THE CIVIL WAR IN RUSSIA
A WIDER PERSPECTIVE
INTRODUCTION

The conditions for civil war in revolutionary Russia had existed since at least the failed Kornilov coup in the summer of 1917. And these conditions had been reinforced by Lenin’s repeated calls for armed insurrection which had divided the Soviets. After the events of 26 October 1917 many of the senior officer corps, who had served in the Imperial Russian Army and remained in post after the February Revolution, now resigned their commissions. Some fled to Pskov near the Estonian border where the ousted Kerensky was temporarily based. Some, like General Yudenich, fled to Finland where they began to organise armed opposition to the Bolsheviks in northern Russia, others headed east to Siberia, while yet others went to Cossack strongholds in the Caucasus and in south-west Russia and Ukraine. In Novocherkassk in the Caucasus, General Kaledin, military leader of the Don Cossacks, formed a Volunteer Army. He was joined by Generals Kornilov and Denikin after they escaped from imprisonment for their roles in the attempted coup of September 1917. They were also joined by General Mikhail Alekseev, who had been Chief-of-Staff under Alexandr Kerensky.

The first test of the resolve of the Bolsheviks to defend the October Revolution occurred on 13 November 1917 when troops loyal to Kerensky and under the command of General Krasnov launched an attack on Petrograd from Pskov but were defeated by Red Guards at Pulkovo Heights, a range of hills just south of the capital.

Revolutionary Russia was polarised. The Bolsheviks’ power came from their support amongst soldiers and workers in the north west of the country. Many of the military units in the south and south east of Russia had remained loyal to the Provisional Government. The sailors of the Baltic Fleet had supported action against the Provisional Government in October but the Kronstadt Soviet was dominated by the Left-wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries (Left SRs). Other political parties, particularly the SRs also had rural power bases amongst the peasants. In such circumstances unifying the nation under a Bolshevik or even a left-wing coalition government would be a major task.
The election to the Constituent Assembly was still several days away when the Bolsheviks used their substantial majority in the All Russia Congress of Soviets to establish a new Central Executive of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets. On this the Bolsheviks had 62 seats, the Left SRs 29 and 10 seats for Mensheviks and the right SRs. The Central Executive then established a new government. It was called the Sovnarkom (SNK), otherwise known as the Council of People’s Commissars. The name had been chosen by Trotsky to avoid using Bourgeois terms like ‘Minister’ or ‘Cabinet’. The first SNK were all Bolsheviks with Lenin as Chairman and Trotsky as Commissar for War and Foreign Affairs. This reflected Lenin’s desire to quickly establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Left SRs argued for a broader coalition government of all the socialist parties. The minority within the Bolshevik leadership who had opposed Lenin’s call for armed insurrection now supported the Left SR’s position. They resigned from the Sovnarkom on 4 November. At this point Lenin changed his position. Still opposed to a broad socialist coalition he accepted the possibility of a coalition with the Left SRs as long as the Bolsheviks retained a majority on the SNK. He realised that if the proletariat was to get the support of Russia’s peasants then it would be necessary to recognise that the Left SRs could rely on significant peasant support. On 7 December four Left SRs joined the Sovnarkom.
The new government was faced by a major economic and political crisis. It was winter, and there was no coal to heat homes or run factories. Unemployment was high and cities and towns along the main railway routes were full of deserters returning from the front. The nationalities within the old Russian Empire were clamouring for some kind of independence or greater autonomy. As in Tsarist Russia and under the Provisional Government food shortages were severe in the urban areas and the Sovnarkom resorted to the same policies as their predecessors: rationing and, in 1918, forced requisitioning of surplus grain. This may have enabled the government to feed the army and the industrial proletariat but it also drove many peasants into supporting the anti-Bolshevik movement - ‘the Whites’.

In October the daily bread ration in Petrograd was 300gms, 150gms by January 1918 and down to 50gms by February. This was equivalent to one-tenth of a loaf per person.


Historical Context
In the absence of any serious resistance from the Russian army the armies of the Central Powers rolled into Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic States. The new Soviet Russia quickly lost access to a quarter of its territory, 45 per cent of its population, one-third of its agricultural produce and 75 per cent of its coal and iron production. Inevitably this made the ongoing economic and social crisis even worse. Trotsky was reported as saying that "the Bolsheviks were compelled to ‘plunder all Russia’ in order to satisfy the army’s basic needs." [E. Wollenberg, The Red Army, 1938 pp.110-111]

Trotsky, as Commissar for War, began to form a new Soviet army to defend the country but this took time and was not popular with some in the Bolshevik Party and the Left SRs. In their view a citizens’ militia - the Red Guard - was more appropriate for a socialist state and, indeed, had successfully defended Petrograd from Kerensky’s counter-offensive.

The German High Command on the Eastern Front gave the Soviet government an ultimatum: peace if they ceded Poland, Finland, the Baltic States and much of Ukraine to Germany. Trotsky favoured a delaying tactic in the hope that Revolution in Germany would overthrow the Kaiser’s government. Lenin argued for accepting the ultimatum and negotiating a peace to buy time.
A ceasefire had been agreed between Russian and German troops on 21 November 1917 (Julian Calendar still in use in Russia) or 4 December (in the Gregorian Calendar in more general use). A wider ceasefire for 30 days, involving all of the Central Powers, was agreed on the next day. A ceasefire is a temporary cessation of hostilities and during this time the forces of the Central Powers were not withdrawn from the front. Negotiations for an armistice (a permanent end to military hostilities) began at Brest-Litovsk and were concluded on 2 December (15\textsuperscript{th}). This was intended to pave the way for the negotiation of a peace treaty.
On 9 December (22\textsuperscript{nd}) negotiations for a separate peace between Germany and Russia began. The Bolshevik leadership was split. On one side were those, led by Bukharin, who argued for continuing to fight on in support of the revolutionary comrades in Germany. A larger group favoured accepting Germany’s severe terms for peace, believing that a negotiated peace would be temporary. Some like Trotsky, argued for dragging out the negotiations as long as possible until the German government was overthrown by revolution. On 31 January the Soviet government adopted the Gregorian calendar to bring Russia in line with the rest of the world. By 18 February the German High Command, frustrated by delays in the negotiations, advanced further into Russia and Ukraine and proposed even harsher peace terms.
While peace treaty negotiations were taking place in Brest-Litovsk a civil war broke out in Finland between socialist forces (the Reds) backed by the Bolsheviks in Russia and anti-Bolshevik forces (the Whites) backed by Germany. Civil society had collapsed in Finland in 1917, while it was still part of the Russian Empire. A General Strike was called in November 1917, the Social Democrats split between those favouring revolution and those seeking a parliamentary solution, while industrialists and other conservatives supported armed groups of strike breakers. The urban industrial south of Finland came out for the Reds, the less populated and agricultural north supported the Whites. The Bolsheviks provided weapons and military support for the Reds and the German army did the same for the Whites.
Historical Context

On 7 November 1917 the Ukrainian National Assembly (the Rada) declared a People’s Republic, intended to be autonomous within a federal Russia. The Bolshevik party in Ukraine reacted by establishing an alternative Ukrainian Soviet Republic with its base in the industrial city of Kharkov. The People’s Republic sent a separate delegation to Brest-Litovsk to negotiate its own peace treaty with the Central Powers, which was signed on 9 February 1918. Civil war broke out between the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.
The military historian, Corelli Barnett, has argued that in spite of German claims about the severity of the Treaty of Versailles it was ‘a slap on the wrist’ compared with the terms Germany would have imposed on the allies if they had won the First World War and was nowhere near as harsh as the terms imposed by Germany on Soviet Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. [Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, London 2002, p.392] The area in red on this map was ceded to Germany. Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus and Ukraine became independent under German supervision, Bessarabia was claimed by Rumania, territory lost by the Ottoman Empire during the Russo-Turkish War (1877-8) was returned, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia rejected the Treaty and declared independence. In August 1918, in a separate agreement, Russia agreed to pay Germany 6 Billion Gold Marks as reparations. Trotsky left the Russian delegation, feeling unable to sign such a treaty, but, at Lenin’s insistence, the remaining Soviet delegation signed on 3 March 1918.
On 15 March the Fourth Congress of Soviets met to ratify the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Boris Kamkov on behalf of the Left SRs spoke against the Treaty. Lenin spoke in favour of it. The Congress voted in favour of ratification but the Left SRs resigned from the Soviet government, as did four of the Bolshevik Commissars. The Left SR now attempted to drive a wedge between Leninists and those in the Bolshevik Party who opposed the Treaty in the hope that Lenin would be removed from power and a new coalition government would emerge. This set them on a collision course with the Bolsheviks which led to an attempted uprising in July 1918.

“..we are in no condition to accept battle at the moment; we have to take this into consideration and say to ourselves, whatever respite we may obtain, no matter how unstable, no matter how brief, harsh and humiliating the peace may be, it is better than war, because it gives the masses a breathing-space, because it provides us with an opportunity to correct what the bourgeoisie have done, the bourgeoisie that are shouting wherever they have an opportunity to shout, especially under the protection of the Germans in the occupied regions.”

Lenin speaking for ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk at the 4th All Russia Congress of Soviets, 15 March 1918

Image: Flickr
Curator: Quapan
CC-BY 2.0
Historical Context

In an attempt to drive a wedge between the Bolsheviks and the German government so that the war would continue, the Left SRs carried out two assassinations of key German figures. The German Ambassador, Count von Mirbach was killed in the German embassy on 6 July 1918 by two Left SRs: Yakov Blumkin and Nikolai Andreyev. This sparked off a Left SR uprising beginning with an artillery bombardment of the Kremlin in Moscow by a detachment of nearly 2000 men under Dmitry Popov. Having seized the telephone exchange and the main telegraph office they sent out telegrams across Russia claiming that they had seized power. The insurrection was put down in two days and the Left SR leadership arrested. However, the Left SR also attempted insurrections in other cities, including Petrograd. After the Left SRs had been banned as a political party they continued their policy of assassinations: including the German Military Governor, von Eichhorn on 30 July, Moisei Uritsky, Bolshevik head of the Cheka (secret police) in Petrograd on 30 August 1918 and a failed attempt by another Left SR, Fanny Kaplan, to assassinate Lenin on the same day.
In addition to civil war in Finland and Ukraine in the early months of 1918 the Soviet government was also faced by a growing threat in the south west from the Volunteer Army (the first White or anti-Bolshevik forces to be organised) and the risk that it would join forces with disaffected Cossack groups in the region. Trotsky organised a force of Red Guards, sailors and Latvian riflemen and marched into the Don region from the north to besiege Novocherkassk, the capital of the Don Cossacks and the headquarters of the Volunteer Army led by Generals Alekseev and Kornilov. After Bolshevik forces captured Taganrog, just 100km from Novocherkassk General Kaledin, leader of the Don Cossacks, committed suicide. As Red forces entered Rostov-on-Don (see map) General Kornilov took his forces south across the frozen steppes heading for Yekaterinodar in the territory of the Kuban Cossacks. This ‘Ice March’ was a disaster and Kornilov was killed in fighting with Red forces. His deputy, General Denikin took command and led them north as can be seen on this map. In June 1918, with reinforcements to the Volunteer Army and joined by Kuban and Don Cossacks Denikin led a successful campaign against the Bolsheviks in the North Caucasus. By January 1919 he was commander-in-chief of the White forces in South Russia with support from the Allies.
In the spring of 1918 the Bolshevik government also faced a threat in Siberia. At the outbreak of the First World War Czechs and Slovaks living in the Russian Empire had formed a volunteer battalion to fight alongside the Russian Army against the Central Powers. Their objective was to win independence for their homeland. After successes on the battlefield they persuaded the Provisional Government to allow them to recruit from Russian prisoner-of-war camps those Czechs and Slovaks who had been captured while fighting for the Austro-Hungarian army. By October 1917 they had 8 regiments in two brigades. After the October Revolution and the beginning of peace negotiations with the Central Powers, the Czechoslovak National Council began negotiations with the Bolsheviks for the evacuation of the Czechoslovak legion so that they could continue the fight alongside the Entente allies. In February 1918 they were given permission to travel on trains from Ukraine to the port of Vladivostock to embark on ships to take them to Western Europe. Under pressure from the German High Command in the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations Trotsky ordered the disarming and arrest of the Czechoslovak Legion. They resisted and armed conflict with the Red Army broke out.
The Czechoslovak Legion soon took control of the Trans-Siberian railway and occupied many of the cities along that railway. Although their main aim was still to get to Vladivostock they were also prepared to join forces with any Russian military units committed to fighting the Central Powers. As the Czechoslovak Legion advanced on Yekaterinburg, where the Imperial family was being held, the Bolsheviks feared that if the Tsar and his family were rescued they would be used to rally support to the cause of the Whites. In the early hours of 18 July the Romanovs were executed in the basement of Ipatiev House, where they were being held. Their bodies were then buried in two unmarked graves in the Koptyaki forest 4km away. The Czechoslovak Legion took Yekaterinburg a week later.
From the spring of 1918 onwards the Red Army now found itself fighting on several fronts, as this map clearly shows. Denikin’s Volunteer Army was having considerable success on the southern front. In Siberia Admiral Kolchak led white forces on an eastern front and had established a provisional Russian Government. In spite of his lack of military experience compared with Denikin he was recognised by the Allies as the overall leader of the anti-Bolshevik Whites and received the largest share of Allied military equipment and advice. In north Russia General Yevgeny Miller (a Latvian of German descent) took charge of White forces with an HQ in Archangelsk while General Nikolai Yudenich took control of white forces in the Baltic and North Western Russia. As the map shows White forces had some successes particularly in 1919 but by mid-1920 they were mainly in retreat.
By March 1920 the Volunteer Army had withdrawn to Crimea from the North Caucasus. Denikin had resigned, partly because he had lost the support of the Allies due to the reign of White terror he initiated and the mass execution of Jews whom he seemed to blame for the Bolshevik revolution. He was replaced by General Pyotr Wrangel who withdrew the Volunteer Army to Crimea. The White forces on the eastern front had withdrawn to Far Eastern Russia where they continued fighting. In the autumn of 1919 Yudenich’s forces advanced on Petrograd but were repulsed and retreated back to Estonia, then disbanded. Yudenich was accused of attempting to abscond with the funds of the North-Western Army. He was arrested, then released and went into exile in France.
The extent to which the Bolshevik government was struggling to hold on to power from early 1918 until, at least, the end of 1920 in the west of Russia and 1922 in the east is perhaps downplayed in some history textbooks. The focus tends to be on the armed conflict between the Red Army and the various White armies operating in different parts of Russia. But it is also important to take into account the other armed conflicts involving Bolshevik forces at this time:

1. The conflicts between Bolshevik-backed communists and nationalists in Finland and Ukraine (1918-19); the Baltic states (1919); Poland, Azerbaijan and Armenia (1920) Georgia (1921) and Central Asia (1920-22).
2. Independent warlords were also fighting Reds and Whites in their own interests in the Far East of Russia, Siberia and Ukraine.
3. There were armed anarchist groups opposed to any centrally-imposed authority.
4. For part of this time the Red Army was still fighting German forces.
5. From February 1919 until March 1921 the Soviet government was at war with the newly independent Poland as it tried to support revolutions in central and eastern Europe through a new western offensive.
6. The Bolshevik forces were also fighting other communist partisans who were protecting local interests, particularly in Siberia and the Far East.
7. Squads of armed peasants (Green Army) fought with the Red Army to stop food requisition. They also fought the Whites for the same reason.
8. The Allied powers began intervening in the Civil War from as early as March 1918.
Historical Context

British artillery arriving in Baku, Azerbaijan in the autumn of 1918 to defend the oilfields from attack by the Central Powers.
Source: Imperial War Museum
IWM licence for non-commercial use

British intervention in the Russian Civil War.

This began in March 1918, when British marines, landed at the arctic port of Murmansk, partly to secure Allied weapons, munitions and other military equipment stored in warehouses in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk and partly to defend North-west Russia from attack by Finns and Germans. This was with the agreement of the Soviet government in spite of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. By the end of 1918 over 30 000 British troops were based in north-west Russia.

In November 1918 a small British Empire force based in Iran was sent by ship to Baku to counter a possible German and Ottoman attack on the oil fields there. They imposed martial law on the Azerbaijan capital.

In December 1918 a British naval flotilla was sent into the Baltic to blockade the Russian fleet at Kronstadt and to support Latvians and Estonians fighting the Red Army.

By the spring of 1919 British Empire troops, mainly Canadian, were sent to Vladivostok to provide support to the Czechoslovak legion, defend the Trans-Siberian railway and support the White army led by Admiral Kolchak.
The Japanese intervention in the Russian Civil War

The Japanese government feared that Bolshevik forces in the Far East of Russia posed a threat to Japan’s northern borders and its newly-annexed protectorate, Korea. In August 1918 troops were shipped to the port of Vladivostok in south-east Russia and then moved inland for Siberia to link up with the Czechoslovak Legion and other Allies. In the height of the Civil War Japan had over 70000 troops in Russia - by far the largest Allied force in the country. Many of them remained in Russia until 1922, long after the other Allied forces had withdrawn.
The French intervention in the Russian Civil War
After the armistice on the Western Front (11.11.1918) the French government decided to send a French-led force of six divisions, plus Czech, Greek, Polish and Romanian troops to Odessa and Sevastopol, ports on the Black Sea in southern Ukraine. The aims were to speed up the withdrawal of German troops from Ukraine and create what the French premier, Georges Clemenceau, had called a ‘cordon sanitaire’ or buffer region to restrict westward Soviet expansion. In spite of the friendly impression in this photograph, the French expeditionary force encountered armed conflict between three groups with very different goals: Ukrainian nationalists, the White Volunteer Army and the Bolsheviks. After finding themselves hopelessly outnumbered by the forces of a local war lord, Nikifor Grigoriev - who at this time was aligned with the Bolsheviks - the French decided to evacuate the force from Odessa on 6 April 1919. German forces in the area came to the same conclusion.
In September 1918 a small US force landed at Arkhangelsk “to guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces” [Woodrow Wilson, Aide Memoire to the Allies, 17 July 1918]. They were also there to support the Whites fighting the Bolsheviks in north and north west Russia. Under increasing military pressure from Bolshevik forces their evacuation back to the USA began in July 1919.

Meanwhile in August 1918 a slightly larger US force had been sent to the Pacific port of Vladivostok to join the Allied Expedition to Siberia in support of the Czechoslovak Legion. When they arrived they found that a significant group of Legionaires had already arrived in Vladivostok, as had the Japanese forces. At first their main role was to protect the Trans-Siberian railway and, indeed, US personnel operated the railway in Siberia in 1919. The last US soldiers left Siberia in April 1920.
The end of the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War
The Allies had first intervened in Russia (i) to keep it in the war and sustain the Eastern Front so that Germany could not move its troops to the Western Front to support its last offensive there, and (ii) to counter any further incursions into Russia by the armies of the Central Powers. After the Armistice had been signed on the Western Front these motives were rendered redundant. But, in fact, the Allies sent even more troops to Russia, partly to prevent the Bolsheviks from getting the weaponry and military supplies that the Allies had been providing to Russia throughout the war, but also to support the anti-Bolshevik forces now fighting the Red Army in north and north west Russia, in the Caucasus, in Ukraine and in Siberia.

However, now that the war was over in western Europe those Allied forces still on duty in Russia wanted to go home. For many this did not seem to be their fight anymore. Public opinion in the USA, Britain and France seemed to hold the same view. There were reports of mutinies amongst some Allied soldiers and sailors. The British and French commanders in Russia did not trust each other. There was friction between US and British commanders and their men in North Russia. The British, French and US commands did not trust the Japanese believing their motives in being in Russia were imperialist. Austen Chamberlain, a member of the British War Cabinet, asserted that “British troops should not remain in North Russia one day longer than the minimum time necessary for their safe evacuation.” By early 1920 all Allied leaders (except in Tokyo) were convinced of the necessity of evacuating any of their own troops who still remained in Russia.
The end of the Civil War
The civil war was virtually over by the summer of 1920. There are a number of reasons why the Bolsheviks were victorious. The Red Army, by Autumn 1920, had grown to 5 million from less than 1 million at the beginning of 1919. By comparison the Whites were never able to muster more than about 2 to 2.5 million troops. The Whites began with the most experienced commanders but talented leaders soon emerged from the ranks in the Red Army. There was also a lot of animosity and distrust between the White Army commanders which hindered their ability to coordinate their actions. This was made worse by the fact that the Whites were spread out around the periphery of European Russia. The base of the Volunteer Army in the North Caucasus was over 1000km from Moscow; Kolchak’s Headquarters was nearly 3000km from Petrograd. Coordination of action was difficult and when advancing their supply lines were soon severely stretched. By March 1920 the Don Cossacks and the Volunteer Army were in full retreat. Some went to Crimea, others boarded ships at Novorossysk on the Black Sea. Thousands who failed to get a ship were executed by the Reds. In November 1920 Wrangel’s White forces in Crimea were also forced to evacuate by sea.
A WIDER INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Sources from

RUSSIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES
White Movement Propaganda

During the Russian Civil War, the White movement (also known as the White Guard or Army) was a political movement that fought against the communist forces / the Bolsheviks (also known as the Reds). This poster from the year 1919 shows a white horseman fighting a red dragon. In the background is an orthodox church.

Title: For a united Russia
Recruitment Poster of the White Army

This recruitment poster produced for the White army is aimed at the Muslims from the Caucasus. It invites them to join the Mountain-Muslim Cavalry Brigade, which became part of the Armed forces of South Russia in 1920.

Title: Gors-Muslim Mountain Division
Colonel Pukovsky invites Muslim volunteers and mountaineers

Source contributed by Louise Sträuli,
Author unknown, 1919, British Library, Public Domain.
General Pyotr Nikolayevich Wrangel, of Baltic German origins, had been a cavalry officer in the Imperial Russian Army, commanded the White Army against the Bolsheviks in Southern Russia.

Portrait of General Pyotr Wrangel, 1878 - 1928, Public Domain

Poster for the Armed forces of the South of Russia with a portrait of General Wrangel, around 1919, Public Domain
Evacuation from Sevastopol of General Wrangel and his forces

On 17 November, 1920, this article (on the left) in Theo Croatian newspaper, Politika, reported that General Wrangel had left Sevastopol for Constantinople. It included reactions from Paris, London and Moscow. On 3 December, the newspaper reported that General Wrangel had arrived in Kotor (in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). The newspaper also reported protests in Italy against the allocation of Russian refugees to Dalmatia.

Source contributed by Vesna Lučić, Public Domain,
Evacuation of the Crimea

This short article in the Serbian newspaper, Politika, dated 20 November, 1920 indicates that around 120,000 soldiers from Wgangel's White Army were evacuated from Crimea on 100 ships.

Serbian Caricatures on the impact of the Russian Revolution in Europe I

Title: The Russian question

Text: "Nevertheless, he will recover!"

Source Contributed by Vesna Lučić, Vreme, No. 62 (19 February 1922),
National Library of Serbia,
Public Domain
Serbian Caricatures on the impact of the Russian Revolution in Europe II

Title: The reconstruction of Europe

Text: Nikola Pašić: "This corner is completely ruined!"
(N. Pašić is prime minister in Kingdom of Serbia, and The Kingdom of SHS)

Source Contributed by Vesna Lučić, Vreme, No. 61 (18 Feburuary 1922), National Library of Serbia, Public Domain

Nikola Pašić, 1845-1926, Public Domain
Appeal to the soldiers of the Entente

A poster appealing to Allied soldiers to show solidarity with the Soviet proletariat. November 2018

Source contributed by Lazar Aranitovic,
Extracted from the publication: Bosiljčić Slobodan (1966), October Revolution, Mladost, Belgrade, p. 201.
Admiral Kolchak reviewing troops of the anti-Bolshevik White Army in Siberia in 1919

Source Contributed by Bob Stradling,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kolchak1919troops.jpg,
Public Domain
Remembrance of the last Russian Emperor

This newspaper article from the Serbian daily Newspaper «Vreme» reports about an event that was organised in Belgrade to commemorate the murder of the last Russian emperor, Nicholas II. The event was organised by Russian refugees and Serbs.

Source contributed by Vesna Lučić accessed through the National Library of Serbia

Russian refugees in Serbia

During the civil war, a lot of anti-Bolshevik Russians fled the country. The kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes welcomed the refugees. This movement is described in some newspaper articles, such as the two examples here.

The first article refers to 10,000 refugees that have arrived in Serbia from South Russia. Politicians call on societal and humanitarian organisations for support. The second article reports about a charity organisation, named the Circle of Serbian Sisters (KoloSrpskih Sestara), who collected christmas gifts for the children of Russian emigrants in Serbia.

Source contributed by Vesna Lučić accessed through the National Library of Serbia
1. Руси на приморју, Politika, 02.12.1920
2. Коло српских сестара руској деци, Politika, 11.01.1921
Hunger in Russia

Horrible Hunger in Russia
People kill and eat each other
Geneva, 2 February - American aid mission in Orenburg, Russia, sent the Auxiliary Committee for Russia in Geneva the following telegram:
The hunger is so high that people mutually kill and eat each other. Parents eat their own children. In Tujakov village a man ate his brother’s children. A woman from the same village ate her two children, another man ate his daughter. The starvation is at a peak. Terrible cases of cannibalism happen every day. The mission is urging for immediate help. (“Vreme”)
In March 1922 the Serbian newspaper «Vreme» publishes a selection of letters that were written about the situation within Russia to emigrated people in Serbia. Three examples are translated here:

**From Odessa:** ... I am writing on a paper of an old letter, which we washed with special mixture and dried, because there is no paper here. ... thus far I lived from what was here with me in the home. Now I sold the last piece of furniture and the last shirt. The peasants were buying all that. How am I going to live now? Perhaps you would say why don’t I work? I would, but where? Everything is closed, factories, stores, warehouses... When I had to leave for some errands, every time I would see a couple of corpses in the streets and dozens of living corpses, starved to death... How am I going to survive? ... For one person, just to survive, it takes 10.000.000 Rubles per month... and where can I find that money?...

**From Kiev:** a letter by a former rich landlord, who now cleans the snow off the rail tracks. ... for 8 hours on the rail tracks, I and my wife get 150.000 Rubles a day, just enough not to die of starvation. What are we going to do when the winter sweeping stops? ... Traffic is horrible. There are no closed (railway) cars, just opened ones, all infected with germs spreading typhus... there is no writing ink, while a writing feather costs 20.000 Rubles...

**From Kubanja** (which used to export 3.200.000 tons of bread per year): ... there is manufacture production, no factories working. The Bolsheviks promised the people we will all own our own car and an airplane, but people are now brought to the state to eat the corpses of their deceased ones... A daughter of our neighbor died. Her mother cooked and ate her... 90% of people are dying of illness and starvation. In the cities they have opened up bars and entertainment saloons, full of glow, drinks, fornication, that is where colossal money is being spent, taken from us through requisition.... all the warehouses are closed. Political situation is the following: State of Bolsheviks

Source contributed by Bojana Dujkovic Blagojevic accessed through the National Library of Serbia

Zrne vesti iz Rusije, in “Vreme”, 26.03.1922
Selection from the Album on Russian Cadets in Sarajevo

By Louise Sträuli
Monument of Peter I.

Inauguration of the monument of King Peter I. in the artillery district II

11 November 1923

Source contributed by Bojana Dujkovic Blagojevic National Library of Serbia, Russian Cadet Corps in Sarajevo 1928, Public Domain in Serbia
Graduation

Russian cadets in Sarajevo

Graduation Procedure (year not mentioned, around 1925)

The descriptions say: Commission (top left), written works (top right) and proclamation (bottom)

Source contributed by Bojana Dujkovic Blagojevic
National Library of Serbia, Russian Cadet Corps in Sarajevo 1928, Public Domain in Serbia
The Peace Treaty in Brest-Litovsk

Source contributed by Konstantin Bityukov,
Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории (Russian state archive of socio-political history)
Ф.670. Оп.1. Д.5.
The peace treaty of Brest Litovsk

Extracts from the Peace Treaty:
Section I

Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey on the one hand, as well as Russia on the other hand announce that the state of war between them is over. They have decided to live in peace and friendship among themselves.

Section VI

Russia is committed to immediately conclude peace with the Ukrainian Republic and accept the peace treaty between these states and the Central Powers. The Ukrainian territory is immediately cleared of Russian troops and the Russian Red Guard. Russia shall cease all agitation or propaganda against the Government or public institutions of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

Section XIV

This peace treaty will be ratified. The exchange of ratifications should take place as soon as possible in Berlin. The Russian Government undertakes to exchange the instruments of ratification at the request of one of the powers of the Central Powers within two weeks. The peace treaty enters into force upon ratification, as the articles, annexes or supplementary treaties do not otherwise provide. In witness thereof, the authorised representatives have signed the present Treaty personally...


Source contributed by Konstantin Bityukov, Retrieved from Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории (Russian State Archive of Socio-political History) Ф.670. Оп.1. Д.5.
Sources from

ALLIED POWERS
As can be seen from its cover, the New Russia journal was published by the Russian Liberation Committee in London. This was a Russian emigré organisation with close links to the Whites during the Civil War. It acted as a liaison between the British government and different White movements operating in Russia. It also was a major source in London of anti-Soviet propaganda and published this journal in English, which contained articles about British-Russian relations and translations of telegrams and other communications from the White armies in Russia.

The New Russia, Vol.2 No.1 February 1920
Source: British Library P.P.3554.emm
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Curated by Katie McElvanney
Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War: Dissent amongst the Allies.

“*We hope from the Russian Revolution there will spring up in the future as great advantages to mankind, or to the country immediately concerned, as sprang from the French Revolution*."
Arthur Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, 14 March 1918, Hansard vol.104 col.546

In 1918 Churchill coined the slogan which became popular with the press “*Kill the Bolshy, Kiss the Hun!*”. On the eve of the Armistice with Germany he declared: “*We might have to build up the German army, as it was important to get Germany on its legs again for fear of the spread of Bolshevism*’.
10 November 1918

After the Bolshevik government signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918 and Russia withdrew from the war divisions emerged within the British Government. Foreign Secretary Balfour informed his colleagues that Trotsky had assured him that the Bolsheviks were trying to buy time. But an anti-Bolshevik faction, led by Winston Churchill believed that the Bolsheviks posed a bigger threat to Europe than Germany.
On 30 March 1918 Douglas Young, British Consul in Archangel reported that Bolsheviks were seizing Allied military stores in Archangel and Murmansk and it was impossible to send Allied troops to protect the stores since Archangel was still iced in.

Bruce Lockhart to British Foreign Office 21 April 1918.
“The moment has now come when Allied intervention must be invited by the Bolsheviks and, if not, the Allies must impose it.”

Although the British embassy had been withdrawn in January 1918 some diplomats remained to keep the British Government informed of developments in Russia. Young was one of these. His dispatch on 30 March served to reinforce concerns already being expressed by some in the Cabinet that either the Bolsheviks or German forces would seize Allied military supplies in Murmansk and Archangel.

News that German forces in Finland might be planning an attack on North Russia in the spring led Lockhart to send his dispatch on 21 April. Since Lockhart was viewed as having pro-Bolshevik sympathies his call for intervention, with or without Bolshevik approval, was taken seriously.
A loose coalition of forces opposed to the Bolsheviks, generally known as the Whites, emerged soon after the Bolshevik revolution under the leadership of Generals who had commanded Russian armies during the War. These included Denikin, Kornilov, Kaledin, Alekseev and Admiral Kolchak.

As we have seen, the Allied governments began to make arrangements to get funds to the Whites soon after the October Revolution even while negotiating unofficially with the Bolshevik leadership to persuade them to remain in the War.

After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had been signed and ratified in March 1918 the fighting in the Civil War intensifies and the Allies took steps to protect the military supplies that had been sent to Russia during the War against the Central Powers.
In the period after the ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk the Allied leadership was receiving contradictory advice from diplomats and political and military advisers regarding the best course of action towards the Bolsheviks.
US Ambassador David Rowland Francis was a businessman and politician. He had welcomed the February Revolution but his advice to President Wilson in May 1918 had been “Under no circumstances should the United States recognise the Bolsheviki.” Francis had no doubt that the United States should intervene in the civil war on the side of the anti-Bolshevik Whites.

US Ambassador Francis to Secretary of State Lansing, 2 May 1918.

“It is our interest to exterminate it [Bolshevism] in the land of its birth. I say ‘our interest’ from two points of view. First: If Bolshevism is permitted to thrive in Russia, it will promote unrest in all countries. Second: It is our duty to the Russian people, who have always been favorable to America, and whose greatest offense is that they favored the Allies against Germany in the world war, to relieve their country of the injury and disgrace inflicted upon it by Soviet rule.”

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Felix Cole, US Consul in Archangel to US Ambassador Francis, 1 June 1918

Intervention is sure to:
Go farther than at first planned involving unforeseen and difficult expenditures of ships, men, and materials;
Fail to reestablish Russia as a military factor in the war against Germany;
Fail to counteract German influence, if anything strengthening that influence;
Necessitate the feeding of from 500,000 to 1,500,000 people;
Be likely to make Russia...an ally of Germany for years to come;
Break our solemn promises to Russia not to interfere.

Felix Cole, US Consul in Archangel, had served longer in Russia than any other US diplomat having been posted there in 1913. He argued strongly against Allied intervention in the Civil War. Ambassador Francis delayed sending this note on to Secretary of State Lansing because it conflicted with his own advice to Washington. By the time that he sent Cole’s advice to the Secretary of State British and French forces had already landed in neighbouring Murmansk to secure Allied military assets.
In the end, after due consideration of the conflicting advice from diplomats, military advisers and members of his administration, President Wilson sent this Aide Memoire to the Allied Ambassadors in Washington to be passed on to their Governments. He had opted for a limited form of US intervention in Russia.

Woodrow Wilson, Aide Memoire, 17 July 1918

“It is the clear and fixed judgment of the Government of the United States, arrived at after repeated and very searching reconsiderations of the whole situation in Russia, that military intervention there would add to the present sad confusion in Russia rather than cure it... and that it would be of no advantage in the prosecution of our main design, to win the war against Germany...Military action is admissible in Russia...only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and .....to guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces and to render such aid as may be acceptable to the Russians in the organization of their own self-defense.”
Secretary of State Lansing added a paragraph to Wilson’s Aide Memoire before passing it on to Allied Ambassadors. While still emphasising US doubts about the extent of an Allied intervention this was not a criticism of the actions already taken by the other Allies. The British Cabinet was frustrated by the time it was taking for the US Government to agree on a plan for intervention. Viscount Cecil at the British Foreign Office observed: “We cannot continue indefinitely to accept responsibility for the dilatory [i.e. slow] methods of the White House.” (1 August 1918)
“In the spring of 1918 British troops had landed at the northern ports of Archangel and Murmansk and the Japanese had seized Vladivostok on the Pacific and spread westwards into Siberia to keep the Germans from getting their hands on Russian raw materials such as grain and oil, as well as on Russian ports and railways. To keep an eye on the Japanese (and perhaps the British) and to protect a legion of Czechs from Russian prisoner-of-war camps who had got themselves stuck in Siberia, the Americans had reluctantly landed their own troops......The French, who were even shorter of manpower than the British sent merely military missions or token forces. When, at the end of the war, Britain not only decided to keep its troops in place but to offer support to anti-Bolshevik White Russians it was already clear that an intervention that had started out against the Germans had slipped into something quite different.”

Margaret MacMillan, Peacemakers, 2001, p.79
War Cabinet Minutes, CAB 23/14
10 November 1918.

On the eve of the Armistice with Germany Winston Churchill, a Minister in the British Government, warned the War Cabinet:
“We might have to build up the Germany army, and not destroy the only police force available for maintaining order in Germany, as it was important to get Germany on its legs again for fear of the spread of Bolshevism.”

We tend to associate the policy of the containment of communism with the famous “Long Telegram” by George F. Kennan, the Truman Doctrine and the beginning of the Cold War. However, there was an earlier version of this policy which was strongly supported by some Allied political and military leaders as early as December 1918.
Post-war continued Allied intervention in Russia

British Prime Minister’s response to Churchill in the War Cabinet:

“Marching men into Germany was like marching them into a cholera area. The Germans did that in Russia and caught the virus. It would be most undesirable to march British miners to Westphalia if Westphalia was controlled by a Bolshevik organization.”

War Cabinet Minutes, CAB 23/14, 10 November 1918

Prime Minister Lloyd George was also concerned about the spread of Bolshevik communism once Germany was defeated but noted reports of desertion and mutiny in the German army and feared that British troops entering Germany to maintain the peace (and, by implication, Russia) might also be ‘infected’ by the ‘cholera’ of Bolshevism.
Post-war continued Allied intervention in Russia

General Wilson to the British War Cabinet
“create a ring of states all round Bolshevik Russia..to prevent Bolshevism from spreading [or] “grasp the nettle firmly by taking active military measures with a view to crushing Bolshevism.” The first option he thought unlikely “because of the problems of garrisoning the border states”. On the second option he thought the British army would face the problem of expecting a conscript army to carry on fighting after the war against Germany was over. He concluded that the Allies should “withdraw from European Russia” while continuing to provide the anti-Bolshevik forces with material support other than troops”.
13 November, 1918

Three days later, the chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Henry Wilson, told the British War Cabinet that they were faced by two alternative intervention strategies in Russia. He doubted the effectiveness of either strategy and recommended withdrawing Allied forces from Russia as soon as possible.
On 16-20 January 1919 at a meeting of the Council of Ten at the Paris Peace Conference, the Allied leaders discussed the civil war in Russia. The French position as expressed by Premier Clemenceau and Field Marshall Foch the Allied Commander in Chief, was for further armed intervention against the Bolsheviks. Foch demanded a quick settlement with Germany so that the Allied Powers could use their combined resources against Bolshevik Russia.

**Marshal Foch at the Paris Peace Conference**

“My plan would be to settle all the important outstanding questions on the Western side in order to enable the Allies to use the resources thus made available for the solution of the Eastern question. . . . Polish troops would be quite able to face the Russians, provided the former are strengthened by the supply of modern appliances and engines of war. Great numbers are required, which could be obtained by mobilizing the Finns, Poles, Czechs, Rumanians and Greeks, as well as the Russian pro-Ally elements still available. . . . If this is done, 1919 will see the end of Bolshevism!"

**Paris, 16 January 1919**
Lloyd George and US President Woodrow Wilson still opposed extending the Allied military intervention in Russia. Conscious of Wilson’s commitment to self-determination he focused on the Russian people’s right to choose their own government. President Wilson proposed a special conference on the island of Prinkipo at which both the Bolsheviks and the Whites should be invited to attend to discuss a peace formula.

Paris, 16 January 1919

The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George’s reply to Field Marshall Foch:
“If [we] proposed to kill Bolshevism by the sword the armies would mutiny….The mere idea of crushing Bolshevism by a military force is pure madness. Even admitting that it is done, who is to occupy Russia?”
Post-war continued Allied intervention in Russia

Extract from message broadcast by short wave radio on 23 January 1919, at the request of the Four Powers at the Paris Peace Conference:

“It is not their wish or purpose to favour or assist any one of the organized groups now contending for the leadership and guidance of Russia as against the others. Their sole and sincere purpose is to do what they can to bring Russia peace and an opportunity to find her way out of her present troubles. In this spirit and with this purpose they have taken the following action: They invite every organized group that is now exercising or attempting to exercise political authority or military control anywhere in Siberia or within the boundaries of European Russia .... to confer with the representatives of the associated Powers in the freest and frankest way, with a view to ascertaining the wishes of all sections of the Russian people and bringing about, if possible, some understanding and agreement by which Russia may work out her own purposes, and happy, co-operative relations be established between her people and the other peoples of the world.”
The Bolsheviks grudgingly agreed to meet with the Allies and the representatives of the de facto anti-Bolshevik governments in Russia, much to the surprise of some British officials.

On 4 February 1919 the Soviet government acknowledged that it was prepared to attend the proposed meeting in Prinkipo but made it clear that their main reason was to meet with the Allies rather than the representatives of the Whites.

“The capacity for resistance of the enemies which Soviet Russia has to fight depends entirely on the aid which they receive from the Allies.” ....However, because the Allies represented “the only real adversaries...it was prepared to enter immediately into negotiations with them on Princes Island or in any other place.”
The Bolsheviks agreed to this but the Whites refused believing that while Wilson and Lloyd George were in favour of the Prinkipo Conference the French were not and there were anti-Bolshevik elements within the British government and Parliament also opposed to the Conference. Here Konstantin Nabokov, Ambassador to Britain for the Provisional Government in 1917 and representative of the Whites in London in 1918-19 reflects on why the Whites refused to accept the offer to go to Prinkipo for peace talks.

Russian Diplomat, Konstantin Nabokov, on his objection to the Prinkipo proposal, which he described as “the most pitiable act”:

“Every conscious, proud and honest Russian patriot was made to understand that Russia must save herself and that all hopes for assistance from our late friends were in vain.”

He also noted that his British contacts advised the Whites to accept because “The Bolsheviks will refuse....Then Great Britain will be in a position to use force in order to destroy Bolshevism.”

Nabokov, The Ordeal of a Diplomat, 1921, pp.286-289
Testimony given by William C. Bullitt to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in September 1919 stated that the French Foreign Office had covertly encouraged the Whites and other anti-Bolshevik governments in eastern Europe to reject the Prinkipo Conference proposal. Bullitt, had been attached to the US Commission to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and had liaised with Lenin and Chicherin (Soviet Foreign Minister) about the Prinkipo proposal.

“\textit{The French – and particularly the French foreign office even more than Mr Clemenceau….were opposed to the idea [i.e. the Prinkipo Conference] and we found that the French foreign office had communicated to the Ukrainian Government and various other anti-soviet governments that if they were to refuse the proposal, they would support them and continue to support them, and not allow the Allies...to make peace with the Russian Soviet government.”}

W.C. Bullitt, testimony to US Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, 12.9.1919 p.32
At the next meeting of the Allied Council in Paris Wilson regretted that the Prinkipo proposal had been rejected by the Whites but thought it possible to meet with them separately. At the same time he saw no value in sending more Allied troops to Russia.

Woodrow Wilson at the Allied Council in Paris

“the troops of the Allied and Associated Powers are doing no sort of good in Russia.” [and ought to be withdrawn from all parts of Russian territory]..”I would be quite content that American representatives should meet representatives of the Bolshevists....if the other Russian governments could not come to Prinkipo to meet the Allies why should the Allies not imitate Mahomet, and go to them.”

Winston Churchill replied that withdrawal of Allied troops from Russia would mean: “the destruction of all non-Bolshevik armies in Russia....and an interminable vista of violence and misery.”

Paris Peace Conference
14 February 1919.
On the following day, 15 February 1919, Churchill and Sidney Sonnino, the Italian Foreign Minister, proposed that more military support should be provided to the anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia. This received support from the French. Wilson responded that he had made his position on this very clear already but if this was the view of the rest of the meeting he would go along with it. Lloyd George from London made his opposition to this proposal very clear, Churchill was on his way back to London and two days later Clemenceau was wounded by an assassin. Further discussion of the Russian question was postponed for the time being.

As soon as Lloyd George heard of the Churchill-Sonnino proposal he sent a telegram to Paris denying that Churchill’s proposal was British policy and “repudiating operations which would consolidate and strengthen Bolshevist opinion and commit the country [i.e. Britain] to a mad enterprise out of hatred of Bolshevist principles. An expensive war of aggression against Russia is a way to strengthen Bolshevism in Russia and create it at home. We cannot afford the burden.”

Telegram 16 February 1919
In mid-February 1919 President Wilson was returning to the United States by sea on the USS George Washington. As this source shows he promptly cabled the American Commission at the Paris Peace Conference to express his concern about the Churchill-Sonnino proposal.

**Wilson to the American Commission at the Paris Peace Conference:**
“Greatly surprised by Churchill’s Russian suggestion...It would be fatal to be led further into the Russian chaos.”
19 February 1919.

**Frank Polk to Wilson from Paris:**
“Churchill’s project is dead and there is little danger that it will be revived again by the Conference.”
23 February 1919.
On March 6th a clandestine mission led by William Bullitt, an attaché in the US delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, crossed into Russia. Officially it was a fact-gathering mission to find out about the political, economic and social conditions in Russia during the civil war. In addition to meeting with Lenin, Bullitt and his colleagues also met with Vladimir Volsky of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and Julius Martov of the Mensheviks.

Vladimir Volsky to W.C. Bullitt: “Intervention of any kind will prolong the regime of the Bolsheviki by compelling us, like all honorable Russians, to drop opposition and rally round the Soviet Government in defence of the revolution.”

Julius Martov to W.C. Bullitt: [Allied] agreement with the Soviet Government... would unmuzzle the opposition who, while the Soviet Government is attacked, are prepared to help in its defence.”

W.C. Bullitt, testimony to US Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, 12.9.1919 p.60
Post-war continued Allied intervention in Russia

On March 14 1919, Bullitt received a Russian proposal accepting the main proposals that Bullitt had presented. But, in addition, and perhaps most startling of all was a proposal from Lenin that:

“All existing de facto governments which have been set up on the territory of the former Russian Empire and Finland to remain in full control of the territories which they occupy at the moment when the armistice becomes effective...and until the peoples inhabiting the territories controlled by the de facto Governments shall themselves determine to change their Governments.”

W.C. Bullitt, testimony to US Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, 12.9.1919 p.39

Unofficially the Bullitt mission had also been sent by the US Government to meet with Lenin and his Foreign Minister, Georgi Chicherin, to negotiate an armistice, a peace conference, the lifting of the Allied economic blockade, withdrawal of Allied troops from Russia and a commitment by the Soviets to honour Russia's financial debts to the Allies.
A deadline of 10 April 1919 was agreed for an allied reply to the soviet proposal presented to Bullitt on 14 March. The Report was never formally discussed at the Peace Conference. The deadline came and went and no reply was made. Bullitt had sent his report to the US State Department, the US President and the other Allied leaders. He had had a meeting with Lloyd George at which they discussed the report and, he claimed, Lloyd George had urged him to publish it. And yet on 16 April 1919 in the British House of Commons the Prime Minister denied all knowledge of any approach from the Soviet government about an armistice.

“We have had no approaches at all.... I have only heard of reports of others having proposals which they assume have come from authentic quarters, but these have never been put before the peace conference by any member and therefore we have not considered them.”

Lloyd George in the House of Commons, 16 April 1919.
Bullitt was told by British officials that Lloyd George had turned away from the peace proposal because word of it had reached the British press which was still strongly anti-Bolshevik and he believed there was a plot to oust him led by Churchill and Lord Northcliffe. The French had always been opposed to an approach to Lenin. But, perhaps, most significant of all, the Big Four at the Paris Conference were getting reports in early April that a White Army led by Admiral Kolchak was around 150km from Moscow and was expected to take the city in two weeks. So, the Allies had decided to wait and see what happened. But Kolchak’s force was defeated by a Red Army counter-attack.

By the end of April the French began to withdraw their forces from southern Russia. The British began to do the same in November. The Allied military intervention and economic blockade was not formally brought to an end until January 1921.
On the peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk

Telegram: Jaime Batalha Reis (1847-1935)
Legação de Portugal em Petrogrado
14 de Fevereiro de 1918

In Brest-Litovsk delegate Russia refuses signing peace conditions proposed by central powers but declares that Russia ended war Russian government decrees immediate demobilization army. Meanwhile, Ukraine signed separate peace treaty with central powers consequence is wheat being sent immediately to Austria-Hungary Germany. Flour finished Petrograd hunger until end next summer (...). Banks remain confiscated and all companies closed brutally [...]. Civil war goes on [...] Germany absolutely dominant., p. 145.

Source contributed by Miguel Barros,
In the aftermath of the Russian civil war – a Portuguese communist in Soviet Russia

The book *The Russia of the Soviets*, written by José Carlos Rates, was dedicated to Jules Humbert-Droz and Dupuis, sent to Portugal by the Komintern. José Carlos Rates, Secretary General of the Portuguese Communist Party between 1922 and 1926, visited Russia in the quality of Portuguese delegate to the V Congress of the III International Communist, held in Moscow.

Foi no dia 30 de julho [de 1924] que transpus a fronteira russa, quinze horas depois de haver saído de Riga (...). Por estranha que pareça esta informação devo dizer que o comboio russo tem carruagens de 1ª, 2ª e 3ª classes, a que correspondem naturalmente preços diferentes. (...) Cheguei a Moscovo em 31 de julho. (...) A única cousa que me dá a ideia do estado de guerra civil de que a Russia acaba de sair é a má conservação da maior parte dos edifícios. 

Ao chegar à sede da Internacional Comunista pergunte ao chaffeur o preço do serviço. Paguei-me sete e meio dólares. Soube pouco depois que havia sido roubado. Sim, o roubo existe na Russia, mas d’ai a poucos eu sabia também que existam a mendicidade e a prostituição. Ah! É muito difícil modificar o mundo! pp. 238 e 239.

A mulher russa, em Moscovo, é, em grande parte, ilustrada, lendo, escrevendo ou falando em duas ou três línguas, o que de resto acontece também com uma boa parte dos operários. Ela toma uma parte muito activa na vida pública, no movimento sindical, nas ciências e artes. A camponesa apresenta extraordinárias semelhanças com a nossa mulher provinciana. Ver uma fotografia de camponesas russas é ver um grupo das nossas mulheres da Beira. Fóra das grandes cidades Lisboa, Moscovo, Porto, Leninegrad, os costumes moraes são os mesmos – o recato, o cuidado exclusivo do lar e dos filhos.

It was on the 30th of July [1924] that I crossed the Russian border, fifteen hours after having left Riga (...). As strange as this information may seem, I must say that the Russian train has 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes, each one differently priced. (...) I arrived in Moscow on the 31st of July. (...) The only thing that hints to the Civil War that has ravaged Russia is the state of disrepair of the buildings.

When arriving at the headquarters of the International Communist I asked to the chauffeur how much was for the service. He said it was seven dollars and a half. I paid them. Yes, robbery is a reality in Russia and, in a short while I realised that also were begging and prostitution. Ah! How hard it is to change the world! pp. 238 e 239.

(...) The Russian woman from Moscow is, for the better part, educated, reading, writing or speaking two or three languages, and this is true also for a substantial part of the workers. She takes an active part in the public life, in the union movement, in sciences and arts. The peasant woman presents extraordinary resemblances with our [Portuguese] provincial woman. To look at a photo of Russian women peasants is like seeing a group of women from Beira [Portuguese region from the inland]. Outside the big cities of Lisbon, Moscow, Porto, Leningrad, the moral traits are the same – the modesty, the exclusive care for the home and the children.

Source contributed by Miguel Barros,
Sources from

NEUTRAL STATES
On December 1922, the Luxembourgish Parliament approves a request made by the Luxembourgish section of the International Red Cross, to grant the amount of 100,000 Luxembourgish Francs for combatting hunger in Russia in the context of the Civil War. The Red Cross speaks of “millions of unfortunate children” starving.

Luxembourg, struggling with its role as a neutral state after the experience of German occupation during WWI, had just entered the League of Nations on December 16, 1920. The government and the Legislature support the request certainly to stress that Luxembourg as a tiny state takes part in the new world order.