



An American Naval Diplomat in Revolutionary Russia: The Life and Times of Vice Admiral Newton A. McCully

Charles J. Weeks

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This is the story of one of the most fascinating naval officers of the early twentieth century: Newton McCully, America's most competent analyst of revolutionary Russia. As assistant naval attache in Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War (1904), naval attache in Petrograd during World War I (1914-1918), commander of U.S. naval forces in North Russia (1918-1919), and U.S. State Department special agent assigned to the anti-Bolshevik governments of General A. I. Denikin and Baron Peter Wrangel in South Russia (1920), McCully developed understanding of the disintegrating tsarist empire unrivaled in the American bureaucracy. Unlike most of his American and European colleagues, he spoke Russian fluently and developed a deep affection for the Russian people. McCully's observations and recommendations from inside Russia, detailed in this biography, provide an incisive picture of the confusing and rapidly changing events surrounding the collapse of the Russian monarchy. Also explored in the book is McCully's role as a compassionate humanitarian who sought relief for Russian refugees and even brought seven children to the United States to rear as his own rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the Red Army. On a broader scale, the book examines both the wide-ranging functions of a U.S. naval officer of the period and the relationship between the military and civilian establishments and reaches some unexpected conclusions. It is based on extensive research in archival records and private documents including McCully's Russian diaries and family papers. As a whole, this is an engrossing tale full of the adventures and ethical dilemmas that confronted naval officers who ventured to exotic ports-of-call during compelling times.

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