



## Historical Dictionary of the Russian Civil Wars, 1916-1926 (Historical Dictionaries of War, Revolution, and Civil Unrest)

By Jonathan D. Smele



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This book is a detailed reference of the twentieth century struggles that were waged across and beyond the decaying Russian Empire at the end of the First World War, as tsarism and democratic alternatives to it collapsed and the world's first Communist state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was born. At the same time, it is a necessary corrective to studies that have viewed events of the time as a unitary "Russian Civil War" that sprang from the Russian Revolution of 1917. Instead, it contributes to the ongoing process of integrating the civil wars into a "continuum of crises" that wracked the Russian Empire and its would-be successor states across a prolonged period.

The *Historical Dictionary of the Russian Civil Wars, 1916-1926* covers the history of this period through a chronology, an introductory essay, appendixes, and an extensive bibliography. The dictionary section has almost 2,000 cross-referenced entries on individuals, political and governmental institutions and political parties, and military formations and concepts, as well as religion, art, film, propaganda, uniforms, and weaponry. This book is an excellent access point for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more about the Russian Civil War.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

This excellent work by independent scholar and historian Smele offers readers close to 2,000 cross-referenced entries that note individuals as well as government, military, political, religious, media, and various social and arts institutions that played roles in the momentous struggle to destroy the Russian monarchy. The dictionary begins with the author's 60-page essay, which introduces readers to the events that culminated in the civil wars after the fall of the Russian Empire. Readers will acknowledge this was not merely a conflict between the Communist Red Army and the so-called Russian White Army but also a struggle among numerous regional factions and with military interventions from other countries. Included in this two-volume work are three detailed appendixes listing governing institutions, a glossary, and a 40-page bibliography that itself makes this work a major resource for serious researchers, students, and those with a keen interest in Russian-Soviet history. The work's clarity and organization justify its inclusion as a core reference resource in all academic libraries in which the study of Russian history or historic conflicts is part of the curriculum as well as in public libraries maintaining collections in world history.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All academic levels; general readers; professionals/practitioners. (CHOICE)

As part of the Rowman & Littlefield Historical Dictionary series, it is ostensibly written for high school and college students. While that audience does benefit, it also is a valuable addition to Russian scholars and specialists. Of particular note is the comprehensive, historiographic, 60-page essay which introduces this work. This essay details why this work incorporates a longer time frame in which to consider the civil wars and how the wars are more than just the Reds versus the Whites. . . .Recommended, highly so, for any libraries actively collecting in Russian history. (*American Reference Books Annual*)

I suggest you petition your local library to add a copy to its research section as soon as possible. Serious scholars needing a personal copy should put this on their gift list or wish list for their birthday or anniversary. It is that good. The 4-page Reader's Note is an excellent primer on the difficulties of writing and researching this subject due to the usage of a different calendar and the various translation styles. The 38-page bibliography is a treasure trove for anyone wanting more in-depth information. Each of the almost two thousand alphabetical listings is more than just a name and a short definition. The entries are so complete this work could easily be called an encyclopedia instead of a dictionary. Inside each entry are boldface cross references to terms with their own listing in the books. Think hyperlinks on paper, and they are quite useful. When you begin connecting these dots, you will need a lot of notepaper. I have checked numerous entries for accuracies and have found no discrepancies. . . .We can learn from other people's experiences to better prepare ourselves for the emergencies/catastrophes of our lives, and these books are a great place to start. (*Survival Blog*)

#### About the Author

**Jonathan D. Smele** is a widely published historian of revolutionary Russia, the former editor of the journal *Revolutionary Russia* and current co-editor of the Bloomsbury History of Modern Russia series, who has taught at universities in Scotland and England since 1988. His research interests include the Russian civil wars, the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, Russian and early Soviet foreign policy and the history of Siberia.

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