

The Aneurin Great War Project: Timeline

Part 10 - The War Itself, 1917

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First published 7th November 2018. This version 09:00 GMT 10th February 2021
[BUT UNDER CONSTANT EXTENSION AND CORRECTION, SO CHECK AGAIN SOON]

This timeline supports the *Aneurin* series of interdisciplinary scientific reflections on why the Great War failed so singularly in its bid to be *The War to End all Wars*. It presents actual or best-guess historical event and introduces theoretical issues of cognitive science as they become relevant.

UPWARD

[Author's Home Page](#)
[Project Aneurin, Scope and Aims](#)
[Master References List](#)

BACKWARD IN TIME

[Part 1 - \(Ape\)men at War, Prehistory to 730](#)
[Part 2 - Royal Wars \(Without Gunpowder\), 731 to 1272](#)
[Part 3 - Royal Wars \(With Gunpowder\), 1273-1602](#)
[Part 4 - The Religious Civil Wars, 1603-1661](#)
[Part 5 - Imperial Wars, 1662-1763](#)
[Part 6 - The Georgian Wars, 1764-1815](#)
[Part 7 - Economic Wars, 1816-1869](#)
[Part 8 - The War Machines, 1870-1894](#)
[Part 9 - Insults at the Weigh-In, 1895-1914](#)
[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1914](#)
[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1915](#)
[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1916](#)

FORWARD IN TIME

[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1918](#)
[Part 11 - Deception as a Profession, 1919 to date](#)

The Timeline Items

EDITORIAL NOTE: Until now we have included battlefield detail in order to contextualise and illustrate the research issues being raised. From here on in, however, we shall be less interested in the psychology of Humankind at war and more concerned with the political and economic systems which sent them to war in the first place; and, of these, the role of deliberate state deception - which is both psychological and political at the same time - will never be far from centre stage.

- 1917 [Friday 5th-6th January] **War in the Balkans [XXXII - The Salonika Campaign (The Rome Conference)]:** [Continued from [1916 \(6th December\)](#)] [Lloyd George](#) and Chief of the Imperial General Staff [Sir William Robertson](#) [<=1916 (12th December)] meet their French counterparts [Briand](#) and [Sarrail](#), in order to sort out the "Easterner-Westerner" issue once and for all. Briand wants more men in Salonika, but the British want the war effort concentrated on the Western Front. The issue is decided by Britain's inability to provide and protect the shipping which would be needed to support an expanded presence, and so the Salonika Front remains static, posing little threat to either Vienna or Istanbul. For more of the detailed discussions in Rome see pages 169-173 of [Dutton \(1975 \[full text online\]\)](#). [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]
- 1917 [6th-19th January] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XVIII - The Baghdad Offensive (Battle of the Khadairi Bend)]:** [Continued from [1916 \(13th December\)](#)] On 6th January 1917 [General Maude](#)'s advance up the Tigris against the Mesopotamian capital, Baghdad, encounters well fortified Ottoman positions at the **Khadairi Bend** [\[map\]](#) which delay the advance by about a fortnight [sub-thread continues at 9th January 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]
- 1917 [9th January] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XIX - The Sinai Offensive (The Battle of Rafah)]:** With the advance up the Tigris now well under way, [General Murray](#)'s E.E.F. [=Egyptian Expeditionary Force] launches an attack on the Sinai Front at **Rafah** [\[map\]](#), threatening Gaza 20 miles further up the coast. The Ottoman central redoubt is captured that same day, leaving Egypt now fully conquered, and setting the stage for an advance northward through Palestine to threaten Jerusalem and - in due course - Damascus [sub-thread continues at 8th March 2017 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]
- 1917 [15th January] **The Weaponisation of Diseases [Germany Against America]:** On 15th January 1917 Norwegian police in the town of **Karasjok** [\[map\]](#) detain Baron **Otto Karl von Rosen** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#), a Swedish national, on suspicion of being an agent for the Germans. In his luggage is found an ampoule of curare poison and ready-to-culture anthrax spores absorbed into sugar cubes. The anthrax is nowadays widely presumed to have been prepared in a German lab for use by **Anton Dilger**'s [\[check him out\]](#) "biological sabotage" network in the United States, where it would have been used to infect livestock destined for Britain and France. The contraband will remain unnoticed in the vaults of the Trondheim police museum until discovered in the late 1990s - for details see [Redmond, et al. \(1998 \[full text online\]\)](#). [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = BIOLOGICAL WARFARE]
- 1917 [27th January-8th May 1920] **Costa Rica, 1871-2018 [II - Banana War, 1917-1920]:** [Continued from [18th August 1871](#)] On 27th January 1917 [Federico Tinoco](#) [\[check him out\]](#) ousts Costa Rican president, **Alfredo González** [\[check him out\]](#), in a coup. The State Department refuses to recognise Tinoco, however, regarding him not just as the wrong sort of dictator but also as disruptively provoking conflict on the border with Nicaragua. On 14th June 1919 the **USS Castine** [\[Wikipedia shipography\]](#) lands marines at the port of Limón on the Caribbean Sea to protect American citizens and property, and on 13th August 1919 Tinoco stands down in favour of **Interim President**^[1919(Aug-Sept)] **Juan Quirós** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#). **USS Denver** [\[Wikipedia shipography\]](#) and **USS Baltimore** [\[Wikipedia shipography\]](#) likewise stand guard at Puntarenas on the Pacific coast while formal elections are hurriedly prepared. Quirós is then replaced by **President**^[1919-1920] **Francisco Aguilar** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#), who returns Costa Rica to its four-year presidential cycle on 8th May 1920 [sub-thread continues at [8th May 1920](#) ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]
- 1917 [2nd February] **Zionism During WW1 [VI - The Balfour Declaration (First Draft)]:** [[Continued from 9th May 1916](#)] Following 15 years of sustained pressure [[see 23rd October 1902](#) and follow the forward links], and sensing an imminent end to Ottoman rule in the Holy Land [see both 6th and 9th January above], the Zionist lobby in British politics ...

ASIDE: The following people acted as Zionist lobbyists before and during WW1 (in alphabetical order, and including as many non-Jews as Jews) ...

Arthur Balfour [[check him out](#)]; **Joseph Chamberlain** [[see 23rd October 1902 and 24th April 1903](#)]; **Sir Edward Grey** [[see 5th February 1915 and 9th May 1916](#)]; **David Lloyd George** [[see 1904 undated ESSENTIAL](#)]; **William H. Hechler** [[Wikipedia biography](#)]; **Theodor Herzl** [[see 15th October 1894 and 1st February 1896 \(and as then directed\)](#)]; **Herbert Samuel** [[see 28th January and 5th February 1915, and 27th February 1916](#)]; **Chaim Weizmann** [[see 8th June 1916 ESSENTIAL](#)]

... makes a major step forward in its campaign to have Palestine reborn as a homeland for the Jewish diaspora. It takes the form of a suggested letter of intent drafted by **[Sir]¹⁹¹⁰ Rufus Isaacs [Lord Reading]¹⁹¹⁴** [[check him out](#)] for **Arthur Balfour** [ditto] and delivered to **Walter Rothschild** [ditto]. Nowadays better known as the "**Balfour Declaration**" [[Wikipedia briefing and full text](#)], the final revision will become one of the most contentious political documents ever signed. It will, for example, be described as bringing about "a peace to end all peace" (**Fromkin, 1989** [[Amazon](#)]), and summarised a full century after the facts in Chapter 12 of **Jim Macgregor and Gerry Docherty's** (2017) "**Prolonging the Agony**" [[check it out](#)] as follows ...

"In pandering to a small group of Zionists, the Balfour Declaration was bizarre, deceitful, and a deliberate betrayal of the loyal Arabs fighting in the desert war against the Turks. Perfidious Albion had rarely plumbed such duplicitous depths" (p396).

[Sub-thread continues at 10th May 1917.] [[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD](#)] [[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING](#)]

1917 [??th February] The Welsh poet **Ellis Evans** [Bardic name "Hedd Wyn"] [[Wikipedia biography](#)] enlists in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. Assigned to 15th Battalion he will be killed on Pilkem Ridge on 31st July. He will win the 1917 Bardic Chair posthumously six weeks later.

"John Buchan did not fight but he often wrote as though he did" [[Strachan 2009](#)]

1917 [20th February] **The News as State Deception [WW1 Propaganda (Britain's Department of Information)]**: [Continued from [18th April 1897 \(cinematic deception\)](#) and [8th February 1898 \(newsprint deception\)](#) **ESSENTIAL PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**] **Lloyd George** establishes a **Department of Information** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] with **John Buchan** [[check him out](#)] as its director. One of his first allocated tasks is to persuade Britain at large of the need to destroy the Ottoman Empire's hold over the Middle East (Fromkin, 1989) [sub-thread continues at [10th February 1918](#), but see also the *How Our Papers Reported It* insets starting at 16th April 1917 ...]. [[THREAD = THE DEATH OF DEMOCRACY](#)] [[THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS](#)] [[THREAD = THE COGNITIVE SCIENCE OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA](#)]

1917 [4th March (O.S. 19th February)¹] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [I - The February Revolution (Rationing Announced)]**: [[New sub-thread](#)] The Petrograd² city authorities announce that rationing will shortly be introduced, causing panic buying much as will be seen a century later in supermarkets across the English-speaking world in the early months of the COVID-19 Pandemic [sub-thread continues at 7th March 1917 ...]. [[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD](#)] [[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION](#)]

¹ The pre-revolutionary "O.S." [=Old Style] Russian Orthodox "Julian" calendar was 13 days behind the "new style" "Gregorian" calendar used elsewhere in this resource. Inconveniently, this means that history's famous "February Revolution" actually took place in March in western history books.

² Petrograd was the name for St. Petersburg throughout WW1 and through until 1924, when it became Leningrad. It reverted to St. Petersburg in 1991.

1917 [7th March (O.S. 22nd February)¹] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [II - The February Revolution (The Putilov Strikes)]**: [Continued from 4th March 1917] Radicalised in part by German *agents provocateurs* intent on weakening Russia's armies in the field, workers at the **Putilov Works** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] in Petrograd go out on strike. Over the following days, they will be joined by supporters across the

City [sub-thread continues at 11th March 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1917 [8th-11th March] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XX - The Baghdad Offensive (Battle of Baghdad)]**: [Continued from 9th January 1917] On 8th March 1917 [General Maude](#)'s troops finally close with the Ottoman defensive positions south of Baghdad. After a surprise attack on 10th March the Turks start to fall back, and the city is entered without major resistance the following day [sub-thread continues at 26th March 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1917 [9th March-6th April] **WW1 in the Caucasus [XI - Revolution in the North (The Transcaucasian Committee)]**: [Continued from [2nd August 1916](#)] On 9th March 1917, in the aftermath of the **February Revolution** [see 4th March above], the Petrograd Soviet starts to implement its policy of defence-only military operations. It sets up a **Special Transcaucasian Committee (OZAKOM)** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] to manage the Caucasus Front, where sickness and desertions have become rife. On 6th April the United States declares war on the Central Powers, but on the explicit advice of Secretary of State **Robert Lansing** [see insets 16th April below], decides NOT to do likewise against the Ottoman Empire. Yudenich will be dismissed for insubordination shortly afterward, only to reappear in Petrograd at the time of the **Kornilov Affair** [see 10th September below] [sub-thread continues at 15th November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = WW1 REPRISALS AND ATROCITIES] [THREAD = WW1 PROPAGANDA]

1917 [11th-15th March (O.S. 26th February-2nd March)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [III - The February Revolution (The Tsar Plays Hardball, and Loses)]**: [Continued from 7th March 1917] On 11th March 1917, [Tsar Nicholas II](#) prorogues his parliament - the *Duma* - and orders his generals to put down the Petrograd protests by force. These prove to be fatefully counter-productive decisions because the troops at hand are largely sympathetic to the strikers' demands and merely shuffle their feet half-heartedly when ordered to deploy the following day. The dissidents respond by setting up a Emergency Duma and a "**Petrograd Soviet**" [[Wikipedia briefing](#); the Russian word COBET - pronounce as sov-yet - means "council"] in order to maintain civil order. Since the armed forces are well-represented in these provisional structures, they more than hold their own against the Tsarist secret police, the *Okhrana*. On 14th March 1917, the Tsar holds discussions with his Chief of Staff [Nikolai Ruzsky](#) [[Wikipedia biography](#)] and other advisers, and on 15th - [suspiciously easily persuaded](#) - he formally abdicates. He and close members of his family are then rounded up and spirited away into house arrest on a remote country estate at **Tobolsk** [[map](#)] in the Ural Mountains [sub-thread continues at 16th March ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1917 [16th March (O.S. 3rd March)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [IV - Provisional Government (The Tsar Detained)]**: [Continued from 11th March 1917] On 16th March 1917, many of the factions in Petrograd subscribe to a Provisional Government with **Prince Georgy Lvov** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] as Prime Minister. The new administration is recognised by the United States on 20th March, followed two days later by Britain, France, and Italy (concerned as they are that Russia should stay in the war against Germany [if Russia called a ceasefire on the Eastern Front, it would double the German strength on the Western Front - Ed.]), even though it is well understood in diplomatic circles that this will extend only to defensive operations. However even limited war is not acceptable to the "**Bolsheviks**" [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] within the Petrograd Soviet, and so the basic tensions which brought about the February Revolution do not go away [sub-thread continues at 8th April ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1917 [26th March-19th April] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XXI - The Palestine Offensive (Stalemate at Gaza)]**: [Continued from 8th March] Having broken through the Ottoman defences at the Battle of Rafah, Murray's E.E.F. - now including **53rd (Welsh) Division** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] - moves against the well-defended coastal city of Gaza. Fighting begins 26th March, but a month of heavy casualties forces the E.E.F. to dig in for the summer and await reinforcements [[Wikipedia briefing and map of front line](#)] [sub-thread

continues at 27th June 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1917 [3rd April] **The Rise of Herbert Hoover [XII - The Food Administration, 1917 (Hoover Goes Cooe)]**: [Continued from [10th October 1914](#)] On 3rd April 1917 the mining speculator turned WW1 relief magnate **Herbert Hoover** [\[check him out\]](#) writes his friend and presidential adviser "Colonel" **Edward House** [\[ditto\]](#) to suggest that his experiences with managing food relief shipments into occupied Belgium [\[see 10th October 1914\]](#) would prove useful to the Wilson Administration in managing food production and supply in the United States, should she enter the war (Burner, 1978) [\[sub-thread continues at 3rd May 1917 ...\]](#). [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = STOCK MARKET AND FINANCIAL PRACTICE AND SHARP PRACTICE]

1917 [6th April] **America Enters WW1**: On 6th April 1917 the United States formally declares war on the Central Powers and begins mobilising her armed forces. The declaration forces American citizens in now-hostile territory to flee on last-trains-out to neutral havens like Switzerland. One of the diplomats fleeing from Vienna to Bern is future Director of the CIA **Allen Dulles** [\[check him out\]](#). One of those trying to get into Germany is Tsarist exile and future Bolshevik leader **Lenin** [\[this narrative is picked up 8th April 1917 in the <Russian Revolution> sub-thread ...\]](#). [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

******* THE WARREN COMMISSION COVER UP BEGINS HERE *******

1917 [8th April (O.S. 25th March)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [V - Provisional Government (A Missed Opportunity)]**: [Continued from 16th March 1917 (but see also 6th April above)] On Easter Sunday 8th April 1917, in the refugee chaos following America's entry into WW1, future Bolshevik leader **Lenin** [\[<=6th April 1917\]](#) phones the U.S. Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, and speaks briefly to the duty officer, who refuses to make the time available out of hours (the fact was, he would later explain, that he had a hot date). Only years later would it emerge that Lenin then turned for help to the German Embassy instead, who rapidly approved his transit to Petrograd. In hindsight, it was an historically expensive missed opportunity for the Allies, because once back in Petrograd [\[see 16th April below\]](#) Lenin revitalised the Bolsheviks, and spent the summer of 1917 fomenting what would become the "**October Revolution**" [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#), and - as Germany had hoped that it would - **taking Russia out of the war against them**. That duty officer was none other than **Allen Dulles** [\[check him out\]](#), future Director of the CIA 1953-1961, enemy of **John Fitzgerald Kennedy**, and approver of truth as a member of the **Warren Commission** 1964-1966. His brief encounter with Lenin was a story Dulles "never tired of repeating" (Helms, 2003, p59), and he never again failed to make time to cultivate a possible intelligence contact [\[sub-thread continues at 16th April 1917 ...\]](#). [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1917 [9th April-16th May] **The Battle of Arras**: Carefully timed to coincide with the **Nivelle Offensive** [\[see 16th April below\]](#), what will become known as the **Battle of Arras** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) kicks off with an offensive by the British 1st (largely Canadian), 3rd (largely Scottish), and 5th Armies on a front running from Vimy Ridge in the north to Neuville-Vitasse in the south, a distance of 11 miles in all. There are then a sequence of lesser battles, as follows ...

DAY 1

First Battle of the Scarpe [\[see main briefing\]](#)

Battle of Vimy Ridge [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#)

DAY 2

Battle of Bullecourt [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#)

DAY 7

Battle of Lagnicourt [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#)

DAY 15

Second Battle of the Scarpe [\[see main briefing\]](#)

DAY 20

Battle of Arleux [\[see main briefing\]](#)

DAY 25

Second Battle of Bullecourt [see main briefing]

Third Battle of the Scarpe [see main briefing]

[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1917 [16th April (O.S. 3rd April)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [VI - Provisional Government (Lenin Arrives Petrograd)]:** [Continued from 8th April 1917] On 16th April 1917 Lenin arrives back in Petrograd. As the Germans had hoped when they had issued him his transit visa, he starts making inflammatory speeches straight away, and over the coming weeks brings a new sense of urgency and focus not just to the Bolsheviks in the Petrograd Soviet but also to the workers' and soldiers' committees in the country at large, who will henceforth be encouraged to refer to themselves as "**Red Guards**" [= КРАСНАЯ ГВАРДИЯ, pronounce as *Kraz-naya Gvardia*] [[Wikipedia briefing](#)].

CAMEO - REDS vs WHITES: The red flag had been a symbol of barricade dissidence and mutinous intent since the late 18th Century, and a uniquely left-wing statement of class-consciousness from the mid-19th Century [[see Wikipedia briefing for specific instances](#)] ...

READING: Check out the hits for the word "flag" in the 1832 chapters of Victor Hugo's "**Les Miserables**" [[Project Gutenberg full text online](#)], and note especially what happens to the "red flag" on the barricade in Chapter IV-5 (a flag which will still be celebrated musically into the 21st Century - [check it out](#)).

When the red flag became the official symbol of anti-Tsarist revolution in 1917, the counter-revolutionary Tsarist factions more or less instantly became known as "Whites". The revolution was thus class-aligned and colour-coded from the very beginning. In his (2018) book "**The Russian Revolution**" [[Amazon](#)], **Robert H. Wilde** explains that Lenin's expectation was no longer that Russian middle-class intellectuals - the famed "**Bourgeoisie**" of Marxist theory - could be persuaded to change anything, leading him to appeal instead to workers, peasants, the armed forces, students, etc. - the equally famed "**Proletariat**" ...

ASIDE: This is why the compound appellation "Marxist-Leninist" had to be invented. "Communism" does not appear in any significant propagandistic sense until 1925 [[Wikipedia briefing](#)], when the word "commune" was borrowed from the French revolutionary vocabulary [[see 15th July 1789](#) and see [18th March 1871](#)]. It is also why **Lee Harvey Oswald** so carefully phrased his TV persona as "A Marxist, but not a Communist" - [YouTube him here](#). The O.E.D. dates the first appearance of the word "Commie" to 1928, but it remained rare until its propaganda value was recognised and exploited by the Western media in the late 1940s.

CAMEO - REDS, WHITES, AND BANKERS: The Germans were far from being the only foreign interest groups with bets riding in the Petrograd Stakes, for the February Revolution can neither be politically nor militarily explained without due reference to those bankrolling the various sides. Which takes us, despite the fact that the United States had only just entered the war, to NYC's Wall Street and to the counting houses of London, Paris, and Frankfurt. The point is that sovereign lenders had taken sides well before the war, and many - especially from the Jewish banking houses - were noticeably anti-Romanoff thanks to the Tsarist liking for anti-Jewish pogroms [[see 19th April 1903](#)]. For example, NYC's **Kuhn, Loeb and Company**, headed by "the Jewish Avenger" **Jacob Schiff** [[check him out](#)], reportedly blocked every attempt by the Tsar to raise a loan in the United States between 1904 and 1916. These issues are explored in detail in **Richard B. Steele's** (2017) "**Wall Street and the Russian Revolution**" [[Amazon](#)]. With very few exceptions, the Western allies supported the Whites against the Reds from the outset (Madeira, 2008).

CAMEO - HOW OUR PAPERS REPORTED IT: Media coverage of events in Russia between 1917 and 1920 was carefully analysed close after the event by political adviser turned propaganda theorist **Walter Lippmann** [[check him out](#), and see [Timeline 1st January 1920, 4th August 1920, and 1st January 1922](#)]. Here is an example of how a hundred million Americans were told what to think ...

"From the Revolution of March 1917 to the final collapse of the eastern front in early February 1918 it is just to say that a strong bias is reflected in the presentation of the news. [...]his bias persistently plays down news of Russia's weakness and plays up announcements and events which sustain hope" (Lippmann, 1920b, p105).

More examples from Lippmann in later entries.

Arriving in Petrograd at about the same time as Lenin (and possibly even on the same train) is presidential adviser **Charles Crane** [[check him out](#)], one of the senior members of the White House's **Root Commission** [no convenient briefing but much to reward the determined browser] ...

CAMEO - THE ROOT COMMISSION: When it became apparent during the winter of 1916-1917 that American entry into the war was ever more likely, [President Wilson](#) sought advice from his Secretary of State **Robert Lansing** [\[check him out\]](#) as to Russia's prospects on the Eastern Front. It was decided that a fact-finding "commission of distinguished Americans" should be sent to Petrograd. After lengthy - and sometimes heated - consultation, Lansing's recommended candidate was veteran politician (and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate from 1912) **Elihu Root** [\[check him out\]](#). Crane led the advance party to Petrograd in April, and was joined by Root 13th June to mid-July. Root was never overly impressed with the Provisional Government's prospects in the field against Germany, but makes America's financial support conditional upon Russia fighting on. "No fight," he warned, "no loans!" (Steele, *op. cit.*).

FURTHER READING: For a gloriously detailed account of the background to, and exploits of, the Root Commission see **Szajkowski (1969)** [\[full text online \(JSTOR registration required\) RECOMMENDED READING\]](#)). For more on Crane in particular see **Richard B. Spence's (2017) "Wall Street and the Russian Revolution"** [\[Amazon\]](#) [\[sub-thread continues at 1st May 1917 ...\]](#). [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE COLD WAR IN THE MAKING\]](#)

1917 [\[16th April-9th May\]](#) **The Second Battle of the Aisne:** [\[a.k.a. "the Nivelle Offensive"\]](#) What will become known as the **Second Battle of the Aisne** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) opens with an offensive by the French 5th and 6th Armies on the Chemin des Dames and Champagne fronts around **Reims** [\[sector map\]](#).

ASIDE - THE CHEMIN DES DAMES: The so-called "Ladies' Road" runs south-eastward from the Soissons-Laon highway to the wooded plateau at Craonne, some 30 miles distant. The Aisne river runs parallel to, to the south of, and some 500 feet below the chemin for its entire length. The Germans had dug in on this high ground in November 1914 to stabilise themselves in the **First Battle of the Aisne** [\[see 13th September 1914\]](#). The French attack was thus uphill all the way. Halfway along the Chemin you will nowadays find the **Caverne du Dragon Museum** [\[website RECOMMENDED VISIT\]](#). The battle gave the Germans a chance to field their latest infantry weapon, the **MG08/15**, a lightened version of their MG08 heavy machine gun on a bipod [\[see this weapon in action\]](#).

Unfortunately for the French, the Germans had learned that an attack was imminent, and were well prepared. As a result, French losses on the first day alone were 40,000 killed, wounded, and missing. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS\]](#)

1917 [\[1st-15th May \(O.S. 19th April-2nd May\)\]](#) **The 1917 Russian Revolution [VII - The Provisional Government ("The April Days")]:** [\[Continued from 16th April 1917\]](#) On 1st May 1917, it comes to light that the Provisional Government's Foreign Minister **Pavel Milyukov** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#) has been exchanging telegrams with his western counterparts confirming Russia's continued interest in acquiring Black Sea access to the Mediterranean from the struggling Ottoman Empire. This, however, is against the understanding reached with the Petrograd Soviet back in March, which had - very explicitly - been that only defensive operations were to be conducted ...

ASIDE: The Petrograd Soviet stood, of course, to the political left of the Provisional Government, just as the Duma had stood to the political left of autocratic Tsarism. Leftist parties, of course, routinely eschew war not just as tragic in itself, but because they regard it as one set of victims of oppression fighting another set of victims of oppression in the interests of both sets of oppressors!! War, in Leftist eyes, always involves one set of mugs bravely fighting another, with cowards and their lackies reaping the benefits.

CAMEO - HOW OUR PAPERS REPORTED IT: Here is Lippmann again, explaining how our modern world has been largely shaped by the Establishment press machine ...

"The question which dominated all the news out of Russia was whether the Russians would continue to fight. [... There were] two alternative theories: one the official Allied theory that Russia would fight; the other, the theory of an unknown Russian revolutionist in New York [actually Leon Trotsky, who had been interviewed back in March - Ed.] and of 'general opinion in Berlin' that Russia would not fight" (*op. cit.*, p105).

On 15th May, after a fortnight of horse-trading, the Petrograd Soviet votes to assimilate itself into the Provisional Government, taking six of the 16 cabinet seats and installing **Alexander Kerensky** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] as Minister of War [sub-thread continues at 1st July 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION] [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS]

1917 [3rd-19th May] **The Rise of Herbert Hoover [XIII - The Food Administration, 1917 (Hoover Extends His Empire)]**: [Continued from 3rd April 1917] On 3rd May 1917 Hoover arrives back in NYC and immediately petitions **President Wilson** to become his administration's "food dictator" (Burner, 1978, p97), citing his experience since 1914 administering Allied aid into Belgium [see [Timeline 1st September 1914](#) and follow the thread <[The Rise of Herbert Hoover](#)>]. On 19th May Wilson asks Congress to approve a post of Food Administrator under the **Lever Act** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)], and when the act is formally passed 10th August 1917 Hoover gets the job. The programme introduces specific price-fixing powers for wheat [the price eventually settles at \$2.20 per bushel for the coming year, 1918, and will hold until after the Armistice - Ed.], and is well supported by a publicity campaign ...

CAMEO - THE 1917 FOOD POSTERS: The 1917 food campaign posters are a marvel to behold - simply switch your browser to images and enter <1917 Food Administration>.

[Sub-thread continues at [7th November 1918](#) ...]

[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = STOCK MARKET AND FINANCIAL PRACTICE AND SHARP PRACTICE]

1917 [10th May] **Zionism During WW1 [VII - The Balfour Declaration (Lloyd George Speech)]**: [Continued from 2nd February 1917] British Prime Minister **Lloyd George** tells an off-the-record meeting of the House of Commons that the war will result in the Ottoman Empire permanently forfeiting control of the Middle East. Indeed he has already set **John Buchan**'s Department of Information the task of making it so. In his (1989) book "**A Peace to End All Peace**" [[Amazon](#)] **David Fromkin** suggests that at least one of the reasons for this lay in the Prime Minister's personal Zionism, thus ...

"Taking office as 1916 turned into 1917, the new Prime Minister brought old-fashioned Radical fervour to such emerging war goals as the destruction of the reactionary Ottoman Empire [...]. One of Lloyd George's first actions [...] was to order his armies in Egypt onto the offensive. One of the others was to order John Buchan [...] to launch a propaganda campaign portraying the destruction of the Ottoman Empire as a major purpose of the war. The campaign captured the imagination of the public: "**The Turk Must Go!**" proved to be an effective slogan. [...] Lloyd George was the only man in his government who had always wanted to acquire Palestine for Britain. He also wanted to encourage the development of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. [...] He was only the latest in a long line of Christian Zionists in Britain that stretched back to the Puritans. [...] Guided by the Scriptures, the Puritans believed that the advent of the Messiah would occur once the people of Judaea were restored to their native land" (pp264-268).

FURTHER READING: This is sensitive area, and before finalising an opinion cautious readers should carefully assess Fromkin's suggestion in the light of what we have said in the [Companion Resource](#) about the "**Religious Right**" in politics [sub-thread continues at 29th May 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [22nd May] **The French Army Mutinies**: Now based in Paris and liaising between the French Ministry of War and the War Office in London, **Edward Spears** [see 1914 (14th August)] hears rumours of mutinies in the French Army on the Aisne. Upon urgent investigation it transpired that up to 30,000 troops had simply walked out of the line on the *Chemin des Dames* front, and across the front as a whole as many as 49 divisions were seriously destabilised (Pedroncini, 1967). The French High Command's response was to respond positively to the complaints of the many while dealing firmly with the few, that is to say, with the ringleaders. More than 20,000 men were court-martialled, 2878 sentenced to hard labour, 554 sentenced to death, and 43 actually executed (Pedroncini, 1967). On the plus side Marshall Pétain promised more leave and no more expensive

grand gestures. France would, he said, "wait for more tanks, and the Americans"! [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS\]](#)

1917 [29th May] **Zionism During WW1 [VIII - The Balfour Declaration (*The Times* Takes Sides)]**: [Continued from 10th May 1917] The Zionist lobby in Britain now promotes its case by calling in some favours from *The Times*, thus ...

"Weizmann had not only British Jewry on his side in the main but also the most influential portions of the British press - whose ranks now were joined by *The Times* itself, with a leader on 'The Future of the Jews' that appeared on May 29. Until that moment, *The Times* [...] had never shown any particular interest in Zionism or the Jewish question. But its editor, **Geoffrey Dawson** [\[check him out\]](#), was a member of the **Round Table** group [\[check it out\]](#), which favoured Zionism, and its foreign editor, **H. Wickham Steed** [\[check him out\]](#) was [...] a firm believer in the Zionist solution. Steed had remained silent in the pages of *The Times* over this question until now, but it was he who contributed the May 29 leader [... observing that:] 'As Dr. Weizmann, the President of the English Zionist Federation, observes in the letter which we published yesterday, [...] the Jews do constitute a nationality. The question is one of fact, not of argument'" (Sanders, 1983, pp532-533).

[Sub-thread continues at 1st June 1917 ...]

[\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [1st June-31st July] **Zionism During WW1 [IX - The Balfour Declaration (Meanwhile, in Switzerland ...)]**: [Continued from 29th May 1917] This is merely an indexing entry to put the <Zionism> sub-thread on hold in order to interpolate two contextualising entries for <WW1 Grand Strategies> [see next entry, and that for 18th July; this sub-thread continues at 4th July 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [1st-30th June] **WW1 Grand Strategies and Carve-Ups [I - Asia Minor ("The Ottoplan")]**: [\[New sub-thread](#) (but nicely contextualised by the <Zionism> narrative)] During June 1917 secret talks take place in Geneva, Switzerland, between carefully briefed representatives of British Prime Minister **Lloyd George** and the Ottoman Empire's until-now-pro-German Minister of War, **Enver Pasha** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#). The British envoy is **Vickers Limited**'s "Merchant of Death" in person, **Basil Zaharoff** [\[check him out\]](#), and the purpose of the talks is to break the war alliance between the Central Powers and the Ottoman Empire [\[see Timeline 27th October 1914\]](#). Fromkin (1989) tells the story this way (note that Mesopotamia is modern Iraq and Palestine modern Israel) ...

"Within months of taking office, **Lloyd George** was engaged in secret negotiations with [Enver]. The Prime Minister's agent in the negotiations was **Vincent Caillard** [\[Grace's Guide obituary\]](#), financial director of the giant armaments firm Vickers [acting] through his close business associate, Basil Zaharoff [...]. Through his emissary, the Prime Minister offered bribes - large bank accounts - to Enver and his associates to leave the war on Britain's terms, which were: Arabia to be independent; Armenia and Syria to enjoy local autonomy within the Ottoman Empire; **Mesopotamia and Palestine to become de facto British protectorates** [...]; and freedom of navigation through the Dardanelles to be secured. [...] France, Italy, and Russia were to get nothing ..." (pp266-267).

No immediate deal seems to have been forthcoming [sub-thread continues at 18th July 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [5th June] **Religion and Killing [The Sergeant York Story (Boot Camp)]**: A 29-year-old Tennessee agricultural labourer, **Alvin C. York** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#), claims exemption from the draft on the grounds of conscientious objection. He is conscripted nonetheless and, while training at Camp Gordon^{GA}, discusses his pacifist ideals with his superiors and is eventually persuaded of the Christian morality of bearing arms [\[see the dramatisation of this conversation, 1941 \("Sergeant York"\)\]](#). This will prove unfortunate for the Germans who will face him on the Western Front the following year because, having hunted the backwoods all his life, he is an exceptionally fine shot [the Alvin York story continues at

[8th October 1918](#). [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION] [THREAD = WW1 PACIFISM AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION]

1917 [27th June] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XXII - The Palestine Offensive (New Commander at Gaza)]**: [Continued from 8th March] **General Allenby** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] relieves General Murray as commander of the E.E.F., and starts planning another assault on the Ottoman positions at Gaza [[Wikipedia briefing and map of front line](#)] [sub-thread continues at 31st October 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1917 [1st-23rd July (O.S. 18th June-10th July)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [VIII - The Provisional Government (The Galician Disaster)]**: [Continued from 1st May 1917] On 1st July 1917, at the instigation of the "No fight, no loans!" policy of the **Root Commission** [see inset 16th April above], the Russians cobble together an offensive of sorts on the **Ternopol** [[map](#)] sector of the front in the direction of **Lvov/Lviv** [[map](#)]. Known nowadays as the **Kerensky Offensive** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)], the advance bogs down within days in an easily flanked salient of their own making. The Germans and the Austro-Hungarians counterattack the northern and southern shoulders of this salient on 18th July, and so thinly stretched are the defenders that the following day the Germans are able to break through and collapse that entire sector of Russian front.

IN EFFECT RUSSIA CEASES TO BE A THREAT TO THE CENTRAL POWERS RIGHT HERE

This is a significant moment in history, because disaffected Russian soldiers now see the Provisional Government as the puppet of foreign financiers, and turn in great numbers to the only consistently anti-war party, namely the Petrograd Soviet, where they become the founding cadres of the **Red Army** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)]. The Root Commission, in other words, has achieved in weeks what the Kaiser has been working on for three years!

CAMEO - HOW OUR PAPERS REPORTED IT: Here is Lippmann again, explaining how Western financiers, having created the East-West schism, tried to cover up their disastrous misjudgement with in-your-face untruths and journalistic platitudes ...

"... the headlines showed a continued optimism, as the following examples show:

July 30 ARMY NOW RECOVERING [they were not - Ed.]

July 31 RUSSIAN ARMIES NOW STRIKING BACK [at skirmish level only - Ed.]

[further examples given]

Aug. 5 ROOT HAS FAITH RUSSIA WILL STAND [no he doesn't - Ed.]

[further examples given]

Aug. 8 SEES RUSSIA SOON AS STRONG AS EVER [a blatant falsehood - Ed.]

Aug. 9 **WE CAN DEPEND ON RUSSIA WITH AID FROM US, ROOT SAYS** [wishful thinking, merely restating his mission - Ed.]

[further examples given]

Thus [...] on the average once every other day, a certain show of optimism is made. It is derived from official reports of minor engagements, from advices to the State Department, and from the Russian Government. [...] No doubt there were minor successes, but the net disaster was indisputable"

Lippmann went on to quantify his argument by counting up headlines in *The New York Times* by category. He reported 82 Russia-positive items (49 of which were official statements from one or other of the governments concerned) versus 66 Russia-negative items. Moreover, 36 of those 66 negatives came complete with ready-prepared disclaimers by those same governments, rendering them positives in disguise. This means that a fairer statement of the ratio is 118 positive to 30 negative. Coming right up to date, these same techniques of deception appear again in **Mark Dice's** (2017) "**The True Story of Fake News**" [[Amazon](#)]. In Dice's analysis, one of the two main skills in 21st Century political propaganda is

"**Agenda Setting**", that is to say, "deciding firstly what is news and secondly what to think about it" (p52), and the other skill is "**Lying by Omission**".

FURTHER READING: For more on the Galician Disaster *per se* see **Robert L. Willett's** (2003) "**Russian Sideshow: America's Undeclared War 1918-1920**" [[Amazon](#)]. For more on the iniquities of headlines written - in the final analysis - by wisened old misers in counting houses far from the fighting, just raise your eyes and take a good hard look at the world. **STOP PRESS:** The following Tweet circulated 17th-18th January 2021 in solidarity with Britons struggling against corruption and foreign interference in both their main political parties simultaneously ...



Noam Chomsky @noamchomskyT · 15h

The key element of social control is the strategy of distraction that is to divert public attention from important issues and changes decided by political and economic elites through the technique of flood or flooding continuous distractions and insignificant information
Chomsky

[Sub-thread continues at 17th July 1917 ...]

[[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD](#)] [[THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS](#)] [[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING](#)]

1917 [4th July] **Zionism During WW1 [X - American Influence (The Morgenthau Mission)]:** [Continued from 1st June] Early in July 1917 secret talks take place in Gibraltar between "that faithful son of the Jewish people, whose services in these hard years Jewry will not forget"¹, the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, **Henry Morgenthau, Sr.** [[Wikipedia biography](#)], and a Zionist delegation headed by Weizmann. British and French liaison officers are at hand. Again, little progress is made [sub-thread continues at 18th July 1917 ...]. [[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD](#)] [[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING](#)]

¹ Sanders (1983 [[Amazon](#)], pp536-537)

1917 [14th July] **Prince Louis of Battenberg** [\leq 1914 (27th October)] anglicises his family name as the more innocuous "Mountbatten". His 17-year-old son **Prince Louis of Battenberg [II]** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] therefore becomes **Louis Mountbatten [1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma]**¹⁹⁴⁷ [=assassinated by Irish nationalist paramilitaries 1979 (27th August)]. In the same Decree **George V** [\leq 1914 (20th March)] announces that he is renouncing the name Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in favour of "Windsor". [[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD](#)]

1917 [18th July or hereabouts] **WW1 Grand Strategies and Carve-Ups [II - Asia Minor ("The Ottoplan" Again)]:** [Continued from 1st June] Following on from the Zaharoff and Morgenthau missions already noted, further talks now take place in Berne, Switzerland, between **Aubrey Herbert** [[check him out](#)] on behalf of the British and representatives of Enver Pasha. Again large sweeteners are offered but again no final deal is struck (after all, with the Central Powers running amok on the Eastern Front, it would be foolish for the Ottomans to abandon the alliance at this stage) [sub-thread continues at 22nd December 1917 ...]. [[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD](#)] [[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING](#)]

1917 [17th-30th July (O.S. 4th-30th July)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [IX - The Provisional Government ("The July Days")]:** [Continued from 1st July 1917] On 17th July 1917, at the height of the German rampage in the Ternopol sector of the Eastern Front, Prime Minister Lvov and many of his Cabinet fall on their swords in disgrace. Minister of War Kerensky takes Lvov's place in a new coalition of left- and right-wing factions, and General **Lavr Kornilov** [[Wikipedia biography](#)], previously commanding general of the 25th Army Corps, is made Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. The public at large is not placated, however, and violent proletarian demonstrations - the "July

Days" - erupt in Petrograd. The popular mood will later be summarised in **George Stewart's** (1933) "**The White Armies of Russia**" [[Amazon](#)] in the following terms ...

"The Provisional Government possessed the flower of Russian liberalism but was wholly unable to command the situation. [...] The murmurings and complaints of soldiers, sailors, workers, and peasants had now become a full-throated roar. While liberals bandied parliamentary concepts, the Reds [...] spoke directly to the primary human desires of Russia's people" (p266).

In fact the arrival of a 20,000-strong force of sailors from Petrograd's **Kronstadt Naval Base** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] very nearly triggers a full-scale Bolshevik coup there and then, but the moment passes for want of sufficient cross-party political support, and in the ensuing government crackdown Lenin is forced to take refuge in neighbouring Finland [sub-thread continues at 1st August 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1917 [18th July] **Zionism During WW1 [XI - The Balfour Declaration (The Rothschild Amendments)]**: [Continued from 1st June 1917] On behalf of the Zionist lobby in Britain, Lord Rothschild feeds back to Lloyd George some desired amendments to the Balfour Declaration draft submitted to him back in February [see 2nd February above]. The essence of the amendments is that the final draft of the declaration should be short and to the point, stating merely two guiding principles. These are (1) "that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people", and (2) that His Majesty's Government "will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object" [sub-thread continues at 3rd September 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [1st-31st August (O.S. 19th July-18th August)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [XI - Foreigners Pick Sides for the Big Match (Kerensky vs. Trotsky)]**: [Continued from 17th July 1917] August 1917 is a time of fevered behind-the-scenes politicking. The Bolsheviks - now speaking (in Lenin's absence) with the voice of [Leon Trotsky](#) - have been thrown onto the back foot by Kornilov's public order intervention on the streets of Petrograd. The Germans are busily charming their way into the affections of the lately Tsarist buffer states they have "liberated" - not least Finland, Latvia, and the Ukraine - promising imminent independence. The Americans still have the Root Commission in theatre but are keeping their eyes open for the commercial main chance. The Zionists are backing whoever most promises to hurt the Tsarists. And as for the British, well you could hardly make it up ...

LEST IT BE OVERLOOKED: Readers who have browsed directly into this entry may have missed the fact that Trotsky had been in NYC earlier in the year, holding discussions with anti-Tsarist Jewish bankers on the one hand and British intelligence on the other. The following cameo is clipped from the entry for the British Ambassador to the United States **Sir William Wiseman** [[click here if you prefer to see the full original](#)] ...

"CAMEO - LEON TROTSKY IN THE BIG APPLE: War games conducted by **Sir Henry Wilson** [see own entry] in 1911 had indicated that the Franco-British *Entente* would be unlikely to win a ground war against the Central Powers unless half the German Army was simultaneously diverted to a war in the east against Russia. Wiseman is mentioned in Chapters 30 and 31 of **Macgregor and Docherty's** 2017 book "**Prolonging the Agony**" [see own entry], and repeatedly throughout **Richard B. Spence's** 2017 book "**Wall Street and the Russian Revolution, 1905-1925**". The authors of both works are making the case that [Leon Trotsky's](#) mysterious 1917 visit to New York City was part of a multifaceted conspiracy to influence the outcome of the then-daily-unfolding [Russian Revolution](#). Penniless and exiled from Russia for sedition, Trotsky had sailed (first class) from Barcelona 28th December 1916 aboard the Spanish liner *Montserrat*, arriving NYC 13th January 1917, being met on the quayside by representatives of that city's Jewish activist groups (coordinated, in all probability, by the fanatical anti-Tsarist banker **Jacob Schiff** [see own entry], partner in investment bankers **Kuhn, Loeb and Company**). [...] Trotsky spent the next three months working the audiences (and wallets) of NYC's Jewish community, and presumably met secretly with who-knows-which intelligence factions, offering who-knows-how-much for who-knows-what political favours.

ASIDE - THE PROBLEM OF CUI BONO: One of the enduring historical mysteries is why Schiff and Wiseman appear to have been working to the same ends. Schiff was anti-Tsarist by conviction but pro-German by birth and family links. By rights, therefore, he should have been supporting the German-backed [Vladimir Lenin](#) rather than his pro-Allied rival Trotsky. Equally, a Lenin-Trotsky alliance had a better chance of taking Russia out of the war than a revolution at odds with itself, so why should Wiseman have been supporting that, when it meant doubling the number of Germans on the Western Front? The scholarly debate goes on to this day. [...]

Trotsky departed NYC 27th March 1917, was delayed for a month in Halifax, Nova Scotia, while the British closely observed the outcome of the **February Revolution** [\[see 8th March 1917\]](#), and arrived back in St. Petersburg 17th May 1917. His first major act was to attend the just convened All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies, where - presumably as agreed - he threw his weight behind Lenin's Bolsheviks [...]. By the time of the more decisive **October Revolution** [\[see 7th November 1917\]](#), he was ready to become one of the seven members of the new Communist Politburo, taking the post of Foreign Minister. He then switched to being Minister of War [=People's Commissar of the Armed Forces] 13th March 1918, overseeing the creation that year of the **Red Army** and its attendant **Supreme Military Council**, and remaining in post during the first five years of the ensuing Reds-versus-Whites [Russian Civil War](#) [...]."

Kerensky, in short, is receiving more advice than he knows what to do with, and none of it with the slightest welfare of the Russian people in mind [sub-thread continues at 1st September 1917 ...]. **[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]** **[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]**

1917 [1st September (O.S. 19th August)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [XII - America Considers the Options (House's Planning Group)]:** [Continued from 1st August 1917] Finally realising the enormity of the events unfolding on the European Eastern Front, [President Wilson](#) has "Colonel" **Edward House** [see 3rd April above] assemble an advisory committee of wise men. Taking temporary quarters in NYC's Public Library, the group includes academics and political correspondents such as **Walter Lippmann** [see insets 16th April above]. Fromkin (1989) will later point to how little these experts actually knew: the ten scholars assigned to cover developments in the Middle East, for example, had previously studied the Crusades, and spent much time wandering the library aisles seeking more up-to-date information. Many "did no more than summarize the information that they found in an encyclopaedia" (p261) [sub-thread continues at 10th September 1917 ...]. **[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]** **[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]**

1917 [3rd September] **Zionism During WW1 [XII - The Balfour Declaration (Discussions in Cabinet)]:** [Continued from 18th July 1917] On Lloyd George's behalf [he was indisposed - Ed.] **Lord Cecil** [\[check him out\]](#) presents Lord Rothschild's latest proposed wording of a position statement concerning Palestine to the War Cabinet [sub-thread continues at 26th October 1917 ...]. **[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]** **[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]**

1917 [10th-13th September (O.S. 28th-31st August)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [XIII - The Kerensky Government (Britain's Failed Interference)]:** [Continued from 1st September 1917] On 10th September 1917 the recently-appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armed forces, General Kornilov, urged on by conservative elements among his General Staff, moves loyal units toward Petrograd. This is the beginning of what is now known as the "**Kornilov Affair**" [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) ...

CAMEO - BRITISH PROMISES AND INDUCEMENTS: Historians have yet to agree as to Kornilov's true motivations. For our present purposes we are happy to go along with the Wikipedia explanation [accessed 24th January 2021], which points the finger at a British intelligence operation, thus ...

"Kornilov had the support of the British military attaché, Brigadier-General **Alfred Knox** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#), and Kerensky accused Knox of producing pro-Kornilov propaganda. Kerensky also claimed **Lord Milner** [\[check him out\]](#) wrote him a letter expressing support for Kornilov. A British armoured car squadron commanded by Commander **Oliver Locker-Lampson** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#) and dressed in Russian uniforms participated in the coup."

On 11th September Trotsky and the Petrograd Soviet order their supporters to dig in expecting an imminent attack, and, in collaboration with the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary factions, set up a **Committee to Combat Counter-Revolution** - soon to be formalised as the ***Cheka Secret Police*** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) - to monitor sources of dissent ...

ASIDE - ON COUNTER-REVOLUTION: This committee should not be confused with the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) set up six weeks later [see 22nd October below]. The definition of "counter-revolutionary" is, of course, factionally centred from the outset. Somewhat ironically, Trotsky will himself be denounced - and assassinated - in due course as a counter-revolutionary.

In the event, the attack never materialises, it being later claimed that pro-revolutionary railway workers deliberately sabotaged the assembly of Kornilov's approaching troop trains. Kornilov resigns 13th September, and Kerensky is appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Provisional Government's armed forces the following day, with Headquarters at **Mogilev** in Belorussia [\[map\]](#). On 19th September the Bolsheviks displace the Mensheviks in the Petrograd Soviet, and on 20th the Moscow Soviet passes a no confidence motion against Kerensky [sub-thread continues at 2nd November 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION\]](#)

1917 [10th-18th October (O.S. 27th September-5th October)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [XIV - The Kerensky Government (Lenin Back From Finland)]:** [Continued from 17th July 1917] On 10th October 1917 Lenin crosses back into Russia from Finland to address a meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee. He calls openly for the dissolution of Kerensky's Provisional Government and suggests its replacement by twin Soviets, one in Petrograd and the other in Moscow. On 18th October the commander of the Petrograd garrison - General **Georgi Polkovnikov** [\[Wikipedia biography\]](#) - orders his units to prepare for redeployment to the Eastern Front against the Germans, whereupon most of them mutinously switch allegiance to the Petrograd Soviet [sub-thread continues at 22nd October 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION\]](#)

1917 [22nd October-6th November (O.S. 9th-24th October)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [XV - The Kerensky Government (The Military Revolutionary Committee)]:** [Continued from 10th October 1917] On 22nd October 1917 the Petrograd Soviet adopts a resolution drafted by Trotsky establishing a **Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC)** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) to defend the city against "Kornilovites", that is to say, troops loyal to Kerensky's Provisional Government (who are presently hovering on troop trains not far from the city or else manning the eighteen fortresses and barracks in the city's defence ring). On 2nd November the MRC holds its first full session, attended by delegations from these eighteen local units. Fifteen of them immediately swear their allegiance to the revolution. On 4th November these troops are instructed to take orders only from Red commanders, and to prepare to defend the revolution against troops loyal to the Provisional Government [sub-thread continues at 7th November 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION\]](#)

1917 [26th October] **Zionism During WW1 [XIII - The Balfour Declaration (The Curzon Memorandum)]:** [Continued from 3rd September 1917] On 26th October 1917 **Lord Curzon** [\[check him out\]](#) circulates a memorandum entitled "**The Future of Palestine**" [\[Wikimedia full text online\]](#) for discussion at War Cabinet. The essence of his concerns are summarised in **Ronald Sanders'** (1983) "**The High Walls of Jerusalem**" [\[Amazon\]](#) as follows (we have highlighted the truly prophetic bit) ...

"Curzon began by calling attention to what he saw as a number of contradictions in the views of the proponents of a Jewish Palestine - in particular, over the matter of whether or not a state was what they ultimately sought. [...] The larger part of his paper was devoted to the question he had raised at the last War Cabinet discussion of the draft declaration - that of Palestine's capacity to absorb a large immigrant Jewish population. [...] 'Palestine,' he wrote, 'would appear to be incapacitated by physical and other conditions from ever becoming in any real sense the national home of the Jewish people.' [Further points made] 'There arises the further question,' he went on, 'what is to become of the people of this country, assuming the Turk

to be expelled [...]. They profess the Mohammedan faith. They will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants, or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the latter" (pp603-604).

ASIDE: Note the phrase "hewers of wood and drawers of water" in the above, for this is taken straight out of the Bible, where it alludes to the Israelite subjugation of the Gibeonites (*Joshua*, 9:21). It may therefore carry a tinge of Establishment anti-Semitism.

[Sub-thread continues at 31st October 1917 ...]

[**THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD**] [**THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING**]

1917 [31st October-8th November]

THIS ENTRY SITS IN TWO SEPARATE SUB-THREADS AS FOLLOWS ...

The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XXIII - The Palestine Offensive (The Battle of Beersheba)]:

[Continued from 24th June 1917, and continuing at 13th November 1917]

Zionism During WW1 [XIV - The Balfour Declaration (Weizmann's Star Ascends)]:

[Continued from 26th October 1917, and continuing at 2nd November 1917]

After a summer of stalemate, in the early hours of 31st October 1917 E.E.F. troops launch a successful surprise attack on the Ottoman defences at **Beersheba** [\[Wikipedia briefing and maps\]](#) ...

CAMEO - THE CINEMA RE-ENACTS: Here is how the charge of the Australian Light Horse was re-enacted in **Simon Wincer's** (1987) movie "**The Lighthorsemen**" [\[IMDB entry\]](#) ...

[YouTube 8 minute clip](#) **WELL WORTH A LOOK**

Meanwhile in London it so happens that the War Cabinet will be meeting later in the day to discuss the aforementioned **Curzon Memorandum** [see 26th October above]. Given the news of positive movement on the field of battle the meeting decides to phrase its way around the sticking points and to finalise the wording of a more vaguely worded declaration of intent as soon as practicable. It now takes a further 48 hours for Foreign Secretary **Arthur Balfour** to prepare the now-canonical **Balfour Declaration** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) for delivery to Lord Rothschild. [**THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD**] [**THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS**] [**THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING**]

***** **MAJOR HISTORICAL MARKER AND CASUS BELLI** *****
***** **MAJOR HISTORICAL MARKER AND CASUS BELLI** *****
***** **MAJOR HISTORICAL MARKER AND CASUS BELLI** *****

1917 [2nd November] **Zionism During WW1 [XV - The Balfour Declaration (The Final Wording)]:**

[Continued from 31st October 1917] On 2nd November 1917 the final wording of the Balfour Declaration is couriered to Lord Rothschild. It reads as follows ...

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object. It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

As previously indicated, the document will, despite the caveat concerning "non-Jewish communities in Palestine", go on to turn the war to end all wars into a peace to end all peace. Perhaps understandably, there will be no public mention of the missive until 9th November, and no substantive discussion of the likely consequences until 3rd December [sub-thread continues at 23rd November 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

***** **MAJOR HISTORICAL MARKER AND CASUS BELLI** *****
***** **MAJOR HISTORICAL MARKER AND CASUS BELLI** *****
***** **MAJOR HISTORICAL MARKER AND CASUS BELLI** *****

1917 [7th-10th November (O.S. 25th-28th October)] **The 1917 Russian Revolution [XVI (LAST) - The October Revolution (End Game)]**: [Continued from 22nd October 1917] On 7th November 1917 Lenin presides over the inaugural session of the **Second Congress of the Soviets** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) [the first had been held back in the summer - Ed.], and sets up a **Council of People's Commissars** [\[Wikipedia briefing\]](#) with himself as chairman. He is also busy on the streets, where the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) has been supplementing its armed presence by posting bills proclaiming as follows ...

"The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies - the Military Revolutionary Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison. The cause for which the people have fought, namely the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power - this cause has been secured. Long live the revolution of the workers, soldiers, and peasants!"

The key event takes place overnight 7th-8th November as Red Guards confront the loyalist defenders of the Petrograd Winter Palace, the principal government building. By dawn, having been under fire all night, most of the defenders have deserted their posts and the buildings are then easily occupied and many members of the outgoing Cabinet arrested. Having been up all night, Congress then defers its next session until 2100hr. Among its first decrees over the coming days are those concerning Peace and Land, the former promising to stop the war and the latter promising

an "Agrarian Revolution". Trotsky, the new "Commissar for Foreign Affairs", duly begins diplomatic moves to take Russia out of the war. Meanwhile, having fled to Mogilev, Kerensky prepares to fight back ...

**THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
BECOMES
THE RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR
RIGHT HERE**

THERE FOLLOWS A VERY HOT WAR BETWEEN "RED" AND
FOREIGN-AIDED "WHITE" ARMIES, WHICH DID NOT FULLY
SUBSIDE UNTIL 1925 AND WHICH IN MANY IMPORTANT
RESPECTS CONTINUES TO THE PRESENT DAY

FURTHER READING: For more of the day-by-day detail see **Judah Magnes's** (1919/2012) "**Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk**" [[Amazon](#) **VERY USEFUL RESOURCE**].

[End of sub-thread <1917 Russian Revolution>; narrative continues immediately below as <Russian Civil War> ...].

[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

- 17 [11th November (O.S. 29th October)] **The Russian Civil War [I (FIRST) - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (The Junkers Mutiny)]:** [[New sub-thread](#)] On 11th November officer cadets at Petrograd's **Vladimirskoye Military Academy** join an attempted counter-revolutionary coup - now known as the "**Junkers Mutiny**" [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] - planned by the aforementioned General Georgi Polkovnikov [see 10th October above], very likely with British assistance. During the morning the cadets occupy their academy, the telephone exchange, and other buildings. Unfortunately for them, however, Soviet agents have intercepted a copy of their battle plans and, despite the efforts of a squadron of armoured cars, the uprising is short lived ...

CAMEO - THE PETROGRAD ARMOURED CARS: The armoured cars were almost certainly some of the Russian-based **Lanchesters** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] of Britain's **Royal Naval Armoured Car Division (RNACD)** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)]. This unit had been in Russia since 1916 under the command of the aforementioned Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson [see inset 10th September 1917; [note carefully the allegation that the vehicles in question were crewed by British troops in Russian uniforms](#)], and had initially been deployed on the Caucasus Front. It had then seen action as steel cavalry in the ill-fated Kerensky Offensive [see 1st July 1917], and was now - in part at least - conveniently at hand at Petrograd. We have seen no final judgement on the rather delicate question whether the vehicles had been (a) supplied with British crews, (b) left with the keys in the ignition, or (c) stolen in the heat of battle by Kerensky loyalists. **FURTHER READING:** For an excellent introduction to this aspect of operations in Russia see **Charlotte Alston's** (2018 [[full text online](#)]) paper entitled "**Encounters on the Eastern Front: The Royal Naval Armoured Car Division in Russia 1915-1920**".

Also on 11th November, *Izvestia*, the Soviet's house newsletter pointedly denies "the base insinuation" that its Congress is being disloyal to the Entente. It was not, it said, "striving after a separate peace". Rather, Russia would henceforth simply be taking "a defensive position" (Magnes, *op. cit.*, p9). Perhaps unsurprisingly, nobody seems particularly convinced [sub-thread continues at 20th November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

- 1917 [13th November] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XXIV - The Palestine Offensive (The Battle of Mughar Ridge)]:** [Continued from 31st October 1917] After a summer of stalemate, the recent success at Beersheba permits an E.E.F. advance into the Judean Hills to threaten the Ottoman garrison at

Jerusalem [sub-thread continues at 17th November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1917 [15th November-5th December (O.S. 2nd-22nd November)] **WW1 in the Caucasus [XII - Revolution in the North (The Transcaucasian Sejm)]**: [Continued from 9th March 1917] On 15th November 1917, in the aftermath of the **October Revolution** [see 7th November above], the Petrograd Soviet establishes a **Transcaucasian Sejm** [Wikipedia briefing] at Erzincan to serve as a puppet civil administration in occupied Armenia. The ensuing weeks see weary Russian soldiers plodding north, to be replaced by Armenian militia heading south to take their places on the firing steps. Henceforth, the fight will be between an empire and a mere dissident province. On 5th December the Ottoman-Russian Armistice is signed [sub-thread continues at 5th February 1918 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = WWI REPRISALS AND ATROCITIES] [THREAD = WWI PROPAGANDA]

1917 [17th November-8th December] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XXV - The Palestine Offensive (To The Walls of Jerusalem)]**: [Continued from 13th November 1917] Following Allenby's recent advance onto the Mughar Hills, the Ottomans fall back toward Jerusalem, abandoning a considerable number of guns. This will have come as good news to Lloyd George, who had instructed Allenby back in June to deliver "**Jerusalem before Christmas**" (Sanders, 1983) [sub-thread continues at 9th December 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1917 [20th-21st November (O.S. 7th-8th November)] **The Russian Civil War [II - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Ukrainians Declare Independence)]**: [Continued from 11th November 1917] On 20th November 1917 Trotsky sends a note across to the Entente and American Embassies in Petrograd again asking them to cooperate in peace negotiations; other Commissars send out briefings according to their portfolio to regional government and military command centres. For its part, the Ukrainian *Rada* immediately re-proclaims itself as the **Ukrainian People's Republic** [Wikipedia briefing] (albeit it is presently occupied by the Central Powers following defeat in battle) and promises Petrograd-style reforms of its own, subject to ratification at a Constituent Assembly to be convened early in 1918 [see 22nd January 1918] [sub-thread continues at 22nd November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [22nd November (O.S. 9th November)] **The Russian Civil War [III - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (The Armed Forces Split)]**: [Continued from 20th November 1917] On 22nd November 1917 up-and-coming People's Commissar **Nikolai Krylenko** [Wikipedia biography] informs the Red Guards that General **Nikolai Dukhonin** [Wikipedia biography], only recently appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial armed forces in Mogilev, had refused to accept the commands of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and that he and his troops should therefore be regarded as counter-revolutionaries [sub-thread continues at 23rd November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [23rd-27th November (O.S. 10th-14th November)] **The Russian Civil War [IV - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (The Trotsky Revelations)]**: [Continued from 22nd November 1917] On 23rd November Trotsky makes diplomatic waves by revealing snippets from the documents his troops had retrieved when they ransacked the Foreign Ministry earlier in the month. Among the secret agreements on show is the **Sykes-Picot Agreement** [see 27th February 1916], under the terms of which the Entente had agreed amongst itself that Palestine would be administered internationally after the war, rather than be made over to any new Ottoman or Arabian Kingdom. London, meanwhile, has only just caught up with Trotsky's armistice proposals (moaning that the Germans had been told 19 hours before *they* had), eventually instructing **Sir George Buchanan** [Wikipedia biography], the British Ambassador, to point out that Britain could not be expected to negotiate with a regime it had yet to recognise (the United States and France make much the same point on 27th November) [sub-thread continues at 28th November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [28th-29th November (O.S. 15th-16th November)] **The Russian Civil War [V - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Christmas Comes Early For Germany)]:** [Continued from 23rd November 1917] On 28th November 1917 the MRC's Commissar Krylenko signs the order for Russia's armed forces to cease fire immediately and begin "fraternising" instead ...

ASIDE: The order applies to the Russian armed forces as a whole, not just to those who have swung over to the Red Guards. In the event, many units will remain loyal to Kerensky and the Mogilev High Command, and with covert Western encouragement are already reorganising to fight as the White Army against the Reds.

The following day the German Chancellor **Georg von Hertling** [Wikipedia biography] addresses the *Reichstag*, and declares that the Petrograd Congress's proposals constitute "a discussable basis for the opening of negotiations", especially insofar as they have promised independence for buffer states such as Poland, Lithuania, and Latvian Courland, whose people, in Germany's publicly stated view¹, "have the right to determine their own fate" (Magnes, *op. cit.*). The peace dividend for Germany, of course, is that peace in the east would permit a million highly experienced troops to be transferred across to the Western Front [sub-thread continues at 30th November 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

¹ Had Germany won the war, these lands would have ended up as German satellites rather than American. Indeed at time of writing [= January 2021], less than a handful are effortlessly free and democratic. We shall be returning to the issue of the buffer states in no little detail in 1918.

1917 [30th November-4th December (O.S. 17th-21st November)] **The Russian Civil War [VI - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Peace Talks Begin)]:** [Continued from 28th November] On 30th November 1917 Trotsky informs the Allies that the Central Powers are honouring the ceasefire on the Eastern Front, and that preliminary talks will be starting at **Brest-Litovsk** [map] on 3rd December. He invites them to send delegates of their own. The Entente, however, are still refusing to recognise the Revolutionary Congress as the legitimate government of Russia, and pointedly decline the offer ...

CAMEO - ON WEAPONISED DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION: It is frequently the case that pressure can be brought on a newly installed foreign government by not gracing them with diplomatic recognition. In 1861, for example, Britain recognised the Confederate States of America as a *bona fide* belligerent, but fell short of recognising the Confederacy as a nation in its own right, and established no formal Embassy [Wikipedia briefing]. This was, and still is, the thrust of International Law for third parties intending to remain neutral. In Russia, however, the situation was complicated by the fact that a similar revolution had been attempted back in 1905, and had failed [Wikipedia briefing]. It therefore made good sense to "wait and see" for a short time. Moreover, it is decidedly bad form at all levels of human interaction to abandon old friends too precipitately, or they will come to doubt the sincerity of that friendship in the first place.

Trotsky responds, equally pointedly, that if the Entente persists in communicating with the remnants of the Imperial Army it would soon have to be regarded as "[interfering] in the internal affairs of our country and [attempting] to incite civil war" - in other words as an act of war in itself, not neutrality. Whereupon (as if things were not complicated enough already) on 4th December President Wilson, in an address to Congress explicitly blames "German intrigue" for leading "the people of Russia into a premature peace". Unless the Russians fight on, he warns, German autocracy will not have been "taught its final and convincing lesson and the people of the world put in control of their own destinies" (Magnes, *op. cit.*, p22). Mogilev, it now seems, has become the instrument of Congressional will, but said Congress sits in Washington and not Petrograd [sub-thread continues at 5th December 1917...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [5th-15th December (O.S. 23rd November-2nd December)] **The Russian Civil War [VII - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (The Russians Exit WW1)]:** [Continued from 30th November 1917] On 5th December 1917 the Russians find themselves prevented (by the absence of their Entente allies) from signing a formal armistice, and so merely extend the ceasefire with the Central Powers until 17th

December. The following day, *Pravda*, another Soviet publication, hints that if the Allies continue to absent themselves from the peace talks then it would simply be making it more likely that the Soviet would be forced to repudiate the large debts accumulated in the name of the Provisional Government and the Tsar before it. This veiled threat is - on the surface at least - studiously ignored by the Allies, and thus on 15th December 1917 the Revolutionary delegation formally signs its separate armistice. That same day, the Czech nationalist **Tomáš Masaryk** [\[see 14th November 1915\]](#) responds by offering his 50,000-strong "Czech Legion" - which has been fighting until now alongside the Imperial Army on the Eastern Front - for use on the Western Front, where it would operate under French command. We shall be returning in due course to the practical problem of how they were actually going to get across Germany to fight the Central bloc from the other side [sub-thread continues at 7th December ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [7th December (O.S. 24th November)] **The Russian Civil War [VIII - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Ukraine Joins Peace Talks)]**: [Continued from 6th December 1917] Since the Ukraine is now a nation in its own right, on 7th October 1917 its *Rada* dispatches a negotiating team to the Brest-Litovsk talks [sub-thread continues at 7th December 1917 ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [7th-9th December (O.S. 24th-26th November)] **The Russian Civil War [IX - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Finland Declares Independence)]**: [Continued from 7th December 1917] On 7th December 1917 Finland follows Ukraine in proclaiming its independence, and on 9th December the Revolutionary Congress confirms that it has no claims on the independent state. Nevertheless, Finland is destined to play a strategically significant part during the Allied North Russian Campaign over the coming years [\[see 27th January 1918\]](#). For the time being, however, the nation remains nominally at war with the Central Powers but maintains the same ceasefire as Russia [sub-thread continues at 12th December ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [9th-11th December] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XXVI - The Palestine Offensive (Jerusalem Captured)]**: [Continued from 17th November 1917] On 9th December 1917, after three weeks battling through the wadis and defiles of the Judaeian Hills, Allenby's E.E.F. now pushes forward to cut the Jaffa-Jerusalem highway west of Jerusalem. Within hours the Ottoman garrison is abandoning its defences and falling back northward, leaving the Mayor of Jerusalem to wander amongst the British drawn up on the Mount of Olives looking for an officer senior enough to receive the keys to his city. On 11th December Allenby formally enters Jerusalem (but deliberately with "no great pageantry of arms").

***** [YouTube contemporary newsreel](#) *****

Preparations will now be made for an advance against Damascus, 136 miles to the north, in the new year [sub-thread continues at [27th January 1918](#) ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = WWI MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS\]](#)

1917 [12th-13th December (O.S. 29th-30th November)] **The Russian Civil War [X - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (More From Trotsky)]**: [Continued from 7th December 1917] On 12th December 1917 Trotsky explicitly blames the absenting Allies for forcing the separate negotiations on themselves, and asks them to note that the People's Commissars do not consider themselves bound by pre-Revolutionary treaties. The next phase of talks at Brest-Litovsk begins the following day [sub-thread continues at 14th December ...]. [\[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD\]](#) [\[THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING\]](#)

1917 [14th December (O.S. 1st December)] **The Russian Civil War [XI - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Lloyd George Holds Forth)]**: [Continued from 12th December 1917] On 14th December 1917, in a speech in London, Lloyd George lays in to the errant Russians as follows ...

"Russia threatens to retire out of the war and leave the French Democracy [...] to shift for themselves. I do not wish to minimise in the least the gravity of this decision. [...] By her retirement she strengthens the Hohenzollerns and weakens the forces of democracy. Her action will not lead, as she imagines, to universal peace" (Magnes, *op. cit.*, p26).

British troops will soon be sent to both North Russia and the Caucasus to ensure that this dismal prediction will be duly borne out [sub-thread continues at 15th December 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING]

1917 [15th December (O.S. 2nd December)] **The Russian Civil War [XII - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (The Vultures Gather)]:** [Continued from 14th December 1917] On 15th December 1917 the delegates at Brest-Litovsk sign an Armistice which is worded to last until 14th January 1918, but renewing automatically thereafter seven days at a time. On the same day in Petrograd, Lenin appoints one **Felix Dzerzhinsky** [Wikipedia biography] as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs and head of the **Cheka Secret Police** [Wikipedia briefing]. And over on the coast of the Pacific Ocean - more than 6000 miles to the East at Vladivostok - the American **Russian Railway Service Corps (RRSC)** [see FURTHER READING below] is just dropping anchor ...

MORITURI

Here is a map of Russia from the *New York Times*, 1919

Key: [Start at "eight o'clock" and work clockwise] (1) The Central Powers are to the west of the line Odessa-Riga, which approximates to the old Eastern Front 1914-1917. (2) The **North Russian Front** is a bridgehead around the summer-only ports of Murmansk and Archangel where the British are organising the local White Army resistance. Note (a) the long Arctic frontier with Finnish Lapland, and (b) how closely the Finns threaten the Murmansk-Petrograd railway. (3) The (in practice actually rather fluid) "**Siberian Cossack Front**" runs the line Perm [map] to Orenburg [map]. (4) A "**Ural Cossack Front**" circles a White enclave around the North Caspian port of Atyrau [map]. (5) The city of Tsaritsin will be become better known during WW2 as Stalingrad. (6) There is another British-led White stronghold [see <"Dunsterforce"> 27th January 1918 EXPLAINS A LOT] between the Black and Caspian Seas, straddling the borders of modern Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, and defending the oil port of Baku [map]. (7) The "**Don Republic**" is another White area centred on Donetsk [map]. (8) A Ukrainian Front runs from the Crimea to Odessa, the Whites here being supported by France and the United States. Vladivostok is 3300 miles to the east of Perm as the crow flies, and the USA a 5000-mile sea journey beyond that



MAP SHOWING APPROXIMATE POSITIONS OF BOLSHEVIST AND ANTI-BOLSHEVIST FORCES ON ALL THE FIGHTING FRONTS IN RUSSIA, (MARCH, 1919)

FURTHER READING: For more on the RRSC see **Robert L. Willett's** (2003) "**Russian Sideshow: America's Undeclared War 1918-1920**" [[Amazon](#)], who devotes the whole of Chapter 15 to the subject. **The railway engineers are accompanied by military observers, leading Willett to conclude that they are "actually the first echelon of the American intervention"** (k3287). Much more on this during 1918 [sub-thread continues at 17th December 1917 ...]. [**THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD**] [**THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING**]

1917 [17th-18th December (O.S. 4th-5th December)] **The Russian Civil War [XIII - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (Ukraine Changes Its Mind)]:** [Continued from 15th December 1917] On 17th December 1917 the Revolutionary Congress accuses the Ukrainian *Rada* of giving succour to "counter-revolutionary forces" and issues a 24-hour desist-or-else ultimatum. The Ukrainians take no notice, and so on 18th December the first front of the Russian Civil War is opened, with rightist Ukrainian and White Imperial units on the one side, and leftist Ukrainian and Red Army units on the other ...

ASIDE: It is difficult to explain how the pro-Revolutionary sentiments expressed by the *Rada* as recently as 20th November (q.v.) should have changed so diametrically. It may well have resulted from German intriguing designed to destabilise the region in anticipation of their forthcoming grab-it-while-you-can **Operation *Faustschlag*** [[see 18th February 1918](#)].

[Sub-thread continues at 22nd December 1917 ...]

[**THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD**] [**THREAD = THE NEVER-ENDED RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, 1917-ONGOING**]

1917 [22nd-28th December (O.S. 9th-15th December)]

THIS ENTRY SITS IN TWO SEPARATE SUB-THREADS AS FOLLOWS ...

The Russian Civil War [XIV - Picking Over The Imperial Carcass (First Plenary Session at Brest-Litovsk)]: [Continued from 17th December 1917, and continuing at [1st January 1918](#)]

WW1 Grand Strategies and Carve-Ups [III - The Brest-Litovsk Talks (Allied Interference)]: [Continued from 18th July 1917, and continuing at [18th February 1918](#)]

On 22nd December 1917 peace talks between the Central Powers (including Bulgaria) and the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and the Revolutionary Congress on the other, begin at Brest-Litovsk. The German Foreign Minister **Richard von Kühlmann** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] presides, and the Bolshevik politician **Adolph Joffe** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] heads the Russian delegation. Also on 22nd December there is arrested in Petrograd a certain Colonel **Andrei Kalpaschnikov** [no convenient biography but see [Kalpaschnikoff \(1920/2020\)](#)], a counter-revolutionary with good contacts (a) with the American Ambassador in that city (**David R. Francis** [[Wikipedia biography](#)]), (b) with the **American Red Cross Mission** there (one **Raymond Robins** [[check him out](#)]) and in Romania (**Henry W. Anderson** [[check him out](#)]) [also in Washington, as it happens - Ed.], and (c) with the reactionaries out in the provinces - not least the Ukraine - who had set up the aborted **Kornilov Coup** three months previously [see 10th September]. Kalpaschnikov is one of the first to have his collar felt by **Felix Dzerzhinsky's** new ***Cheka*** secret police [see 15th December], and his crime seems to have something to do with how best to utilise the American Red Cross's motor pool ...

CAMEO - THE ROSTOV AFFAIR: It is well documented that the American Red Cross's man in Petrograd, Robins, had a few days previously received a strange telegraphic request from Anderson, his opposite number in Jassy/Iasi in Romania [map link below], asking him to release 60 Red Cross motor vehicles and 100,000 Rubles of Red Cross funds for transfer to **Rostov-on-Don** [map], the headquarters city of **Alexey Kaledin's** [[Wikipedia biography](#)] "**Volunteer Army**" [[Wikipedia briefing](#)], the field force of the counter-revolutionary **Don Cossacks** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)]...

QUICKIE - THE ROMANIAN AND UKRAINIAN FRONTS, LATE 1917: Russia and Prussia had been squabbling over influence in ethnic Romania for 40 years [[see 21st May 1877](#), then as directed].

The Romanians have recently been at war with the Bulgarians [[see 29th June 1913](#)], and the Bulgarians sided with the Central Powers 14th October 1915. Romania was therefore finally persuaded to side with the Entente [[see 27th August 1916](#), then as directed], only to lose more than half their lands, including their capital, Bucharest, in the **Falkenhayn Offensive** [[see 18th September 1916](#), then as directed]. The Romanians thus became a left-of-line embarrassment to the Russians, who were forced to divert emergency Russian reinforcements to their aid, successfully stabilising a defensive line on the River Siret. A temporary Romanian capital was established at **Jassy/Iasi** [[map](#) **NOTE THAT THIS CITY THEREBY SUDDENLY BECAME A GATEWAY TO THE UKRAINE AND SOUTH RUSSIA**]. However, when the Russian Army collapsed during the **October Revolution** [[see 7th November](#)], Romania realised that she lacked the resources to continue the war on her own, and on 9th December 1917 signed the **Focsani Armistice** [[Wikipedia briefing](#)] with the Central Powers. This, however, provided little substantive protection for the Romanian royal family, because the Central Powers might advance again at any moment. And this was of particular concern to Britain, because the Romanian queen, **Marie** [[Wikipedia biography](#)], **was a grand-daughter of Britain's Queen Victoria**.

***** PLUS ÇA CHANGE ... *****

As for the Ukraine, this was a fiercely nationalistic region which had never been entirely happy as part of the Tsarist Empire, and looked even less favourably upon the prospect of rule by the Bolsheviks. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the ultra-nationalist Kaledin had been appointed Ataman of the Don Cossacks 17th June 1917, and as recently as 11th December the entire **Don Bend** region [[map](#)] had descended into outright civil war. **BREAKING: [Here is a recent BBC report from that very front, still active 104 years later.](#)**

Unaware of the true purpose of Anderson's request, Robins declined it, only for it to be re-issued in the name of Ambassador Francis only hours later. The story soon circulates in diplomatic circles that the Red Cross vehicles were to have been used to smuggle Queen Marie to safety by taking her overland to Baghdad via Rostov, cis-Caucasian Russia, and Armenia [[approximate route, had the operation gone ahead](#)]. **OUR VERDICT:** We see not the slightest explanatory value in the Queen Marie story, finding it both unnecessary (she could have been cruised out of Odessa with much less effort) and extremely dangerous (the Ukraine was, as noted above, a hot and unforgiving civil war zone). We therefore presume that the motor vehicles were simply being transferred on a pretext out of pro-revolutionary areas for use by the Volunteer Army on the Don. This alternative explanation is a better fit with events the following month, not least the "**Lockhart Plot**" [[see 29th January 1918](#)] and the move up northward into Armenia by the "**Dunsterforce**" out of Baghdad [[see 27th January 1918](#)]. Much more on this often ignored theatre of war in the New Year.

On 27th December Trotsky again invites the Entente Powers to the proceedings, only for France to reply (a) that "an Ally has failed us", and (b) **[that she will accordingly be dealing "favourably" with the counter-revolutionaries](#)**. The session adjourns 28th December 1917, having set 9th January 1918 as the date to reconvene. On 28th December in Petrograd Trotsky grants an interview to journalist/British intelligence operative **Arthur Ransome** [[check him out A MOST INTERESTING TALE](#)], who conveniently gets on extraordinarily well with Trotsky's secretary **Evgenia Shelepina** [[Spartacus Educational biography DITTO](#)] (although it has to be admitted that the pillow talk may have been going both ways [the pair will marry in 1924 and settle in Britain - Ed.]) [sub-thread continues at [9th February 1918](#) ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

***** Sorry, but this file's gotten too big *****

UPWARD

[Author's Home Page](#)

[Project Aneurin, Scope and Aims](#)

[Master References List](#)

BACKWARD IN TIME

[Part 1 - \(Ape\)men at War, Prehistory to 730](#)

[Part 2 - Royal Wars \(Without Gunpowder\), 731 to 1272](#)

[Part 3 - Royal Wars \(With Gunpowder\), 1273-1602](#)

[Part 4 - The Religious Civil Wars, 1603-1661](#)

[Part 5 - Imperial Wars, 1662-1763](#)

[Part 6 - The Georgian Wars, 1764-1815](#)

[Part 7 - Economic Wars, 1816-1869](#)

[Part 8 - The War Machines, 1870-1894](#)
[Part 9 - Insults at the Weigh-In, 1895-1914](#)
[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1914](#)
[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1915](#)
[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1916](#)

FORWARD IN TIME

[Part 10 - The War Itself, 1918](#)
[Part 11 - Deception as a Profession, 1919 to date](#)