

From Victoria to Vladivostok: Canada's Siberian Expedition, 1917-19 (Studies in Canadian Military History)

Benjamin Isitt



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As the last guns sounded on the Western Front, 4,200 Canadian soldiers, some of them conscripts, travelled from Victoria to Vladivostok to open a new theatre of war in Siberia. Part of the Allied intervention in Russia's civil war, the force sought to defeat Bolshevism, but grim conditions, conflict among the Allies, and local opposition eventually forced Canada to evacuate the troops.

This ground-breaking book brings to life a forgotten chapter in the history of Canada and Russia. Combining military and labour history with the social history of British Columbia, Québec, and Russia, Benjamin Isitt examines how the Siberian Expedition exacerbated tensions within Canadian society at a time when a radicalized working class, many French-Canadians, and even the soldiers themselves objected to Canada's military adventure designed to alter the outcome of the Russian Revolution.

Military historians have tended to write off the Siberian Expeditionary Force as a mere sideshow, an embarrassing episode in the larger context of the First World War. By bringing the story of the expedition to centre stage, Benjamin Isitt illuminates a forgotten chapter in the history of labour radicalism and the complex factors that have shaped foreign policy. The result is a highly readable and provocative work that challenges public memory of the First World War.

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