

EPHEMERAL STATES of the RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR

The Russian Revolution of 1917 led to the collapse of the world's largest multiethnic empire. In its wake, a multitude of independent entities were declared.

Some where ethnic minorities looking for autonomy, others were warlords claiming legitimacy through the veneer of a state, and some were early Soviet republics that didn't survive until the formation of the USSR in 1922.

By then, most of these states were defeated and either dissolved or merged with Soviet Republics.



REPUBLIC OF UHTUA
JULY 1919 – MAY 1920

Karelian Finns declared independence in July 1919, initially seeking to join independent Finland, but the republic was defeated by the Red Army the following May. The flag and coat of arms was designed by renowned Finnish painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela.



REPUBLIC OF NORTH INGRIA
JULY 1919 – OCT 1920

A national minority since the 1600s, Ingrian Finns declared independence in 1919 hoping to join an independent Finland. The republic was overrun by the Red Army in 1920, and during the Winter Wars the entire population was forcibly relocated to Central Asia.



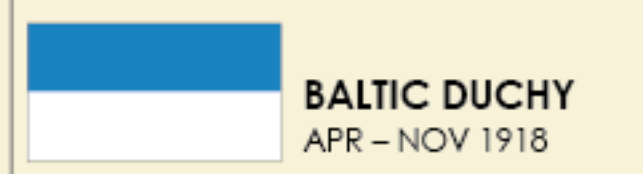
SOVIET REPUBLIC OF SOLDIERS AND FORTRESS-BUILDERS OF NAISSAAR
DEC 1917 – FEB 1918

In the chaos of revolution, around 90 sailors manning a Russian navy fort declared independence and began taxing the local Estonian population. They were later expelled by German forces.



DUCHY OF COURLAND AND SEMIGALLIA
MAR – NOV 1918

After Russian forces withdrew from the Baltics, German Baltic nobles set up a German-dominated state and offered the crown to Kaiser Wilhelm II. Germany recognised the country, but it soon became a part of the unrecognised Baltic Duchy.



BALTIC DUCHY
APR – NOV 1918

After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, German Baltic nobles declared an independent state and offered to join a personal union with Germany. The state had no authority and lost all legitimacy when the German forces left in November.



REPUBLIC OF PERLOJA
NOV 1918 – 1923

Caught in the chaos between Red, German and Polish forces, the Lithuanian town of Perloja organised an independent government and raised an army of 300 men to defend the city. It remained de facto independent until 1923.



HUTSUL REPUBLIC
JAN – JUN 1919

A Ukrainian-speaking part of Austria-Hungary, the inhabitants revolted in 1919 and declared an independent republic intending to join an independent Western Ukraine. The area was finally admitted to Czechoslovakia, becoming a part of Ukraine in 1946.



REPUBLIC OF IDEL-URAL
DEC 1917 – MAR 1918

A united Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash and Volga German homeland, claiming an enormous area between the Volga and the Urals. Despite pledges from all ethnic groups, the republic's military only held parts of Kazan city. The city was captured by the Red Army in March.



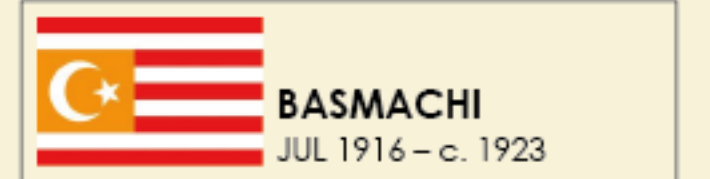
ALASH AUTONOMY
DEC 1917 – AUG 1920

A Kazakh government claiming a large territory, which was in reality held by competing Red and White forces. Changing sides with the tide of war, and finally split into two factions, the unsteady government merged with the Kazakh Soviet Republic in 1920.



KOKAND
NOV 1917 – JAN 1918

Aiming to restore the Kokand Khanate, the state was boycotted by local elders over religious issues and so only controlled the capital city. Its razing by the Red Army in January 1918, however, ignited the larger Basmachi revolts.



BASMACHI
JUL 1916 – c. 1923

Starting as an anti-conscription revolt, the Basmachi movement flared up into a demand for sovereignty for Central Asian Muslims. However, disorganised and politically divided, the movement's guerrilla forces were mainly defeated by the Red Army by the early 1920s.



CONFEDERATED REPUBLIC OF ALTAI
1917 – JAN 1920

Declared as the first step towards rebuilding Genghis Khan's empire, the state never became a competing force in the fight between Red and White forces.

LEGEND

- Russian Empire 1917
- Bolshevik heartland 1919
- SOVIET REPUBLICS
- CZARIST REPUBLICS
- FOREIGN-ALIGNED STATES
- UNALIGNED/OTHER
- Capital city
- Other city
- Modern border
- Areas occupied by the Central Powers until November 1918
- Areas occupied by Allied forces until 1920



THE FREE TERRITORY
JAN – MAY 1918

An anarchist 'state' constituted of local governments protected by Nestor Makhno's rogue army. Initially tolerated by the Bolshevik army, the two later turned on each other and Makhno was defeated.



DON REPUBLIC
MAY 1918 – MAR 1920

In response to the Red Army's arrival, Don Cossacks – traditionally elite soldiers – raised an army of 50,000 men which made up an essential part of the Southern White forces. After their defeat, Cossack culture was repressed and purged.



THE MOUNTAIN REPUBLIC
NOV 1917 – MAY 1919

A united Chechen, Ingush and Ossetian state led by a local oil baron. Allied with Germany and the Ottomans, the republic was defeated by Reds in March 1918, reassembled and was defeated again by White forces in May 1919.



NORTH CAUCASIAN EMIRATE
SEP 1919 – JAN 1920

Established as an anti-Czarist, Ottoman-aligned monarchy, the country's small army soon became dependent on Red assistance. The territory became a Soviet republic after the emir's death in 1920.



MILITARY DICTATORSHIP OF MUGHAN
AUG 1918 – APR 1919

A right-wing, pro-Czarist state organised by a White General and protected by a UK/Canadian/Australian/New Zealand force. It succumbed to popular revolt and was finally turned into a Soviet republic, which in turn only lasted two months.



THE FAR EAST REPUBLIC
APR 1920 – NOV 1922

A puppet state established by the Soviets specifically as a buffer state against Japanese expansionism in Siberia. As the Japanese withdrew in 1922, the Red Army captured Vladivostok and effectively ended the civil war.



KARS REPUBLIC
DEC 1918 – APR 1919

After the Russian-Ottoman armistice of 1918, the Ottoman Army delayed its withdrawal in order to set up a puppet state. British troops invaded the republic in 1919. They were replaced by Armenian troops in 1920, contributing to the outbreak of the Turkish-Armenian war.



ARAS REPUBLIC
DEC 1918 – JUN 1919

After a British border proposal giving the area to Armenia, a retired Azeri officer initiated a revolt and proclaimed an independent republic allied with the Ottoman Empire. Armenian troops took control in 1919.



TRANS-CAUCASIAN FEDERATION
APR – MAY 1918

As the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ceded much of Georgia to Turkey, the Transcaucasian Federation was declared, in a state of war with Turkey. As Turkish troops advanced, however, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan all left the fledgling federation only a month later.



SOVIET REPUBLIC OF GILAN
MAY 1920 – SEP 1921

A brewing anti-royal secession movement in Northern Iran gained some traction when the Bolsheviks supported their cause, and a Soviet republic was declared in 1920. The following year, Russia signed a treaty with Iran and withdrew support. The republic was quickly overrun by Iranian forces.



GREEN UKRAINE
APR 1920 – NOV 1922

Established by Siberian Ukrainians, this would-be state proclaimed a union with independent Ukraine in 1918, and attempted to form a government several times until the Red Army took control of its territory in 1922.



SOURCES:
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• Minahan, J. *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups Around the World*. ABC-CLIO, 2002.
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