



# Fugitive Moment: The True Story of and Unsung Hero

*Phil Penningroth*

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## **Fugitive Moment: The True Story of and Unsung Hero** Phil Penningroth

Fugitive Moment tells the true story of an American hero who defied the YMCA and the United States government in order to negotiate the freedom of American and British prisoners of war in Bolshevik Russia. During the First World War, Louis Penningroth volunteered to serve with the YMCA to bring charity, faith, and hope to prisoners of war in Europe. In those days, the Y was one of the premier non-governmental organizations in the world, renowned for its ecumenical and apolitical policies. Under the leadership of evangelist John Mott, the YMCA succored prisoners without bias or favor in most of the warring nations. Soon after WWI, at the height of the Russian Civil War, Britain, France, and the United States landed troops at Murmansk and Archangel in an attempt to overthrow the Bolsheviks. For more than a year, these Allied soldiers fought a series of arctic battles with the Red Army. During this campaign, a number of Allied prisoners were captured. Because Allied governments had broken all diplomatic relations with Russia, these prisoners of war were forgotten and abandoned by their governments. When Penningroth proposed going to Russia to bring relief to the Allied prisoners, John Mott said no, fearing the response from the Allied governments. The Y was no longer apolitical, and Penningroth was forced to choose between his career and his conscience... Based on Louis Penningroth's papers and ten years of research, this "novel history" sheds light on a moment when a man of faith, with the wisdom of a serpent and the gentleness of a dove, braved the wolves of the world to live Christ's admonition to his disciples: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

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