

The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Person: Jan Kozlowski and the Russian Revolution

On September 1918, Jan Kozlowski, age fourteen, watched his older brother Walter executed by gunshot by Bolshevik forces for refusing to join the Red Army. He was in Sverdlovsk near the main station for the Trans-Siberian Railway in the Ural Mountains. Now completely alone, and a pariah, as he was the younger brother of an “an enemy of the people.” While huddling in abandoned buildings in town, he spotted a train going east. He jumped on it, and that started a journey that would take him across Russia, to Vladivostok and eventually to a new life in the United States. Using letters and other sources and the lens of global micro-history, this paper will examine the extraordinary events of the Russian Revolution through the life of this ordinary young man. It is hoped that this story and its parallel discussion of resources and approaches will inspire general readers, researchers, and classroom instructors to further engage in the increasingly popular lens of global microhistory.¹

A Story Revealed

“What do you want for your birthday?” Jan Kozlowski asked, “Turning twenty-one is a big event and you should get something special.” “I want your story,” his grand-daughter replied. He did not say much, but a few days later he came back and handed her a map. It was marked with a heavy black line across it and ten numbers. Accompanying the map was a family tree and six sheets of graph paper. For each of the ten numbers there was a story of his life at that place, from the place of his birth in Riga, then part of the Russian Empire, in 1904 and his subsequent journey across the entirety of Russia during the cataclysmic events of the Russian Revolution and Civil War.

Jan Kozlowski’s story unfolds through the map and the sparse, almost obviously painful reminiscences he gave to his granddaughter, and further information developed by



Image 1: Russian Soldiers during the Civil War, Summer, 1919. Public Domain (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Civil_War#/media/File:Uniformes_\(koltchak\)_001.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Civil_War#/media/File:Uniformes_(koltchak)_001.jpg).)

Jon, his only son, with whom Jan had spoken only rarely about his past and when he did, he was vague and quickly changed the topic. Only later was Jon able to fill in some of the blank pages of his father's life with a few pictures, letters, a high school and college diploma, and some military service records. These abstract artifacts did little to help Jon understand the full story of his father's early life, but did allow him, in retrospect, to at least understand more what his dad, "must have gone through."²

The Significance of the Story for Research and Teaching World History Methodologies

While surviving supporting documents of Jan's story are relatively sparse, they are powerful.³ That power is enhanced, rather than lessened, by the restraint which characterizes his recollections, that often are cryptic, as are most accounts of trauma that are, as here, painful to recall even decades after the events described, as is the case here, some sixty-five

years later.⁴ Jan's struggle with the promise he made to his son and granddaughter to tell them his life story is palpable, as if he knew it was a story that would bring up painful memories and wanted to spare them the harshest realities of what he actually experienced. Nonetheless, what Jan did share with them is dramatic and of great value to historians of the period. His recollections vividly bring to life the reality of living through the Russian Revolution, from its inception during mounting instability and repressive policies of Tsar Nicholas II's failing empire, to the military catastrophes and growing disillusionments of the Russian people with the Tsar during the First World War. Eyewitness accounts of the Russian revolution abound, but Jan's story brings to life not only the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917 and the Russian Civil War, it also puts a human face on these events that will aid students of history in understanding these tumultuous years.

Jan's journey can also be viewed as an important contribution to the methodology of historical research and the teaching of world history. In his analysis of the analytical and historiographical frameworks of the Russian Revolution as it neared its centennial anniversary, the historian S. A. Smith noted that one of the major developments has been toward what he calls the "anthropological turn, a turning of the spotlight away from revolutionary activists, parties, and ideologies toward daily life and the ordinary person."⁵ World historians interested in finding ways to make the seeming vast events they often analyze comprehensible have also taken this approach. Tonio Andrade coined the phrase "global microhistory" to capture this goal of illuminating transnational themes through the lens of ordinary experiences. He argued, such a focus makes the "global" aspect comprehensible, but it can also help us understand the humanity and importance of events. As he implored us: ". . . let's bring the history of our interconnected world to life, one story at a time."⁶ Similarly Laura Mitchell, while President of the World History Association, noted that:

Historians have long wrestled with this existential question: how can the unique, idiosyncratic details of a single life illuminate the broad patterns of daily experience, the regular thrum of economic exchanges, the structures of governance, or the sinews of affinity that hold society together? Social, economic, political, and cultural historians alike struggle to suite the revealing, intriguing, singular details that bring the past to life with the larger currents of change and continuity that help us make sense of the past. Despite the sustained popularity of biography (for "famous" people) and increasing attention to life histories (for ordinary folk), many scholars remain skeptical about how much one person's experience can tell us about the "big picture" questions that drive world history . . ."⁷

Jan's story is my attempt to lessen that skepticism and show that the life of an ordinary man can indeed illuminate the extraordinary events of the Russian Revolution. It is to further that that end, I have provided the key documents that can be used to tell Jan's

story in the Appendices at the end of this article. These can enable readers to consider how Jan's story is told and how I interpret that story. The Appendices are also designed to enable teachers to ask students to write their own version of Jan's story based on these documents. Instructors can direct students to think about how Jan tells his story, the language he uses, his descriptions of the events and the even key information that they think may be missing from his story: activities that build critical thinking. Students can also be tasked to interpret and contextualize the 1923 letter from Zofia, Jan's mother, and think of the ways we, as historians can employ use this type of source to understand the experiences of ordinary people in extraordinary times. Then, after having the students examine the primary sources for themselves they can have their students read the article, critique and analyze my presentation and interpretation of Jan's story, and, happily, should they choose to do so, share their views with me.



Image 2: Map of Key Places in the Journey of Jan Kozłowski during the Russian Revolution.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Location_map_of_the_USSR.svg.

Attribution: Blackcat, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia. This map has been modified from the blank map of the Soviet Union available through Wikimedia.

Grodno and Riga⁸

Jan Kozlowski was born on June 23, 1904 in Riga. At the time it was a booming industrial town; the third largest industrial city in the Russian Empire with over 250,000 citizens.

Jan's father, Wladyslaw, was an "architect-engineer" and Jan remembers them owning an estate that included "several small villages near the city of Grodno."⁹ (He was also very old, 66, when Jan was born.) Grodno, formally part of the Lithuanian Commonwealth had been annexed by Russia as part of the collective land grab of the Third Partition of Poland in 1795. It was a key administrative and commercial center for the empire, incorporating modern Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova and significant parts of the Ukraine and Latvia. The Pale Settlement was also the area of the Empire that Jews were primarily allowed to reside.

Not surprisingly then, the Grodno of Jan's father's time was overwhelmingly a Jewish city and Jews were major players in the commercial and emerging industrial sectors.¹⁰ While there is no mention of Jewish ancestry in Jan's memoirs it is possible that his family had been part of that community at one point in time. It is also likely, if he or parts his family had been Jewish that they may have converted as a way to avoid the increasing persecutions against Jews during the late Romanov era.

The multi-ethnic makeup of the cities in the Pale region likely enflamed tensions between royal communities and imperial rule. During the second half of the nineteenth century, given growing nationalism, it became the focus of efforts to "Russify" the region. In the early 1860s uprisings demanding greater autonomy for Poles had led to violent clashes and hundreds of deaths. To deter further unrest Tsar Alexander II issued a decree in 1865 banning the use of Polish language in public in the Grodno region.¹¹ Further efforts were made to Russify Grodno by building Orthodox churches as a way to weaken the Polish-Catholic influence there. State directed pogroms against the area's large Jewish population were also part of these efforts.

Jan's story indicates that he strongly identified as Polish. Clearly, that identity would play a key role in choices he made moving forward. We do not know what role Polish identity may have played in his larger family context. What we do know, is that his father would find himself at odds with that state; perhaps because he was a Pole? Nonetheless it is reasonable to speculate that those sentiments, Polish ethnicity or the possibility of Jewish ancestry of the family may have played key roles in setting the stage for the extraordinary journey that would unfold.

Waldyslaw's father, Stanislaw Kozlowski, is listed as a "Baron" from Grodno in the scant family genealogy which may account for the estate Jan's father grew up on. Yet, while Jan's records indicate that they still owned "several villages" there is no mention he inherited the title as well. While Jan notes his family's roots in Grodno, Riga was his home and at best he traveled to Grodno as an infant couple of times.

The Riga where Jan was born in 1904 and spent his first few, if formative, years was rife with political and ethnic tension. The majority of the population, ethnically Latvian, were mistrusted by the Tsar as anti-Russian and, like in Grodno, there were constant efforts to suppress any ethnic expressions of autonomy. The Latvian majority for their part resented the city's elite, mostly German landowners, who controlled many of the levers of political and cultural power in the city. Poles, of which Jan and presumably his family identified themselves, were only a small portion of the Riga population, however they too were the target of animosity.

The course of world events that would influence Jan's life and much of subsequent world history, began in the winter of 1905. In the Far East, Tsarist forces were decimated by the Japanese naval and land forces, producing a military humiliation and political nightmare for the Tsar. The conflict with Japan had been driven by Russia's desire to secure the rich resources of Eastern Siberia and fears arising from Japan's growing colonial presence in Korea and northern China. The Tsar, Nicolas II, was also facing increasing political challenges to his despotic rule at home. The Tsar decided that what Russia needed was a "merry little war" against the Empire of the Rising Sun that would at once secure its imperial interests in the East and overawe his domestic opponents.¹² The unexpected defeat Russia sent his government into a tailspin.¹³ As one historian has summarized it, "The war had cost a fortune and shown the Tsarist government to be corrupt, incompetent and poorly led."¹⁴

Russia's military failure in the East fed into growing labor unrest. Rapid industrialization in cities like St. Petersburg and Riga had dramatically increased the numbers of urban workers, and the oppressive conditions under which they lived and worked fueled their resentment. On January 12, 1905 an Orthodox priest and labor leader, Father Gapon, led a massive crowd, estimated at 120,000, toward the Winter Palace, the royal residence in St. Petersburg. They were intent on presenting the Tsar with a petition demanding labor reform. There was a clear sense that the Russian's military woes signaled a need for real change in the Tsarist state. Few envisioned true representative government, but many wanted some sort of parliamentary system. What the protesters engendered was a massacre. With Nicholas II and his family at their estate outside of St. Petersburg, his military charged the crowd. Some 200 protesters were shot or run down by charging cavalry.

News of military defeat in the East and the crushing of protests at home reached Riga sparked mass protests. On January 13, 1905 Tsarist forces opened fire on an estimated 10,000 demonstrators there, killing 73 and wounding over 200. Some 2,500 Latvians were killed and several hundred more were executed in government reprisals during the following year.¹⁵

Somehow Jan's father got caught up in the protests. As a Pole, he may have advocated the easing of discriminatory policies toward ethnic minorities. As an architect-engineer, it is possible to surmise that he was an advocate for the reformation of the Tsar's

stranglehold on power and the creation of some sort of political representation, i.e. a Duma or Parliament, that many were arguing was long overdue in the Empire. In any event, he was arrested, but not executed, which suggests his involvement was at a lesser level than some ringleaders. Jan's son recalls his father saying that he got in trouble with the Tsar's regime for his allowing "common peasants" to buy land on their family estate, leading to him being "arrested and convicted of political activity".¹⁶

After his conviction, his father, Wladyslaw, was sent to Sverdlovsk (later renamed Ekaterinburg) to serve his sentence. Siberian exile was a common punishment for tsarist political prisoners and Wladyslaw was no exception. "The Russian government had always attempted to populate this vast region," Jan recalls, "by exiling its criminals and political prisoners to Siberia." Sverdlovsk was at the time a key city- "the Gateway to Siberia." Located in the Ural Mountains and well positioned on the Trans-Siberian Railway line, it served as the key administrative and transportation hub for the Empire's massive Siberian lands. Jan remembers that his father's work was "related to the building of the railroad."

Wladyslaw's time in exile was a period of violent upheaval in Russia, often referred to as "Russia's First Revolution" although, in the end, little came of the movement.¹⁷ Nicholas did sanction the creation of a two-house parliamentary structure: a State Council of noble advisors, and a Duma, a representative body based on property ownership qualifications. Freedom of assembly and trade unions were allowed, temporarily. At some point during this period Jan's father was "pardoned or else his banishment was commuted" and he returned to Riga.

By the end of 1905 the impetus for revolution had abated. Nicholas II and his newly appointed Prime Minister, Pytor Stolypin strove to address the damage. Stolypin had served as a young governor of Grodno Province in the 1902 and then moved up the administrative ladder over the next couple of years. In the aftermath of 1905 the Tsar brought him in to establish order. One of the Prime Minister's major initiatives in this regard was an effort to stabilize the state by advocating privatization of the countryside by ending collective farms and getting some nobles to sell their land. The hope was that these peasants would capitalize agriculture production, stimulate the rural economy and, at the same time, and in turn, become solid supporters of the state.

Stolypin did everything in his power to limit political reform, "executing over a thousand [radicals and revolutionaries], closing oppositional newspapers and harassing trade unions."¹⁸ He encouraged Nicholas II to dissolve the first Duma when, despite its property qualifications and general conservative bent, it actually tried to play its parliamentary role and propose legislation. A Second Duma, more compliant, was seated in 1906 and would survive to the end of the Tsar's reign in 1917. Understandably, Jan's records say nothing of this period: he was an infant. It is quite likely that Wladyslaw gave up his political reform efforts after his commutation, knowing Stolypin showed no hesitancy in putting his 'necktie'

around recalcitrant revolutionaries. We can imagine that he returned to his professional life as an architect. Another child, born in 1905, died at age 4 in 1909. Nor is much noted about his older brother Aleksander who was ten years older than Jan. Jan's son related that "my father died in 1910" and that the family resided in Riga most of the time.

St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad

In August 1914, ten-year old Jan's life took another dramatic turn when Russia, and Germany and the Austrian Empire went to war. In the beginning, the war went well for the Russians. Jan recalls that "in the early part of World War I the Russian Army enjoyed great success against the Austrian Army, taking many thousands of prisoners of war and sending them to Siberia . . . Poles, Czechoslovaks and Hungarians surrendered willingly to get out of Austrian dominance."

However, in 1915 Russian fortunes rapidly declined when Germany decided to shift major military resources from the stagnant western front to the East. The hope was that by bolstering their Austro-Hungarian ally and knocking Russia back or out of the war, they could then return to more decisively dealing with the Western Front. As Jan noted, "[the] Russians were much less successful," in the northeast. By 1915 German forces were in Russian Poland and western Latvia. They also launched offensives into Courland, directly west of Riga. Given the presence of German elites Riga was likely a divided city in terms of its loyalties. The Russian military refused to raise Latvian military units and instead integrated Latvians into "Russian corps." Jan's brother Aleksander, age twenty, was likely conscripted into one of these units and sent to the front.

As fears of the German invasion mounted, and food and other resources likely became so scarce that Jan's mother, Zofia, decided to move from Riga to the relative safety of Petrograd. (The city, formerly St. Petersburg, had been given this more Russian name in September 1914 after the declaration of war.) Initially, life in Petrograd probably seemed normal. Germans living in the city were dismissed from jobs but that would not have impacted the Kozlowskis. There were likely increases in food prices, but the family had means and so such increases in food costs or other necessities may not have had a significant impact on them. Jan attended a boarding school in the city and, according to his recollections from his son, he did not seem to spend much time at home. Moreover, in 1915 many aspects of daily life in the city continued as before. Theaters and race courses remained open; restaurants remained busy.

Petrograd's sense of sanctuary eroded over the course of 1915. As the war front deteriorated, more refugees streamed into the city, and the strains on resources and production began to hit everyone. Unrest became more common and political activism and workers strikes more brazen and open. Due to inflation and limited access to food and fuel, discontent spread. For the first time in Petrograd, queues appeared and gave rise to spontaneous

speeches by women. On 14 October, the government asked the military to distribute food from military warehouses. By the end of 1916, the situation in Petrograd was further aggravated by the outbreak of a political crisis.¹⁹ Grigori Rasputin, a monk who had become an intimate advisor to the Tsar and his wife, was killed by the Tsar's advisors. Rasputin, who the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky referred to as "a drunken debauch of a galley slave who had come into an unexpected fortune" was seen by many of the Tsar's family as a crazed, manipulative advisor who was ruining the royal family and indeed the whole Romanov dynasty.²⁰ They hoped that his death would jolt the Tsar back to his senses. It had the opposite effect: the dynasty and the war descended further into the abyss of impending revolution. Jan's description of the early events of 1917 is both cryptic and poignant. "Many factions were formed trying to seize control of government. Food shortages became acute. Chaos was spreading." He was thirteen, still a boy, but events would quickly and forcibly make him a man.

In February 1917 the toll of war, deprivation, and government incompetence exploded into protest and then revolution. Nicholas tried to stave off the revolution as he had done in 1905 with a few concessions and military repression, but this time it did not work. Workers who were starved and cold took to the streets no longer demanding reform but revolution. The military, exhausted by war and unwilling to follow incompetent leadership, refused to subdue the protests. Almost overnight, the Romanov Dynasty, who had controlled Russia for over four centuries, dissolved.

In a last gasp effort to save the dynasty Nicholas II agreed to abdicate in favor of his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, but it was too late and within days the Tsar and his family were taken prisoner by the newly established Provisional Government. Initially the royal family was held in St. Petersburg as the new government tried to negotiate with foreign powers, especially England, to offer them exile. Members of the Petrograd Soviet, a powerful organization of workers and soldiers more aligned with the leftist groups and later the Bolsheviks objected, however. They wanted the Tsar in Russia, as a potential hostage and bargaining chip for whatever unfolded. Under the Bolshevik's pressure the Provisional Government relented and negotiations with England ended.

The leaders of the Provisional Government hoped that getting rid of the Tsar and his blundering incompetency would stabilize the country and rally the populace around the flag. They hoped that this would, in turn, reverse the disastrous fortunes of the war and somehow repel the German and Austrian invasions. Their hopes proved hollow, however as they were the victims of the same failed war policies, along with food and fuel scarcities that had crippled the Tsar's war efforts. Adding to the new governments was the emergence of a variety of political factions fighting for positions and power in the new government.

Bolshevik leaders like Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin returned from exile and gained influence and control over key working class, together with soldier and sailor organizations in Petrograd known as Soviets. Jan said, "[The] Bolshevik (Red) faction was gaining control."

Central to the Bolsheviks success was their alignment with key Soviets in Petrograd. Workers were fed up with the deprivations of the home front and the brutalities of factory work. Transportation workers that controlled railway and telegraph lines, along with soldiers tired of the slaughter and especially sailors who manned the warships in the harbors around Petrograd all became aligned with Bolshevik aims.

It had been to those sailors that the leader of the Bolsheviks, Vladimir Lenin, had appealed to for support when he returned from exile in April 1917 after the overthrow of the Tsar and the establishment of the Provisional Government:

“Comrade sailors, I greet you without knowing yet whether or not you have been believing in all the promises of the Provisional Government. But I am convinced that when they talk to you sweetly, when they promise you a lot, they are deceiving you and the whole Russian people. The people need peace; the people need bread; the people need land. And they give you war, hunger, no bread. . . . We must fight for the social revolution, fight to the end, till the complete victory of the proletariat. All power to the Soviets! Long live the world revolution!”²¹

This proclamation, which has come to be known as the April Theses, defined Lenin’s and the Bolshevik Party’s program. Politically, the key phrase was “all power to the Soviets!” In allying with these organizations Lenin was clearly challenging the legitimacy of the Provisional Government that had taken over after the fall of Tsar Nicholas from power a few months before.

Initially Lenin’s April Theses met with little support from the Russian populace or even his own Bolshevik Party. The Provisional Government instituted changes that were widely supported. It reformed regulations in the factories and garrisons, giving workers and soldiers more rights. It disbanded the hated secret police of the Tsar and promised to hold elections for a constitutional assembly in the fall. But it also kept pouring troops into brutal, senseless offensives, and its provisional nature made it unwilling to deal with long-term problems of economic misery, land reform, and the nationalities issues.

By the early fall, Lenin’s program was more appealing to his party and to increasingly alienated soldiers, sailors, and workers than the unfulfilled Provisional Government’s promises. The Provisional Government, fearful of the growing support for the Bolsheviks amongst key labor and military groups, especially sailors who manned the warships in Kronstadt, the naval base outside of Petrograd, tried to clamp down on the Party’s newspapers and organizations. It was too little, too late. On October 24, the Bolshevik Party voted for armed insurrection. Over the next few days, their loyalists stormed the Winter Palace where the government met. The naval cruiser, the *Aurora*, now controlled by sailors supporting the coup, sailed into Petrograd and fired a blank charge at the Winter Palace. The Provisional Government, recognizing it has little support and few resources to oppose the Bolshevik forces, acceded to the revolutionary party.

The Bolshevik coup was over in a matter of days; it had not been particularly violent as the Provisional Government had few willing to defend it by then; casualties were few. Even so, Jan says nothing about these events in his memoir; his silence is interesting and perplexing. He was there, an eye witness to the revolution that would change the world but besides his observation “that the Bolshevik (Red) faction” was gaining control he writes nothing. Was he still in school? Did he see any of the fighting for control of the city? Did he hear the shots ring out across the streets? He was thirteen, clearly old enough to be aware of the chaos that unfolded around him. It is in his story an exasperating void whose reasons and implications are impossible to fill. Was it like other events in his extraordinary journey too painful to recall? Or, by then had the fighting and factionalism of Russia become too ordinary to note? We do not know.

Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk

We do know that the Bolsheviks had succeeded in taking control of Petrograd and forced the leaders of the ousted Provisional Government to flee, but the power of the Bolsheviks’ was far from secure. While they succeeded in taking Moscow and several other key cities in western Russia, much of the vast empire was beyond their control. German forces still occupied huge swaths of land in the west and the war against the Bolsheviks still raged. Moreover, many people were either unsure of, or absolutely against, what the Bolsheviks portended for social and political change. Many regions of the country wanted independence, not control by the new revolutionary movement.

As the Bolsheviks solidified their control of the capital over the next several months, Jan’s mother made a momentous decision. Middle-class, bourgeoisie, land-owners like Jan’s family became the enemy of the new Bolshevik government and their working-class revolution; they were, potentially, no longer safe in the now Communist capital. As the new government established control over the city and the region, Jan’s brother, Aleksander, was released from military service and returned home. Jan’s mother decided it was prudent for both of them to leave as soon as possible. “A decision was made that my brother would take me and move to a city in the Ural Mountains- the principal city of Ekaterinburg. The plan was that he would establish residence there and mother would join us later because of the difficulty of travel at that time.” Jan and his brother boarded the train to Ekaterinburg in January 1918. They waved goodbye to their mother unaware they would never see her again.

Jan’s son recalled that, “The decision to move to Ekaterinburg was apparently made on the assumption of connections that my father made while living there.” Alexander’s wife also had “some family members living in Ekaterinburg” strengthening the possibilities of help in resettlement. “Jan’s mother probably also assumed “that living conditions there were much better.” They weren’t. If Jan’s mother hoped to protect her children by sending

away from the chaos of the capitol she horribly miscalculated. In reality they wound up in the hornet's nest of the erupting Russian Civil War.

Czech, Hungarian and Polish prisoners of war (known as the Czech legions), exiled to Siberia during the war, organized and began to try and move west to get back to their homelands as soon as the former Austrian Empire collapsed. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on March 9, 1918 ended the war between Russia, Austria and Germany. Jan notes that as many as "a half-million of these men were scattered throughout Siberia and they began to organize into their own ethnic groups." Many of them had been armed by the Tsar and trained to fight against the Austrian Empire. As the war wound down these units became strung out along the Trans-Siberian Railway. They also became a threat to the Bolsheviks, who feared their national differences and monarchist affiliations. Logistically, the Czech legion's efforts to move west along the railroads created direct conflicts with Bolshevik forces under the command of Leon Trotsky, who sought to secure the critical artery for the revolution's needs.

On May 14, 1918 Czech legions in Chelyabinsk, a city not far from Ekaterinburg, attacked Bolshevik soldiers, and took control of the city. The revolution was coming to the Urals. Other groups, such as Siberians who wanted no part of the Red Revolution and military units still loyal to the Tsar, also began to rise against the new regime. Collectively they became known as "the Whites" these various factions began to fight for control of the railroad and "the Gateway to Siberia" Ekaterinburg. Now there with his brother Jan ominously noted that the "events that followed led to more turmoil and chaos. A form of civil war existed among different factions. Conflict between these factions usually led to elimination of opponents."

Tsar Nicholas and his family, now prisoners of the Bolsheviks, were close by. The Bolsheviks had hoped that they could be held as hostages far away to prevent monarchists who may be a threat to their fragile hold on power. However, as the Czech and White revolts spread across the rail lines of Siberia the Bolsheviks fretted that the royal family might slip out of their grasp and rally the anti-revolutionary forces. On the night of July 16-17, under orders from Lenin and the central Bolshevik leadership, local Soviet militia "exterminated" the royal family, as Jan puts it.

Jan and his brother had gone to Ekaterinburg to escape the revolution; instead they found themselves at its epicenter. The assassination of the Tsar and his family was the crossing of the Rubicon. Tsarist supporters now had even more reason to detest the new regime. Foreign powers that had hoped for moderation, perhaps exile for the Tsar, were faced with the violent reality of the Bolshevik revolution.

Tense months followed as the anti-Bolshevik forces closed in on Ekaterinburg. The Red (Bolshevik) Army began to conscript any available person and remove any potential enemy. One potential enemy who surfaced was Jan's brother. Aleksander. "My brother

Alexander [Jan now writes his anglicized version of his brother's name] often expressed himself in opposition to Communism," Jan recalled. "This led to his arrest by Bolshevik militants and conviction (actually only accusation) as a Royalist." According to Jan's son, Jon. Alexander's opposition became known as he refused to join the Red Army. "In September [1918] members of the Bolshevik militia wanted Alexander and several other Polish men to join the revolution, but the men refused." When he refused "he was executed without a trial." Jon notes that "Dad told me that several Polish men were simply lined up against a wall and shot. Dad was there, he saw his brother killed." He was fourteen years old. Fearful of Bolshevik reprisals Aleksander's wife's family refused to shelter him and he spent a week or so hiding in the streets. Jan's son Jon remembers his father telling him that "he found some shelter under partially enclosed stairways—like fire escapes—and hid for several days finding food discarded from either stores or rooming houses."

Understandably Jan's memoir is at its most emotional as he recalled those events and the anger, the fear and helplessness he felt. Yet, even here there is a measure to his words; a restraint in his voice. "I was left alone . . . it was early fall of 1918. Grief, rage other emotions led me to desire to leave and go. Just go anywhere." Wandering the city near the train station he spotted a moving freight train with an empty boxcar. "The idea was borne to hop on the train as a means of escape. Shortly, afterward, two or three days later, I located an infrequent freight train and spotted another empty boxcar. I was on it, moving EAST!"

Omsk, Novosibirsk and Irkutsk

Escape was Jan's only plan; escape from the Bolsheviks that had just killed his brother; escape from the chaos that was engulfing the country. He knew that escape to the West was not possible but, according to Jan's son, his father slowly developed a vague plan that by heading east he would eventually have the chance to somehow get back to the West, hopefully to a new Polish state that was emerging out of the ashes of the First World War in Central Europe. He was not alone as his vague plan matched the strategy and challenges also faced by the Czech-Slovak forces as rail travel west was blocked by the Bolsheviks. Fourteen year-old Jan became a fellow traveler in the unfolding civil war across the length and breadth of Siberia.

As he huddled into the freight car, others fleeing east told him there was a large contingent of Czech-Slovaks in Omsk, some five hundred miles away. "Without great trouble", he wrote, "I arrived there in a few days." Omsk, at that time, was the headquarters of Admiral Kolchak, the leader of the White Russian forces. The Whites were a wildly mixed array of groups opposed to Bolshevik rule. Kolchak had backed the Provisional Government after the fall of the Tsar and vehemently opposed the Communists. He also opposed the nationalist aspirations of many subjects of the Russian Empire. There were certainly many Siberians in Omsk who hoped for independence from whatever government eventually

may emerge in Moscow. Mostly, Kolchak's position as leader of the White forces rested on the backing of the Allied leaders of Great Britain, France, and the United States who hoped that his success could, somehow, reopen a second front against the Germans from the East and, at the same time, safeguard against the possibility of a Red revolution spreading across Siberia and beyond.

Jan was not interested in joining Kolchak or the White cause, regardless of the hatred he felt toward the Bolsheviks for the murder of his brother. He wanted safety. In Omsk he learned that Novosibirsk, some four hundred miles further east had a large Polish community and that some 1100 miles further there was an even larger Polish community in Irkutsk. With winter snows beginning to swirl he decided to continue on to Omsk. Some of the first people he met in Omsk spoke Polish and they encouraged him to stay there until "more peaceful and normal times" but, Jan wrote, "I had my mind on getting on . . . I got a free train ride to Irkutsk."

Jan arrived in Irkutsk on Nov 20th." News of the end of the First World War (then called "the Great War") had just reached there. The news did not change his plans to keep moving east. "Normally," Jan goes on, "to negotiate the 1500 miles between Irkutsk and Vladivostok would not have presented many difficulties. But these were not normal times." It was an understatement of immense portions. The snow and cold of the Siberian winter engulfed the city, everything ground to a halt, including many of the trains heading east. Jan recalls his dad saying that food was often difficult to find; refugees fought for whatever scraps they could find. Firefights between prisoner of war factions and white Russians, and Bolshevik forces erupted along the Trans-Siberian railway as each side desperately tried to secure this vital life line. As the winter closed in, the Red Army, under Trotsky's leadership, managed to secure Ekaterinburg and move toward Omsk.

Chita and Harbin

After about five months in Irkutsk somehow surviving the cold, bitter Siberian winter, Jan once again headed east in March 1919. "This stage of my trek was the most difficult to negotiate," he noted soberly. Progress was halted by a severe snowstorm a couple of days out. Their train got pushed off to a siding in a small mining town in the middle of nowhere. "After what seemed like weeks of waiting, the food and fuel supplies became scarce. Unrest began to spread among the members of the train. Living 40 people to a freight car can be very trying, especially if you are hungry and cold and helpless to do anything to remedy the condition."

On top of the cold, the hunger and the helplessness the Civil War raged all around. Besides the ongoing battles between Czech-Slovak, White Russians and Red Army forces, several international contingents were beginning to grab sections of the Trans-Siberian Railway. French, Canadian, and British units roamed across Eastern Siberia. The Japanese,

already in control of Korea, were eying the possibility of acquiring the rich mineral and agricultural lands of Manchuria. Japanese forces set their sights on Harbin, a crucial railway station in northern China, as their key goal to controlling the region. Everyone viewed the Bolsheviks with great skepticism, if not great fear.

By March 1919, when Jan left Irkutsk, the United States had begun to beef up its presence in the Pacific port of Vladivostok. Over the course of that summer some 8,000 US troops arrived. Their agenda was mixed to say the least. A memorandum from President Wilson's Secretary of War, Newton Baker, to Major General Harold Graves, commander of the US forces in Vladivostok indicated that the US had a three-fold agenda: One goal was to aid the Czech-Slovak units in their efforts to get out of Russia and return home. The second goal was to guard the almost one billion dollars in armaments that the US had shipped to Vladivostok and Murmansk and preclude those supplies from falling into the wrong hands. Third, they were to "help the Russians organize their new government."²² Which Russians, which government, was open to debate. A great deal of uncertainty remained over who would win the civil war. The US had not yet openly chosen sides in the conflict, but it was clear they intended to safeguard munitions. Like their allies, the British and French, the US hoped to bolster forces such as the Czech-Slovaks and the Whites to curb the Communist threat. Along with the US army some 70,000 Japanese troops moved into the area.

Each nation, each group, Jan wrote, held portions of the railway and so, he said, "the only way an individual could advance was to join such a group. It was to such a group, a Czecho-Slovak semi-military train of about 20 cars that I managed to attach myself." With this group aiding him he eventually made it to Chita, roughly 550 miles from Irkutsk.

"Populated," Jan says, "by people of Mongol and Chinese origin," they were met with a cold reception in Chita. Given the tensions of war, and their starved and likely emaciated appearance, the reactions of the citizens of Chita are not at all surprising. Jan and the others were anxious to move on, but their engine broke down and they could not get any parts to fix it. Each member of his group, which he estimated at about 800 refugees, started to make their own plans. Jan kept heading east, "in small stages, sometimes in native caravans by foot, or occasional horseback and once on a camel." If lucky, he'd spy a train and hop on till caught and kicked off by railway authorities. Exhausted by months of hard travel, cold and lacking food, he stumbled into Harbin in the summer of 1919.

Even though Harbin is in China, in many ways, it was a Russian city. During the late nineteenth century, the Russians negotiated a deal with the Qing Dynasty to construct a spur line of the Trans-Siberian Railway through Harbin. This spur would dramatically cut travel time by rail to Vladivostok and its completion had accelerated Russian settlement in the area. By the time Jan arrived, the Japanese had moved into Manchuria and, he notes, the area was effectively under Japanese control.

Completely exhausted as he was, Harbin offered no respite, no peace. During the summer of 1919, northern China experienced a massive cholera epidemic and “Harbin was one of the hardest hit cities.”²³ Jan, like many, fell ill. In his letter to his granddaughter, it barely warrants a mention. The other incident that happened there, which almost cost him his life, is not noted at all. Harbin was likely a very rough place. Not only was it a city of great strategic importance as a transportation hub in Eastern Siberia, it was, by then, home to close to 100,000 White Russians who had also fled east. Many were in direct conflict with the Bolsheviks. Various groups constantly fought for control of the city and firefights erupted spontaneously and often. It was in one of those firefights, according to Jan’s son, that his dad was “injured in a conflict/skirmish of some sort between Polish or Russian refugees and a group of Bolsheviks who objected to non-followers of the then ongoing revolution.” The skirmish left some refugees dead or injured, and Dad was among those injured. I don’t know if his injury was a gunshot wound—I don’t think so—instead I think it was a blow to the back that left him unable to move and unable to speak.” He would stutter for the rest of his life. “Left for dead,” Jon remembers, he was “discovered” by a Polish speaking woman seeking to find her husband. She found the husband, he was uninjured, and the couple took in the young injured refugee. “They took care of him for almost a year,” Jan recalls. Somehow, they helped him get through the final leg of his arduous trek, to Vladivostok.

Vladivostok

Vladivostok was the eastern terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway. For many, it was also the path for many displaced eastern Europeans to ultimately return to their homes in the West. Few had any idea how that might happen; Jan almost certainly did not. Yet, as it happened in the darkest days of Harbin, the now fifteen year-old Jan found succor and salvation. The Polish speaking family who had saved his life and helped him get to Vladivostok also helped find him a job in a Polish restaurant. His pay covered room and board. His son believed that his father’s boarding school training provided him some English language skills. If so, that may have been a critical skill in Vladivostok, a city now under American military occupation. It is not known whether that was a factor in their meeting, but he became acquainted with American service-man, who fatefully took his ethnic “cousin” under his wings. He told Jan about an organization in the United States with an office located in Japan called the Polish National Alliance (PNA). The Alliance was founded in the United States during the late nineteenth century with a mission to promote Polish nationalism. The headquarters was in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Due to the war, its offices on the western edges of the Pacific served to help Polish refugees find safety

The United States

Jan's birthday gift to his granddaughter ended with the simple sentence, "It was his suggestion [the Polish-American soldier who had befriended him at the restaurant in Vladivostok] that prompted my eventual arrival in the US." Like so many other parts of Jan's tale, his sparse conclusion belies a much more challenging and difficult story. He wasn't quite yet sixteen, and with a speech impediment, so deciding to go an unfamiliar place was clearly a big decision. Presumably he knew some English, but he knew little else about his destination except through the stories from the soldiers who visited the restaurant. How to get there posed the next issue. Before getting to the US he had to get to Japan. Luckily his experience in the Vladivostok restaurant landed him a job in the galley kitchen of a ship heading to Japan. How he contacted the Association, and how long this all took, we do not know. And even after he somehow negotiated these steps entry into the US he faced another challenge.

Jan does not say why, but when he was eventually sponsored by the PNA and given the right to go to the US, he could not go there directly. Instead, he sailed across the Pacific, again with a job in a ship's galley, and landed in Vancouver, Canada. It could have been that opportunity came first or perhaps it could have been the fact that the United States government at that time was "fearing that the U.S. was in danger of its own communist revolution and cracked down on political and labor organizations. Russian immigrants were singled out as a particular danger . . ." ²⁴ In the Pacific Northwest the International Works of the World, the IWW, or the "Wobblies", had gained a strong foothold in the mining and timber industries. On Armistice Day 1919 violent confrontation from Wobblies and the local police in Centralia, Washington had left six dead and many wounded. Crackdowns on Communist groups across the US followed. Jan, while not a Russian agent, was a young man coming from a Russian port.

Jan arrived in Vancouver and once again his galley experience paid off as he got a job on the Trans-Canadian Railway that paid his passage to Toronto. There, his trail goes cold for a spell, although Jan notes he eventually did get across the border to Pittsburgh where the Polish National Association had its main office. To gain permanent entry to the USA, he had to have a job, so the agency arranged for him to go to a school to be trained as a sheet metal worker. Six months later, a fellow refugee (apparently someone he met at the school), told him about a job in Raymond in the state of Washington. He then headed back to the Northwest, the area he would call home for the rest of his life. He had yet to turn seventeen.

Home?

There is one remaining development in Jan's story to be considered. It is a letter from Jan's mother, Zofia, "to her dear and precious son Yan." It was written on September 24, 1923. She

was still in Petrograd, now renamed Leningrad. By then the Civil War was largely over, at least in Leningrad. Fires of anti-Bolshevik sentiment still simmered in distant parts of the Soviet Union, but opposition to the Communist Party had been severely and successfully quashed in the centers of power.²⁵

The cost of the Bolshevik victories in the Civil War had been extremely high. Not only had they alienated many of their most loyal followers like the Kronstadt Sailors, they had also left a country ruined and weeping. Combat deaths during the Russian Civil War were close to two million. The accompanying famine killed another five to seven million people.²⁶ The economy was in absolute shambles, many parts of the country with no food, no livestock, and no fuel. Leningrad had lost two-thirds of its population to war and flight during the Civil War.

By September 1923, when Zofia wrote her son, the Party had the begun the enormous task of trying to rebuild the country. Economically it abandoned the policy of War Communism²⁷ and rapid nationalization of the key industrial and commercial sectors of the economy in favor of what Lenin called the “New Economic Policy” (NEP).²⁸ The Party leaders tried to deal with food shortages by fixed taxes rather than by grain seizures. Peasants were allowed to sell their grain for profit and small shopkeepers and artisans were allowed to produce consumer goods for the market. The NEP even allowed farmers to hire others as laborers, at least in small numbers. The NEP brought some measure of material relief, at least in some areas of the Soviet Union and especially in key cities like Leningrad. However, there was little relief from strong state control over all aspects of political, cultural and social life. The Cheka, the Bolshevik’s secret police, had wide authority to stifle any and all dissent, and they did so.

Zofia’s letter says little about her life in Leningrad. She writes that she is generally healthy but has been having some pain in her leg She was going to a clinic “and will soon be healthy and all will be well.” She thanks Jan for the five dollars he sent “(and for which I am very grateful) I will save for future unforeseen circumstances.” It is a small clue to how she is getting by, but a small, vague one at best. It hints at a sense of normalcy, but offers little in the way of specifics.

More important, Zofia’s letter says almost nothing about politics. Her only allusion to the political climate is when she notes that “every government has its rules for everything—they need to establish order and maintain it, as well as profit from it.” That’s all—no discussion of the tumultuous years of revolution and civil war since she saw Jan six long years ago. No commentary on the nature of the Bolshevik state and the Cheka. It is if the state is too distant to bother with, or more likely, too omnipresent to speak about openly.²⁹

Jan’s mother starts her letter by indicating that she is answering a letter that she got from Jan the day before. She notes that “. . . you wrote quite a lot about everything and described your everyday life, about which I knew absolutely nothing. Until now I have

been keenly interested in your everyday life, so your letter really warmed my heart.” Jon’s chronology indicates that his dad had communicated with his mother previously, but the details are unknown. “He told me that he had some things that she had sent to him in Raymond, Washington, including a box of letters, were destroyed in a fire at the house where he then lived.” Yet, Zofia’s letter also hints to the fact that she knew nothing about his life. Had he tried to write earlier, and his letters never received? Perhaps she had heard from him, but cautious of government censors she chose not to acknowledge it?

Zofia’s reply makes it clear than Jan had indicated that he intended to come back to visit over the next Easter. “May God grant that your words are realized and actually come true,” she prays. Then, her letter takes an immediate, heart-wrenching turn. The complications of him going back are enumerated. Yes, immigrants are coming to the USSR from the US but “in reality, accomplishing such a trip is not so easily accomplished. Visa, permissions, paper work all require herculean efforts to procure.” Then, she advises him, “. . . swindlers and cheats abound . . .” all anxious to take every penny you have. And even if you get here, she goes on, leaving may be even harder, “for as others discover that you want to leave Russia, they will find out instantly. Find out about everything stealthily, step by step. (Slowly but surely!) . . . Everywhere in life, in all matters, keen wits and resourcefulness are essential. Secrets cannot be kept; others find out everything instantly. Life is an endless negotiation with survival.” Perhaps her silence on the politics of the revolution and civil war noted earlier was her negotiation with survival?

The letter ends by Jan’s mother noting that she will be happy to see him, but there is an unwritten if clear suggestion that says maybe you should stay where you are, that maybe even though I miss you desperately to not try to return home, even for a visit. “She is happy and content, “she had written early in the letter, “that you have changed your intention to live in America and to invite me there; you have chosen the most sound, prudent, and reasonable path.” Prudence and reason, the latter part of the letter suggests, would be to not try to come back at all, even though that meant she would likely never visit him in the United States, or ever see him again. “That is all I wanted to tell you,” she writes, “and all the advice I wanted to give you, perhaps you will choose to use something from what I have said above, according to your discretion.”

Jan never went back. It is not clear whether circumstances intervened, or his mother’s advice swayed him to delay or cancel his plans. There was one more letter we know he received from Russia. The letter itself no longer exists. Jan’s son’s notes indicate that there was a letter he received in 1924. It was a letter from friends of Zofia’s in Leningrad, letting Jan know she had passed away. She was sixty years old. Even here, however, the story remains uncertain. The family tree Jan created lists his mother’s dates as “1864–1924?”

Jan graduated from the University of Washington a year later. During his time at the school, he was active in athletics, primarily track and baseball. He joined the army, actually

serving several non-consecutive enlistments. He played on the Army's baseball team and between enlistments played for the San Francisco Seals in the then Pacific Coast League. On his last Army enlistment, he served in the US infantry in Shanghai. He was wounded there, shot in the stomach, during the Japanese invasion of 1937. He returned home and while convalescing at a base outside Spokane, Washington, he met his wife, Lucille. In 1939 he was naturalized as an American citizen. For reasons they did not bother to share with him the United States Immigration offices decided to change his last name from Kozlowski to Koloski; presumably it was easier to spell. That year they had their only son, Jon. The family settled in the Puget Sound region where he lived out his days. It was in the spring of 1984, at age eighty, that he sat down and wrote down his memories as a gift to his only granddaughter. Two years later, in 1986, he died peacefully in his sleep.

Jan's story lives on in those sparse notes to his son and granddaughter. It also lives on in my family; Jan, who later went by the name Jack, was my wife's grandfather. He is also the namesake of our son Jack. Although I never had the pleasure of meeting him, his life story of flight from Russia to a life in the US is the story of my family's history. Whenever I tell his story in my classes I am reminded that one of the many lessons we can draw from the extraordinary journeys of this ordinary man is that his story is our history. Jan's story helps illuminate the dramatic events that transformed the vast lands of Russia. It draws attention to the global implications of the Bolsheviks coming to power. It also, I hope, inspires all of us to identify and learn from extraordinary stories in the seemingly ordinary experiences of their families.

Appendices

Appendix I: Introduction to Sources

The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Person: Jan Kozlowski and the Russian Revolution is based on four unpublished documents. I am including these documents as part of this article to give readers a chance for themselves to think about how Jan's story is told and how I interpret that story. An important theme of the article is how we know about Jan's extraordinary life and the ways he decided to tell and represent that story. As I note throughout the article, it is often what Jan does not say that is the most important. In his memoir, for example, he makes no mention of being injured in Harbin. He says nothing about the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd even though he was there when it happened. In her letter to her son Zofia says almost nothing about her own circumstances even though she notes he described his life in depth to her in a letter she had received the previous day. Why? Ultimately, we do not know and can only make reasonable guesses, but it does help us understand that it is sometimes what is not in the historical document that is at least as important as what is written there or missing from the historical record.

Also important is language Jan uses to describe his experiences, its tenor and tone. Throughout the article I have speculated on why this may have been the case. In making these assertions I have consulted Jan's son, Jon, and his granddaughter, Laurie, to see if they make sense given that they knew him well. They have concurred with my observations but they themselves are left with suppositions rather than answers. Students reading the documents for themselves can think about the way Jan, his son, and his mother tell their parts of the tales. How is the voice of Jan's narrative, written some sixty plus years after the events happened, itself an insight into what he must have felt and experienced at the time? How does the tone of his mother's letter impact our understanding of her experience of the Bolshevik state?

The most important document is *The Birthday Gift*. (Appendix II) This is the memoir that Jan Kozlowski wrote for his granddaughter, Laurie Koloski Taylor, on her twenty-first birthday in 1984. It provides a genealogy of his family going back to his grandfather. Jan's son, Jon has added a few explanatory notes, especially about the change of the family name from Kozlowski to Koloski as part of the naturalization process.

The Birthday Gift tells the story of his life, from his birth in Riga in 1904, until his immigration to the United States in 1920. It is organized chronologically and geographically with ten cities identified to indicate key parts of his early life. Most of these cities, and thus this memoir, focus on the key events that frame the central part of this article: his experiences during the Russian Revolution and Civil War.

Accompanying this gift was a large National Geographic map of the Soviet Union with each of these cities identified. In lieu of the original, I have created a map using an open source option. (See Image 2.) I have modified it from the original in that I did not include some cities, Kaunas and Vilnius, which play no role in his story. I also decided in my writing of Jan's story to consolidate the treatment some of the cities that he treats individually. I did so to give the narrative a better flow. It is for you, the reader, to determine whether that was a good choice or not. I also included two places in the article that Jan does not mention in his memoir: the United States and Home? I did so because it is story of his emigration from the USSR and his early life in the United States is also important part of the story. It not only contextualizes what happened to him personally it, also helps us understand the global ramifications of the revolution.

The notes from Jan's son Jon, titled *The Chronology* (Appendix III) here, were crucial to the task of filling in some of the crucial pieces Jan left out of his gift to his granddaughter, as well as important markers in his life after he left the USSR. These notes were written in 2015 or 2016 when Jon found a collection of documents from his father's life in the United States—military and education records, some pictures and employment information. These documents compelled him to reflect on the memoir his dad had given his daughter and his own memories of their passing conversations about his dad's early life. The most important

of those memories from Jan's flight across Russia is the fact the he was "wounded and left for dead" in Harbin; a critical fact never mentioned in Jan's memoir. Jon's chronology also helps fill in the gaps in the story of how Jan was able to immigrate to the United States and his early life here. Jan's memories mostly corroborate Jon's story that I have put together here. The major difference is Jon has his father serving in the US army in Hong Kong in the 1930s although that seems very unlikely. A map of Shanghai and a receipt from the Shanghai YMCA that were saved along with a few photos more likely have Jan in that city. It also jibes with where the US Army was in the 1930s and with why he would have been wounded by the Japanese in 1937.

The last document that frames this article is a letter that Jan received from his mother, Zofia, in 1923. (Appendix IV) It is the one extant letter between the two we have. Jon's chronology indicates that "he told me that he had some things that she had sent to him in Raymond and a box of letters, all of which were destroyed in a fire at the house in Raymond." Without them we are forced to fill in the blanks of what their relationship was in that time when he last saw her in 1917 and her death in 1924. Jon had this letter for a long time but had never known what it said as it had not been translated. For his sixtieth birthday his daughter Laurie had it translated from Russian into English. I have included the translation here.

Appendix II: Jan Kozlowski, *The Birthday Gift to Laurie Koloski*

Wladyslaw Kozlowski (Note: Names Wladimierz or Wladyslaw are versions of name Walter).

He is the second son of Stanislaw and Zofia, born February 10, 1838 at Grodno, Poland. He inherited title to family estates near Riga upon death of older brother Wojciech. Riga was then a possession of Russia. Wladyslaw died February 10, 1910.

Zofia—One of daughters of Kajetan Olszewski, Born in 1864 in Wilno, Lithuania. Married to Wladyslaw Kozlowski in 1884. Zofia died in Leningrad in 1924.

Jan—Polish version of English name John. Name (surname) Kozlowski changed by decree of court upon naturalization to U.S. citizenship from Kozlowski to John Walter Koloski.

Documented on Certificate of Naturalization.

Birth Certificate for Jon Walter Koloski (Oct. 20, 1939) lists name as Jan Wladyslaw Kozlowski also, but father's Naturalization legally changed that name to Jon Walter Koloski.

Father uses name John to avoid "Jr." as a legal differentiation of names.

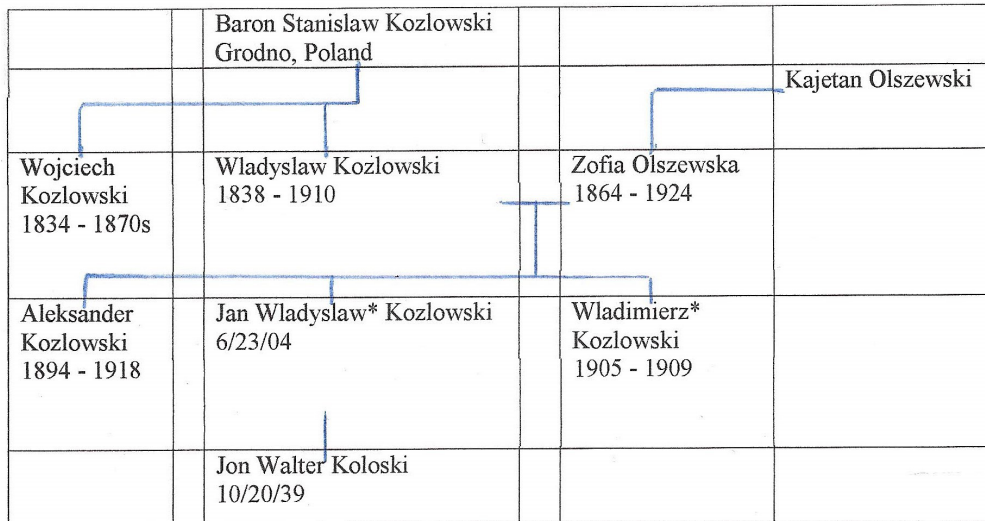


Image 3: Jan Kozłowski's Family Tree

Source: Jan Kozłowski, *The Birthday Gift*, unpublished.

Grodno: Origin of Kozłowski family holdings. The land included a group of several small villages near City of Grodno, my father's birthplace. Feb. 10, 1838–Feb. 10, 1910.

Kaunas: Seat of Province's government. Former name: Kovno.

Vilnius: Mother's birthplace. (1864–1924?) Former name: Vilno

Riga: I was born in Riga on June 23, 1904. My earliest recollections are of a house in the City of Riga. Father's occupation was Architect-Engineer. He was frequently away from home. I recall on one occasion when father was absent that mother and I visited the City of Vilno where mother's family resided. After my father's death in 1910, we continued living in Riga until the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In spring of 1915, because of threat of advancing German Armies across Poland and Lithuania spreading devastation, and on advice of mother's family and my older brother who was then in the Russian Army, we moved to Petrograd, now Leningrad.

Leningrad: While living in Petrograd with my mother's relatives who moved there earlier, I was placed in a church-supported school, a school best described as a boarding school because one's entire time was spent on school's premises, with only occasional visits to your family. In the early part of the First World War the Russian Army enjoyed great success against Austrian Army, taking many thousands of prisoners of war and sending them to Siberia. The Austrian Army which consisted mostly of conscripted Poles, Czechoslovaks

and Hungarians, surrendered willingly to get out from Austrian dominance. While, in the northwest, Russians were much less successful. That, in turn, has caused great turmoil in Russia with eventual withdrawal from the war and lead to the start of the Revolution in February of 1917. The monarchy was overthrown, and many factions were formed trying to seize control of government. Food storage became more acute. Chaos was spreading. Bolshevik (Red) faction was gaining control. In the fall of that year, my brother Aleksander returned home from service in the Army. A decision was made that my brother would take me and move to a city in the Ural Mountains—the principal city of Ekaterinburg (later renamed Sverdlovsk). The plan was that he would establish residence there and mother was to join us later because of difficulty of travel at that time.

Sverdlovsk: Former name: Ekaterinburg. This city was founded in the late 19th Century. It was originally a mining center, and in 1904 was designated as Western Terminal of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The city was also called the “Gateway to Siberia.” The Russian government has always attempted to populate this vast region by exiling its criminals and political prisoners to Siberia. In 1914 and 1915, almost 500,000 prisoners of war (mostly Czechs and Poles) were sent to Siberia. In 1904, my father was arrested and convicted of political activity and exiled to Siberia and was based in Ekaterinburg to work related to building of the railroad. While living there, he apparently established some friendship with local residents. In 1905, after conclusion of Russo-Japanese war, father was pardoned or else his banishment was commuted, and returned home to Riga. He died in February 1910. The decision to move to Ekaterinburg was apparently made on assumption of connections father made while living there, and the fact that living conditions there were much better. My brother and I arrived there in January 1918. It was there in Ekaterinburg in the summer of that year that the Royal Family of Romanoff was exterminated. They had lived there in confined exile since the overthrow of Czar in 1917.

Events that followed led to more turmoil and chaos. A form of civil war existed among different factions. To name some, Bolsheviks: Reds, Communists, and other radical splinters of the above; Mensheviks: Whites, less radical group, but opposed to Bolsheviks). Conflict between those factions usually led to elimination of opponents.

My brother Alexander often expressed himself in opposition to Communism. This eventually led to his arrest by Bolshevik militants and conviction (actually accused) as a Royalist. He was executed without a trial. I was left alone. Alexander’s wife’s relatives were reluctant to give me shelter, for fear of reprisals. It was early fall of 1918. Grief, rage, other emotions led me to desire to leave and go. Just go anywhere. After several days of hiding on the streets I was wandering near a freight depot, I saw an empty freight car within a moving train. The idea was borne to hop on the train as a means of escape. Shortly afterward, two or three days later, I located an infrequent freight train and spotted another empty boxcar. I was on it, moving east.

Omsk: Omsk is about 500 miles east of Sverdlovsk, located on Trans-Siberian Railroad.

After Russia's withdrawal from World War I and because of revolution and unstable government, concern about a half-million Austrian prisoners of war, scattered throughout Siberia, vanished. Left to their own devices, these former prisoners began to organize into their own ethnic groups. Their eventual goal was to return to their homeland. One such group, mostly Czech-Slovaks, was located in Omsk. It was there that I made my contact with a Czech group and through them I learned of large concentration of Poles in Novosibirsk, and a still larger group further east in a city Irkutsk. After a brief stay in Omsk, I decided to get to Irkutsk before winter. It was not difficult to reach Novosibirsk.

Novosibirsk: Almost the first people I spoke to in this city happened to be Polish. I soon had their sympathy and they suggested I contact the Polish community that was situated in this city. I soon did. I was offered shelter and food. Most people here were advising that I stay there until more normal and peaceful time, but, I had my mind set on getting on. It was early in November, but the winter has begun. In spite of difficulties, I acquired some heavy clothing. And in couple of weeks, with the help of a friend who was working for the railroad, I managed to get a free ride on the train to Irkutsk.

Irkutsk, November 1918–1919: I arrived in Irkutsk about November 20. News of the end of World War I has just reached here- Formation of new countries was occurring- Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and other countries that were parts of Russian, Austrian and German Empires, were gaining their independence. The question was how to get there? The shortest route to Europe was west. That direction was blocked by Russia which was in state of Civil War, depleted of resources by the preceding war, and to a great extent by the hostile feelings Poles and Russians had toward each other for centuries. The remaining route open was to move east and then by sea around Asia and back through Mediterranean to Italy or France and then north to their homeland. Normally, to negotiate the 1,500 miles between Irkutsk and Vladivostok would not have presented many difficulties. But these were not normal times. First, severe winter brought almost all activities to halt. Then, getting the necessary transportation became almost impossible.

Vladivostok: This stage of my trek across Siberia was the most difficult to negotiate. The only means of transportation between Irkutsk and points east was the Trans-Siberian Railroad. In normal times, it would not be difficult to span this distance in a week or two. But, in 1919 things were not normal. To begin with, Southeast Siberia and Manchuria were occupied by several nations, Japan, Great Britain, France, Italy and U.S., among others, besides white Russians. They all held portions of the railroad. Each nation was claiming priority and military groups were usually successful in obtaining the right to travel, especially

if they could provide their own cars and engines, engineers and fuel. The only way an individual could advance is to attach himself to such a group. It was to such a group, a Czechoslovak semi-military train of about 20 cars, that I managed to attach myself. We moved out of Irkutsk in late March of 1919. After proceeding for several days and about 400 to 500 miles, we encountered a severe snowstorm. We were forced to stop and wait out the storm. Meanwhile, other traffic has accumulated behind us. Eventually, after reaching a small mining community, we were forced to abandon the main track and were forced on to a siding and to wait for another clearance. After what seemed like weeks of waiting, the food and fuel supplies became scarce. Unrest began to spread among the members of the train. Living 40 people to a freight car can be very trying, especially if you are hungry and cold and helpless to do anything to remedy the condition. Eventually, about the end of May, we managed to get back on track and proceeded on eastward, just past the city of Chita, populated by people mostly of Mongol and Chinese origin and very unfriendly. There we were stranded again by failure of the engines. Our group, originally about 800 people, began to disperse—mostly by hitching rides on passing trains. It was at this point that I left the main body of our group and started to work my way toward Vladivostok in short stages. Sometimes on native caravans by travelling on foot or occasionally on horseback, and once on a camel. Or if near a railroad, we hopped on a passing train until caught by an official and thrown off. Thus, I reached Harbin in early summer of 1919. Harbin was controlled jointly by Japanese and white Russians. It was there that I learned that Poland has gained its independence. It was also in the grip of epidemic of cholera. I was lucky to manage to get attached to a white family who were evacuating to Vladivostok and they took me along.

At that time, Vladivostok had a sizeable Polish community, mostly ex-prisoners of war and refugees from Siberia. Poland also maintained a consulate there. But, to add to difficulties, there also existed a war between Russian and Poland (1919–1920), so returning to Poland had to be delayed. Meanwhile, I acquired a job in a Polish-run restaurant that provided me with board and room. While working at the restaurant, I met my first American, a soldier in the American Army, of Polish descent. It was his suggestion that prompted my eventual arrival in the United States.

Appendix III: Jon Koloski, *Chronology of the life of Jan Wladyslaw Kozlowski 1904–1986*

1904: Born June 23, 1904 Riga Latvia, lived in Riga until 1914.

1910: 6 years old. His father dies.

1915: 11 Years old. Moved to Petrograd (now called Leningrad). Lived in a private boarding school most of the time (for several years) due to war activities related to World War I and the developing civil war and revolution in Eastern Europe and Western Russia and Poland.

1917: 13 years old. WW I more or less evolved into the Russian Revolution, also called the Bolshevik Revolution.

1918: 14 years old. Moves to Ekaterinburg (now called Sverdlovsk) in the southern Ural Mts. Traveled with his brother Aleksander and Aleksander's wife; she apparently had some family members living in Ekaterinburg. In September Aleksander was executed without a trial by members of the Bolshevik militia who want Aleksander and several other Polish men to join their revolution, but the men refused. Dad told me that the several Polish men were simply lined up against a wall and shot. Dad was there, he saw his brother killed and was left alone because he was too young. I remember him telling me that he found some shelter under partially enclosed stairways—like fire escapes—and hid for several days finding food discarded from either stores or rooming houses.

Aleksander's wife's family refused to let my dad in their home because they were afraid of reprisal by the Bolsheviks. After a week or so of hiding on the streets, dad saw a train and hopped into an empty boxcar. The train was headed east. He spent the winter of 1918/1919 in several different refugee camps with Polish and other refugees.

1919: 15 years old. Dad reaches Harbin a community near Vladivostok on the east coast of Russia. He lived with other refugee families. There was still some war/conflict going on between Russia and Poland and dad was involved in some sort of shooting skirmish where he was wounded and left for dead. A Polish family found him and cared for him for almost a year. Somehow the injury affected his speech because he could not speak at all for a while and then with some stuttering for the rest of his life.

The Polish family helped him get a job in a restaurant to pay for board and room. Because of his earlier boarding school time he learned several languages including English. Speaking more than one language helped him get the restaurant job. He met an American soldier at the restaurant who told dad about a Polish refugee organization in Japan and the USA called The Polish National Alliance (PNA).

Almost 16 years old. Dad got a job as a kitchen helper on a ship going to Japan. Once there he found the PINA office and they helped him get another job as a kitchen helper on a freight ship going to Vancouver Canada. Now 16 years old he arrived in Vancouver in September 1920. Somehow, he learned how to get a job kitchen helper on a Trans-Canada RR train going to Toronto. He travelled (I have no idea how) from Toronto to Pittsburg PA to find the headquarters of the PINA- He arrived in Pittsburg in October or November of 1920. The PNA arranged for dad to attend a trade school in Pittsburg where he learned to do sheet metal work. I do not know where he lived for the 6 months he went to that school.

1920: Not yet 17 years old. At the sheet metal trade school, he met another Polish refugee who had friends of his family living in Raymond Washington. The two boys went to Raymond after finishing the trade school and got jobs in a sawmill in Raymond. They apparently lived with the family the other boy knew. Dad had not attended any school since leaving

Petrograd in 1915 six years prior. The family he lived with and the sawmill boss wanted him to attend a US high school and get a diploma. He entered high school as a ninth grader where the school discovered that his previous private school training placed him about equal with 12th grade students. His age—now 17—meant he should be in the 12th grade. By testing he was advanced through three years in one school year so he received his h/s diploma a couple of weeks before he turned 18 years old.

1922: 18 years old. He also received a scholarship to attend the Univ. of Washington when he graduated h/s or perhaps the scholarship was granted by the saw mill??? He was still working in the mill during h/s and during the summer after h/s graduation he worked again on a ship. He entered U/W in the fall of 1922. He majored in history. He was an outstanding track and baseball athlete. As part of a 4-man, 440-yard relay team they set a record in 1925 that still stood when I entered the U/w in 1957.

1923: 19 years old. Apparently, he was able to continue to correspond with his mother in Russia. He told me that he had some things that she had sent to him in Raymond and a box of letters, all of which were destroyed in a fire at the house in Raymond. His mother sent him a letter dated Sept 24, 1923 that was the last time he had any communication with his mother. She apparently died in early 1924. He learned about her death by a letter from the people that she knew or lived with in Petrograd.

1925: 25 years old. He received his BA in history in June 1925, completing the course in three years. He received two job offers after graduation: one from the National Museum (later re-named the Smithsonian I believe), and the other offer was to play professional baseball for the US Army (apparently the military had formal sports teams at that time??). He took the baseball offer because it paid more.

1927 He left the Army baseball team—I think in 1927—to play professional baseball for the San Francisco Seals. He injured his pitching arm, so he rejoined the Army in 1928, this time as a regular soldier in the 31st Infantry. He told me that his decision to re-join the Army was because he had no family and wanted to travel. He stayed in the Army until 1937. He spent most of that time in China and the Philippine Islands.

1937: 33 years old. He was assigned to a US military Post in Shanghai. The Chinese and Japanese were at war (reason unknown to me) and dad was wounded in the stomach by a stray bullet. After emergency hospital care in Shanghai he was sent to a hospital in San Francisco and then, once recovered, he was re-assigned to fort George Wright in Spokane, WA. While at Ft. Wright he met a fellow who was dating one of my mother's sisters and thus met my mom. They were subsequently married, and he left the army to work for a contractor in Spokane.

1939: 35 years old. I was born in October 1939. We moved to Seattle in 1941 because dad got a job at Boeing just before the USA entered WW II.

Appendix IV: Letter from Zofia Kozlowski to Jan Koloski

Petrograd September 24, 1923

My dear and priceless son Yas,

I received your letter on the 23rd of September, to which I am answering the day after I received it. I am very happy that you received everything, read everything and answered everything in detail. Although you said you have nothing to write to me about, you wrote quite a lot about everything and described your everyday life, about which I knew absolutely nothing. Until now I have been keenly interested in your everyday life, so your letter really warmed my heart. I feel happier and stronger from all the news you gave me, and especially from the news that you are coming to me to Petrograd for Easter, may God grant that your words are realized and actually come true. Already from this moment on I wait and wait, and will continue to wait day and night. I have prayed for you—that God be with you, that He bring to fruition the good plans you have been contemplating.

I am very happy and content that you have changed your intention to live in America and to invite me there; you have chosen the most sound, prudent, and reasonable path. Whatever lies ahead of you I plan to stand firm and steadfast and to bring it to fulfillment at once and not to give up in the face of any obstacles. My dear son Yas, I want to give you some advice or, so to speak, to chat with you regarding your trip from Western America to Eastern Europe, or from one part of the world to the other, or more precisely put—from the North American States to Russia. In theory this is easy for me to say, but in reality it is not so easily accomplished. If my advice is helpful to you, use it, and if not, then disregard it. Generally speaking, some advice for life is not harmful, provided it is sound and honest. As I can tell from your letter, you, my dear Yas, are not stupid and perhaps even know better than I, that you need to arrange to come to Petrograd from Raymond. You write very wisely in your letter, and quite correctly, that if you want to start some kind of a business or open a repair shop, that first you need money. In my opinion you also need brains, business sense and knowledge, and many, many other things, for example, if you were to come right now from Raymond to Petrograd, in addition to money you would need to obtain the right, that is, the permission, from the American government there—from the Russian representative in order to come to Russia. But the Russian representative or consul is in Washington D.C. or in New York and San Francisco; perhaps they are elsewhere, but I don't think they are in the smaller cities.

Many immigrant workers from America are arriving in Russia, you can come with them, but you need to find out where their community is, or the location of the office, bureau, or agency for transit of Russian emigrants to Russia. Once you find out where such organizations are you will probably need to apply to them in Washington D.C. or in New York as well. However, you need to be on your guard and protect yourself from swindlers

and cheats posing as agents arranging your transport across the border. They take your money up front, then ultimately disappear, having swindled you.

Coming to Russia isn't exactly like going from Cambridge to Raymond. One can travel wherever one wants about America and Russia, without any permission; however, from America to Russia and back—this is completely another matter and very serious and difficult, something you should already begin contemplating and be concerned with. You should already begin investigating this and inquiring more from knowledgeable and practical people who will be able to provide you with accurate, wise, and truthful advise. But don't announce this information too boldly or loudly, so that it may be harmful to your intentions, for as others discover that you want to leave for Russia, they will figure you out instantly. Find out about everything stealthily, step by step (Slowly but surely!), but only accurately, secretly, cleverly, and wisely. Everywhere in life, in all matters, keen wits and resourcefulness are essential, most important for one's endeavors and plans are friends and especially, benevolent people. That's all that I wanted to tell you and all the advice I wanted to give you; perhaps you will choose to use something from what I have said above, according to your discretion. It's all up to you now—everything depends on you yourself and upon those circumstances that may greet you in the future.

Thank God I am healthy for the time being, although my right leg has been causing me some pain. I have been going to the clinic for treatment and feel that my leg will soon be healthy and then all will be well. I have already exchanged the first five dollars and will pay for the treatment with it. The five dollars which I just received (and for which I am very grateful) I will save for future unforeseen circumstances. Pietynies sends his regards and wishes you lots of success in your affairs. He really praised you for your intentions to return. He tells you to find out how much money you can bring back with you from America because if you have too much they will take it from you and that would be a shame. Every government has its rules for everything—they need to establish order and maintain it, as well as profit from it. Please write future letters to Pietynies address, with a note that it s for me. He is more literate than I, and besides, he goes to the post office regularly, so at the same time that he picks up your letter he can send mine. Here is his address:

Russia

City: Petrograd, Goncharnaya Street No. 23, Apt. 6

Georgiy Igantievich Pietynies

Attn: Sofiya Kayetanovna Kozlovskaya

Tom Taylor is an Associate Professor of World History at Seattle University. He is also the President of the Northwest World History Association and working on a book, *Modern Travel in World History* that is under contract with Routledge Press. He can be reached at twtaylor@seattleu.edu.

NOTES

¹ To promote this discussion of global microhistory I have included the key documents used for this article in the Appendix that follows it. Educators may want to consider having students read these documents before they have students read the article itself to see how they would construct the story of Jan's extraordinary life.

² Jan's birthday gift to his granddaughter, his son's notes and a letter Jan received from his mother are reproduced in the Appendix that accompanies this article.

³ These documents are included in the Appendix at the end of this article.

⁴ Jan's reluctance to address some critical issues in his stories of his early life during the Russian Revolution are typical of people who experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Among the many symptoms associated with PTSD according to the Mayo Clinic are, "trying to avoid or thinking about the traumatic event." See "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967>. Accessed December 18, 2020.

⁵ S.A. Smith, "The Historiography of the Russian Revolution: 100 Years On," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (Fall 2015), 736.

⁶ Tonio Andrade, "A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Toward a Global Microhistory," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 21, no. 4 (December 2010), 574.

⁷ Laura Mitchell, "Illustrating Empire: A Soldier's Life and Trans-imperial Encounters in the Eighteenth Century," *World History Connected*, Vol. 14, no. 1 (2017), at http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/14.1/forum_mitchell.html. Accessed June 10, 2020.

⁸ I have organized this article around the key cities Jan Kozłowski uses to tell his story to his granddaughter although I have organized them slightly differently. I did so in part to eliminate a couple of cities early in his chronology which do not play any important role in his life. I did so also to improve the narrative flow of the article by combining some of the cities he treats individually into a group. I have, in the latter part of this article, combined a few stops along his journey to strengthen the flow of the narrative. The original cities cited can be seen in Appendix II: A Birthday Gift.

⁹ All quotes from Jan Koloski taken from "A Birthday Gift." See Appendix II for the full document.

¹⁰ Dov Rabin, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (New York: The Gale Group, 2008). Reprinted in "Grodno," *The Jewish Virtual Library*, at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/grodno>. Accessed August 20, 2020.

¹¹ "Grodno: Local History," *Virtual Shetl*, <https://sztetl.org.pl/en/towns/g/1057-grodno/96-local-history/70743-local-history>. Accessed May 20, 2020.

¹² Tony Downy and Nigel Smith, *Russia and the USSR, 1905–1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 19.

¹³ Bartlett, Rosamund. "Japonisme and Japanophobia: The Russo-Japanese War in Russian Cultural Consciousness." *The Russian Review* 67, no. 1 (2008): 8–33 at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20620668>. Accessed December 1, 2020.

¹⁴ Downy and Smith, *Russia and the USSR, 1905–1995*, 19.

¹⁵ "1905: Bloody Sunday Monument," *Riga: In Your Pocket Essential City Guides*, at https://www.inyourpocket.com/riga/1905-bloody-sunday-monument_140941v. Accessed September 15, 2020.

¹⁶ See Appendix III: Jon Koloski, *Chronology of the life of Jan Władysław Kozłowski, 1904–1986*.

¹⁷ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (New York: Oxford University Press: New York, 1998), 25.

¹⁸ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, 26.

¹⁹ Natalia Ivanova, "Petrograd: First World War (1914–1918)," *Cahiers Bruxellois – Brusselse Cahiers*, vol. xlvi, no. 1E (2014), 164.

²⁰ Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution: the Overthrow of the Tzarism and the Triumph of the Soviets* (New York: Anchor Books, 1932), 59.

²¹ Cited in Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station* (London: Fontana Library, 1940), 474.

²² Gibson Bell Smith, "Guarding the Railroad, Taming the Cossacks: The U.S. Army in Russia, 1918–1920," *The Prologue: the Journal of the United States Archive*, Vol. 34, no. 4 (Winter 2002) at <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/winter/us-army-in-russia-1.html>. Accessed July 15, 2020.

²³ For a description of the epidemic see William Muir, "Cholera Epidemic, 1919," at <https://disasterhistory.org/the-cholera-epidemic-1919>. Accessed September 20, 2020.

²⁴ "Soviet Exiles: Immigration and Relocation in US History," *The Library of Congress*, at <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/polish-russian/soviet-exiles/>. Accessed October 20, 2020.

²⁵ Perhaps the most important step in this consolidation of power in Leningrad was the assault on the Kronstadt Sailors in 1921. Recall that these sailors had been some of the most loyal supporters of the Bolsheviks when they overthrew the Provisional Government. Their support had been also crucial in the early years of the Civil War as the Red Army fought for survival. By 1921, however, support of the Communists had waned as the Party increasingly stifled dissidence in the Soviets and absolute orthodoxy within the party as well. Lenin's cry of "All Power to the Soviets" had been replaced by "All power to the revolutionary party." When the Soviet Sailors demanded new elections in the Soviets and the inclusion of minority voices in party decisions, the Bolshevik leadership responded by attacking the sailors' wintery base and killing or capturing the rebels.

²⁶ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1995), 123.

²⁷ War Communism was the Bolshevik economic policy from 1918–1921 during the Civil War. It sought to bring key sectors of the economy under control of the government and to provide the military the materials it need to prosecute the war. For an explanation of War Communism see. C N Trueman "War Communism," historylearningsite.co.uk. *The History Learning Site*, 25 May 2015. Accessed Dec 21, 2020.

²⁸ For an explanation of the New Economic Policy, see C N Trueman "New Economic Policy," historylearningsite.co.uk. *The History Learning Site*, 25 May 2015. Accessed Dec 21, 2020.

²⁹ Censorship was common in the Soviet Union and the Cheka had almost unlimited power to monitor the population. The likelihood that they would have read Zofia' letter to her son abroad cannot be overlooked her as we try to interpret what she wrote and what she didn't. For an overview of censorship in the Soviet Union during this period see Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, 125–127.