opportune.

The intention of the Allies to land at Archangel was widely anticipated, but General Poole had intended to await the arrival of reinforcements (the three battalions of the American 339th Regiment) before undertaking that operation. In late July, however, Ambassador Francis and the British Ambassador Lindley arrived in Murmansk from Vologda via Archangel, and informed Poole that a coup d'etat was scheduled for the night of 31 July.\(^\text{13}\) Poole departed for Archangel with the strongest force he could muster—about 1400 men of eleven different nationalities\(^\text{14}\)—in order to provide Allied military support. A flotilla of warships, with the troops embarked, including the British "aeroplane ship" Nairana, departed Murmansk for Archangel. In the late afternoon of 1 August, the ships approached Modyugski Island, which barred the approach to Archangel, located in the mouth of the Dvina River. The Bolshevik coastal

\(^{13}\)Ullman, op. cit., p. 235. It seems certain, however, that Poole must have known about the coup since Strakhovsky points out that members of the group which executed the coup were British agents. Leonid I. Strakhovsky, Intervention at Archangel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 18-21.

artillery batteries on the island made an initial effort to resist, but were overcome by a concerted air and sea attack by the planes from the *Nairana* and the guns of the British cruiser *Attentive*. After an exchange of salvoes, the *Attentive* landed about 150 troops who occupied the batteries without loss.

The Bolsheviks sought to delay the Allied advance by sinking two icebreakers and a minelayer in the Dvina River channel, but the Allied ships were able to pick their way around these obstacles\(^\text{15}\) and, by 8:00 P.M. on 2 August, they had landed their troops in Archangel and in the nearby communities of Solombola and Economia.\(^\text{16}\) Upon their arrival they were informed that Bolshevik power had been overthrown by the anticipated coup, and that a new government, favorable to the Allies, had been established under the Popular-Socialist Leader N. K. Chaikovsky. The leaders of the Allied force were met by an armed guard of

\(^\text{15}\)Eight Russian pilots were "commandeered" by the Allies and were told that they would be shot if the ships went ashore or hit a mine. See Captain E. Altham's "The Dwina Campaign" in the *Journal of the Royal Services Institution*, Vol. 68 (May, 1923), pp. 228-253. Captain Altham was captain of the *Attentive*.

\(^\text{16}\)This account is based on the report of Captain B. B. Bierer USN, captain of the *Olympia* who accompanied the expedition aboard General Poole's yacht *Salvador* even though the *Olympia* did not participate in the expedition. See the War Diary of the U.S.S. *Olympia*, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Records Group 45, National Archives.
counterrevolutionists and "a procession was made through the streets filled with cheering people to the new government headquarters where expressions of good will on both sides and short speeches were made to the people." 17

As at Murmansk, the enthusiasm with which the Allied forces were met, and the speed with which an anti-Bolshevik government was formed, seemed to confirm the widespread idea that the Bolsheviks did not really represent the Russian people. General Poole was impressed by the ease with which the occupation of Archangel had been carried out and expressed his contempt for the military ability of the Bolsheviks. Confident that the Archangel landings represented only a first step toward a link-up of all anti-Bolshevik elements and a coordinated march on Petrograd and Moscow, he organized his small forces for an immediate advance to the interior of Russia.

Initial deployments. On the morning of 3 August, a trainload of the Bolshevik troops who had retreated south from Archangel along the railroad to Vologda approached Archangel. The British cruiser Attentive moved up the Dvina River where it put ashore a landing party and began


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to bombard the advancing Bolsheviks. In addition, aircraft from the Nairana bombed and strafed the Bolsheviks. The landing party, which included 25 of the sailors from the U.S.S. Olympia under Ensign James G. Williamson, drove the Bolsheviks back down the railroad. The American sailors commandeered a wood-burning locomotive and used it to push two flatcars on which machine guns were hastily mounted. The sailors chased the Bolsheviks' train for nearly 29 miles until the Bolsheviks managed to get far enough ahead to burn down a bridge in front of them. A brief fight took place at the site of the demolished bridge and a determined Bolshevik counterattack threatened to overrun the Bluejackets' position until the remainder of the landing party, a group of French infantrymen, arrived to rescue them.\textsuperscript{15} The United States seamen were assigned to patrol duty between the site of the demolished bridge and Archangel\textsuperscript{19} while the remainder of the party, under British Lieutenant Colonel Guard, proceeded down the railroad toward Vologda. On 16 August, this force reported that it had fought a pitched battle without loss against a "strong enemy patrol" whose

\textsuperscript{15}Moore, Mead and Jahns, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 53. The three authors were all members of the 339th Infantry Regiment. See also Rear Admiral Kemp Tolley, USN (Ret.), "Our Russian War of 1918-1919," \textit{United States Naval Institute Proceedings}, February 1969, No. 2, Vol. 95, No. 792, pp. 58-72.

\textsuperscript{19}War diary of the Olympia.
leader was reported to be a German. On 22 August, the Allies put an armored train into operation on the railroad line and, assisted by its supporting artillery fire and by aircraft from the Nairana, Colonel Guard's force fought its way into the railroad town of Obozerskaya, 70 miles south of Archangel, on 5 September, 1918.

Meanwhile another small force, consisting of about 100 French infantrymen, 25 American seamen under the command of Ensign Donald Hicks, 35 Russians of the Slavo-British Legion, and 27 Poles, under the overall command of Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon of the British Army, struck out southeastward along the Dvina River with the intention of turning southwest along the Emptsa River to attack the railroad at Plesetskaya, 50 miles south of Obozerskaya. Their objective was to seize railroad cars and to attack Obozerskaya from the south in conjunction with Colonel Guard's attack from the north. Departing from Archangel on 11 August, the Allied troops fought their way into Seletskoe, 75 miles southeast of Archangel on the Emptsa River, and prepared to attack Plesetskaya. However, because Colonel Guard's attack on Obozerskaya was proceeding slowly, their orders were changed and they were ordered to attack Obozerskaya directly. Moving through the swampy forest,

20Report of Captain Martin, ANREF Records.
Colonel Haseldon's men reached a point about four miles from Obozerskaya on 30 August. Here they encountered a sign stuck in the middle of the road which read, "You are the destroyers of humanity. It will go hard with you if you attack Obozerskaya. You had better go back. We have you surrounded." Despite this warning, the tiny Allied force attacked toward Obozerskaya at 6:00 A.M. on 31 August, but could make no headway. After renewing the attack on the morning of 1 September, Colonel Haseldon received word that 500 Bolshevik sailors had taken Seletskoe from the south and were advancing to attack his party from the rear. Turning to meet this threat, the Allied party fought the Bolsheviks for two days until ordered to retreat to the railroad which they finally reached after a two day march through the woods. Arriving at the railroad at a point approximately five miles north of Obozerskaya on 5 September, Colonel Haseldon's party discovered that Colonel Guard's party had occupied Obozerskaya and, while the French and other Allied soldiers went forward to reinforce him, the American sailors returned to Archangel as guards for the 123 Bolshevik prisoners taken by Colonel Guard's forces.

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21 Report of Ensign Hicks, contained in the War Diary of the Olympia. This paragraph is based entirely upon that report.
Meanwhile, simultaneously with the landing at Archangel, an expedition of about 50 men (British, French, Serbs, Russians, Finns and Poles) armed with two machine guns and one Lewis gun proceeded through the White Sea to the town of Onega at the entrance to the Onega River, approximately 80 miles southwest of Archangel. Arming local anti-Bolshevik Russians, this tiny party set off up the river for Chekuevo with the intention of proceeding eastward along the road from Chekuevo to Obozerskaya and participating in the attack on that town. Near the village of Bolshie Ozerski, situated midway on the road between Chekuevo and Obozerskaya, this Allied force encountered 350 Bolsheviks with four machine guns. A six hour struggle ensued with the Allies losing eight men killed and two wounded, and the Bolsheviks losing an estimated thirty to forty killed and thirty wounded. Although the Bolsheviks broke off the battle, the presence of this strong force between them and their objective led the Allied force to return to Onega, burning bridges behind them.22

At about the same time, a detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Josselyn of the British Army was being dispatched up the Dvina River, past the junction of the Emtsa River where Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon had turned to attack the

22Extracts from the correspondence files of G.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF Records, box 1.
railroad. The objective of this force was Kotlas, the northern terminus of a spur line which connected with the Trans-Siberian Railroad at Viatka, and a location to which large quantities of war materials had been evacuated from Archangel. The attack was supported by Allied gunboats and, in late August, was reinforced by troops of the 18th Battalion of Royal Scots, most of whom were "fit for garrison duty only." In all, Colonel Josselyn's force consisted of 660 British infantry (the Scots), 110 Russian volunteers, 35 Poles and 38 Lithuanians. After repeated brushes with Bolshevik forces numbering about 1000 to 1500 troops, Josselyn ordered a retreat to the town of Bereznik, near the junction of the Dvina and Vaga Rivers, where he established himself to await reinforcements.

This then, was the situation in which General Poole found himself prior to the arrival of American troops in September, 1918. He had entrusted the Murmansk Front to General Maynard, whose task it was to defend Murmansk against any advance by the Germans and the Finns. In the beginning, therefore, General Maynard's front faced to the east although, as we shall see, he was to come into contact with the Bolsheviks in the south as well. Having provided for his

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right flank, Poole sought to gain the Trans-Siberian by a two pronged drive south along the Archangel-Vologda Railroad and the Dvina River. He began his drive immediately upon his arrival in Archangel even though he had, at that time, only about 1400 men. Despite reinforcement by the arrival of the 1000 men of the Royal Scots his drive had stalled on the Railroad and Dvina River Fronts. His thrust up the Onega River and a similar advance up the Pinega River to the Northeast, which were minor efforts designed to defend the flanks of his two main columns, had also came to naught. However, General Poole was, in General Maynard's words, "one of the most confirmed optimists," and with the arrival of some 4600 American troops on 4 September, he soon sought to resume the offensive.

It is interesting to note that General Poole's determination to drive into the interior of Russia coincided wonderfully with the views of Ambassador Francis who, with other Allied diplomats, had returned to Archangel from Murmansk after the occupation of the former city. Francis wired the Secretary of State on 27 August that,

... I shall, to the extent of my authority, encourage American troops, if and when landed, to proceed to such points in the interior as Kotlas, Sukhona and Vologda, as at those places, as well as in Petrograd and Moscow, are stored war supplies ... transferred from Archangel. Furthermore, I shall encourage American troops to

obey the commands of General Poole in his effort to effect a junction with the Czecho-Slovaks . . . 25

This seemed to be an aggressive interpretation of the official American policy to say the least. However, Francis made it quite clear locally that he, not Poole, would direct American affairs. He so informed Colonel George Stewart, the commander of the newly arrived American 339th Infantry Regiment, and then asked, "If I should tell you not to obey one of General Poole's orders, what would you do?" Stewart replied, "I would obey you." 26 And so, under the direction of Poole and Francis, the Allied operation took on an offensive character that was quite inconsistent with its official charter and quite beyond the capability of the miniscule forces assigned to it.

25FR 1918 Russia, p. 515.

The Murmansk-Petrograd Railroad Front. General Maynard, appointed by General Poole as the Commander of the Murmansk Front, was not present at the meeting in Murmansk on 30 June when the Allied leaders and the Murmansk Soviet announced their determination to defend Murmansk. Rather, he had gone down the railroad line to inspect the detachments at Kandalaksha and Kem and to evaluate conditions along the railroad. With three officers and a platoon of infantry, Maynard set off down the wretched, single-track railway which had been so hastily thrown through the endless pine forests and across the many broad, rushing rivers. After a suspicious delay at a small station along the way, Maynard's party arrived in Kandalaksha only to find a train "packed with Russian soldiers, with engine attached and steam up."¹ These, no doubt, were the soldiers which Chicherin had threatened to send. Parading his men across the track to delay the departure of the train, Maynard sent word to the French and Serbians in the Kandalaksha detachment to be ready for action and sent an armed escort to conduct the commander of the Russian troops to Maynard's train. This done, Maynard informed the Russian Commander,

¹Maynard, op. cit., p. 44.
Spiridonov, that if his train endeavored to move toward Murmansk it would be blown to bits. Spiridonov, apparently half drunk, submitted to Maynard's threat although his men outnumbered Maynard's by about eight to one.

Leaving Spiridonov and his men under the guns of the French artillery, Maynard and his party continued down the line to Kem, which he found to be "thronged with Red Guards."² At Kem, however, the Allied garrison was of a rather considerable size numbering about 500 men with artillery and an improvised armored train. With this support, Maynard had no difficulty in convincing the commander of the Red Guards that he should not proceed further north.

Returning to Kandalaksha, Maynard learned from Murmansk that these two groups of Bolshevik soldiers were the advance party of a force that was moving north from Petrozavodsk to attack Murmansk. Maynard, therefore, gave orders to disarm both groups and sent them back southwards on their trains. Although the Bolsheviks were unhappy about this treatment, 700 or 800 of them were disarmed without mishap and the Allies retained possession of the railroad from Murmansk to Kem.³

²Ibid., p. 49.
³Ibid., p. 51.
Upon returning to Murmansk, Maynard discussed the situation with Poole. This discussion helped to clarify things for Maynard. "Bolshevik Russia was a recognized enemy," he wrote later, and "I had a free hand to take such military measures as were possible to combat a Bolshevik-German-White Finn combination." Maynard's first move was to occupy Soroka, a railroad town about 25 miles south of Kem and approximately 300 miles south of Murmansk. The Bolsheviks who had been disarmed and returned southward had concentrated in Soroka, where they had been reinforced by other Bolshevik troops pushing north from Petrozavodsk. Maynard received word that these Bolsheviks "had commenced a series of outrages against all suspected of pro-Ally leanings," and decided to send troops to the scene. Supported by the guns of the cruiser Attentive, which arrived at Soroka by sailing through the White Sea from Murmansk, Maynard with a portion of the garrison from Kem and a landing party from the Attentive, entered Soroka on 8 July. The appearance of the cruiser had a "magical" effect on the Bolsheviks, who beat a hasty retreat down the railroad, destroying every bridge for 25 miles. Thus, by the middle of July, the Allied force in Murmansk had established

\[4\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 57.}\]
\[5\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 59.}\]
itself along the railroad from Murmansk to Soroka with no losses and with no apparent threat from the disorganized Bolsheviks.

However, at that time, Maynard regarded the Germans and the White Finns as the main problem. The clearance of the "Red troops from the railway was but a preliminary step," leaving his force, which by August had not yet reached 6000, "free to deal with our chief enemy." Intelligence reports indicated that German and Finnish troops in Finland totalled about 100,000, of which 35,000 were reported to be poised for an attack on the Murmansk region.

"In these circumstances," wrote Maynard, "I do not think that I can be considered unduly pessimistic when I assert that my force is insufficient for the task it has to perform." Nevertheless, after submitting a request to the War Office for reinforcements, on 25 August, Maynard set out to defend Murmansk by establishing himself as far to the south and east of that city as possible. Although recognizing the risk of stretching his tiny force too thin, Maynard decided that further thrusts down the railway against the

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6Ibid., p. 63.

7Letter from General Maynard to General Poole, found in Extracts from the Correspondence Files of Allied G.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF Records, box 1.

8Maynard, op. cit., p. 65.
Bolsheviks and westward toward the Finnish border were necessary to determine the size and intentions of his opponents, and, if possible, to convey a false impression as to the size of his own forces.

Maynard sent a British captain with 150 British and Serbians down the railroad from Soroka. Captain Sheppard, who carried false orders which mentioned large Allied formations and which discussed the details of a forthcoming large-scale offensive, led his men down the railroad toward Povskyetz. They encountered and defeated several large groups of Bolsheviks with only slight loss to themselves, and captured large quantities of stores and ammunition. Maynard also despatched two columns westward from the railroad toward the Finnish border. One column, composed of Finns and Karelians led by British officers and NCOs, left Kem and followed the Kem River for 60 miles to a point where it met and defeated a group of Finnish White Guards. This column occupied the village of Ughtinskaya and then continued its advance until it reached a point 130 miles west of Kem. The other column left Kandalashka and fought their way westward to Lake Pyavozero against scattered resistance by White Finns. A small, but decisive action was fought on the western shore of that lake and the White Finns retreated across the border. By early October, central Karelia had been cleared and losses of 2000, among which were counted "German officers and N.C.O.s," had been inflicted upon the
enemy. Despite a continuing concern over German intentions, the success of the Karelian operations, together with the arrival of British and Italian reinforcements in September, caused General Maynard to feel, for the first time, "real confidence in our power to frustrate German aims."9

Although Maynard may have felt relieved about the Germans, he soon came to have some apprehensions about General Poole. Maynard was nominally under the orders of General Poole, but had been given "a free hand in the conduct of local operations," when General Poole had moved to Archangel. Furthermore, he was empowered to communicate directly with the War Office to whom he had appealed on 25 August for reinforcements. Maynard was, therefore, non-plussed when he discovered, in early October, that the 5000 troops which he had been promised were to be diverted to Archangel at Poole's request. Further, 100 of his Marines which had been loaned to General Poole for the landing at Archangel were never returned, and a battalion of British troops, sent by sea from Murmansk to reinforce Kem, were "collared" for service on General Poole's fronts when they put in at Archangel en route. In addition, of the total number of awards and decorations allocated to North Russia,

9Maynard, op. cit., p. 106. The foregoing account of operations south of Soroka and in Karelia is taken from Maynard, pp. 88-99.
Maynard's forces received only one sixth although at the time, Maynard complained, "my force is two thirds that of Archangel."\textsuperscript{10} These events led Maynard to write the Director of Military Operations at the War Office recommending "the separation of this command from Archangel,"\textsuperscript{11} and, on 5 November, word was received that the Allied North Russian force was to be reorganized as two separate commands.

Thus, Maynard assumed an independent command as autumn ended and the Russian winter set in. By late November, his forces had grown to nearly 15,000 of which 7000 were British, 3000 were Allies (French, Serbian and Italian) and 5000 were locally recruited Karelians, Finns, and Russians. Although Maynard acknowledged that, "campaigning during an Arctic winter . . . would be fraught with difficulties," the improvements in the size, efficiency and independence of his command led him to conclude that he "had good grounds for believing that we should not fail to overcome them successfully."\textsuperscript{12}

The Archangel-Vologda Railroad Front. The doughboys of the 3rd battalion, 339th Infantry marched down the gangplank of the transports, on the afternoon of 5 September, were immediately loaded into railway cars, and started down

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., pp. 124-131.
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 133.
the railway toward Obozerskaya. All night long the cars jolted southward pausing with a jerk at various sidings in the forest. At one of these sidings the green and curious American troops passed a northbound train loaded with Bolshevik prisoners and deserters, probably the same ones that were being guarded by Lt. Hicks' American sailors. Early the next morning, the 1000-odd Americans arrived in the outskirts of Obozerskaya, where they were enthusiastically greeted by French officers whose few men made up the greater part of Lieutenant Colonel Guard's slender force and who were quite pleased to see the arrival of reinforcements. The Americans were assigned to guard duty in the outer ring of hastily constructed defensive positions which surrounded Obozerskaya and action was immediately taken to prepare Obozerskaya as a base for further advances toward Vologda and the Trans-Siberian. As Colonel Guard put it, "it must be impressed on all ranks that we are fighting an offensive war, and not a defensive one."

Feverish preparations were made for further operations. Obozerskaya was one of the few places where the north-south route of the railroad intersected with a

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13 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 19.
14 See p. 63 above.
15 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 21.
passable east-west road and, therefore, was one of the few points where operations on the railroad front could be coordinated with operations on the Dvina and Onega Rivers. Trenches were dug, fire lanes through the woods were cut, blockhouses were built and ground was levelled for an airfield. Troops were quartered in the surrounding Russian peasant homes, support forces were brought up (or recruited from among local Russians) and training of the mixed and inexperienced Allied force proceeded apace. The "ferocious looking" armoured train with its flatcar-mounted naval guns was strengthened by the addition of another flatcar in front which was "buttressed with sandbags and . . . bristling with machine guns and Lewis automatics."\(^{16}\) This train was manned by Polish gunners and was under the command of a one-armed British naval commander who "secretly . . . itched to get his armoured train into point blank engagement" with the armoured train which the Bolsheviks had put into action on their side of the front.\(^{17}\)

It soon became plain that the Bolsheviks were not interested in retreating without a fight. On 11 September, an American patrol of two platoons of "M" Company encountered a Bolshevik patrol and, after heavy fighting pushed

\(^{16}\)Moore, Mead and Jahns, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 21.

\(^{17}\)\textit{Ibid.}
them back down the railroad to Verst Post 464. On the morning of 16 September, the Bolsheviks launched a ferocious counterattack which was repulsed only at the last minute when a platoon of "I" Company under Lieutenant Gordon B. Reese charged the Bolsheviks with fixed bayonets.

In the face of this aggressive Bolshevik activity, the British Commander, Colonel Sutherland (who had replaced Lieutenant Colonel Guard), decided upon an attack to clear the Bolsheviks from the railroad southward to Verst Point 455. Colonel Sutherland's plan called for two companies of Americans ("M" and "I") to go by train to Verst Post 462 where they were to get off the train and follow separate paths southward through the forest to points on either side of Verst Post 455. These points were to be reached during the night of 28 September and an attack on the flanks and rear of the Bolshevik positions at Verst Point 455 was to be launched from these points at 6:00 on the morning of the 29th. The attack was to be supported by artillery fire from the armored train and other guns while a third party, composed of French infantry, American machine gunners and a company of American headquarters personnel who had been

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18 Verst Posts were markers along the Russian railroads and roads which measured the distance from point to point. One Verst is equal to approximately 2/3 of a mile. In this case the distance measured was the distance from Vologda towards Archangel.

19 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 22.
hastily trained as mortarmen, advanced straight down the railroad against the Bolshevik positions. The plan seemed simple enough, but had been worked out in insufficient detail and without knowledge of the terrain through which the flanking attacks were to be mounted. Furnished with an unverified foresters' map which showed only roughest outlines of terrain features, the flanking parties were to follow loggers' paths which had been first cut in the time of Peter the Great, and which purportedly paralleled the railroad.

Unfortunately, however, the map did not show a large lake, and one of the two parties, faced with the prospect of going around a lake of unknown size, in the dark, on barely passably marshy ground, decided instead to return to its starting point. At 6:00, while they were still mired in the forest, they heard the opening bombardment and, although desperately fatigued, they sought to reach the railroad by the most direct route. About two hours after the bombardment began, they reached the railroad near the armored train where the American battalion commander, Major Nichols, ordered them to rest and dry off. Meanwhile, the smaller flanking party had also become bogged down.

Meanwhile, unaware that the flanking parties were unable to attack as planned, the French and Americans launched their attack down the railroad as planned. Supported by American machine guns and trench mortars, the
French infantry captured the bridge at Verst Post 458 and drove the Bolsheviks out of their first line of trenches south of the bridge. However, since the attack on their rear did not materialize, the Bolsheviks were able to mount a fierce counterattack. Their first attempt to recapture the bridge was repulsed, but in the fighting the trench mortars ran out of ammunition and reserve supplies had not been brought forward from Obozerskaya. Therefore, the second Bolshevik counterattack overran the mortarmen's positions and forced the machine gunners and French infantry to retreat. For a while, it appeared that the bridge would be recaptured; but one platoon of "M" Company and a half company of "I" Company from the detachment which had been lost in the forest rushed to the bridge and managed to consolidate its defense. Unfortunately, Colonel Sutherland, apparently concluding that the bridge was lost, ordered it shelled by his armored train and the resulting barrage wounded eight Americans, two fatally, before Colonel Sutherland could be informed that the bridge was still in Allied hands. Despite this unhappy event, and despite a continuing two-day barrage of artillery and machine gun fire from the Bolsheviks, the Americans and French managed to retain possession of the bridge at Verst Post 458. However, for all their efforts, the Allies had advanced only five versts—barely three miles—and Vologda and the
Trans-Siberian were still over 300 miles away.\textsuperscript{20}

The nearness of defeat in the September fighting led General Poole to reinforce the Allied troops on the railroad front and to replace Colonel Sutherland with Colonel Lucas, a French officer.\textsuperscript{21} On 1 October, a brigade of Canadian artillery arrived in Archangel and three officers and twenty gunners were sent to the railroad front to take over the operation of the guns on the armored train from the Polish gunners.\textsuperscript{22} Meanwhile, the Allied forces, seeking to avoid further unpleasant experiences in the swamps along the railroad, spent considerable time with Russian guides exploring the surrounding forest and developing military terrain sketches for future operations. All of this made the second

\textsuperscript{20}This account of the advance to Verst Post 458 is based on the reports of Lieutenant Kieth (C.O. of the Trench Mortar Platoon), Major Young (C.O. of the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry Regiment until relieved by Major Nichols on 28 September) and Major Nichols, ANREF Records, Box 2. See also Moore, Mead and Jahns, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 23-27. One of these authors, Captain Moore, was the commander of the flanking detachment which was stymied by the lake.

\textsuperscript{21}Colonel Stewart, the commander of the American 339th Infantry Regiment was offered the job first, but refused, saying that he would be "exceeding his instructions if he left Archangel." Ironside, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 33.

attack on Verst Post 455, which was launched on 13 October, more successful despite the presence of the same difficulties.

On the morning of the 13th, a combined force of American and French Infantry entered the forest with the intention of trying once more to march through the woods to reach the rear of the main Bolshevik position at Verst Post 455. Their objective was to trap the Bolshevik forces and to dynamite their armored train. Although the Bolsheviks bombarded the Allied force with shrapnel at the beginning of their march, the improved knowledge of the terrain they were crossing enabled the Allied troops to move swiftly and surely through the barrage to a spot on the flank and to the rear of the Bolsheviks. The French and Americans spent the night in the forest in a cold rain, sleeping on the ground without a fire, and with no food save hardtack. At 5:00 on 14 October, they began to advance toward the Bolshevik position. In its enthusiasm, the leading platoon got too far ahead of the main party and was detected by the Bolsheviks, who dispatched a larger force to deal with it. The main body of the Allied force, instead of following their instructions to take up positions across the railroad in the Bolshevik rear, attacked perpendicularly to the railroad line in an effort to save their comrades of the leading platoon. The Bolsheviks, surprised and confused by the appearance of a second group of wildly charging Allied troops, retreated.
to their trains and steamed away to the south with guns blaz­ing. Fortunately for the Allied soldiers, the Bolsheviks, in their panic, did not adjust for the fact that their train-mounted artillery pieces and machine guns were several feet in the air and their volleys passed harmlessly over the heads of the Allied soldiers. The Allies, however, had the unusual good luck of seeing their enemies moving across their front, and were able to pour a murderous fire into the re­tiring Bolshevik trains, inflicting what the American Command­er calculated as "hundreds of casualties." 23

Although the Bolsheviks made a fighting retreat, and even counter attacked on 16 October, the Allied forces were able to take advantage of their confusion, and by 17 October had forced them back to Verst Post 445. There, despite heavy shelling by the Bolsheviks and a strong but unsuccess­ful Bolshevik counter attack on 4 November, the Allies con­solidate their positions and sought to make them equally secure against the increasingly aggressive Bolshevik enemy and the oncoming Russian winter.

The Dvina River Front. As we have seen, the small British force on the Dvina River had bogged down after some initial successes. The objective of this force was Kotlas, 23Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 27. See also the report of Major J. B. Nichols, ANREF Records, box 2.
some 500 miles up the Dvina from Archangel and, with the arrival of the 1000 men of the 1st Battalion of the 339th Infantry, the advance toward that objective was resumed. At the beginning of these operations, artillery support was furnished mainly by a monitor of the British Navy which mounted a 7.5 inch gun, two gunboats improvised from local river steamers, and two Russian motor launches— all manned by British crews. In addition, several light artillery pieces, manned by White Russians were also assigned to the Dvina column. However, the Bolsheviks had commandeered the largest and swiftest of the river boats in Archangel harbor and had taken them upstream with them where they had outfitted them with guns, which outranged the guns of the tiny Allied River fleet. As we shall see, this superior range of the Bolshevik artillery was to have an important and continuing effect on Allied operations.

Upon the arrival of the American troops in Bereznik on September 12th, the Royal Scots were sent forward along both banks of the Dvina towards the far-off objective of Kotlas. Two companies, supported by the British monitor, fought their way through several small villages on the north bank and, with the assistance of a daring flanking movement

\[24\text{Altham, op. cit., p. 235.}\]
\[25\text{Ibid.}\]
through the virtually impassable, swampy forest, the tiny force of Scots reached the village of Borok, some 50 miles up the Dvina River from Bereznik, on 27 September. There, having outrun their supplies, having no artillery, and having come up against a Bolshevik position of "immense strength," the Scots went over to the defensive. Meanwhile, the remaining company of Scots set out from Bereznik and advanced south up the Vaga River to the village of Ust Vaga, some 10 miles south of Bereznik. From thence, the tiny force crossed the Vaga River and headed eastward across the triangle of land lying between the Vaga and the Dvina Rivers with the intention of attacking the village of Chamova on the south bank of the Dvina. The route taken by the Scots lay across a vast track of marshy forest, and they were able to traverse the 8 or 9 miles to Chamova only by felling trees "to form a track or bridge" across the less passable parts. Even so, the trip took eight and a half hours and, although the Scots arrived at their destination soaked and exhausted, they were pressed immediately into the attack of the village. By dawn, the following day, the 15th of September, the enemy had been driven out of the village, three prisoners had been taken, and enemy material, including a 3-inch gun, ammunition, a motor car, rifles and —

26Ewing, op. cit., p. 747, 748.
On the following day, a Bolshevik armed steamer, which several of the Scots mistook for an Allied supply vessel, put ashore a landing party at Chamova. Walking unarmed to the landing place several of the Scots, who were seeking rations, were captured and placed in small boats which the Bolsheviks started to row toward the steamer. The Scots' enraged comrades, armed with machine guns, also piled into row boats and started after the Bolshevik landing party with the intention of freeing their mates. Before the Bolshevik gunners on the steamer and the Scot machine gunners could join in battle, the British monitor rounded a bend in the river and sank the Bolshevik steamer with three shots from her 7.5 inch gun. Survivors were rescued from the river by the British crew, "including the lady cook, who swam most lustily."

The Allies continued their advance along the south bank of the Dvina to the village of Seltsoe, 30 miles from Chamova. Here the Bolsheviks decided to make a stand behind the mile or so of open marsh that lay between the advancing Allies and the village. A deep, icy stream flowed

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27Ibid., p. 744.

28The story of the Scot ration party was taken from Robur, "Garrison's Work in Arctic Russia" Blackwood's Magazine, No. MCCXLIV (June 1919), Vol. CCV, p. 732 and from Altham, op. cit., p. 237.
through the marsh and emptied into the Dvina River. One bridge carried the only passable road into Setsoe over this stream. Against this fine natural defensive position, the as-yet untried Americans deployed for the attack. On the morning of 19 September, one company of Americans (Co. "D" under Captain Coleman) advanced on Setsoe by wading laboriously through the marsh until, by 1:00 P.M., they were within 1500 yards of the village. At that point the Bolsheviks opened fire with rifles, machine guns, and rapid fire artillery from the protection of the houses in the village. Unable to advance against this withering fire, the Americans dug in as best they could in the mud and water and awaited further developments. Meanwhile, two other companies of the 1st Battalion circled around through the woods to the south in an effort to attack the village from the flank. They were discovered, however, and were also brought under a devastating rifle and artillery fire. Like the men of "D" Company, the men of "B" and "C" Companies sought whatever cover they could find in the marshy approaches to Setsoe, and awaited instructions. As had been the case in the earlier attacks along the railroad, none of the men attacking Setsoe had the slightest idea of the nature of the terrain over which they were attempting to advance. By nightfall, when a drizzling rain began to fall, they were thoroughly soaked, without rations, and under a continuous
artillery barrage which intensified as the Bolsheviks moved five gunboats, mounting six and nine inch guns into position on the river.

At daybreak, the Americans concluded that attacking was preferable to being exterminated in the mud by artillery fire, and the commander of "B" Company sent out a reconnaissance patrol to locate the best path of attack. This patrol was scattered by machine gun fire but the remainder of "B" Company pressed forward, supported by such fire as "D" and "C" Companies could supply. They encountered a strong enemy trench network, flanked by machine guns, which barred their advance and the fighting continued without any letup or conclusion. Three Americans were killed and eight wounded during this action. The American battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Corbley, who had been far to the rear struggling to bring up the White Russian artillery pieces through the clinging, near-impassable mud, finally arrived at dusk with the artillery. These guns delivered an extremely effective fifteen minute artillery barrage on the town which convinced the Bolsheviks, whose morale was already badly shaken by the persistence of the American attack, to evacuate the town. As the barrage ended, the American infantrymen rose up and rushed forward through the morass and into the town just as the last of the Bolsheviks were fleeing out the other side. The Americans,
... with white, strained faces, in contrast to their muck-daubed uniforms, shook hands prayerfully as they discussed how a determined defense could have murdered them all in making that frontal attack across a swamp in face of well-set machine gun positions. 29

The Americans in Seltsoe, like their Scottish comrades across the river, found themselves dangerously exposed. Their situation was made more critical by the decision of Allied headquarters in Archangel to transfer two companies of American troops to Shenkursk on the Vaga River. This action reduced the Allied force on the Dvina River to about 1000 men who faced an estimated 3500 Bolsheviks. 30

The Allied position on both sides of the Dvina was further weakened by the withdrawal of the British monitor and gunboats on 4 October to avoid their being trapped by the approaching winter freeze. Since the Dvina River froze from its mouth at Archangel toward the upper part of the river, the British and Russian ships were required to leave the Seltsoe-Borok area for winter quarters in Archangel nearly two weeks before the river was expected to freeze in mid-October. Although the gunboats put ashore the short range field pieces which constituted the majority of their armament, the Bolshevik gunboats, whose guns had double the range of the Allied field pieces, were able to bombard the

29 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 34.
30 Diary of the 67th Battery, CFA, p. 17.
Allied positions almost at will until the freeze (which unexpectedly did not occur until mid-November) forced them to seek winter quarters also. 31

Thus, although a Bolshevik attack on the afternoon of 14 October was repulsed, the continuing Bolshevik artillery barrage rendered Seltsoe untenable and the Americans and Scottish troops withdrew 10 miles downstream to the village of Toulgas. Simultaneously, the Scots on the north bank of the Dvina repulsed a Bolshevik attack on Borok, but retired to the village of Kurgomin across the river and approximately 5 miles down stream from Toulgas. In both villages the Allies were strengthened by the arrival of units of the 16th Canadian Field Artillery Brigade. Although their six 18-pounder guns were outranged by the 6 inch and 4.1 inch naval guns of the 22 Bolshevik gunboats, 32 the Canadians made up the difference with calm courage, skill, and a ferocious fighting spirit. Thus strengthened, but still faced with a numerous and increasingly aggressive enemy, the Allies set out to make their positions in Toulgas and Kurgomin as strong as possible.

The village of Toulgas was composed of three small

31Altham, op. cit., p. 239. See also Cudahy, op. cit., p. 137.

32Diary of the 67th Battery, p. 17. The Canadian 18 pounders had a maximum range of 6,600 yards while the Bolshevik guns ranged up to 9000 yards.
clusters of peasant huts along the Dvina. The main section of the village was the center section, known as Toulgas, while smaller villages up river and down river were known, respectively, as Upper Toulgas and Lower Toulgas. The center village was located at the crest of a bald hill which sloped gradually toward Upper Toulgas. However, Toulgas and Upper Toulgas were separated by a swift, deep, cold stream which issues from the forest on the southwest and flows between them into the Dvina. A single bridge, over which the only road connecting the two settlements passed, spanned the river. The total distance from Toulgas to Upper Toulgas was about \( \frac{1}{2} \) mile. Near the bridge, on the Upper Toulgas side, were a church and a log house belonging to its priest. The priest's house was barricaded as a defensive point and log blockhouses were constructed along the stream between Toulgas and Upper Toulgas, and along the margin between Toulgas and the forest. Since the river banks were extremely steep, and since a flanking movement through the forest was thought to involve almost insurmountable difficulties for an attacking party of any size, the village of Lower Toulgas was left undefended. However, a hospital was set up and rations and other supplies were stored there. To complete the defenses, two field guns of the Canadian 67th Battery were placed in a draw between Toulgas and Lower Toulgas where they could be concealed from view, yet be able
to fire on any attack through Upper Toulgas toward the bridge or from the woods bordering the center village of Toulgas. Thus, by November the tiny Allied force, which consisted of one infantry company of Americans, (with one platoon attached), one infantry company of Scots, and two Canadian field pieces, had supplemented Toulgas' natural defensive features as much as possible, and had fought off one night attack on 17 October, which followed three days of intensive bombardment by the Bolsheviks. The weeks of inactivity that followed seemed ominous to the defenders who, "noting the increasing boldness of enemy patrols and the decreasing friendliness of the local civilians" exerted every effort to further strengthen their position.33

On 11 November, 1918, when armies elsewhere in the world were laying down their arms, dawn was the signal for the commencement of a heavy artillery attack on Toulgas from the Bolshevik gunboats in the river. Simultaneously, Bolshevik infantry mounted an attack on Upper Toulgas. Moving to counter this attack, the members of the small Allied force were shaken to hear firing from their rear. Five hundred Bolsheviks who had been guided through the impassable forest by a civilian wearing a mask burst from the woods.


34Ibid.
near Lower Toulgas and moved through that village to attack the Canadian field pieces from the rear. The Bolsheviks paused momentarily to ransack the houses of Lower Toulgas for food, and their Commander, a commissar by the name of Melochofski, ordered the execution of the wounded Allied soldiers in the hospital. It is hard to determine whether Melochofski was diverted from this task by the entreaties of his female companion, a member of the Battalion of Death, or the two jugs of rum placed before him by the British medical N.C.O. in charge of the hospital. In any case, the delay gave 20 of the Canadian artillery drivers—men who are not normally employed as infantrymen—time to arm themselves and to check the Bolshevik advance. This, in turn, enabled the Canadian gunners to reverse one of their two guns, and "swearing fine, full chested Canadian blasphemies," they poured a barrage of shrapnel fire into the advancing Bolsheviks.

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35 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 107. See also the report of General Finlayson, previously cited. Madame Olga, as she was known, remained in the hospital, and there ministered to Melochofski who was mortally wounded in the attack on the Allied rear.

36 Cudahy, op. cit., p. 145. Cudahy was a platoon commander during this fight.

37 Diary of the 67th Battery CFA, p. 19.

38 Cudahy, op. cit., p. 145.
Because of a slight rise in the ground between the reversed artillery piece and the advancing Bolsheviks, the latter were able to take cover and form a small semi-circle around the guns. From this position, they directed a continuous stream of rifle and machine gun fire on the Canadians. This fire severely mauled a platoon of Royal Scots which was sent to support the guns, killing 10 of 35 men, but the survivors, together with the drivers, stoutly defended the artillery while the guns, one firing forward and the other firing to the rear, continued to bombard the enemy. During the day, several efforts were made by the Bolsheviks to rush the guns but all were repulsed.

At dusk, the second gun was reversed and began firing "over open sights" (i.e., point blank) at the Bolsheviks who retreated into Lower Toulgas. The Canadian artillerymen continued the bombardment and were joined by their mates in Kurgomen who shelled Lower Toulgas from across the river. The Bolsheviks retreated into the woods leaving 60 dead and wounded behind. Although the Bolsheviks had occupied Upper Toulgas during the day, forcing the small party of Allied defenders back to the main defenses at the river, they did not press the attack but seemed to wait for the Allied defense to collapse from the assault on its rear. Therefore, during the night, after the Bolsheviks had retreated from

39 Diary of the 67th Battery, p. 19.
Lower Toulgas, the Canadian artillery fired two salvoes into Upper Toulgas "to let this frontal attacking force know that the guns were intact and that a fight was waiting beside them."\(^{40}\)

At dawn on the 12th the Bolshevik gunboats opened fire in what was to become a continuous two day artillery barrage. These gunboats remained out of range of the Canadian 3 inch artillery pieces and for two days shells rained on all parts of the Allied positions while the Bolshevik infantrymen crouched in the woods waiting for the defense to collapse.\(^{41}\) Several times the Bolsheviks sought to advance from their positions in Upper Toulgas across the bridge toward Toulgas, but each time they were repulsed by rifle and machine gun fire from the protecting blockhouse. When that blockhouse was destroyed by artillery fire, American infantrymen continued their defense from a trench alongside the Priest's house and from the windows of the church itself. The barrage continued until darkness, under the cover of which the Allies were able to recover their wounded and bring food, water and ammunition to the forward positions.

At dawn on the 13th the barrage resumed. During this

\(^{40}\)Cudahy, _op. cit._, p. 147.

\(^{41}\)Diary of the 67th Battery, p. 19.
third day of battle, the Bolshevik artillery switched from
the bombardment of the Allied positions near the bridge to
a shelling of the blockhouses and other structures which
formed the main defense line against a flanking assault from
the woods. For hours, high explosive projectiles and
shrapnel shells fell among these positions at a rate of one
every fifteen seconds. Although the Allied soldiers were,
from time to time, forced to evacuate positions that were
under concentrated fire, and although exposure was deadly,
these troops, nevertheless, managed to mount a successful
defense against the numerous tentative thrusts against their
lines. When night fell the third day, enemy patrol action
continued and rifle and machine gun fire continued through
the night after the artillery fire had ceased.

In these circumstances, the Allied force began to
realize the hopelessness of their position. Obviously, a
continued siege would, in time, completely destroy them and
the only hope seemed to lie in counterattack. Thus, in the
predawn dark of the fourth day, the Scots relieved the
Americans in the blockhouses, and the Americans of Company
"B" moved into the woods. These troops moved silently to a
point opposite Upper Toulgas where they surrounded and cap­
tured a Bolshevik observation post. Several of the Bolshe­
viks were killed but several escaped to Upper Toulgas to

42Cudahy, op. cit., p. 152.
report that they had been overcome by a large, previously unreported, force of Americans. The Americans set fire to the observation post which contained a large quantity of ammunition, and the explosion of these rounds added to the Bolsheviks' conviction that they were being attacked by Allied reinforcements. Panic-stricken, they fled from Upper Toulgas in disorder, and the Americans who advanced into that village were amazed to encounter only a few stragglers who, finding themselves abandoned, were eager to surrender. As Lieutenant Cudahy later recalled,

Fortune plays a great part in war, and uncertainty accounts for many things that appear inexplicable reviewed from the comfortable distance of peace; perhaps the most important conformation that can come to a commanding officer is knowledge of enemy strength and his fighting morale, and the Bolsheviks had no such information.\(^3\)

Concurrently with the flight of Bolshevik troops from Upper Toulgas, the ice began to build up in the river and the Bolshevik gunboats withdrew upstream. Thus, four days after the Armistice had ended the war in the West, the tiny Allied force on the Dvina had won only a brief respite from battle. The news from France did not, however, produce more than a moment's enthusiasm for it soon became apparent that the peace did not extend to North Russia. The Americans and Scots turned grimly to the strengthening of their fortifications in the sure knowledge that they would be used again.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 154-5.
The Vaga River Front. It will be recalled that two companies of Americans had been transferred from the Dvina River front to the Vaga River where they joined "A" Company which had been sent there earlier. The Vaga River, flowing north to the Dvina River, lies between the Vologda-Archangel Railroad and the Dvina River, which were the main axes of General Poole's thrust for the Trans-Siberian. Since the Vaga offered an excellent approach to the rear of the Allied forces engaged on the Dvina, the Allied high command was discomfited to receive reports of Bolshevik troop buildups along that river. Accordingly, two platoons of "A" Company under Captain Odjard and Lieutenant Mead had been sent up the Vaga where on 19 September they occupied the town of Shenkhursk without firing a shot. Shenkhursk was one of the most prosperous towns in Archangelsk Province, had previously been a summer resort for well-to-do Russians, and had many well-constructed permanent buildings. The Americans found the town life quite pleasant since the townspeople welcomed them as liberators, and since many of life's pleasantries, such as comfortable quarters, baths, and girls who wore stockings instead of boots, were available. Numerous townspeople sought to enlist in the fight against Bolshevism, but the war seemed far away. The idyl did not last however and orders from General Poole's headquarters in Archangel assigned a British commander to the "Vaga Column," as it became known, and directed the small party of Americans
to continue up the river in an effort to locate the enemy. Thus, on 21 September, the two platoons of Americans, together with 35 White Russian troops, found themselves steaming upriver on the river steamer "Tolstoy" upon which they had mounted a pom pom gun. 44

About 28 miles south of Shenkursk, a force of Bolshevik troops fired on the "battle cruiser" from the bluffs along the shore. Since the Bolsheviks had the advantage of position, and since the stream was too shallow to permit the boat to turn around and withdraw, the Captain maneuvered her as close to the shore as possible and the American and Russian troops leaped overboard into the waist-deep water and charged up the bluffs toward the enemy who took to their heels. 45 The Americans and White Russians pursued the Bolsheviks by land for several days until they entered the village of Rodvino some sixty miles south of Shenkursk. Here the precariousness of their situation became apparent to the tiny force. They were exhausted, out of rations, and dressed in lightweight clothing at a time when much colder weather was closing in. To make matters worse, their only contact with their headquarters was a local telegraph line

44Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 64. Lieutenant Mead, who led one of the two platoons of "A" Company up the river, is one of the authors of this book.

45Ibid.
which was continually being cut by the Bolsheviks. Fortunately for the party, however, their commander, Captain Odjard, was a skilled and determined leader. Recognizing the limitations of his tiny force, he dispatched frequent patrols which kept the enemy "bluffed" as to the size of the tiny Allied force. 46

On 1 October, a Russian Colonel and two hundred White Russians, equipped with two small artillery pieces arrived in Rodvino and, on the morning of 8 October, the combined American-Russian force moved southeastward to attack the village of Nijni Puya in the hope that the Bolsheviks would be still further misled concerning the size and intentions of the Allied force and withdraw their troops from the line of retreat to Shenkhursk. During the morning the Allied troops drove several miles toward the town through mud and water, "leaping from tussock to tussock, rifle held high to keep it from the water," 47 in the manner characteristic of so many of the soggy North Russian battles. The Bolsheviks numbered between 400 and 700, including 150 Baltic sailors,

46 Dorothea York, The Romance of Company "A" (Detroit: McIntyre Printing Co., 1923), p. 46. Despite the suggestion of the title, this book is not a "romance" but is a careful attempt to reconstruct, by interview with its members, the activities of Co. "A" of the 339th. Since the official records of the Vaga column as well as many of the private diaries were lost during the evacuation of Shenkursk in January, 1919, this little book is quite valuable in detailing the events along the Vaga during 1918.

47 Ibid., p. 50.
and fought stoutly to prevent the village from falling into the hands of the Allies who could not have numbered more than 350. The Bolsheviks had no artillery, however, and the two White Russian guns inflicted numerous casualties. By 10 A.M., the Bolsheviks were driven from the town with over 100 killed and wounded.\textsuperscript{48}

The continuing isolation of this small force, deep inside Bolshevik-controlled territory, caused considerable apprehension among its members, and the falling of the first snow on 15 October increased this apprehension. To make matters worse, rumors persisted that the Bolsheviks were moving men and supplies from the Vologda-Archangel railway along one of the few well-defined east-west trails to the village of Ust Padenga, some 20 miles south of Shenkursk, as a preliminary to attacking Shenkursk itself. To meet this threat, British headquarters, on 18 October, issued the order for the Americans and White Russians to retreat to Ust Padenga and to make it into a strong defensive position. Since the loss of Shenkursk would endanger the rear of the Dvina column, the Americans were told to defend Ust Padenga "at all cost."\textsuperscript{49} Accordingly, the Vaga River Column, reinforced by the arrival of "C" company from the Dvina, and a

\textsuperscript{48}Moore, Mead and Jahns, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 64. See also York, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{49}Moore, Mead and Jahns, p. 66.
battery of the Canadian Field Artillery Brigade, set out to fortify Ust Padenga as much as possible and went over to the defensive. It is interesting to note that the last patrol action carried out prior to the retreat to Ust Padenga, brought Captain Odjard and a party of 50 Americans and White Russians to the village of Navolok--a small village on the west bank of the Vaga, 40 miles south of Shenkursk and 250 miles south of Archangel. This was the farthest point inland attained by the Allied expedition to North Russia.

The Emptsa River Front. As we have seen, the main axes of General Poole's thrust towards the Trans-Siberian were the Vologda-Archangel railroad and the Dvina River column. Just as the Allied headquarters had decided that the creation of the Vaga front was necessary to guard against Bolshevik activity between these two salients, so also did it decide that there was an excellent opportunity for Allied operations between them. To this end, Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon's small party of French, Russians, Poles and American seamen had originally been ordered to advance from Seletskoe along the Emptsa River to attack Plesestskaya during August. Through some mixup, one hundred and fifty men of Company "K" under Captain Donoghue, were detached from the American force that was sent down the railroad on 5 September and were sent eastward into the forest to rescue Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon's force which, at that time, had
not been heard from since reporting the threat to their rear. Thus, at just about the same time Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon's force was emerging from the forest near Obozerskaya, Captain Donaghue's men were entering it to rescue them. These two forces formed the nucleus of what was to become the Emptsa River Front.

A glance at the map (Appendix 1) will show that the Archangel-Vologda Railway and the Dvina River are connected by the Emptsa River which flows through the village of Emptsa, on the Archangel-Vologda railway and continues northeastward to the Dvina River. The Emptsa flows into the Dvina River about halfway between Archangel and the most advanced Allied positions on the Dvina and Vaga Rivers. For this reason, the Emptsa offered an excellent opportunity for the Bolsheviks to cut off these positions by attacking their line of supply in the rear. About one third of the way down the river from the village of Emptsa is the village of Kodish, located on the southern side. A road which led from Kodish to the important Bolshevik base at Plesetskaya offered the Allies an excellent avenue of approach to this base, the capture of which would isolate the Bolshevik forces on the Railroad Front. Thus, the northeast-southwest axis of the Emptsa River and the Kodish-Plesetskaya road formed a line which both sides regarded as vital to the defense of their main positions and which both sides regarded
as offering an excellent opportunity for successful offensive operations to support their main thrusts. It was only natural that clashes along this line would be frequent and bloody.

Proceeding about 20 miles towards Seletskoe, Captain O'Donoghue's "K" Company men came upon the scene of the battle between Colonel Haseldon's party and the Bolshevik sailors. Three fresh graves, a large quantity of abandoned equipment and the suddenly interrupted diary of an American sailor convinced the American soldiers that operations on this front were not going to be easy. Uncertain as to where the enemy was, "K" Company moved northeastward along the Emptsa until they encountered a party of English Marines, French machine gunners, Royal Scots and Russian artillery—about 150 men in all—under the command of Captain Scott of the British Army who had been dispatched from the Dvina force to assist Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon, also.

Captain Scott assumed command of the Emptsa River force of about 380 men and directed them to take up positions in the village of Seletskoe on 16 September. They came under Bolshevik attack almost immediately. For two days and two nights the Bolsheviks, urged forward by their commanders, hurled themselves at the Allied positions. For two days and two nights the Allied soldiers repulsed these attacks. Their defensive fire, which was intensified by the fire of the French machine gun section, inflicted such
casualties on the Bolsheviks that they broke off the attack, "assassinated their commander, and scurried south thirty miles." Despite this victory, the British commander, who had received an erroneous intelligence report of Bolshevik forces preparing to attack his rear from the north, ordered a retreat to the village of Tiogra nearer the Dvina. On learning of the Bolshevik flight to the south, however, the Allies reoccupied Seletskoe on 23 September where they were reinforced by a platoon of American machine gunners, the remainder of "K" Company, "L" Company under Captain Cherry which was detached from the Railroad Front, a detachment of American engineers, and a company of White Russians.

The British high command decided that the Allied force on the Emptsa should move forward, capture Kodish and press on to capture Pleseskaya. According to its plan, the Bolsheviks would be trapped between the Allied force advancing from Kodish and the Allied attack down the railroad which, as we have seen, was launched by Colonel Sutherland with only slight effect. Not having heard of the Allied failure to advance on the Railroad Front, the Allied force on the Kodish Front, under the British Lieutenant

50Moore, Mead and Jahns, op.cit., p. 57.
51Ibid.
52Extracts from Correspondence Files of Allied G.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF, Records Box 1.
Colonel Henderson, moved south to attack Kodish on 26 September.

On the morning of the 26th, "K" Company, half of "L" Company and the machine gun section moved southwestward along the northern bank of the Emptsa. Their first objective was the point where the trail from Seletskoe to Kodish crossed the Emptsa River. The Bolsheviks with about 500 men and 4 field guns, were strongly entrenched on the southern side of the river and peppered the Americans with rifle, machine gun and artillery fire when they attempted to cross the river by raft. Stymied, the Americans once more found themselves forced to "dig-in" as best they could in the swampy Russian forest. English Marines and a section of Canadian artillery was brought up, but another attempt to cross the river was also thrown back. On 7 October, Lieutenant Colonel Henderson was relieved by a British Lieutenant Colonel Gavin, under whose direction the American engineers constructed a ferry about six miles northeast of the river crossing. On 12 October, "K" and "L" Companies crossed at the ferry and advanced on Kodish along the southern bank of the river. Marching until they encountered the flank of the Bolshevik positions facing the river, they bivouacked for the night and made preparations for a morning attack. The plan for this attack involved sending Company "L" and two platoons of Company "K" around the Bolshevik
flank to attack the village of Kodish from the rear, while the remainder of "K" Company attacked the Bolshevik flank and the British and Canadians on the northern shore poured machine gun and artillery fire into the Bolshevik front. However, as so often happened in this strange northern war, the party sent to attack Kodish was unable to make its way to its objective through the bottomless Russian swamp. The Bolsheviks were, therefore, able to contain and counter-attack the small party on their flank, inflicting heavy losses on the Americans. As night fell, the British Marines were able to cross the river and join the fight. On the following day, 14 October, "K" and "L" Companies, together with the British Marines, advanced toward Kodish but were stopped short of their objective by strong Bolshevik counter-attacks in the late afternoon. Forced to spend another night sleeping on their arms in the sodden forest, the Allies rose up at dawn on the following morning and threw themselves upon the Bolsheviks. The ferocity of their attack drove the Bolsheviks out of Kodish and sent them fleeing into the woods to the south.

The Allied success at Kodish was coupled with the news of the Allied advance to Verst Post 445 on the railroad, and the advance on Plesetskaya seemed destined for success. White Russian troops occupied the villages of Shred Makhrenga and Tarasevo to the east and southeast of Kodish, while American troops continued their advance on Plesetskaya
along the road that led through the villages of Avda and Kochmas. On 17 October, the Americans encountered strong Bolshevik resistance about ten miles down the road in the vicinity of Avda. After a day's hard fighting failed to dislodge the Bolsheviks, the Americans dug-in for the night and renewed the attack on the morning of the 18th without success until a flanking movement in the late afternoon caused the Bolsheviks to withdraw from their positions.\textsuperscript{53} All seemed to be going very well. Allied patrols reached Kochmas and even reached the vicinity of Plesetskaya.\textsuperscript{54} Spies and deserters reported that the morale of the Bolsheviks was very low and that they were preparing to evacuate Plesetskaya.\textsuperscript{55} At this point, however, orders were received from Allied headquarters in Archangel which detached the British Marines, and which transferred the Canadian artillery (less one gun which remained) to the Dvina Front. Far from pressing the attack, the Americans on the Kodish Front suddenly found themselves very much on the defensive.

Posting a four man outpost near Avda, Captain Donoghue directed the preparation of two defensive sites between that outpost and Kodish. About 2½ miles from the

\textsuperscript{53}Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{54}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.}
outpost two machine gun crews, a Lewis gun crew and 46 infantrymen of Company "K" dug trenches in the dense woods along the Kodish-Plesetskaya road. About two and one half miles behind this position, 40 infantrymen and a Vickers gun took up positions astride the road; while one mile further to the rear, in Kodish itself, Captain Donoghue, with four Vickers guns posted his reserves, 40 sick and wounded men. Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon, who had replaced Lieutenant Colonel Gavin, was located at Seletskoe 20 miles across the river to the rear with all the other Allied troops, including the Canadian artillery section. On 29 October, the Bolsheviks reoccupied Ayda, and on 1 November, they drove in the outpost and opened an artillery bombardment of the American positions.

The Americans in the forward positions labored night and day to strengthen their defenses and unceasingly patrolled the surrounding forest to guard against surprise attack. However, by 4 November, a Bolshevik attack forced the Americans to evacuate the more forward of the two fortified positions along the road, and to fall back toward the second fortified position. Here they obtained a slight respite during which they could establish new defensive positions. Their efforts were sparked by a new sense of urgency for, on the morning of 5 November, the sound of machine guns to the rear announced the fact that the Bolsheviks had slipped around the forward positions and were attacking the
rear position at Kodish. The attack was not sustained, however, and the Americans retained possession of Kodish, although the continuous harassing fire directed at the American positions made it clear that it was only a matter of time before the Bolsheviks would completely cut off the American troops.

On 8 November, just as Lieutenant Colonel Haseldon had come up to inspect the American positions, a fresh Bolshevik battalion delivered a vigorous attack on the two American detachments outside Kodish. These two detachments, however, being close together, were able to deliver such an intense fire into the massed Bolshevik troops that they wavered, broke and fled. The American position was clearly in danger, and that night the order was given for its withdrawal back across the Emptsa River. On 9 November, the Americans reoccupied their former positions on the northern bank of the Emptsa River where, like their comrades on the Railroad Front and the Dvina and Vaga River Fronts, they feverishly prepared defensive positions against the ever-stronger Bolsheviks and the advancing Russian winter.

The Onega River Front. As we have seen, General Poole sought to protect his flanks by expeditions up the Onega and Pinega Rivers. A brief consideration of these expeditions will serve to bring us up to date on the Allied situation at the time of the Armistice on the Western Front.
The 50 men who landed at Onega and who sought to advance toward Oberskaya had encountered a strong Bolshevik force which had forced them to retreat to the village of Onega. Their position there appeared precarious as intelligence reports indicated that 500 Bolsheviks were marching against the town. To assist them, Allied headquarters dispatched a monitor and a detachment of White Russian forces on 22 August, and, when the American forces arrived at Archangel on 4 September, two platoons of "H" Company, about 115 men under the command of Lieutenant Phillips, were taken by boat to Onega where they reported to the British Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Clark. At Clark's order, these platoons proceeded up the river to Chekuevo, where they were joined by 93 White Russians. This tiny force was working feverishly to strengthen the defenses of Chekuevo when they were attacked by a force of approximately 350 Bolsheviks at dawn on the morning of 24 September.

The attack, which was launched against the American positions on the west bank of the river made little headway until the White Russians on the east bank gave way and the Bolsheviks were able to fire across the river into the

56 Extract from the War Diary of British Headquarters, ANREF Records, Box 3.
57 Ibid.
58 Operation Summary, 339th Infantry, ANREF Records, Box 2.
American flank. This forced the Americans also to give way and begin a slow retreat northward under the fire of Bolshevik machine guns and the rifle fire of small parties which had worked their way into the American rear. Rallying, the Americans directed the fire of their Lewis guns against the Bolshevik machine guns and put them out of action, killing the Bolshevik leader in the process. The Americans then charged the Bolsheviks who broke and fled southward along the river.39

Lieutenant Colonel Clark directed the American commander on the Onega Front to open a line of communications through the forest to the railroad (the objective of the Allied force which had been routed in August) and to proceed southward up the Onega River in a movement southward parallel to the advance of the Allies down the railroad. Although American patrols had reported the Bolsheviks had massed about 700 troops in Kaska, a village 10 miles south of Chekuevo, the American commander moved forward on 30 September in compliance with his orders. Two squads of Americans were detached and, together with some Russian volunteers, were placed under the command of Captain Burton of the British Marines, who led them southward along the east bank of the Onega. Lieutenant Phillips took one

59Operations Summary, 339th Infantry, ANREF Records, Box 2.
platoon of Americans and some Russian volunteers along the west bank of the Onega while Lieutenant Pellegrom led the other American platoon in a flanking attack through the woods in an effort to attack the enemy positions from the west. Captain Burton's Russians deserted at the first sounds of combat, and he was forced to withdraw. Lieutenant Phillips' Russians departed soon after. Because of the nature of the terrain, Lieutenant Pellegrom was able to bring his men no closer than 300 yards to the enemy positions and, therefore, with no support on either flank, and weakened by the desertion of the Russian allies, Lieutenant Phillips' force was unable to overcome the Bolshevik defense. Pinned down by heavy Bolshevik fire, Lieutenant Phillips fought off Bolshevik counter attacks during the day, and withdrew his forces to Chekeuvo that night with losses of six killed and three wounded. Bolshevik deserters later reported Bolshevik losses as thirty killed and fifty wounded. 60

The battle of Kaska made each side more cautious and constant patrol action took place. The road through the forest from Chekeuvo to Obozerskaya was opened up, not by the Onega force, but by a patrol from "M" Company on the railroad, which marched down the road unopposed to open

60Ibid.
communications between the two columns. The strength of
the Bolsheviks' defense at Kaska led the Allied high com-
mand to send out the remainder of "H" Company from Archangel
as reinforcements and to dispatch, also, a new British com-
mander for the Onega column, Lieutenant Colonel "Tin Eye"
Edwards. Patrol action continued and the American troops
pushed well south of Kaska to the village of Priluk, 100
miles from Onega, where contact with the larger Bolshevik
force was maintained. The appearance of the first signs of
winter brought a further note of caution, however, and Colonel
Edwards ordered the small American force back to Chekuevo,
where defensive positions were constructed to defend this
critical point on the line of communication between the Onega
column and the railroad column. In addition, a tiny force
of one French officer, twenty-five French infantrymen, and
fifteen White Russians were sent out from Archangel to take
up a position in the village of Bolshieozerkie, which lay
about halfway along the road between these columns. As
winter came on and the snow began to fall, this small

61Moore, Lt. Col. Joel R., "The North Russian Expedi-
this article, Moore reports that the battle of October
1st was intended to open the road to Obozerskaya, but Kaska
is well south of the road from Chekeuvo through Bolshieozer-
kie to Obozerskaya.

62Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 84. The
authors do not explain the origin of Colonel Edwards' in-
teresting nickname.
detachment reminded one American of "a choice morsel of tenderloin, baited for puma."^3

**The Pinega River Front.** As we have seen, the main part of the 1st and 3rd battalions of the American 339th Infantry Regiment were dispatched to assist the Allied forces on the two major fronts--the Railroad Front and the Dvina River Front. The remaining battalion, the second, was held in reserve in Archangel from whence it dispatched a part of its force, Company H, up the Onega River in mid-September to assist in protecting the Allied right flank. Sometime later, in mid-October, a report that the Bolsheviks were building up their forces along the Pinega River on the Allied left flank led the Allied high command to dispatch a small force of Americans from Company G of the second battalion up the Pinega River. On 20 October, Captain Conway took two platoons of about 35 men each, by steamer up the Dvina River to the point where it intersects with the Pinega River, and from thence up the Pinega River to the city of Pinega, which lies almost due east of Archangel at a distance of approximately 75 miles. The American Captain's mission was to take command of the Pinega area, raise local volunteers, and organize them for self defense.

The local Bolsheviks, including the city's mayor,

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^3Cudahy, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
fled before the arrival of the American force which was warmly welcoming by the remaining inhabitants. These anti-Bolshevik Russians pleaded for an attack on the Bolsheviks in Pinega Valley to remove the threat of a Bolshevik return and to recover the city's supply of flour which the retreating Bolsheviks had taken with them. After raising a force of Russian volunteers, Captain Conway, acting on British orders from Archangel, dispatched his 70 Americans and 210 Russians up the river. They encountered only enemy patrols and, on Thanksgiving day, entered the village of Karpogora, some 80 miles upriver from Pinega. Here they found themselves a countryside that was at least half pro-Bolshevik, and exposed to increasing attacks from the Bolsheviks who, having found out the relative weakness of the Allied column, prepared their numerically superior forces for a counter-attack.\textsuperscript{64} To the tiny force of Americans, the situation seemed ominous; but to Allied headquarters in Archangel, where situation maps showed the left flank of the Allied expedition firmly anchored in Pinega, the danger seemed remote. From an even farther vantage point—American Headquarters in France—the question was raised, "Just where is the Pinega Front?"\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{64}Moore, Mead and Jahns, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 85-86.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 87.
CHAPTER VI

THE SITUATION AFTER THE ARMISTICE ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Who is the Enemy? As we have seen, the belief that the Bolsheviks and the Germans were in alliance was widespread in the Allied nations. Nor was this belief dispelled after the arrival in Russia of the Allied North Russian Expeditionary Force. Shortly after the occupation of Archangel, General Poole's headquarters issued a circular which contained "information of general interest to troops arriving in Russia," and which answered, perhaps, any question as to why it was necessary to fight Russians to save Russia from the Germans. The circular read, in part,

POLITICAL VIEWS

The Bolshevik Government is entirely in the hands of the Germans who have backed this party against all others in Russia owing to the simplicity of maintaining Anarchy in a totally disorganized country. Therefore we are definitely opposed to the Bolshevik-cum-German party. In regard to other parties we express no criticism and will accept them as we find them provided they are for "Russia" and therefore "out with the Boche." Briefly, we do not meddle in internal affairs.

THE ENEMY

BOLSHEVIKS. These are soldiers and sailors who, in the majority of cases, are criminals. Their natural, vicious brutality enabled them to assume leadership. The Bolshevik is now fighting desperately firstly because the restoration of law and order means an end to his reign and secondly, because he sees a rope around his neck for his past misdeeds if he is caught.

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GERMANS. The Bolsheviks have no capacity for organization but this is supplied by the Germans and their lesser Allies. The Germans usually appear in Russian uniforms and are impossible to distinguish.¹

Thus, prior to the Armistice, it is not surprising that Allied operational orders and intelligence summaries clearly referred to the Bolsheviks as "enemy forces." Further, despite British insistence that they would not "meddle in internal affairs," the Allies installed, and kept in power, the subservient anti-Bolshevik Provisional Government of President Chaikovsky. In doing so, and by encouraging this regime to raise numbers of "loyal" Russian troops to fight against Bolsheviks, the Allies created a group of sympathizers whom they did not wish to abandon to Bolshevik reprisals when the war with Germany ended. Finally, although the Bolsheviks were, for various reasons, reluctant to fight the Allies in the beginning, Poole's aggressive thrusts into Russian territory led the Bolsheviks to organize a military opposition which became increasingly effective and increasingly aggressive.

**General Ironside.** On October 14th, General Poole was replaced as Commander in Chief of the Allied Expedition by Major General Sir Edmund Ironside, whose view of the military forces at his command was a bit more balanced ("a

¹Miscellaneous file of British circulars, ANREF Records, Box 10.
tiny army . . . sitting on the edge of Russia's vast territory"^2) and whose objectives were a bit more modest ("to hold the fort until the Provisional Government could organize its forces.")^3 While his view was colored by his belief in the necessity to "smash Bolshevism," he was enough of a military realist to recognize the tenuosity of the Allied position. Upon assuming command, Ironside reviewed the military situation and saw that instead of a straight-line front against the Bolsheviks, the Allied forces were spread fan-like from their bases at Archangel and Murmansk. Two main columns—the Railroad and Dvina fronts—and three subordinate columns—the Pinega and Onega Rivers and the Murmansk railroad front—had plunged into Russia more or less independently of one another. With winter approaching, with no reinforcements planned for his modest forces, and with Bolshevik forces becoming more aggressive, the outlook was bleak indeed. Clearly, Poole's hope of reaching the Trans-Siberian Railroad was beyond the realm of practicality, and Ironside quietly switched over to defensive operations. However, this did not in any way mean an end to the fighting.

The Armistice. Announcement of the armistice in

^2Ironside, op. cit., p. 55.
^3Ibid., p. 56.
Europe made an already confused situation in Russia even less clear. The news that the war against the Central Powers had ended had an electric effect on the Allied troops in North Russia. In Archangel, "the wireless and cable stations were working overtime with telegrams from Ambassadors and commanders of contingents, all asking for information and instructions." Colonel Stewart, the commander of American troops, cabled the War Department,

Men of this command have performed most excellent service under the most trying climatic conditions. . . . The original object of this expedition no longer exists. The winter port of Archangel will be practicable for navigation twenty to thirty days longer and then closes until June. My inference is plain. Immediate consideration requested.

American and French troops showed signs of uncertainty, and expressed the fear that hostilities might be continued because of British "imperialistic" interests in North Russia. On 13 November, the American Charge in Archangel cabled that the withdrawal of American troops would lead to "severe Bolshevik reprisals" against the inhabitants of the North Russian region, and expressed his view that the United States had an "obligation" to the Russians which would be voided by the withdrawal of United States troops. The

4Ibid., p. 50.
5"Report of the Expedition to the Murman Coast," ANREF Records, Box 2.
British government suggested that a joint United States-British statement might be issued to the effect that "the Allied occupation is not likely to be terminating in the immediate future, although it is not intended that it should be permanent." The United States Government dodged the issue by replying that any statement should be deferred until the arrival of the President in Paris for the peace conference. However, the American charge in Archangel, DeWitt Clinton Poole, did not defer making a statement, and on Thanksgiving Day he addressed United States soldiers saying,

You men know what you are doing here. You are protecting one spot in Russia from sanguinary bedlam of Bolshevism. Don't think you are forgotten. Washington knows what you are doing, what you are up against. You may be sure that the President in good time will tell you and the rest of us what he expects each to do.

No one had to tell the six hundred Americans, Scots and Canadians in the village of Toulgas on the Dvina River what to do. On Armistice Day, as we have seen, they were fighting for their lives against an attack by more than a thousand well-armed Bolsheviks.

The Mutinies. Slowly it became apparent to the

7Ibid., p. 570.

8Ambassador Francis, who had become ill, left Russia on 6 November, 1918.

9Ibid., p. 573.
Allied forces that the end of the war in Europe did not mean the end of the war in North Russia. While these soldiers had never been too enthusiastic about their assignment to Russia, they had, up to the Armistice, regarded it as a distasteful but essential aspect of the war against Germany. With the end of the fighting on the Western Front, the Allied soldiers felt alone, forgotten and resentful. Most continued to do their duty and obeyed the orders issued by General Ironside's headquarters in Archangel. Here and there, however, disaffection smouldered, orders were disobeyed, mutiny flared and, in the case of the "loyal" Russians, desertions to the Bolshevik lines became more frequent.

Even before the Armistice, during the drive to Verst Post 445 on the Railroad Front, French soldiers who had heard rumors concerning the proposed cessation of hostilities on the Western Front concluded that the war was about to end and refused to remain in their assigned positions on the front line. As a result, American troops of "I" Company had to fight off the Bolshevik counterattack of 16 October unassisted. Although the French troops returned to their places two days later, the fear of mutiny began to spread
through the Allied command.\textsuperscript{10} The French Commander of the Railroad Front, Colonel Lucas, wired Archangel for reinforcements, observing that his troops,

Both American and French, cannot be left longer under such conditions... They require periods of rest so that they can be taken in hand to be properly drilled. ... Otherwise it is to be feared that a feeling of discontent may manifest itself together with a lack of discipline which must be avoided at all costs.\textsuperscript{11}

In Toulgas, where the weary defenders had driven off the Bolshevik Armistice Day attack (reportedly directed by Trotsky himself), American soldiers threatened to "walk out" unless promised early relief.\textsuperscript{12} On the Railroad Front where an attack southward was ordered in December to secure better winter quarters, a British machine gun company refused to attack and a detachment of White Russians declared that "it was not the right kind of a day to make the attack."\textsuperscript{13} On December 11th, when ordered to fall out for review, the 1st

\textsuperscript{10}Moore, Mead and Jahns, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28. See also John Cudahy, \textit{Archangel, The American War with Russia}, (Chicago: A. C. McClury & Co., 1924), p. 94. Cudahy reports that ninety of the mutineers were arrested and returned to Archangel, but Moore, Mead and Jahns report no such punishment, observing merely that their French commander "had shamed them out of their mutinous conduct and they were satisfied again to help their much admired American comrades."

\textsuperscript{11}Extracts from Correspondence Files of Allied G.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF Records, box 1.

\textsuperscript{12}Cudahy, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 161.

\textsuperscript{13}Records of the ANREF, box 2, (Report of Major Donoghue).
Archangel Company of the locally-recruited "loyal" Russian Army refused to leave their barracks. Although the Commanding General of the Russian forces pleaded with them personally, the Russian soldiers waved red flags from the windows and refused to obey his command to form up for parade. When other Allied soldiers fired upon the building with machine guns and mortars, the mutinous soldiers tumbled out of the building and the red flags disappeared "as if by magic." In addition, both British and French units refused, in February and March, to obey orders to relieve American troops in the front lines.

Although the mutinies were small, and quickly put down, they contributed tremendously to the generally unsettled feeling of the Allied forces during the winter of 1918-1919. Such disorders were not entirely confined to the Allied forces, however, and Allied Intelligence officials issued a report, based on the statements of 31 Bolshevik deserters, that the 6th Soviet Regiment was in a state "approaching complete demoralization," and that an attack on the Allied positions on the Vaga River "was indefinitely

14 Ironside, op. cit., p. 69. Ironside states that Russians manned the guns which fired at the building, but the official return for Headquarters Company, 339th Infantry, for December 11th reports that "about 75 men of the company were called out to quell a mutiny among Russian soldiers quartered at Alexander Nevsky Barracks, Archangel, Russia." ANREF Records, box 6.

15 Ironside, op. cit., pp. 112-114.
postponed owing to the bad morale of the troops."16

British Command. Disappointment over the continuation of the war was not the only cause of unrest among the Allied soldiers. Tensions among the Allies also added to the generally unsettled situation. The Commander of American troops in North Russia reported that:

General Poole . . . appeared to interpret the decision of the Supreme War Council in Paris, that the operations should be under the direction of the British, to mean that the exercise of command even down to the smallest units should be by British officers, whatever might be their ability to exercise such command. To meet this situation, the practice has been instituted, and has been followed throughout, of appointing officers to temporary rank without pay, apparently to ensure the seniority of British officers in all cases.17

British command of the expedition also meant British control of the supplies and one American soldier wrote his brother that,

16Military Intelligence Summary #18, ANREF Records, box 2.

17Brigadier General Wilds P. Richardson, "Supplemental Report, AEF, North Russia," Archangel, Russia, dated 23 July, 1919, submitted to the Adjutant General, USA, through the C. in C., AEF, France. Located in the records of the AEF, G-3 (Operations) Reports, Document 10003.4, folder 707, Records Group 120, National Archives. General Richardson was sent to Russia in April, 1919 to investigate the reported unrest among American troops, and to supervise their return to the United States. He attached to this report copies of British orders which announced the promotion of several British officers to temporary or acting rank—in some cases, two grades above their permanent rank.
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... the situation up here is under English control, and when we landed we were also under their control, they are disliked by all here from the Russians up, they control the food and clothing and we have to look to them for everything.18

Numerous other letters of a similar or even more violent tone were stopped by American officers who acted as censors for their units. Some, which had passed the censors in North Russia, were examined by censors in Britain, who returned them for "proper action" because they were found to be "unsoldierly in tone and decidedly anti-British in sentiment."19 One soldier wrote, "We are fighting for British interests and spilling good American blood . . . for a cause that our government surely does not understand." Another wrote that after French and American troops had captured a town the British put up a British flag which was subsequently torn down by the enraged French and American troops. Still another soldier wrote,

... if any English ever began to tell you people back in the states what he had done in the war call him a Lair and then bust him in the nose because they are a great big bunch of yellow bums.20

18Letter from Sgt. C. Duetsch, Supply Co., 339th Infantry Regiment, not passed by the American censor, ANREF Records, Box 7.

19Cablegram to Commanding Officer, American North Russian Expedition from Major General Biddle, Hq. B.S., Number 3, SOS, AEF, London, dated 21 January, 1919, ANREF Records, Box 7.

20All quotes are from letters not passed by the American censors, ANREF Records, Box 7.
Information concerning the attitude of the British is less readily available, but the records of the American forces contain a letter which reveals that a British commander relinquished his command on the grounds that he did not consider the troops given him, particularly the Americans, "sufficiently strong morally to withstand a shock attack." In addition, a British report dated in early 1919 described the American soldiers as "not of much value," and related how "the bulk of the fighting . . . fell on the small number of French and British troops."

Morale. Thus, for several reasons the Allied troops were, in the months immediately following the Armistice, unsettled at best, and mutinous at worst. The American Military Attache, concerned about the condition of American morale, dispatched two of his assistants, Captain Hartzfeld and Captain Prince to the Railroad and Dvina Fronts. Both officers reported that morale on the Railroad Front was relatively good. The troops there were comfortably quartered in heated railway cars, were well fed, and received supplies from Archangel regularly via the railroad. The front was quite small, extending only about 1000 feet across


22Richardson, op. cit.
the railroad bed and ending in the impassable forest on either side. The men had confidence in their American officers and in their equipment, and were kept busy reinforcing their defenses. They complained about the British officers, who were reported to be frequently intoxicated, and the Russians because of their "failure to cooperate." On the whole, however, the Railroad troops were in good spirits.23

Nevertheless, Captain Hartzfeld found it necessary to explain, in some detail, why the Allied troops were still fighting in Russia. This he did by pointing out that,

We wished to land at Archangel and Murmansk to prevent the establishment of a German naval base, to protect stores, and to assist the Czech-Slovaks. . . .

A government was organized by the Russians here at Archangel in opposition to the Government at Moscow and that government extended an invitation to the Allies to land. This act of the newly organized government and of all who actively supported it was equivalent to a death sentence should the Bolshevik government return here.

We are in honor bound to protect those who served us so well when we needed them.24

Hartzfeld’s report concluded by recommending to Allied Headquarters that a short statement of these "arguments" should be printed and distributed freely at the various

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24Ibid.
fronts as soon as possible.

On the Dvina Front, however, things were found to be in a different state. Captain Prince reported on 2 February 1919 that a sergeant had told him that the men are disgusted because they do not know why we are here for, we came to fight Germany and help establish an Eastern front, now that is ancient history. . . . Evidently there is some hidden purpose and we are here for economic purposes or for acquisition of territorial or other concessions. This means we are fighting for capital. . . . Bolshevicks are now fighting for their liberty and the Russian people should be allowed to straighten out themselves their difficulties. 25 Prince concluded from this that a "large amount of the trouble has to be credited to the effects of the Bolshevik propaganda," but added that other factors contributed to the generally lower morale of the American troops on the Dvina River Front. Apart from their perplexity over the reasons for their being in Russia, the Americans on the Dvina had fought for four months "under the most difficult conditions," had lost most of their personal effects without replacement through the British-controlled supply channels, and were "depressed" because of the constant shelling by Bolshevik artillery, which could pound the Allied lines without fear of return fire by the badly outranged Allied batteries. "The men say," reported Prince, "that if our governments had really intended to carry on operations here they would

have provided the necessary equipment and men for the purpose."26 This general feeling of frustration and anger among the troops on the Dvina was not relieved by the one visit of the American regimental commander, Colonel Stewart, who remarked to them, "that his work at Archangel was just as hard as theirs if not more so."27

Thus, as 1919 began, the Allied troops, racked by doubt and dissention, faced a continuation of the unpopular and little understood war against the Bolsheviks. An American soldier, writing home about the Russians on whose behalf he was supposed to be fighting wrote that, "I am sick of it because there is no good in fighting here just to help a bunch of fools that don't know right from wrong."28 As for the Russians themselves, General Ironside, who visited the training camp for Russian conscripts at Kholmogori on the Dvina at Christmas time, remarked that he had seen "a terrible hopelessness" in their eyes, and that "many of them did not believe in their hearts that they could beat the Bolsheviks."29

At home, where public opinion had earlier demanded

26Ibid.
27Ibid.
28Letters not passed by the American censor, ANREF Records, Box 7.
29Ironside, op. cit., p. 84.
the dispatch of a military expedition to Russia, the realization dawned slowly that the military forces which had so easily been put ashore in the summer of 1918, were frozen in and could not be evacuated until the summer of 1919. In the meantime, it seemed quite possible that they might be annihilated.
CHAPTER VII

MILITARY OPERATIONS AFTER THE ARMISTICE

The Murmansk-Petrograd Railroad. The Armistice on the Western Front caused General Maynard only a moment's hesitation. Writing later, Maynard noted that there were two major reasons why the Allied forces were not evacuated immediately after the cessation of hostilities in the West. First, the Allies in Archangel were frozen in, and relied on Murmansk for communications, reinforcements and supplies until such time as they could be evacuated. Secondly, it was "unthinkable" that the Allies should desert "the many loyal Russians who had risked all by supporting the Allies." 1

Although Maynard regarded these loyal Russians as an inefficient military force, his personal hatred of Bolshevism, "the most malign of all influences at work in the present day world," led him to support their efforts enthusiastically. Thus, after 11 November, Maynard regarded the "anti-Soviet movement . . . as my chief concern," and sought to do his best "to enable it to stand alone as speedily as possible." 2

Nevertheless, Maynard resolved not to fight the Bolsheviks unless it were necessary to assist the

1 Maynard, op. cit., p. 134.
2 Ibid., p. 143.
"loyalists." His immediate efforts, therefore, were directed toward the recruiting of additional soldiers for the loyal forces, and pacifying, as best he could, the discontentment of the unpaid and revolution-minded railway workers in Murmansk, Kandalaksha, and Kem. However, the appearance of sizeable Bolshevik forces around Soroka, in an area which Maynard and the newly-appointed deputy governor of the Murmansk area had hoped to exploit for additional recruits, led to a change in plans. Urged on by the deputy governor, Maynard laid plans for a further advance down the railroad. Although weakened by the loss of troops to General Ironside's command at Archangel, which, as we shall see, was in dire straits during the early months of 1919, Maynard directed the occupation of the town of Segeja, 60 miles further down the railroad from Soroka. On 20 February, at a cost of one British NCO killed and less than a dozen of all nationalities wounded, the Allies occupied Segeja and took control of the surrounding territory, thereby extending their recruiting area by 3000 square miles. 3

After occupying Segeja, Maynard sought to assume a defensive posture, but political problems appeared to dictate the need for continued offensive operations. On 31

March, Maynard cabled the War Office that the Finnish Legion, the detachment of Red Finns which had joined the Allied forces in early 1918 to help fight the Germans, were about to revolt and join the Bolsheviks against the Allies. Noting that his forces had been reduced to "an exceedingly small force" by the requirement to send reinforcements to the Archangel Front, Maynard pleaded for reinforcements and, on 12 April two infantry companies arrived from England. Whether this small contingent was alone sufficient to restore General Maynard's confidence is not clear, but on 17 April he wired that he had occupied Urozero and Vojmosalmi and reported that he was contemplating operations against Medvyejya Gora and Povyenetz, some 40 miles to the south.5

On 25 April, he reported that the Russian leaders are urging me very strongly to be allowed to press forward, stating that unless they are permitted to follow up recent successes the morale of the troops will suffer. They affirm, too, that the advance will open up the most hopeful of recruiting areas, and do more than anything else to stop Bolshevik agitation throughout the occupied area.6

Maynard's message ended with the assumption that the War Office would leave the proposed advance to his discretion. The War Office replied that he was free to make the advance "if a favourable opportunity offers," provided he understood that no further reinforcements for the venture were

4The Evacuation of North Russia, p. 26.
5Ibid., p. 34.
6Ibid., p. 34-35.
available. Needing no further encouragement, Maynard pressed his British and Russian forces forward and Povyenetz and Medvyejya Gora were captured on 18 and 21 May respectively.

Maynard endeavored to sustain his southward thrust, but the failure of his Russian troops to attain their objectives in the face of increasing Bolshevik resistance led the War Office to caution him, on 17 June, that he "had reached the limit of what you can do," and ordered him to consolidate his present position. By then, his British and French Marines had been withdrawn as had the Italian battalion and his American railroad detachment. With only the Serbian battalion and the two companies of English infantry left, Maynard could do nothing else but assume the defensive.

The Archangel-Vologda Railroad Front. Despite General Ironside's switchover to a defensive posture in early November and despite the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front, the fighting in North Russia was far from over. Although the Bolshevik forces had been disorganized and poorly equipped during 1918, they were increasingly well-fed, well-clothed and well-armed in the early months of 1919. The American Charge in Archangel reported on 9 January, 1919, that the Bolsheviks were showing "improvement in discipline, organization and morale," and were mobilizing all men in the northern provinces between the ages of 16 and 48 "with
a view to forming an army of 700,000 on this front. Although some of the Allied troops had hoped that the coming of winter would bring a lull in the fighting, events were to prove that this was not to be the case. Frozen in, cut off from the outside world, and facing an increasingly active and effective enemy, the Allied forces found themselves with considerable fighting yet to do.

General Ironside visited the French Commander, Colonel Lucas on the Railroad Front on 2 December, 1918, and found him concerned about the condition and morale of the French troops under his command and fearful of attack, despite the sturdiness of the defenses which had been constructed by the American Engineers. Lucas had not visited the columns on the Onega and Emptsa Rivers which protected his flanks, and his failure to dispatch patrols had kept him ignorant of the location and strength of the Bolsheviks opposing him. This ignorance only heightened his fear of being attacked. Ironside ordered him to become better informed about the condition of his own forces as well as those of his enemy and to lay plans for an attack on Emptsa and Plesetskaya to secure better winter quarters for his


8Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 186.
men. If the large towns with their permanent buildings could be secured, Ironside reasoned, the Allied troops could be made more comfortable for the oncoming winter, and the loss of the main Bolshevik supply base at Plesetskaya would reduce the threat to Allied defensive positions on the Onega and Emptsa Fronts as well as on the Railroad Front.

Colonel Lucas laid plans for a new attack which would follow the strategy which had failed in September. French and American troops on the Railroad Front, supported by reinforcements from the British Liverpool Regiment, were to advance down the railway, capture Emptsa and continue on to attack Plesetskaya from the north while the Allied forces along the Emptsa River launched a coordinated drive against Plesetskaya, down the road from Kodish. As a diversion, the Onega column was to launch an attack up the Onega Valley to a point near Plesetskaya, where a linkup with the railroad forces could be made. As usual, the attack down the railroad was to be preceded by a flanking attack through the forest from the Allied positions at Verst Post 445 to a position on the west flank of the Bolshevik defenders of Emptsa. This time, however, since the forests were deep with snow, the flanking movement was to be speeded by the employment of a detachment of Russian troops, equipped with snowshoes.

under the leadership of a French Canadian northwoodsman who
held the rank of Captain of the French Foreign Legion.\textsuperscript{10}
Considering how nearly successful the Allies had been in
this effort during September, and considering the fact that
Bolshevik patrols had observed the Allied efforts to con­
struct a strong and apparently permanent winter position
at Verst Post 445, the attack seemed to have some chance of
surprise and some prospect of success.

The main thrust of the attack was the push down the
railroad. In preparation for this advance, the Allies had
repaired the bridge at Verst Post 445, which had been blown
up by the retreating Bolsheviks in October, and had loaded
troops into railway cars so that, together with the British
armored train, they could advance as far as possible, hope­
fully as far as Emptsa, by rail before having to dismount
for battle. For this purpose, the Allied Commander had mar­
shalled one company of the British Liverpool Regiment, one
company ("I") and two half companies ("M" and "G") of Amer­
ican infantry, one American machine gun company, three com­
panies of French infantry and two sections (i.e. guns) of
French machine guns. Supporting artillery consisted of
4 75 French mm guns and 4 French 155 mm guns. The British
armored train mounted 1 18-pounder cannon, 2 3.3 inch

\textsuperscript{10}"Report on the Allied Offensive on Vologda Force
Front" by Captain E. Prince, USA, Assistant Mil. Attaché,
Records of the ANREF, Box 2.
Russian howitzers, and 5 Lewis guns.\textsuperscript{11} First, however, the supporting attacks were to be launched against the Bolshevik flanks.

The diversionary attack along the Onega was mounted by two platoons of Company "H", the Russian Naval Brigade, a Polish detachment of about 120 men, and a company of the Archangel Russian regiment. This attack was launched one day earlier than the other attacks and had the objective of joining forces with the railway detachment at the village of Sheleksa, some 40 miles southeast of Chekuevo and about six miles west of the Archangel-Vologda railway between Emptsa and Plesetskaya. Having advanced about half way to this goal, by 30 December, the Onega force of approximately 620 men encountered the Bolshevik 1st Petrograd Regiment of 1500 men outside the village of Turchasovo. The Naval Brigade repelled a strong Bolshevik counter-attack without losses, but the diversionary attack on the Onega Front came to a halt.

The flanking attack of the Snow Shoe Detachment also failed to attain its objective because of a most unpredictable situation. Although the detachment was hastily formed for this particular attack, it had long been planned for. Its commander, Captain Barbateau, had been sent by the British Government to Canada in the fall of 1918 to purchase

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}

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snowshoes and other winter equipment, and several thousand pairs of Canadian snowshoes were shipped to Russia for the Allied forces there. British Ordnance also shipped a large number of regulation snowshoes to the North Russian front. The latter were small wooden hoops, about 18 inches long by 12 inches wide, and were for use on hard-crusted snow. They were not suited for soft, powdery snow which, because there had been no thaws in North Russia that winter, lay in three foot depths in the forests along the Vologda-Archangel railway. The Canadian snowshoes, which were capable of supporting a man's weight on soft snow had, "by some misunderstanding," all been sent to the Dvina and Murmansk Fronts.\footnote{12}

Thus, as Captain Barbateau's 250 Coureurs des Bois (as he named them)\footnote{13} struck out through the woods, they were wearing the regulation British snowshoe which sank through the snow almost to the ground at every step.

The plan called for Les Coureurs des Bois to leave Verst Post 448 on 29 December, march five miles westward from the Allied position on Verst Post 448, turn south and march fifteen miles to positions west of Emptsa from which they would attack and cut the railway south of that town on the morning of 30 December. This maneuver, it was hoped,\footnote{12}\footnote{13}

\footnote{12}{Ibid.}

\footnote{13}{John A. Swettenham, \textit{Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919 and the Part Played by Canada} (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 193.}
would bag the Bolsheviks between the Coureurs de Bois and the Railway detachment, whose attack down the railroad was also scheduled for the morning of 30 December. By nightfall on the 29th, however, the Coureur de Bois had only made six miles through the snow and their commander sent word (by a runner on Canadian snowshoes) back to the Railway that his men were exhausted and that further progress through the woods in the dark was impossible. He asked for 48 hours to rest his men and to complete his march, but Colonel Lucas, whose responsibility included coordinating the attacks of the Onega detachment, the Coureur de Bois, and the Emptsa River detachment, granted a delay of only 24 hours and postponed the railway attack until 31 December.

The Emptsa River. Colonel Lucas did not notify the Emptsa River detachment of the delay, however, and, at dawn on 30 December, two companies of American infantry ("E" and "K"), a platoon of American machine gunners and a section of American trench mortars, all under the command of Major Donoghue, and supported by a section of Canadian artillery, moved across the frozen Emptsa River to attack Kodish once more. Their battle orders called for them to occupy Kodish and to push down the Kodish-Plesetskaya road as far as Kochmas, by 30 December. Plesetskaya, itself, was to be occupied on the 31st through the joint efforts of the several attacking forces, although Major Donoghue did not know
that the attack of the other detachments, had either been repulsed, became bogged down or had been postponed.

The 450 Americans attacking Kodish were supposed to receive support from a British machine gun section which, with 20 white Russians, was to advance from the east and take up positions in the rear of Kodish. From these positions they were to fire on the Bolsheviks as they were driven from the village by Americans.\(^\text{14}\) In addition, a detachment of 50 white Russian troops, together with two Platoons of Coureurs de Bois which had been detached from the Railroad Front, were to circle to the Bolshevik rear from the west, seize his artillery and turn it upon the 700 Bolshevik reserve troops in the village of Avda, six miles down the Kodish-Plesetskaya road, thereby preventing their reinforcement of the 2700 Bolsheviks in Kodish.\(^\text{15}\) If the odds seem desperate, they serve to emphasize the desperateness of the fighting that took place.

The place was simple and well-thought out and, despite the size of the enemy force facing him, the American Commander knew that the attack down the railway, if successful, would cut off the Bolsheviks. He, therefore, counted on the demoralization of the Bolshevik troops when they

\(^{14}\)Ironsides, op. cit., p. 90.

\(^{15}\)Operations Order #3, from Commanding Officer, Seletskoe Detachment to Major Donoghue, 27 December, 1918, in Report of Expedition to Murman Coast, ANREF records, Box 2.
found that they were caught between two allied forces. Thus, as Major Donoghue moved his men forward in the 20-degree below zero temperature, there seemed to be a reasonable chance for success. The attack was opened by a 1000 round barrage from the Stokes trench mortars coupled with the fire of the 20 guns of the machine gun company which drove the Bolsheviks from their positions in front of Kodish while the Canadian Artillery fired over the heads of the advancing Americans to bombard the Bolsheviks in Kodish itself.

Although the Bolsheviks fought stubbornly, the weight of the Allied fire drove them back and by 1:00 P.M., the Americans once more were in possession of Kodish. However, things did not go according to schedule. The Bolshevik troops retreated from Kodish but they were not fired on by the British machine gunners as planned. Although Major Donaghue reported that the British did not attack because "they were exhausted," the truth of the matter is that their commander was drunk, or as General Ironside put it, "had succumbed to the festivities of the season," and had failed to give the order to fire. Similarly, although

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16 Moore, Mead & Jahns, op. cit., pp. 128-129. Lt. Jahns was a platoon commander during this attack.

17 Report of Major Donoghue, Records of the ANREF, Box 2.

18 Ironside, op. cit., p. 90.
the two platoons of *Coureurs des Bois* reached the Bolshevik rear and captured two field guns,\(^9\) the commander of the detachment of loyal Russians which was to support them decided that, "it was not the right kind of a day" to make an attack and therefore did not carry out the other part of the encircling movement.\(^20\) The *Coureurs des Bois*, attacked by Bolshevik reserves from Avda, and unsupported by any other Allied force, blew up the Bolshevik guns and withdrew.\(^21\)

The Bolsheviks, who had not been hurt at all by the abortive British and White Russian flanking attacks, were able to regroup their units and block the Allied advance toward Plesetskaya. Two American platoons advanced as far as Verst Post 12 on the Kodish-Plesetskaya road, the scene of heavy fighting the previous fall, but Bolshevik machine gun fire halted them in their tracks. The fighting continued well after darkness fell, and frostbite added

\(^9\)Leonid I. Strakhovsky, "The Canadian Artillery Brigade in North Russia, 1918-1919" *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1 (March 1958), pp. 125-146, p. 140. Although Strakhovsky was writing about the Canadian artillery units in this article, he was himself a member of the *Coureurs des Bois* during this engagement, having joined the French Foreign Legion detachment in North Russia to avoid political persecution in Archangel.

\(^20\)Report of Major Donoghue, ANREF Records, Box 2.


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casualties to those felled by gunfire. Half of the ninety-odd men of the two advanced platoons\(^{22}\) were killed or wounded, and dawn found the Americans pinned down and unable to advance further. The main portion of the American force remained in Kodish, despite a continuous and galling artillery and small arms fire from three surrounding hills which remained in Bolshevik hands. The Bolsheviks, far from retreating toward Plesetskaya, showed every sign of counter attacking.\(^{23}\)

The overall battle plan had called for a concerted attack on several fronts with the central thrust being the attack down the railroad. As we have seen, the failure of Captain Barbateau's *Coureurs des Bois* to reach their jumpoff positions had led Colonel Lucas to reschedule the attack down the railway from 30 December to the 31st. During the 30th, preparations were continued for the attack on the following day. At 1:30 on the 30th, however, the Bolsheviks who had already been attacked on the Onega and Emptsa River flanks, apparently realized the Allied intent, and opened up an intense artillery barrage on the Allied forces concentrated between Verst Post 445 and 448. Although an estimated 1500 artillery rounds were fired into the Allied positions, only two French privates were wounded. Nevertheless,

\(^{22}\)Moore, Mead and Jahns, *op. cit.*, p. 129. One of these platoons was the one commanded by Lt. Jahns.

\(^{23}\)Report of Major Donoghue, ANREF Records, Box 2.
at 10:00 P.M. on the 30th, the Commander of the Railway Front ordered the attack postponed indefinitely, and ordered the Coureurs des Bois to return to the railway. The Bolshevnik shelling continued the following two days, and although casualties were light, the fire was intense and accurate. As a result, the armoured train was forced to withdraw to Verst Post 448, several artillery pieces that had been mounted in railway cars were unloaded and dispersed for protection, and several of the defensive block-houses were evacuated. Thus, the attack on the Railroad Front was not only postponed, but, because of the dispersal of the forces which were to mount the attack, was entirely dissipated.

Despite the failure of the railroad attack on Ple-setskaya, and despite the peril of their position, the Americans in Kodish were ordered by the British commander of the Emp tsa Front to defend Kodish. Although convinced of the futility of this course, the Americans, "... undermined the houses to get warmth and protection, ... built barricades ... and chipped out shallow trenches in the frozen ground," while machine gun fire, shrapnel and cold took an increasing toll. Reinforced by a company of British soldiers of the Liverpool Regiment, the Allies attacked the Bolshevik position at Verst Post 12

24Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 129.
25Ibid., p. 130.
three times without success. Major Donoghue, sensing the inevitable, detached portions of "E" Company to assist the Engineers in strengthening the defensive portions on the north side of the Emptsa River, and, by mid January the Allies had retreated across the river. The Bolsheviks—reoccupied ruined Kodish, knowing that Plesetskaya was secure.

Ust Padenga. As noted previously a small Allied force of American and Russian infantry and Canadian Artillery had pushed up the Vaga River in October to the farthest inland point reached by the Allied expedition and had then retreated to defensive positions at Ust Padenga some fourteen miles south of the Allied-held city of Shenkursk. Since the Allied positions on the Dvina River were dependent upon the retention of control over the Vaga River, this defensive position on the Vaga was regarded by G.H.Q. as vital. Further, since Shenkursk was the second largest city in Archangelsk Province and had become a refuge for members of the intelligentsia and other well-to-do Russians who sought to escape the Bolsheviks, its possession was significant from the viewpoint of Allied prestige, as well as for its strategic importance. The retention of Shenkursk depended upon the defense of Ust Padenga.

Ust Padenga was one of a cluster of villages located

around the junction of the Padenga and Vaga Rivers. The Padenga River issues from the forest on the west side of the Vaga, turns north and parallels the Vaga for about 2/3 of a mile and then turns again to the east and empties into the Vaga. Between the two rivers, where they run parallel, was a clearing. In the southeastern corner of this clearing, close to the woods near the point where the Padenga River emerges, was the village of Nijni Gora, situated on the top of a low hill and almost completely surrounded by an irregular gulley several hundred yards which vanished into the forest. Across the clearing to the east lay the village of Ust Padenga which, like Nijni Gora, was south of the intersection of the two rivers. North of that intersection lay the village of Visorka Gora, the main Allied position.

Although these three villages formed the main defensive outpost on the Vaga River, the position was not a strong one. The village of Nijni Gora was too close to the forest to prevent surprise and was too far forward of the main positions to permit safe evacuation of its garrison across the exposed clearing under fire. The village of Ust Padenga, although having the advantage of clearing all around it, nevertheless, could not effectively be defended if Nijni Gora was lost. The main position in Visorka Gora was somewhat stronger, being on a hill overlooking the exposed clearing through which an attack was most likely
to come, but the edge of the forest was close to the village, and the danger of envelopment through the forest was apparent. In addition, Visorka Gora, like the other two villages, was exposed to Bolshevik artillery fire which, as usual, outranged the guns of the Allies. As one of the survivors put it, "The place had no particular advantage and several disadvantages, but we were not here in pursuance of any clearly defined idea or tactical plan. It just happened." All they knew was that they had orders "to hold this front at all costs."

The Allied force defending Ust Padenga was composed of about 260 Americans of "A" Company and the 310th Engineers, 9 Canadian artillerymen, an English signal company, a company of Russian infantry and some Russian artillerymen. For artillery support, there were two 18-pounders, one one-pounder and one pom pom gun. Both of the latter two were manned by Russians, while the 18-pounders were manned by the Russians and the Canadians on an alternating basis. Barbed wire was strung, block houses and dugouts were constructed and fire lanes were cleared.

General Ironside personally inspected the positions

27Ironside, op. cit., p. 99.
28Dorothy York, op. cit., p. 75.
29Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 135.
30Diary of the 68th Battery, p. 36.
at Ust Padenga on 15 January and although he decided pri-
vately that the position was vulnerable to envelopment, he
found the British Commander of the Vaga Column, Colonel
Graham, and the American Commander at Ust Padenga, Captain
Odjard, confident of their defenses. 31 However, rumors of
an impending attack multiplied, and Bolshevik patrols were
frequent and bold. The refusal of Russian troops to man the
defenses in Nijni Gora added to the general jitteriness as
the 47 Americans of the fourth platoon of "A" Company moved
into the village on 18 January to take their places. 32

At dawn on the 19th, Bolshevik artillery opened a
ferocious bombardment of all three villages. Their guns,
positioned deep in the forest on the opposite side of the
Vaga, were well beyond the range of the Allied artillery
pieces. The attack concentrated on Nijni Gora, and shortly
after the bombardment commenced the Americans could make out,
in the faint light of the Arctic morning, hundreds of dark-
clad enemy soldiers emerging from the forest and advancing
toward their positions. Although the Americans peppered
them with rifle and machine gun fire, the range was too
great to have any real effect, and the Bolsheviks continued
their slow, ponderous advance through the deep snow. Sud-
denly, the artillery barrage lifted and hundreds more

32 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 135.
Bolshevik soldiers clad in white smocks arose from the concealment of the gulley which surrounded Nijni Gora and advanced in "perfect attack formation" across the few remaining yards that separated them from the Allied positions. Although the Americans tore gaping holes in the advancing lines with frenzied rifle and machine gun fire, the weight of the Bolshevik numbers carried the advance forward, and their fire inflicted numerous casualties on the defending Americans. The American platoon commander, Lieutenant Mead, soon realized the hopelessness of his position and telephoned the American commander at Visorka Gora to ask for artillery fire to cover his withdrawal. However, the Russians, whose turn it was to man the guns, had deserted them.33

Despite desperate acts of individual heroism by the defenders, the Bolshevik attack forced the Americans back through the streets of the village and toward the eight hundred yards of open plain, waist deep in snow, that lay between Nijni Gora and Visorka Gora. To make matters worse, Bolshevik snipers concealed in the woods along the edge of the plain began to fire on the American flank as they floundered through the snow "in mad desperation"34 toward the safety of the main position.

33Ibid., p. 136.
34Ibid., p. 137.
One by one, man after man fell wounded or dead in the snow, either to die from the grievous wounds or terrible exposure. The thermometer stood about forty-five degrees below zero and some of the wounded were so terribly frozen that their death was as much due to exposure as enemy bullets. Of this entire platoon of forty-seven men, seven finally succeeded in gaining the shelter of the main position uninjured.35

The Russian gunners at Visorka Gora, forced to return to their guns at pistol point, fired forward on the recently evacuated village of Nijni Gora and westward into the forest where Bolshevik troops had circled to the flank of the main Allied positions and were pouring a galling rifle and machine gun fire into those positions.36 Under the rather inadequate cover of this fire, rescue parties brought in four dead and fifteen wounded Americans but the remainder were unaccounted for. Finally, as the afternoon wore on, the Bolshevik shelling ceased and their infantry showed no inclination to cross the open spaces so recently and so bloodily traversed by the Americans. As night fell, the American commander recalled the Russian company which had held Ust Padenga and sought to further strengthen the defenses of the one remaining village.37 As Bolshevik prisoners later reported, over 900 Bolsheviks had participated in the attack on Nijni Gora, which had all but annihilated

35Ibid.

36York, op. cit., p. 80.

37Ibid., pp. 80-81.
the American defenders. For the moment, the Bolsheviks were satisfied with that.

At dawn on the following day, the Bolshevik artillery bombardment resumed, and the Allied artillery, now manned once more by the hastily summoned Canadians, returned the fire as best it could. For two days, the Bolsheviks pounded the village with artillery fire and set forward wave after wave of infantry against Visorka Gora but the Canadian gunners, firing over open sights poured shrapnel into the advancing enemy, thus "breaking up attack after attack." Two days later, the Bolsheviks, apparently unaware that Ust Padenga had been evacuated, advanced across the open plains to attack that deserted village. Allied rifle, machine gun and artillery fire dropped "hundreds" into the snow, but the Bolsheviks completed their occupation of the village and turned their full attention to the remaining Allied positions at Visorka Gora.

By evening on the 22nd, when Bolshevik incendiary shells had set fire to two Allied blockhouses, the order came to retreat. Leaving behind one gun which the Russian

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38 Diary of the 68th Brigade, p. 38.
39 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 137.
40 Ibid.
gunners had abandoned by the roadside, the Allies staggered down the trail toward Shenkursk. At one point, they found that the enemy had bypassed them and had taken up positions on both sides of the river, barring their way. However, after dark on the night of the 23rd, they worked silently through the Bolsheviks, who apparently mistook them for part of the large Bolshevik formation being concentrated for an attack on Shenkursk.

Early on the morning of the 24th, the weary Allied soldiers arrived in a village of Spasskoe, four miles southwest of Shenkursk where, after three hours sleep, they set out to form a defensive line against the oncoming Bolsheviks. The one remaining Canadian 18-pounder was emplaced to fire in an arc of 360 degrees, and the weary, half starved, half frozen Allied soldiers entrenched themselves as best they could along the edge of the bluff on which the village stood. From the tower of the local church, the

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41 The Canadian gunners, unable to get the gun back on the road, and having only enough of the starved or weakened Russian ponies to pull the other gun, disabled it but sent the breech block to their commander in Shenkursk by special messenger to assure him that they had not sullied the CFA reputation for never having lost a gun to the enemy. "Diary of the 67th Battery," p. 38, and D. York, op. cit., p. 86.

42 Moore, Mead and Jahns, op. cit., p. 139. See also York, p. 91.

43 The gun rescued from Ust Padenga had been sent into Shenkursk and had been replaced with one sent out from that city, "Diary of the 68th Battery," p. 36.
pursuing Bolsheviks, perhaps 2000 in all, could be seen spreading northward across the plain toward Spasskoe and Shenkursk.

The Bolsheviks seemed to be in no hurry, however, and after their artillery sought out and destroyed the Canadian artillery piece, they were free to stay beyond the range of Allied machine gun and rifle fire and pound the village to pieces. The Bolshevik fire killed the Canadian artillery commander, Captain Mowat, wounded the American infantry commander, Captain Odjard, and rained shells down on the other Allied soldiers who were as helpless as the lone Allied airplane, sent out from Archangel, which hummed ineffectively overhead. In such circumstances, retreat was the only remaining alternative and by nightfall on the 24th the weary survivors of Ust Padenga dragged themselves into Shenkursk which was, itself, already under Bolshevik artillery fire.

Shenkursk. As we have seen, Shenkursk was an important city, whose possession was regarded by both sides as an indication of how the war was going. Its many substantial buildings made it especially valuable for billeting troops in the winter. The Allies, as was their custom, had fortified it with numerous blockhouses and other strong points, and had accumulated a large quantity of stores.

44 York, op. cit., p. 94.
Colonel Stewart reported that,

The defenses of Shenkursk were good. . . . The garrison consisted of about seventeen hundred men supplied for two months but the enemy was advancing . . . with a combined force of about six thousand men and no reinforcements were available . . . if besieged there would be no facilities for relieving the situation until the opening of navigation on the Dvina and Vaga Rivers in June.

As a result, when enemy shells began falling in the city, the British Commander of the Dvina River Front, Lieutenant Colonel Graham, ordered the evacuation of the city. The evacuation had to be carried out in great secrecy because a party of 200 Bolshevik troops was reported to be astride the main evacuation route, and the city was almost completely surrounded. At 1:30 A.M. on the morning of 25 January, the Allied forces began to evacuate Shenkursk along a little-known logging trail which rejoined the main escape route some twelve miles beyond the Bolshevik party. Moving silently with talking and smoking prohibited, the Allied force stretched out for over a mile with horses pulling artillery sleighs and carrying the wounded while the soldiers plodded along on foot. Somehow, the twenty mile march north to the village of Shegovari was completed, without incident, by 2:30 P.M., even though 150 Partisans and 350 refugees had swollen the column to well over 2000.

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45 Report of the Expedition to the Murman Coast, Records of the ANREF, Box 2.

46 Ibid.
All of the supplies accumulated in Shenkursk had to be abandoned, however, because they could not be carried, and because their destruction would have alerted the Bolsheviks to the fact that the Allies were evacuating the city.\(^{47}\)

Although the withdrawal was completed in good order, the abandonment of these supplies and the knowledge that more than 3000 Bolshevik troops were close behind caused the Allied troops to evacuate Shegovari for Vistavka, ten miles farther north, where they took up defensive positions with more than a little apprehension. However, although they could not have known it at the time, the successful attack of Siberian White Russians on the town of Perm in the rear of the Bolshevik army attacking the Vaga River force, distracted the attention of that army and probably saved the Vaga River force from another, perhaps decisive, major attack.\(^{48}\)

**Bolshieozerkie.** During the months of February and March, activities were, for the most part, limited to patrol skirmishes and artillery exchanges. On 7 February, Allied forces under Major Donoghue again attacked Kodish and although they captured the village and pushed nine miles beyond, they were counterattacked and forced to

\(^{47}\)Notes from the War Diary of British Hq., Archangel, ANREF Records, Box 3.

\(^{48}\)Ironside, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
return to their original positions. On 9 March, the Bolsheviks launched a major attack against the Allied positions in Vistafka, preceded by a massive artillery barrage which included tear gas shells. Although the attack was repulsed, the Canadian artillery commander reported that if the enemy had, "at any time, summoned up sufficient courage to rush any position, weight of numbers would have carried him to victory." Not wishing to await another attack, the Allies withdrew to Kitsa, a few miles further north.

The last major battle prior to the withdrawal of the American troops from North Russia took place during late March and early April around the village of Bolshieozerkke, which, as we have seen, was an important outpost on the road connecting the Obozerskaya on the Railroad Front with Chekuevo on the Onega Front. On 17 March, the Bolsheviks attacked the village and either killed or captured the entire garrison of fifty French and Russians, together with a patrol of Americans from Chekuevo. The capture of Bolshieozerkke severed the connection between the two Allied Fronts.

The Allied commander on the Onega Front gave orders for a patrol to advance cautiously toward Bolshieozerkke to determine the situation. Advancing to less than a mile of

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49 Report of the Expedition to the Murman Coast (Report of Major Holland), ANREF Records, Box 2.

50 Diary of the 68th Brigade, p. 42.

51 Ibid.
Bolshieozerkie on 18 March, the patrol was fired upon by "five or six" machine guns at once. The horses drawing their sleighs bolted, and the members of the patrol were thrown into the snow. They managed to escape with their lives only because the Bolsheviks' "high shooting" enabled them to withdraw through the deep snow on their hands and knees.⁵²

Reports that the Bolsheviks had occupied Bolshieozerkie with 1500 men led the commanders on both fronts to adopt a more cautious approach. A patrol of 300 British and 70 Americans advanced eastward from the Onega Front toward Bolshieozerkie on 23 March, but was stopped by heavy machine gun fire outside that village. A second attempt was made on 2 April, but was also repulsed with heavy battle and numerous cases of frostbite and fatigue.⁵³ A strong patrol also set out westward from Obozerskaya on the Railroad Front toward Bolshieozerkie but, upon nearing that village, found itself under attack from the rear as well as from the front. Cut off and fighting for survival, this patrol of Americans, French Foreign Legion and Russians beat off the Bolshevik attacks with point blank artillery barrages and concentrated machine gun and rifle fire. Reinforcements from Obozerskaya fought their way through

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⁵² Report of the Expedition to the Murman Coast (Extract from War Diary of "H" Company), ANREF Records, Box 2.

⁵³ Ibid. (Report of Lieutenant Colonel Morrison)
to the beleaguered patrol and assisted them in building blockhouses and other defensive positions.

At 3:30 A.M. on the morning of 1 April, the reinforced Allied patrol east of Bolshieozerkie was attacked from front and rear by two Bolshevik regiments. Although repulsed in their first attempt, the Bolsheviks returned to the attack several times during the day but broke off the action as night fell. On 2 April, the Bolsheviks initiated a heavy artillery barrage in preparation for an assault, but the Allied counter fire was so intense that the Bolshevik artillery was partially silenced and the attack that followed was weak and easily beaten off. By 3 April, the commander of the embattled patrol was able to report "no enemy activity during the day." Bolshevik deserters came across to the Allied lines in large numbers with reports of heavy casualties, mutiny and intense suffering from the cold and, by 5 April, the Bolsheviks had withdrawn from Bolshieozerkie. The Allies entered from both the east and the west, and reestablished contact between the Onega and the Railroad Fronts.

54Ibid. (War Diary, "M" Company, 339th Infantry)
CHAPTER VIII

WITHDRAWAL

Although the military situation remained relatively stable after the retreat from Shenkursk, the Allies regarded the situation as extremely precarious. The American Charge in Archangel cabled the acting Secretary of State that:

The military situation of American and Allied troops in Northern Russia is considered by most officers to be very unsatisfactory. . . . We are more and more and more put on the defensive, subjected to more and more frequent attacks and bombardment suffering many casualties. . . .

General Ironside sought to hold his tiny force together, but even he could see that "we were drawing terribly near to the end of our tether as an efficient fighting force."2

In the United States, debate over the intervention raged in Congress. While some senators reviewed the anti-German reasons, others advanced the more up-to-date anti-Bolshevik reasons. In January, 1919, Senator Johnson of California observed that the Czech Legion was still fighting in Russia, while Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska remarked that most of the reasons for the intervention were

1PR 1919 Russia, p. 607.

2Ironside, op. cit., p. 114.
not longer operative.3 The New York Times commented editorially that while "Senator Hitchcock sufficiently explained to the Senate why we had sent troops to Russia . . . he was not so fortunate in explaining why we had sent so few."4 Arguments for withdrawal became more frequent, and, on March 29th, the American Chargé was informed that President Wilson had approved the withdrawal of American troops "when spring conditions permit."5

In Britain, also, concern over the situation was expressed at all levels. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Henry Wilson, noted that the reasons for which the expedition had been despatched had either disappeared or, in the case of the projected linkup with the Czechs, "could not be realized."6 Accordingly, General Wilson pointed out "the urgent necessity of coming to a decision on the policy to be adopted without delay," and recommended that General Maynard's forces in Murmansk be reinforced to ensure the retention of that warm-water port as

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3All Congressional remarks are from the Congressional Record, 57, Part 2, pp. 1101-1171, as quoted in L. I. Strakhovsky, American Opinion About Russia: 1917-1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 94.


5FR 1919 Russia, p. 622.

6Memorandum to the Secretary of the War Cabinet, dated 2 January, 1919, quoted in The Evacuation of North Russia, p. 8.
an exit for Allied troops should their situation worsen beyond its "present unsatisfactory condition."?

In February, the Imperial General Staff submitted an "appreciation" of the situation on the Archangel Front which pointed out that the Allied forces on that front were outnumbered 18,325 men to 22,700 men by the Bolshevik Sixth Army which had increased "80 per cent [over] . . . estimates of two months ago." Subsequent papers expressed similar concern over the apparently deteriorating situation and urged the dispatch of fresh troops to relieve the "tired, dispirited, home-sick and . . . mutinous" troops of General Ironside's command. Accordingly, the Secretary of State for War was authorized to raise a relief force of about 8000 men composed of four battalions of infantry with supporting elements of artillery, engineers, machine gun units and service troops. Shortly afterwards, on 4 April, 1919, the War Office transmitted to General Ironside a message which he was requested to pass on to his British troops. Noting their "discipline and dogged British fighting qualities," and urging them to "carry on like Britains [sic] fighting for dear life and dearer honour," the message informed the British troops that they would be relieved and "be back home in time to see this year's harvest

7Ibid., p. 20.
8Ibid., p. 23.
gathered in." This, together with the earlier announcement of the American withdrawal, meant the beginning of the end of the Allied intervention.

The withdrawal of the North Russian expeditionary forces having been decided upon, the British, who regarded themselves as "the Mandatory of the Allies in respect to North Russia," sought to determine the exact way in which this difficult and dangerous mission was to be carried out. Because they felt an obligation to the North Russians who had supported the Allied cause, the British decided that the best course of action would be to furnish the material and training necessary to raise the North Russian military forces to a level of efficiency where they could support the North Russian Government against the Bolsheviks after the withdrawal of the Allied troops. Such a course also would provide the necessary military cover for the evacuation of Allied troops in the face of an aggressive enemy. Therefore, the British General Staff regarded three actions to be essential to the successful conclusion of the North Russian expedition:

(a) To strike a sharp and successful blow at the Bolshevik forces before the departure of the Allied troops;
(b) To organize and train an efficient force of Russians to defend the area liberated from the Bolsheviks; and, in addition, if the stability of the North Russian Government is to be assured, it is necessary:

\[\text{\cite{ibid., p. 27.}}\]
\[\text{\cite{ibid., p. 33.}}\]
To effect a real and permanent junction between the North Russian forces and the right wing of Kolchak's Siberian Army. The organization of "an efficient force of Russians," however, promised to present formidable problems.

From the earliest days of the Allied intervention, the development of an effective, loyal Russian army was the goal of the Allied High Command. President Chaikovsky of the Provisional Government was an ardent old revolutionary, but knew nothing of military matters. His years of revolutionary activities in prewar Russia led him to hold the Bolsheviks in complete contempt, and although General Ironside endeavored to convince him that "force would be necessary to defeat the Bolsheviks," he had no plan of action for the protection of his shaky regime. Chaikovsky's two military advisers, General Samarine and Colonel Douroff were, perhaps, slightly more knowledgeable militarily, but were also men of inaction. Upon General Ironside's request, a more reliable Russian general, General Marousheffsky, was sent to Archangel from the Western front, arriving on 17 November, 1918.

Enthusiastic about what a self-sufficient Russian military force could do, General Marousheffsky convinced Chaikovsky that conscription was necessary. The Provisional Government adopted his recommendation, and a very simple

\[\text{\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 10.}\]
selection method was developed. The conscription officials would visit each village in the Province, and all men were ordered to appear. After a brief medical examination, all those within the prescribed age limits were ordered to report to the barracks in Archangel. Although the General reported to Ironside that none of those conscripted failed to appear, as we have seen, his first effort to parade the conscripts resulted in a mutiny which had to be put down by American and other Allied troops.\(^\text{12}\)

As time passed, and Russian units were formed, these units undertook the training of other Russian conscripts. Many of the officers were former officers and non-commissioned officers of the tsarist armies but the revolution had produced a great fear in them. Nevertheless, despite the "terrible hopelessness" that General Ironside had seen in their eyes, the number of "loyal" Russians under arms rose from 2650 in early January to 17,341 by 5 April, and to 22,000 by the end of June.\(^\text{13}\)

General Miller, a former tsarist army commander (despite his unRussian name), arrived in Archangel in early February, where he was appointed to the post of Governor General in the Provisional Government. By virtue of his

\(^{12}\)See above, pp. 122, 123.

\(^{13}\)ANREF Records, Box 2 (Strength Returns) and "Evacuation of North Russia," p. 13.
seniority, General Miller took over as the top Russian leader in North Russia, and his optimism was infectious. Prior to his arrival, White Russian troops had fought effectively against the Bolsheviks in some battles, but the several occasions at Archangel, Kodish and Ust Padenga, when White Russians had refused to fight or had been forced to fight, led the Allied troops to distrust, if not despise, them. Miller's efforts to organize them, together with his infectious enthusiasm for the White Russian cause, led to the development of a more disciplined force. The organization of White Russian soldiers into units led by British and French officers improved their effectiveness, and the news of the successes of the White Russian armies on other fronts raised their morale considerably. Thus, by 30 April, General Ironside was able to report that, although "not highly trained, ... they were better than anything the Bolsheviks could produce."^14

Nevertheless, the unpredictability of these Russian troops was demonstrated at Toulgas on 25 April when 300 men of the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd North Russian Rifle Regiment mutinied and murdered seven of their officers. The mutineers then disappeared into the forest where they joined a Bolshevik force which apparently had been waiting for them. Together, they turned and attacked Toulgas, but were driven

^14Ironside, op. cit., p. 123.
off with heavy casualties by artillery and machine guns manned by the remaining members of the White Russian regiment. It was on this unstable force that the Allied plan for evacuation depended.

General Ironside was informed, on 4 May, 1919, that he was to make the necessary preparations to deliver the "sharp blow" at the Bolshevik forces which would render them incapable of interfering with the Allied evacuation, and which would enable the North Russian forces to link up with Kolchak's army. Ironside's instructions were to strike up the Dvina in the direction of Kotlas, and with the arrival of the first contingent of the relief force under General Grogan on 26 May, Ironside was able to lay his plans with some confidence that they would be successful. In submitting these plans to the War Office for approval, Ironside reported that, "the morale, feeding and equipment of enemy's troops opposed to us on Dvina /sic/ and Vaga are bad," and estimated that, "one operation . . . will open way direct to Kotlas, whole operation taking about 15 days." As he watched the second contingent under General Sadleir-Jackson disembark on 5 June, Ironside was moved to think that these fresh British units "could walk through anything in North Russia."

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15Evacuation of North Russia, p. 36. See also Ironside, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

16Ironsie, op. cit., p. 147.
Despite Ironside's momentary optimism, events soon forced him to take a dimmer view. Following the battle of Bolshieozerkie in April, the American troops had been gradually withdrawn from all fronts and had been concentrated within the inner defenses of Archangel. During June, the majority of the Americans, together with the British troops who had served during the previous winter, were evacuated from Russia on board the transports which had brought the British relief forces. The French troops were evacuated soon after. By the end of July, only a handful of Americans, French and other Allied troops were left in North Russia, and General Ironside's future campaigns were to be dependent upon the British relief forces and his "loyal" Russians.

On 18 June, Ironside learned that Kolchak's central and southern armies had been defeated. He was informed by the War Office that these defeats would probably preclude the planned link up of forces in Kotlas, but Ironside replied that a successful offensive against the Bolsheviks was necessary to ensure the safe evacuation of his troops, whether junction with Kolchak's armies was possible or not. The War Office wired its approval of Ironside's plan, but by 9 July, the Dvina River had fallen to the lowest level ever recorded and the naval flotilla, which was to support

17*Evacuation of North Russia*, p. 37.
the attack with naval gunfire and to provide transport up
the river, was unable to negotiate the river for more than
a few miles. As a result, Ironside was forced to limit his
operations to an attack against Gorodok and Seltsoe along
the Dvina with the objective of "disengaging his forces and
delaying any Bolshevik counter-offensive."\(^{18}\)

To complicate matters for the General, another mutiny
took place on the Dvina Front on 7 July, when 100 men of
the Slavo-British Legion and the Machine Gun Company of the
4th Northern (Russian) Rifle Regiment murdered three of
their British officers and four of their Russian officers
and sought to go over to the Bolshevik side. The mutiny
was suppressed with the help of gun fire from the naval
flotilla on the river. However, on 20 July, Ironside re­
ceived news that a Russian regiment on the Onega Front had
also mutinied and had handed over the entire front to the
Bolsheviks. In addition, an attempted mutiny of the Rus­
sian troops on the Railway Front was narrowly averted by
Polish and British troops.\(^{19}\) It is easy to sympathize
with Ironside's later statement, that he had felt "a dis­
tinct urge to extricate myself and my troops as quickly as
I could."\(^{20}\) Perhaps it was with this thought in mind,

\(^{18}\)Evacuation of North Russia, p. 13.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 14. See also Ironside, op. cit.,
pp. 157-164.

\(^{20}\)Irons ide, op. cit., p. 160.
that General Ironside set out to deliver the blow that would cover the final Allied withdrawal.

August 10th was the date selected to inform the people of Archangel Province that the Allied forces were to be completely withdrawn. The same date was picked for the Allied attack in the belief that news of a great victory would offset the Russians' disappointment over the withdrawal. The attack was indeed a great success, and, by the end of the day, 3000 Bolsheviks were prisoners, many others had been killed or wounded, 18 field guns had been captured, and the Allied forces had advanced 20 miles down the Dvina. The water along that distance was deep enough to enable the naval flotilla to render effective support with gun fire and landing parties, and, after the battle, to mine the river against Bolshevik counter attacks. 21

The success of the Allied attack seemed to assure a stable situation within which the British could withdraw their troops, and 1 September was established as the date on which those on the Archangel Front would board the transports for home. However, General Miller, the Russian Governor General, announced his plan for additional offensive operations which would facilitate the British withdrawal and which would leave the "loyal" Russians in better positions after the British departure. For these reasons, the

21*Evacuation of North Russia*, p. 17.
departure of the British troops from Archangel was delayed until 10 September, although General Miller was informed that these troops could not participate in the new offensive.

General Miller at first expressed his confident intention of regaining Shenkursk, capturing Plesetskaya and reoccupying Onega, but the continuing bad state of morale among the Russian troops on the Dvina caused him to concentrate his efforts on the latter two objectives only. On 29 August, General Miller's soldiers advanced down the Archangel-Vologda Railroad and finally captured Emptsa, together with ten guns and 500 prisoners. The Russians were also successful in their effort to recapture Onega, which they occupied on 10 September in the face of only scattered resistance. These successes elated the Russians, and General Miller discussed with General Ironside his prospects for advancing to Vologda.\(^2\) His suggestion that the British troops should remain to assist him "finish the show" was, however, firmly refused, although General Ironside handed over large quantities of military supplies, including newly arrived tanks. By 23 September, the British had evacuated their front line positions and were concentrated within the inner defenses of Archangel.\(^3\) On the night of 26 September, the entire British contingent was loaded aboard

\(^2\)Ironside, op. cit., p. 182.

\(^3\)Ibid. See also Stewart, op. cit., p. 201.
transports and set sail for home.

The evacuation of Murmansk was delayed because there was no concern over the port freezing as was the case in Archangel and because it was necessary to refit the British river craft for the return voyage home. Because Murmansk was to be evacuated later, the British High Command ordered an offensive southward along the Murmansk Railroad to cover the withdrawal of the British troops. French and British reinforcements were landed at Murmansk and, on 14 September, orders were issued for an advance southward down the Murmansk Railroad. These orders were issued over the signature of the Russian Commander, General Skobelsin so that the success would be viewed as a Russian success and Russian morale boosted accordingly. The attack, supported by an Allied flotilla of small boats operating in Lake Onega, was successful and the Allied forces advanced to a point several miles south of Lijma on the shores of that lake. Over 1000 prisoners were taken in this brief but hard-fought campaign. However, immediately after the attack the order to evacuate the British troops was given, and, by 29 September, the forward positions had been handed over to the Russians and all British troops were withdrawn north of Kandalaksha. By 12 October, the last British forces in North Russia set

24Evacuation of North Russia, p. 18.
sail from Murmansk harbour.

And the Russian people? They saw clearly what would happen—sooner or later—after the Allied withdrawal. Several representatives of the North Russians Zemstvos and Municipalités, gathered at Archangel on 25 August and wrote to President Wilson,

> With your help we created a Russian force which sustains most of the burden in this struggle. . . . The presence of your troops was a moral support to us allowing us to gain time during which the Bolsheviks steadily neared their downfall. We were mistaken. You are recalling those . . . men . . . who came to our assistance in the name of humanity.

. . . And we look into the future with anguish uncertain of our ability to hold out to the end. This is the picture created by the departure of your troops. You plunge us into a multitude of calamities and give new encouragement to the Bolsheviks to mock at the unhappy population. We ask you to believe this cry of despair and pain . . . which is caused by your decision. 25

The Government of the United States regretted "most keenly" its inability to help but expressed its "deep and sympathetic interest in the efforts now being made by the Provisional Government of Northern Russia." 26 Six thousand Russian of various ages, professions and political beliefs were evacuated with the British forces. Those left occupied themselves in different ways with some hoarding gold and food, some joining the growing Bolshevik movement in Archangel, and some denying tomorrow in a frenzied round of

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parties. The White Russian resistance weakened, and, on
February 21st, 1920, Archangel fell to the Red Army. Mur­
mansk fell two days later.

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27 Ironside, op. cit., pp. 176-179. See also David
Footman, Civil War in Russia (London: Faber and Faber,
1961), which contains an authoritative account of events in
North Russia after the evacuation of Allied troops.
At various times during 1918, the need to send troops to North Russia seemed quite clear, although, as we have seen, different people gave different reasons. The British feared "the further efforts which the enemy [the Germans] are certain to put forward on this [the Murman] coast," and Churchill pleaded "above all things" for a reconstitution of the Eastern Front. Generally speaking, the French were chary about sending troops anywhere when the ferocious battles of 1918 were still raging on their soil, and the American military leaders shared this point of view. Nevertheless, both the French and the Americans found reasons for sending troops. The Americans, as President Wilson saw it, were justified in sending troops to guard military supplies, to help the Czecho-Slovaks "consolidate their forces," and to "steady" any Russian efforts at self government. The French embraced these goals but

1For example, Pershing mentions the fact that Ambassador Francis urged the General to support the sending of 100,000 men to Russia in June, 1918, but that he had opposed the idea on the grounds that Germany could only be defeated by destroying the German Army on the Western Front and that intervention in Russia would "simply mean scattering our resources." See J.J. Pershing, My Experience in the World War (Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1931), Vol. II, pp. 149, 176, and 179.
added the rather shadowy requirement "to fight against ruin and anarchy, the consequences of which can extend to ourselves." Many people in all countries—particularly Churchill and Francis—saw a threat in the Bolshevik rise to power that went beyond the fear that they would cooperate with the Germans, and that did not end with the Armistice. The White Russians, for their part, regarded Allied intervention as an absolutely essential part of their fight for a free nation.

What, then, did the North Russian expedition accomplish? Were any of the diverse goals established for it ever achieved? These questions are answered quickly as far as some of the reasons for intervention are concerned. For example, the war supplies which the Allied forces were to have protected were, as we have seen, mostly gone by the time the Allied forces landed. In fact, the American troops attacking up the Dvina River in September, 1918 were fired upon by rapid-fire artillery pieces which had been made in the United States, and markings on the fragments of the shells fired into American positions in Toulgas on Armistice Day revealed that they also had been manufactured

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2 French Foreign Minister Pinchon in an address to the Chamber of Deputies after the war. As quoted in G. A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921* (South Bend: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 73.

3 Moore, Mead and Jahns, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
in the United States.  

The idea that the North Russian expedition could link up with, and somehow save, the Czech Legion was also ephemeral. General Maynard reported that General Poole knew, as early as June, 1918, that the Czechs could not reach the northern ports and, as we have seen, General Poole's instructions gave him no encouragement in this regard. Poole himself reported on 22 September, 1918, that "the enemy was probably too strong to afford us hope of pulling off the 'big thing'" on the Dvina River and that those forces should have reinforced the Railroad Front for the drive on Plesetskaya. General Ironside, although more soberly realistic than Poole, nevertheless thought for a brief moment in June, 1918, as he watched the British reinforcements disembark, that a drive to Kotlas and a link up with Admiral Kolchak's forces was possible. However, the mutiny of Ironside's "loyal" Russian troops soon restored a more pessimistic view. In the early summer of 1919, when the news from Siberia was good, and when it seemed that the Czech Legion would be successful in fighting its way toward Vologda, two White Russian officers were sent east to contact its commander, General Gaida. Neither was

\[4\text{Halliday, op. cit., p. 9.}\]
\[5\text{Maynard, op. cit., p. 26.}\]
\[6\text{Extracts from the Correspondence Files of Allied A.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF Records, Box 1.}\]
ever heard of again, and contacts between the Czechs and the Allied forces never got any closer than this.

As far as efforts to "steady" Russian efforts at self government were concerned, the Allies supported the Provincial Government at Archangel, but it must be said that this government was largely a puppet of the Allies. The American Consul in Archangel reported that the enthusiasm with which the Allies were greeted at the time of their landing in Archangel was "confined to certain classes," and that the "working class was patently absent." ^ Ironside reported that the Provisional Government was "out of touch" with the peasants of the countryside around Archangel, and that these peasants, who were already "Communistic" had no desire to fight the Bolsheviks. ^ However, when Chaikovsky was toppled from power by a coup d'etat in September, 1918, the Allies promptly (and without consulting the people) restored him to power.

The matter of restoring the Eastern Front is a little more difficult to evaluate. The Allied expedition did figure to a certain extent in the activities of the German forces in Finland even though they never actually fought them. The experience of the Germans in withdrawing two corps from the Battle of the Marne is a good measure of the


effect that the presence of General von der Goeltz's 55,000 men in Finland may have had on the Western Front. However, notwithstanding the presence of the Allied expedition in North Russia, these troops were withdrawn to the Western Front as the Germans saw fit. By 2 November, 1918, British intelligence reported that less than 2,000 Germans remained in Finland. In addition, over 40 divisions of German troops were transferred from Southern Russia to the Western Front in the months following the Peace of Brest Litovsk. Although the Allied troops advancing down the Archangel-Vologda railroad in August, 1918, reported (probably erroneously) that they had killed a German officer, and although General Maynard reported that German officers and NCOs had been killed leading White Finns during the battles in Karelia, there is no evidence whatsoever that German units were ever in contact with the Allied North Russian Expeditionary Force or, for that matter, anywhere near it.

The Germans continued their "determined transfer of troops from East to West," but the need to maintain a "certain

9Strakhovsky, Origins, p. 36.
10Extracts from Correspondence Files of Allied A.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF Records, Box 1.
11Ludendorff, op. cit., II, p. 199.
12Notes from the War Diary of British Headquarters, ANREF Records, Box 3.
13Maynard, op. cit., p. 97.
minimum of troops" as occupation forces in Southern Russia probably hurt their war effort in the West far more than the presence of the tiny Allied forces in North Russia.

In addition, at least one of the military reasons for intervention—the need to prevent the Germans from establishing submarine bases around the Murman Peninsula—was refuted by no less an authority than Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the British Admiralty. Sir Eric, who had personally visited the Murmansk and White Sea areas, reported to the Supreme War Council, on 3 July, 1918, that the inhospitality of the country on the northern shore of the peninsula made "any enemy effort entirely out of proportion to the advantage to be gained," and continued that although there were inlets along the western side of the White Sea which could be used as resting places for submarines,

the water is so shallow and the difficulties of navigation so great that this bit of coast, together with the general difficulty of communications from the land side, is considered to be of no value to the enemy as submarine bases.15

Also, General Maynard reported, shortly after his arrival in Murmansk, that the north shore of the Murman Peninsula,


15Annexure (B) to the Proces-Verbaux of the Seventh Session of the Supreme War Council, 2-4 July, 1918, SWC Records.
particularly the port of Pechenga, was utterly unsuited for submarine operations.\textsuperscript{16} Certainly anyone with an eye for logistics could have noted the impossible task the Germans would have faced in providing fuel, torpedoes and other supplies, even if she had been able to secure North Russian ports for her submarines.

Finally, it is necessary to ask why, if restoration of the Eastern Front against the Germans was the main object of the expedition, Allied forces were not withdrawn after the Armistice. First, of course, is the fact that they could not be withdrawn because the port of Archangel was frozen in and because the severe Russian winter made movement of the Allied troops and supplies from the Archangel Front to Murmansk a difficult undertaking. Secondly, any withdrawal of Allied troops would require the protection of an effective covering force and, by November, 1918, the "loyal" Russians had not developed any reliable force capable of such an undertaking. Thirdly, the Allied governments were quite undecided as to what action should be taken. The American government sought to postpone a decision until the Paris Peace Conference should begin,\textsuperscript{17} the British government advocated a continuation of the "occupation" indefinitely,\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16}Maynard, \emph{op. cit.}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{FR 1918 Russia}, Vol. II, p. 570.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.
and the North Russian Provisional Government insisted that "there can be no true end to the war without final liquidation of Bolshevism." In addition, the Allies at all levels felt an obligation to those anti-Bolshevik Russians who had supported the Allied forces. The American Chargé in Archangel, for example, wired the Acting Secretary of State on 22 February, 1919 that it would be "unthinkable" that the Allies should abandon "the people of this region." Finally, the Bolsheviks, not without good reason, had decided, after some hesitation, that the Allied expedition was really an invasion and had mobilized the countryside to repel the "Anglo-French and ... American robbers and executioners." Thus, frozen in, lacking instructions, fearful for the welfare of their Russian allies, and fighting for their lives against an aggressive, determined and increasingly well equipped enemy, the Allied forces remained in North Russia well after the Armistice ended the war on the Western Front.

George Kennan, probably the leading authority on Soviet-Western relations has written that,

19Ibid., p. 571.

20FR 1919 Russia, p. 619.

21From an appeal by Trotsky quoted in the orders (number 167 dated 22 September, 1918) of the Bolshevik Sixth Army, found in British Military Intelligence Summary #23, ANREF Records, Box 1.
The simple fact remains: had a world war not been in progress, there would never, under any conceivable stretch of the imagination, have been an Allied intervention in North Russia. 

No doubt this is true. Kennan also observes that the 500 British and American battle deaths, when compared with the casualties on the Western Front in 1918, make it clear how "trivial in the military sense . . . these skirmishes in North Russia [were] . . . "

No doubt this is true, also. However, Nikita Khrushchev, speaking at a luncheon in his honor at the Twentieth Century Fox Studios in Los Angeles on 19 September, 1959, remarked that the Soviet people remember that in the hard times after the October Revolution, U.S. troops . . . landed on Soviet soil to help the White Guards fight our Soviet system. And they were not the only ones to land. . . .

Your armed intervention in Russia was the most unpleasant thing that ever occurred in the relations between our two countries for we had never waged war against America until then.

It is hard to see how the Allied expedition to North Russia could have appeared as anything other than an anti-Bolshevik crusade to the North Russians, and it is easy to see how the Bolsheviks could look beyond the stated reasons for the Allied intervention and see only a threat to their


23Ibid., p. 90.

already shaky regime. At the time Chicherin's emissary had asked Ambassador Francis if the intervention had been decided upon he informed the Ambassador that the Soviet Government was divided on the matter of resistance to such an intervention. However, by the time of the Armistice, the Bolsheviks were zealously building their forces for the defense of their regime.

Militarily, the North Russian expedition was a failure. It failed to protect the war supplies, it failed to link up with the Czechs, it failed to establish a viable "free" Russian Government and it failed to exert any significant influence on the transfer of German troops to the Western Front. It did, however, bring the Allies into direct conflict with the Bolsheviks. Although General Poole believed to the end of his stay in North Russia that "the plan was good and afforded reasonable hope of success," the strength of the Bolsheviks was too great for the small force of sick, dispirited, ill-equipped, and poorly officered Allied troops. Further, Russia's two great allies, vastness and climate, were no less formidable for the invaders of 1918 than they had been for the invaders of 1812 or were to be for the invaders of 1941. Probably the fact that the

\[25\text{See p. 28 above.}\]
\[26\text{Extracts from Correspondence Files of Allied G.H.Q., Archangel, ANREF records, Box 1.}\]
North Russian Expeditionary Force was not destroyed completely was due to the excellence of General Ironside's leadership and the fact that to the Bolsheviks the North Russian Front was of relatively minor importance. Had the Bolsheviks massed their forces on the Railroad Front, they might have been able to drive up the railroad to Archangel, capture that city, and leave the other fronts to die on the vine. As it was, the military operations were allowed to "peter out" and although nearly 4,000 Allied troops were killed or wounded, no peace was signed because no war had been declared. Without sufficient forces to attain any of the objectives set for it, and without a clear overall view of what these objectives were, the Allied expedition to North Russia was at best a futile campaign which, no doubt, played an important role in the poisoning of Soviet-Western relations.
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