

A background image of several red poppies with green stems and leaves, set against a plain white background. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds.

# Life After the Armistice

Session 3 – Political and Industrial Upheaval



1919 – the year of the nearly  
revolution



August Bank Holiday 1919 – tanks were sent to Liverpool by the Government





The towering HMS Valiant – one of the most formidable battleships of its time – can be seen moored in the Mersey, as battleships were deployed against British trade unionist and Communist crowds

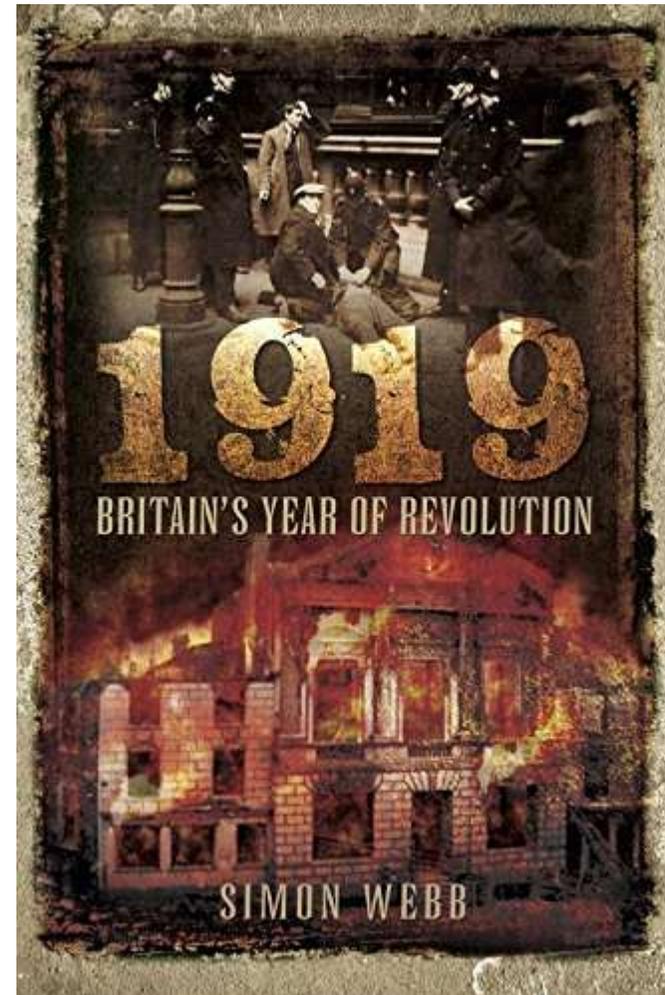




1919: Britain's Year of  
Revolution

By

Simon Webb



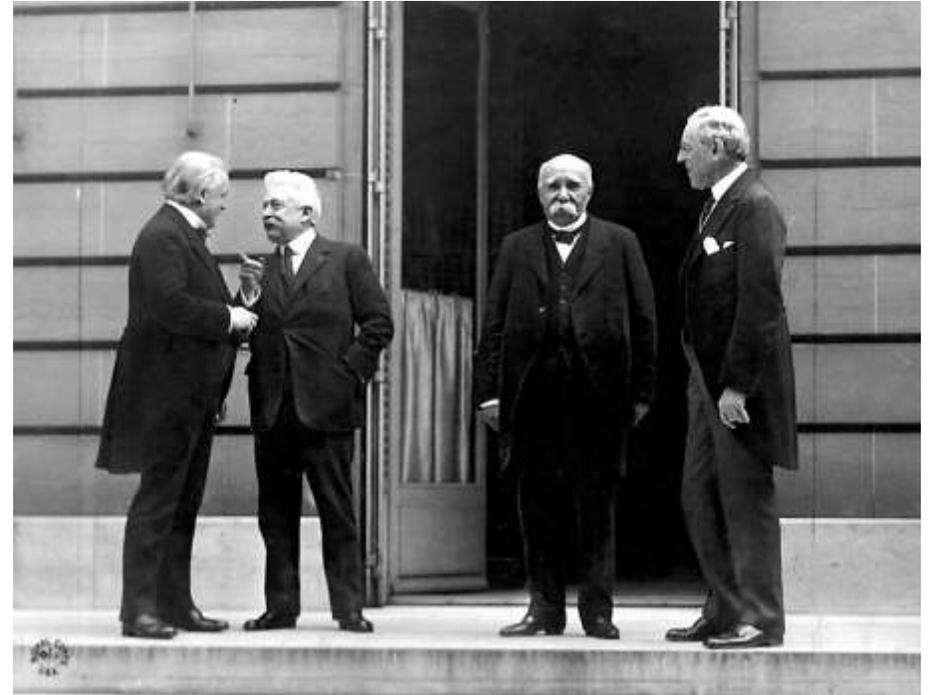


1919 – the year of peace



# The year of peace

- Although the armistice was in 1918, the actual peace treaties were in 1919.
- The decisions made at the Paris peace conference redesigned Europe.
- Edith Wilson, the wife of the American president, Woodrow Wilson, recalled entering a hotel salon and finding her husband and his advisors on their knees on the floor poring over maps of Europe trying to sort out the new borders.



“The Big Four” made all the major decisions at the Paris Peace Conference (from left to right, David Lloyd George of Britain, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando of Italy, Georges Clemenceau of France, Woodrow Wilson of the U.S.).



# The year of peace

- She laughed, “You look like a lot of little boys playing a game.”
- The President replied, “Alas, it is the most serious game every undertaken, for on the result of it hangs, in my estimation, the future peace of the world.”





# The year of peace

- The crisis of 1917-18 destroyed the great dynastic empire that had ruled central, eastern and south-eastern Europe for centuries –
  - The Romanovs (Russia)
  - The Habsburgs (Austria)
  - The Hohenzollerns (Germany)
  - The Ottomans (Turkey)
- In August 1914 Europe contained only three republics.





# The year of peace

- By the end of 1918 there were thirteen republics.
- Nine of them were states that did not even exist at the start of the war including Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia.





# 1914 and 1919 Europe





# The year of peace

- By the end of 1918 there were thirteen republics.
- Nine of them were states that did not even exist at the start of the war including Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia.
- The war had given a opportunity for nationalism in several areas that would have echoes for the following two decades.





# The year of peace

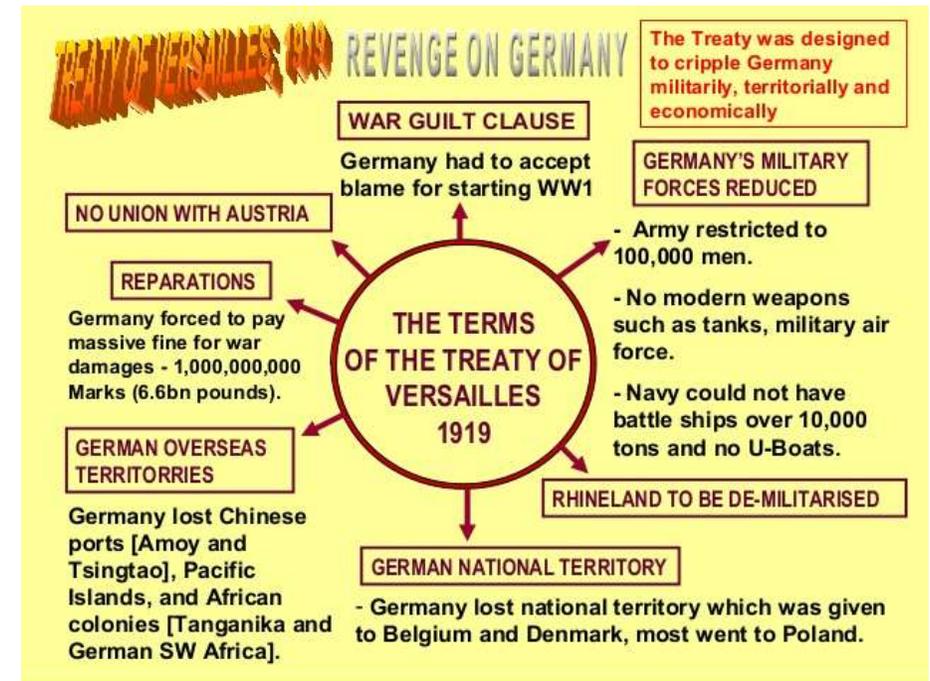
- Germany lost land and was humiliated by the end of the war.
- Economically it was also very badly hit.
- During the First World War Germany could not import or export industrial goods, which severely limited trade. Food and other resources were diverted to the war effort.
- To pay for the war, rather than raise taxes, the Kaiser borrowed massive amounts of money by selling 'war bonds' to the public.
- By the end of the war the country was heavily in debt.





# The year of peace

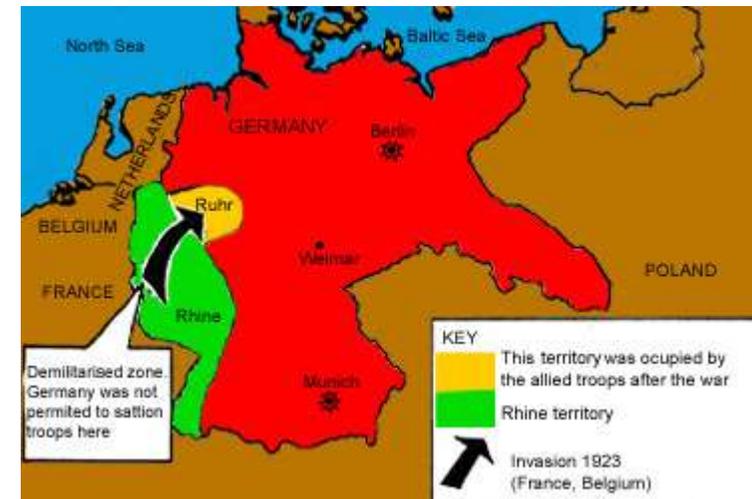
- The immediate economic consequences of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were a significant concern and added to Germany's humiliation.
- Under the terms of the treaty Germany had to pay huge sums in reparations.





# The year of peace

- In 1921, this amount was set at £6.6 billion; a sum that Germany could not pay.
- By December 1922, because the German government could not pay, French and Belgian troops invaded and occupied the Ruhr to take goods and raw materials in lieu of money.
- The Ruhr contained Germany's main industries.





# The year of peace

- With the economy in ruins, and the Allies claiming reparations and taking control of industry, goods became difficult to obtain and therefore very expensive.
- The government tried to solve the problem by printing more money.
- Money became very easy to get hold of, but things to buy were just as scarce as ever.
- This led to hyperinflation.





# The year of peace

- By the autumn of 1923 a loaf of bread cost 200 billion marks.
- Workers paid by the hour found their wages were worthless, because prices had risen since they began their shifts.
- People who had saved money for years saw the value of those savings wiped out.
- The scene was set for the rise of an Austrian corporal called Adolf Hitler.





# The Rise of Communism



# The Rise of Communism

- As a result of its alliance with Serbia, Russia entered the war against Germany in 1914.
- A huge Russian army was formed by forcing working class and peasant men to join.
- Although the Russian army had great numbers, the soldiers were not equipped or trained to fight.
- Many of them were sent into battle without shoes, food, and even weapons.





# The Rise of Communism

- Over the next three years, nearly 2 million Russian soldiers were killed in battle and nearly another 5 million were wounded.
- The Russian people blamed the Tsar for entering the war and getting so many of their young men killed.





# The Rise of Communism

- The people of Russia first revolted in early 1917.
- The revolution began when a number of workers decided to strike.
- Many of these workers got together during the strike to discuss politics.
- They began to riot.
- The Tsar, Nicholas II, ordered the army to suppress the riot.
- However, many of the soldiers refused to fire on the Russian people and the army began to mutiny against the Tsar.





# The Rise of Communism

- After a few days of riots, the army turned against the Tsar.
- The Tsar was forced to give up his throne and a new government took over.
- The government was run by two political parties: the Petrograd Soviet (representing the workers and soldiers) and the Provisional Government (the traditional government without the Tsar).
- Over the next several months the two sides ruled Russia.





# The Rise of Communism

- One of the main factions of the Petrograd Soviet was a group called the Bolsheviks.
- They were led by Vladimir Lenin and believed that the new Russian government should be a Marxist (communist) government.
- In October of 1917, Lenin took full control of the government in what is called the Bolshevik Revolution.
- Russia was now the first communist country in the world.





# The Rise of Communism

- After the revolution, Russia exited World War I by signing a peace treaty with Germany.
- The new government took control of all industry and moved the Russian economy from a rural one to an industrial one.
- It also seized farmland from landholders and distributed it among the peasants.
- Women were given equal rights to those of men and religion was banned from many aspects of society.





# The Rise of Communism

- From 1918 to 1920, Russia experienced a civil war between the Bolsheviks (also called the Red Army) and the anti-Bolsheviks (the White Army).
- The Bolsheviks won and the new country was called the USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republic).





# Industrial Unrest, 1919



# Industrial Unrest

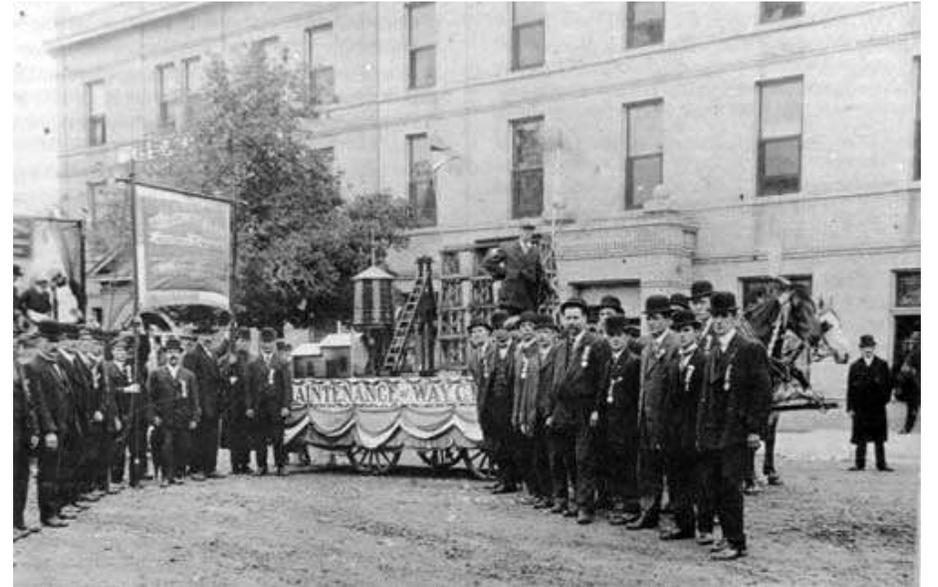
- The Bolsheviks saw the Russian Revolution as just the start.
- Their aim was to spread Communism throughout the world.
- Germany and Britain were their two key targets because, prior to World War 1, they the most advanced Capitalist economies.





# Industrial Unrest

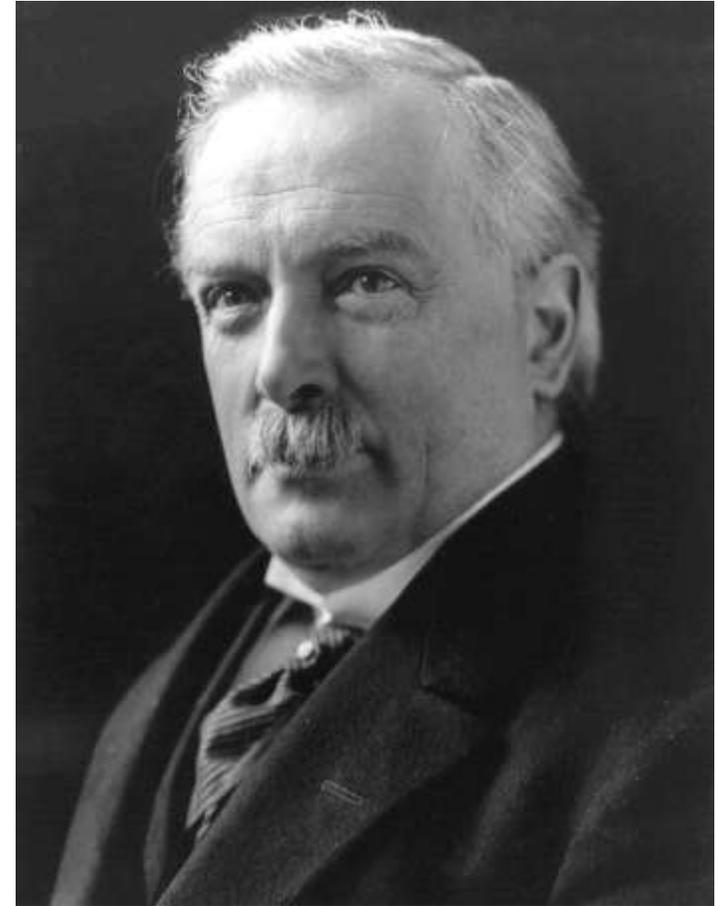
- As the armistice came nearer the British Coalition Government grew worried about the impact of civil unrest when the soldiers came home.
- The fear of the Bolshevik revolution reaching Britain was very real to them.
- They acted by slowing down the demob, extending the right to vote and calling an election and by making promises about new homes etc.





# Industrial Unrest

- The election was a non-event.
- Most of the newly enfranchised soldiers were still in Europe and could not vote.
- The opposition parties were given very little warning so could not campaign effectively.
- Lloyd-George was seen as the man who had won the war – the Welsh Wizard.





# Industrial Unrest

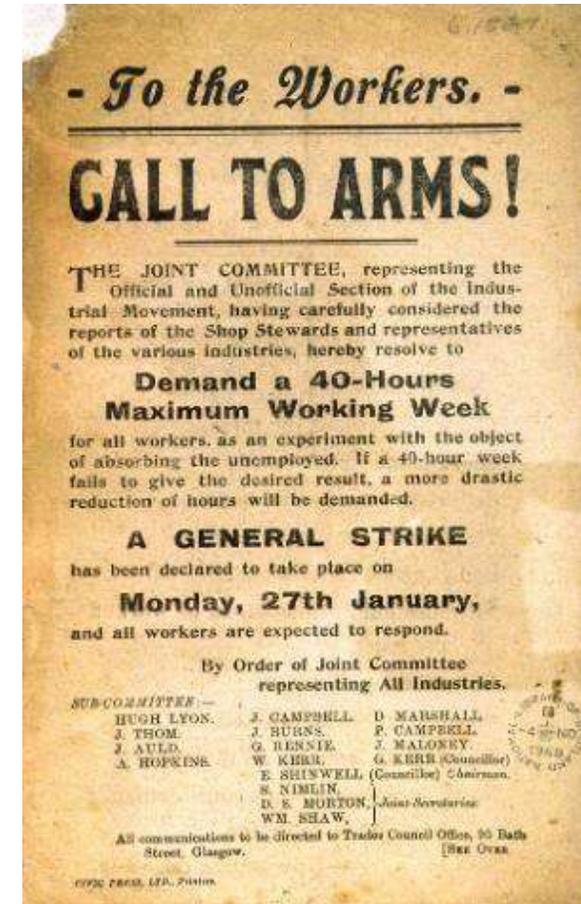
- There was growing unrest, however, both in the armed forces and in industrial centres.
- In late 1918 there were mutinies among the soldiers.
- From January 1919 there was growing industrial unrest building on unrest that had raised its head on several occasions during the war.
- Lloyd George and his cabinet realized that they might very well be facing a revolution of the same kind that had overthrown the Tsar.





# Industrial Unrest

- The earliest strikes in 1919 took place in Belfast and Glasgow.
- The return of soldiers wanting jobs as well as the financial problems resulting from the war meant that mass unemployment was threatened.
- The Scottish TUC and Clyde Workers' Committee (CWC) sought to increase the availability of jobs, open to demobilised soldiers, by reducing the working week, from a newly agreed 47 hours, to 40 hours.





# Industrial Unrest

- The resulting strike began on Monday 27 January, with a meeting of around 3,000 workers held at the St. Andrew's Halls.
- By 30 January, 40,000 workers from the Clydes engineering and shipbuilding industries had joined.
- Sympathy strikes also started among local power station workers and miners from the nearby Lanarkshire and Stirlingshire pits.





# Industrial Unrest

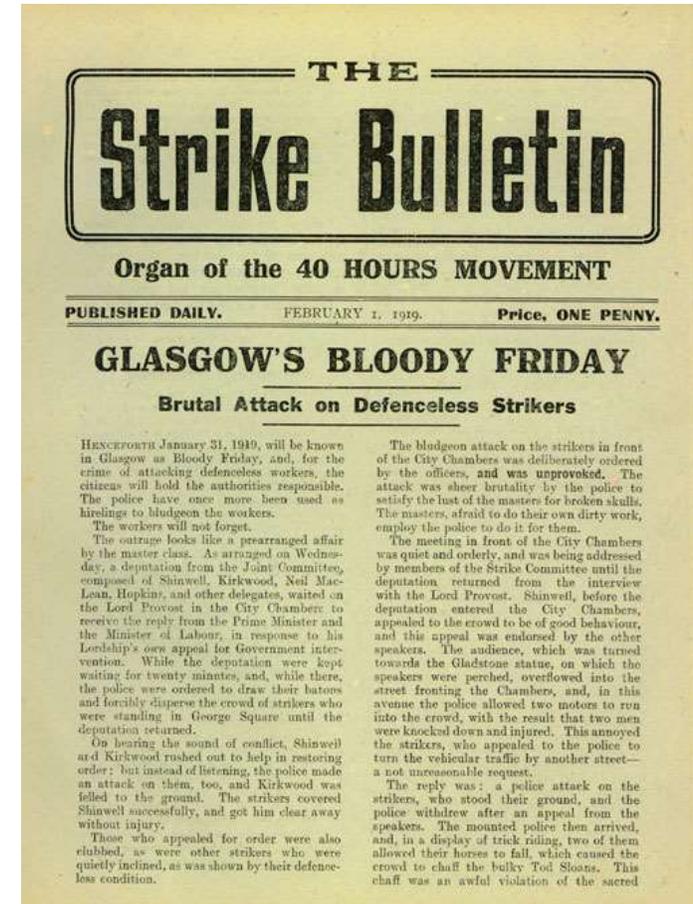
- The 'Strike Situation in Glasgow' was discussed by the War Cabinet on 30 January.
- At the meeting concern was voiced that, given the concurrent European popular uprisings, the strike had the possibility to spread throughout the country.
- It was decided that intervention by the armed forces was necessary to maintain order in Glasgow.





# Industrial Unrest

- On 31 January, a large number of strikers congregated in George Square.
- They were awaiting an answer to a their petition which the CWC had delivered to the Lord Provost of Glasgow some days earlier.
- Accounts differ on what initiated the violence on the day, but police testimony at the following trials records that the police baton charged the striking workers at 12:20 .
- After the baton charge, the outnumbered police retreated from George Square.
- The fighting between the strikers and police, some mounted, spread into the surrounding streets and continued into the night.





# Industrial Unrest

- The events of the day prompted the request for military assistance by the Sheriff of Lanarkshire.
- A meeting of the War Cabinet was convened and during that meeting Munro, Secretary for Scotland, described the demonstration as 'a Bolshevist uprising'





# Industrial Unrest

- Six tanks supported by 100 lorries together with 12,000 troops were deployed.
- The troops guarded locations of import to the civil authorities throughout the period of the strike, which lasted until 12 February.
- The troops and tanks then remained in Glasgow, and its surrounding areas, until 18 February.
- Industrial unrest grew throughout the country, spreading first to London and then to other areas including the mines.





# A Summer of Unrest



# A Summer of Unrest

- Rioting tends to occur in outbreaks during particular years.
- 1919 was one such year.
- The summer was a hot one which might have been a contributory factor.
- There were several outbreaks of unrest in army camps throughout the country and overseas.





# A Summer of Unrest

- In early 1919 a series of race riots spread across Britain, centred on sea ports.
- The first, in Glasgow, was followed by South Shields, London, then Barry and Newport in Wales.
- Cardiff and Liverpool in June were the most serious.
- Three people died in the Cardiff riots, one black and two white.
- In Liverpool, a black man, Charles Wotten, was murdered by drowning in the docks.





# Police Strike

# Police Strike

