The German Revolution and Entente Intervention November 1918 – March 1919

". . Всякий, кто серьезно хочет узбавиться от Колчаковщины, должен все силы, все средства, все уменье целиком отдать делу создания и укрепления красной армии."

"Anyone, who desires to be saved from the regime of Kolchak, must render all force, all means, all skills to devote themselves to the creation and strengthening of the Red Army."

Map 4

The German Revolution and Entente Intervention // November 1918 – March 1919

Colored lithographic print, 64 x 102 cm. Compilers: A. N. de-Lazari and N. N. Lesevitskii.

Artist: D. N. Kravchenko

Historical Background

The fourth map in the series focuses on the continuing threats to Bolshevik rule, and deals with the massive discontent in Europe brought about in 1918-19 by the end of the First World War. The surrender of the Central Powers to the Allies in November 1918 ended the War and resulted in the collapse of the four ruling dynasties of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Romania, and Ottoman Turkey. Combined frustrations over privations incurred during the war, grievous labor conditions, declining wages, and hunger fueled uprisings in several European capitals, where socialists encouraged strikes and rebellions to replace the fallen governments. Taking advantage of the armistice, the Bolsheviks annulled the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and expanded their control over western Russia and Ukraine. In Siberia Admiral Kolchak, the counterrevolution's newly-instated "Supreme Ruler of Russia," began gathering his forces for an assault in spring 1919.

As its central theme, the map illustrates the growing support for the communist revolution throughout Russia and Western Europe in the wake of the Great War. Its most dominant color is red, which identifies expanding Bolshevik authority over most of Russia west of the Urals and Ukraine, the communist uprising in Bavaria, and the communist government of Hungary.

Flags denote centers of power and rule, in addition to significant events of the period. Most prominent is the large red flag flying over Moscow, which is also surrounded by outlines of five large stars. Smaller red flags indicate centers of communist support. In opposition stands a large red, white, and blue flag indicating the establishment of Admiral Kolchak's headquarters at Omsk on November 18.

Symbols are associated with significant events of the period. The most dominant visual symbols are those of soldiers. Red Army soldiers with rifles and bayonets stand or kneel in defense of communist occupied territory; whereas green soldiers with rifles and bayonets, or Cossacks with lances on horseback, indicate White opposition campaigns in the Urals. Additional symbols of soldiers indicate armed operations in the Northern Caucasus, the Donbas, Ukraine, Odessa, and the Baltics.

Additionally, flames symbolize points of communist uprisings; a series of five-pointed red stars encompassing Moscow suggests the growth of Bolshevik power; colored lines and arrows indicate the positions and movements of Red Army and opposition forces in November 1918 and March 1919; hammer and sickle emblems denote the formation of soviets; and symbols of ships indicate the transport of Entente supplies to Murmansk and Archangel. Statistics note the alignments of Red and White forces at the beginning of 1919.

Germany's Defeat and Political Crisis

Germany's defeat in the war is highlighted by illustrations of its warships sailing to Great Britain, where they were ultimately scuttled, thereby effectively stripping Germany of its status as a major power and indicating the eclipse of its empire that extended into Africa and Asia.

The long string of events was ignited by a sailors' revolt at the end of October at the chief German naval base at Kiel, which grew into a series of strikes and uprisings in other ports and industrial cities, symbolized by explosions over ten cities. On November 2 Kiel's sailors, joined by workers and soldiers, formed a soviet based on the Bolshevik model. Their actions were mimicked in the wake of other uprisings, wherein sailors and workers' councils temporarily seized authority, as indicated by the red flags over Lübeck, Hannover, and Frankfurt. **Figure 9**

The most serious crisis occurred in Berlin in January 1919, when hundreds of thousands of strikers instigated the insurrection known as the Spartacist uprising, named after the movement headed by the political activist, Karl Liebnecht. Germany's government called upon the demobilized German army, including right-wing military factions known as *Freikorps*, to suppress the uprising, which is depicted by a large blue arrow advancing towards Berlin. *Freikorps* captured the communist leader Liebnecht and his colleague, Rosa Luxembourg, and summarily shot them. The date and text "16 January murder of Liebnecht and Luxembourg" recognizes their execution.

A prominent political casualty of the war was Kaiser Wilhelm II, was abandoned by the Prussian officer corps and the population at large. He abdicated at the end of November, forcing the formation of an impromptu government. A white flag with crossed red bands over Berlin, and the text and date "Abdication of Wilhelm II, 25 November," signifies the fate of the Kaiser and his flight from Germany.

The southern state of Bavaria is colored red to illustrate its brief socialist government. A leftist-backed putsch in Munich in early November declared Bavaria a socialist republic on November 17, an event symbolized by the red flag with emblems of a star and a hammer and sickle, with the date "7 November." One of the many casualties of the November *putsch* was the Wittelsbach dynasty, which had ruled Bavaria for over seven centuries. Its demise is symbolized by the white flag with the emblem of a crown and crossed red bends, and the date "14 November" of its overthrow. Bavaria's socialist state turned increasingly radical, becoming the Bavarian Soviet Republic on April 7, which lasted less than two weeks until being replaced a council of Red Guards, whom themselves were violently overthrown by *Freikorps* units in mid-May 1919.

The Entente and Anti-Bolshevik Forces Surround Communist Russia

Events in the northwest sector of the map are limited to the continuing Allied intervention in northern Russia and Finland's pursuit of national independence.

Originating in the United Kingdom and spreading over the North Sea, what appears to be a green stream flows above Fenno-Scandia before branching into arrows that head towards Murmansk, Archangel, and Onega. Superimposed over the image is the phrase "Entente Intervention from the North." Above Archangelsk is a furled yellow flag with the abbreviated Russian name "Cha khii," referring to the populist, Nicholas Chaikovskii, and the date II/X 2 October, which relate to Allied support for his brief reign over the "Provisional Government of the Northern Region." The green arrows emanating from Murmansk, Onega, and Arkhangelsk indicate the principal avenues of advance of Allied troops into northern Russia, whereas the thick green line indicates their furthest defensive positions by March 1919.

Two large flags above Helsinki refer to the contests over Finnish independence and the region of East Karelia. The white flag with a blue Scandinavian cross, which is the national flag of Finland, is accompanied by the text "Finnish Regent General Mannerheim 4 December." These refer to Mannerheim's acceptance from the Finnish government of the title of Regent in an effort to ward off a possible Bolshevik invasion and secure recognition for Finnish independence. The other white flag, emblazoned with the letter Ф (F) and a crown in the canton, above the text "Frederick of Hesse invited to the throne," identifies the attempted reinstatement of the Finnish monarchy in the form of Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse, brother-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm II. He was forced to renounce his candidacy in the wake of Mannerheim's instatement.

The map's northeast sector is dominated by events involving the rise of the anti-Bolshevik Admiral Kolchak in Siberia and the planning for his major offensive towards the Volga. In September 1918 delegates of anti-Bolshevik political parties and local governments created the All-Russian Provisional Government, led by the

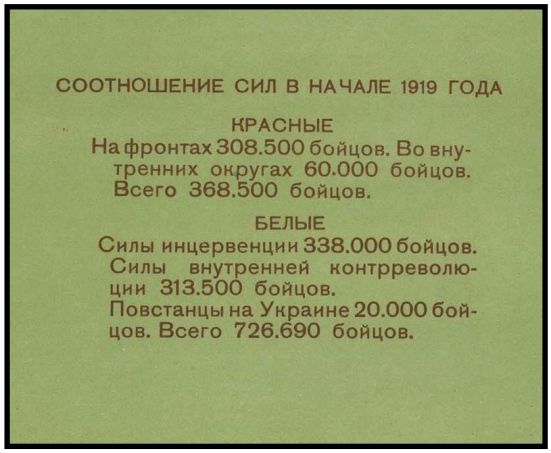
All-Russian Directorate of five delegates headquartered in Omsk, which is represented by the yellow flag with Cyrillic letters ВРД (VRD), an abbreviation of the phrase "All-Russian Directorate." A paper government with little internal or foreign support, the Directorate lasted eight weeks, until being replaced on the night of November 17-18 by another anti-Bolshevik government, that of Admiral Alexander Kolchak, who assumed the title "Supreme Ruler of Russia." Kolchak chose the red, white, and blue tri-color flag (traditionally the official flag of Imperial Russia) as the standard of his new regime. The small symbol of an explosion accompanied by the date and text "21-22 November Revolt against Bolshevism" refers to Kolchak's accession to power. **Figure 10**

Aleksandr Vasilyevich Kolchak, supreme ruler of all Russian government, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing right *—Like their Red counterparts, White opposition forces also printed posters, though not in as many editions, to advocate their cause. Today, many in Russia revere Admiral Kolchak as a saint, albeit one who failed to work any miracles.*

A man with no political ambition, Kolchak manifested simple goals at the time of his elevation to "Supreme Ruler": the creation of an effective counter-revolutionary army; the restoration of law and order in Russia; and victory over the Bolsheviks. His objectives, however modest, required the mettle of a true dictator, but opinions among his colleagues were mixed. According to one of his biographers, he possessed many admirable personal qualities, but he viewed power as a burden and was ill-suited to the demands of statecraft. His inexperience in politics was no tonic for the corruption and barbarism of Siberia, while being bereft of the skills of a military tactician or strategist precluded any ability to control his staff and to find able commanders, much less lead a land force against a better organized and equipped opponent. Though celebrated as a hero in Russia today, he justifiably shares some of the blame for the failure of the Whites to mount an effective opposition to the Red Army.

The most prominent illustration in the northeast sector is an ensemble of figures that represent the disposition of forces at the resumption of fighting in early March 1919, in what was known as Kolchak's "Ufa Offensive." Fighting had been brought to a stalemate in late December following the White capture of the provincial capital of Perm, combined with winter conditions. Seeking to reinstate the initiative and take advantage of anti-Soviet peasant uprisings the Red Army rear, Admiral Kolchak employed 130,000-145,000 troops in a major thrust to the west stretching from Perm to Uralsk. Situated between the southern Urals and the Volga, the ensemble includes four green figures of White Army soldiers, two regulars and two Cossacks on horseback. Facing them are four red figures representing Red Army soldiers.

Transcription of Text


СООТНОШЕНИЕ СИЛ В НАЧАЛЕ 1919 ГОДА

КРАСНЫЕ

На фронтах 308.500 бойцов. Во внутренних округах 60.000 бойцов. Всего 368.500 бойцов.

БЕЛЫЕ

Силы инцервенции 338.000 бойцов. Силы внутренней контрреволюции 313.500 бойцов. Повстанцы на Украине 20.000 бойцов. Всего 726.690 бойцов.

The Balance of Forces in early 1919

Red

On the fronts 308,500 fighters.

In the interior districts 60,000 fighters.

Total 368,500 soldiers.

White

Interventionist forces 338,000 fighters.*

Internal counter-revolutionary

Forces 313,500 fighters.

Rebels in Ukraine 20,000 fighters.

Total 736, 690 soldiers.

*The text obviously exaggerates the total number of Allied intervention forces operating in Russia at the beginning of 1919. At any time between 1918 and 1922 the total Allied forces, which included those of the Japanese, never exceeded one-hundred-and-twenty-thousand

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Conventional Symbols

1. *Position of sides in November 1918.*

2. *Position of sides in March 1919.*

3. *Revolt and revolution in Germany and Austria in November 1918.*

4. *Education soviets.*

5. *Transfer of troops to the Eastern Front.*

6. *German fleet in the hands of the rebel sailors.*

7. *Sinking of a red cruiser by an English mine.*

8. *Arrival and proclamation of the All-Russian Directory ,9 October*

9. *Kolchak's coup in Omsk 18 November .*

10. *Invitation of the Allied representatives to the Soviet and White governments for peace talks.*

The green palm tree situated over the Sea of Marmara signifies an effort by Allied representatives in Paris in December 1918-January 1919 to employ diplomacy to end the Civil War in Russia. Because members of the Peace Conference refused to receive the Bolsheviks, American President Wilson and British Prime Minister Lloyd George devised a proposal to confer with Russian delegates at Prinkipo, or Princes Islands, in the Sea of Marmara. Their proposal, broadcast by radio to Russia on February 16, was received with Bolshevik mistrust, and the incentive to negotiate died.