

## The War In Between the Wars: The Continuing Violent Aftermath of World War I

While history books may declare that the Versailles Peace Treaty ended World War I, that is true only in the most limited sense. There were no more major engagements of the German, British and French Armies after the Armistice, but wars, revolutions and political violence continued to roil Europe and set up the conditions in which Nazism and the Third Reich developed. The following excerpts from *War Comes to God's House* give a brief overview of that very complex time. They begin just after a brief exploration of post-WWI events in Germany.

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This seems as good a place as any to interject a little more about broader European conditions in the years just after the Versailles Treaty and the setting in which these events in Germany were taking place. I can only offer here the barest outline of world conditions after the War and that unfortunately will tend to minimize their significance. It was not only in Germany that the War did not end with the Armistice. It would be quite accurate to state that the wars, civil strife, and attendant economic collapse, famine, and disease that lay in the shadow of the War easily exceeded the official toll of the 1914-1918 War.

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia alone far exceeded that toll, and that was only one of many. Several nations that had been submerged under the Russian Empire strove for independence after the collapse of the Czarist regime; most of those nationalist revolutions were ruthlessly suppressed by the Soviet Red Army, intent on forcing their 'workers paradise' upon everyone.

Hungary was separated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the treaty table and it fell into civil war as Bolsheviks declared a Soviet Hungarian state allied to Soviet Russia. Austria, having also lost its ruling monarchy, fell into anarchy for a time. The Turkish Empire, another defeated ally of Germany, was dissolved with resulting chaos and scramble for independence by some nations and new empire by others.

Poland and several other nations that had been absorbed by the German, Austrian, and Russian Empires at the end of the Napoleonic era were 'restored' by the Versailles Treaty masterminds - but that didn't make it fact. A major (but strangely little known) war, with millions of troops and hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded, ensued between Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Soviet Russia in 1919 and 1920. Whose fault it was is an irrelevant question in a situation of such complexity as that. The fact most important to our story is that a notoriously brutal Soviet Red Army, under "Jew" Leon Trotsky, was threatening to plow through Poland and into practically defenseless Germany.

It was well known that the Bolsheviks believed Germany to be on the brink of all out revolution and they fully expected to drag it into their revolutionary empire and, from there, launch the final assault on western Europe's capitalist states. By what the Polish people saw as nothing short of a miracle however, the Soviets were defeated. They pulled back to Russia shaking their fists to the west and promising to return; and they did, less than twenty years later.

In another of the classic examples of the difference between intelligence and wisdom, the German military had smuggled Lenin and other Bolshevik Communist leaders

back into Russia from hiding in exile. They succeeded in fomenting revolution, exactly as the General Staff had hoped. The practical, ordered minds of the German General Staff, however, could not conceive of the lure of the Bolshevik's improbable utopia to a war weary, chaotic, lost and disillusioned Europe.



Lenin, head the Bolshevik wing of the Communist party, went from obscure intellectual to the dictator of Soviet Russia. Many later dictators learned their art from him.

The First Communist International, called by Lenin early in 1919, boldly declared all out war on the capitalist western

world. The western allies were wise enough to recognize the threat and fight it, but not dedicated enough to achieve victory. The Communists were.



The Allies committed limited numbers of troops and a naval blockade to destroy Soviet Communism.

They also aided the White Russian counter-revolutionaries as depicted in this Soviet cartoon, above.

On paper, the Allied Powers and the White Russians should have easily defeated the Soviet revolutionary forces early on, but they were poorly organized and led. The Bolsheviks, though small in number originally, were extremely dedicated and found a surprisingly able commander in Leon Trotsky. The Red Army grew exponentially as the western allies and White Russians faded and eventually gave up the effort.

Part of their weakness was that the White Russians were united only as anti-Red and had differing loyalties – some to the Kerensky government established by the Russian parliament after the Czar's abdication and recognized by the Allied governments, some to the Czarist Regime in exile, some to local independence movements, some only to themselves.

Lenin's boast of a “Three Million Man Army” coming soon to a city near you (below) may have been an exaggeration to dishearten opposition, but the “Red Menace” was quite real and taken seriously in every land in its path.



To their great credit, the Polish lines held at the battle of Warsaw – a battle likened then to the Battle of Tours where Charles Martel threw back the advancing hordes of Islam from France. Unfortunately though, unlike Tours, it was not the last battle, and gained only a short respite for Poland. Also unfortunate, was that Poland used its newfound freedom and military power in border wars with its neighbors.

Only two decades later Soviet forces would once again invade Poland. Only this time Germany had already destroyed Polish military power in their attack from the west before Russia attacked from the east. The German attack on Poland was the official beginning of World War Two. Of course, one could say that WWI had never really ended.



*Polish forces await the onslaught of the Red Army*



The Bolsheviks were quite up front in what they intended for the hated land owning “squires” of Poland.

Trotsky's ruthless success easily made him the most hated and feared man in Europe (r); and an easy target for antisemitism; along with Grigori Zinoviez, another of the Party's 'Big Seven' and chief propagandist.

Despite his success in saving and expanding the Communist Revolution, Trotsky was betrayed, exiled, and assassinated. Zinoviev was executed after a 'show trial'.



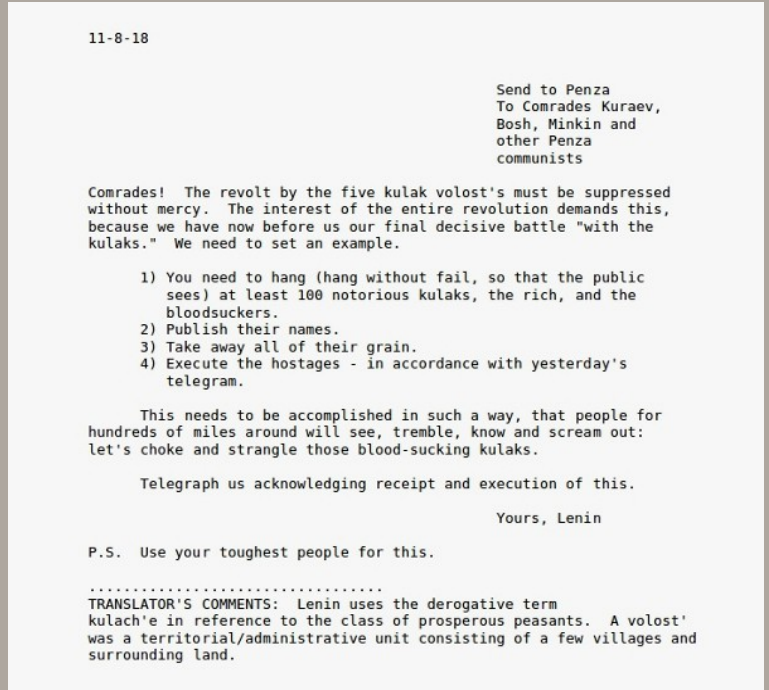
Nothing motivates a soldier to fight so well as a threat to home and family; and the Polish were fighting for their home turf.

Fear of Communism, or Bolshevism as it was variously known became a driving force in German politics, and justifiably so I might add.

In the years after World War I, the Russian Revolution and the Soviets' brutal rise to power decimated Russia. Estimates of the cost in human life to create the first "Socialist Worker's Paradise" range up to thirty million. The dead included not only those who were killed in the fighting, but executions of unknown numbers of priests, Christian laity, the "bourgeoisie" and anyone remotely suspected of potential disloyalty.

Then there were millions of landowning peasants, the kulaks, deliberately starved, and countless deaths attendant to the forced relocation of unruly ethnic populations, and deaths of forced laborers from harsh conditions and overwork.

The short term opening up of the Soviet Union's secret files under Boris Yeltsin give a glimpse into the early days of the Soviet Union. The Library of Congress has made available online translations of much of that information (*Revelations from the Russian Archives*), including this letter from Lenin to some of his local henchmen.



There were thousands of such messages issued during the glory days of the Bolshevik Revolution and the early Soviet Union. Hell holds no greater fury than is found in middle class, privileged Marxist revolutionaries.

Churchill had this to say about Lenin: *“Implacable vengeance, rising from a frozen pity in a sensible, matter-of-fact, good-humored integument! (i.e. a disguise) His weapon logic; his mood opportunistic. His sympathies cold and wide as the Arctic Ocean; his hatreds tight as the hangman's noose. His purpose to save the world; his method to blow it up.”* (Brown and MacDonald, p-57)

I can't describe Lenin, and his Marxist/Communist/National Socialist peers up to and including today's, so eloquently. I would say it this way – A sham of pity for the poor and down trodden and a burning hatred for the prosperous and powerful based more upon envy than righteous indignation. Every socialist dictator seems to end up in the former evil regime's palaces enjoying opulence and power unheard of even by emperors – though some hypocritically appear in public in simple peasant dress.

Even as Soviet Russia writhed in its own self imposed agony, the Soviet system was sending out its agents organizing, infiltrating, sabotaging, whitewashing its evil with hired “journalists”, making straight the path for future conquests. As an example, the American Communist “Journalist” John Reed, subject of the highly acclaimed movie “Reds” was revealed in the released Kremlin documents to have been well paid for his services to the Revolution.

Despite the Soviet propaganda, the depredations of Communism were well known in Germany, and nowhere better than at Bethel which served as a haven for refugees from the Soviet horror, most notably the “Volga Orphans”, ethnic German children who had lost their families in their expulsion from Soviet Russia.

A touching demographic anomaly occurred at Bethel in 1921. The birth dates of many of the Volga orphans were unknown, so the boys were given “Uncle Fritz’s” birthday, and the girls his sister Frieda’s.

The German Left never recognized or admitted that there was a 'Red Menace'; doubtless because they knew on which side of the Red rifle barrel they would be standing.



The upper and middle classes, Protestant and Catholic churchmen and many others in Germany realized the danger, however; and increasing fear and distrust along nationalist/traditionalist and socialist/internationalist lines developed. Knowing that many people throughout your nation and community would happily see you killed is a hard thing to live with.