

If They Win: A Very Ordinary Genocide

Analysis by [Tessa Lena](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Due to confusion, fragmentation, and abuse, atrocities that are obvious in the retrospect can feel “ordinary” and almost “rational” in real time
- › It is possible that we are living through what the Native intellectual Steven Newcomb calls “a view from the shore, referring to the original people of this land looking at the ships and not knowing that they will soon experience a “Great Reset” and a genocide”
- › Many of our ancestors in different parts of the world have lived through war and violent abuse, and the need for honest, difficult healing is vast
- › There is hope; but in order for that hope to come true, we need to act

When we look back at “successful” atrocities of the past, we often scratch our heads and wonder how come the people living at that time allowed it and didn’t see the obvious at all. But what if the atrocities that are so obvious in the retrospect felt “ordinary” and “logical” to the contemporaries?

And what if the thought of unimaginable cruelty was just too unbearable to them – just like it is “unthinkable” today to those who look at the obvious signs of an obvious totalitarian regime and tell themselves a fairy tale about a possibly incompetent but loving and caring bureaucrats?

What if just like today, when atrocities happened in the past, it felt all too confusing, all too fragmented, with each separate fragment of the plot explainable by rational words –

and so, each new bizarre development of the grand atrocity felt like a separate, sudden and unexpected event?

And what if every time in history there is an atrocity perpetrated by the predators, it feels very ordinary to the contemporaries because on a sensory level, big words like “genocide” apply to horrible things from another time or place – but when it’s here and now, it feels like an unfortunate but rational circumstance?

A personal note: I think a lot about my family and the entire generation of my great grandparents who lived through the Bolshevik takeover of the vast land that became known as the Soviet Union – and its people. This must have felt so abusive and unnatural, I think – but then I look outside the window, and what I see also feels so abusive and unnatural – and yet it’s happening in broad daylight.

Is it “ordinary?” An ordinary abusive religious reform? An ordinary “stealth genocide” custom-designed for people whose noses are buried in their iPhones?

A View “From the Shore”

Are we experiencing what the brilliant Native intellectual [Steven Newcomb](#) calls “a view from the shore,” referring to the original people of this land who are looking at the weird ships for the first time and – as they are looking at the ships – they have no way of knowing that their free and independent existence has come to an end, and that they are about to live through an unthinkable sicko genocide?

And they don’t have a “genocide” on their minds at all? Because, see, in order to say “it’s a genocide,” enough time has to pass to do the body count ... And the time has not passed yet? Are we the people looking at the proverbial ships from the shore? And what can we do to heal the atrocity that was done to the guardians of this land – and to prevent ours?

The “Soviet New Normal”

This story is not about **isms** at all, it's about something much bigger than isms – as most of them have been used for good and for bad – but subjectively, I have special grudge against the “ism” that my own family had to live through in the not so distant part – the “commun-ism.”

The Soviet “new normal” ended up upending the lives of millions. It dictated the law, the relationships, the way of life and the worldview of millions for at least seventy years. But at the onset of it, was it possible for anyone to accept as reality the fact that a tiny group of terrorists would pull it off and maintain the lie for generations to come?

I often think about what it felt like to live through it all. The rumors, the fragmented news, the uncertainty ... the sudden new commissar “boss” showing up in flesh, with a revolver in his hand ... The shock, the grief, the excitement, the hope, the disappointment, the acceptance of feels inevitable now ... The psychological adjustment, the new school curriculum, the gradual then sudden expropriation of the property one had to work for ...

The change in language, the kids coming home from school with “new correct ideas,” telling you that you an ideological fossil at best and an enemy at worst ... The dynamic of envy and rivalry in small communities leading to violent deaths ... And more shock, grief, hope, disappointment, and acceptance of what seems to be here to stay.

Perhaps even some internal explaining away of the “new normal” as something possibly positive because ... well, it's here, and so what do you do? You adjust or die, right?

And then the “post-revolution babies” finally growing up – having learned and internalized the language and the thinking given to them by the Bolsheviks. Years later, they will be betrayed again – in a new way – and told by the children of the communist leaders come post-Soviet oligarchs that they can toss that language and thinking given to them by the Bolsheviks in the trash.

But that has happened yet and, as young adults, all they know was that it's a new day, a new dawn ... Their dawn and the only dawn they know.

The harsh slogans, the “progressive” language of Pravda, the commissars, the local meetings ... the electricity ... the “progress,” the factory chimney smoke, the war on farmers, the chemical fertilizers, the steel, the new medicine ... the city folks coming to the village and telling the peasants how to farm ... and so, if you have not emigrated and were still alive and saw through the abusive nature of all this, you still dealt with it because, what else do you do? You deal with it or die.

And then another war, more adversity, the need to die for Stalin and for the Motherland ... the devastation, the bombings, the deaths, the suffering ... the widows, the orphans, the tears, the howling from here to the sky, the forever sexlessness because the men are all gone and many will not return ... the infrequent letters from the front for the lucky ones from their loved ones who are still alive ... then the cold, and the hunger, and the hungry relative orphans at your doorstep asking for food, and more tears, and more howling – day after day – and day after day – and day after day – and then suddenly, it all ends, and the victory comes.

Then, the tears of joy, and more howling for the dead, and a new life ... And by that time, who could even think about the lies of the Bolsheviks that lead to their terroristic coup? By that time, it had been only twenty eight years after their coup, but did it feel that way?

And then a new dawn, a new day ... the hard work, and the post-war babies whose parents had been raised on “victory of communism” and Stalin and so on, and had sacrificed so much for that ... Pravda headlines ... local communist meetings ... post-war poverty and occasional bright spots like finally owning one dress (that you don’t even want to wear so as not to accidentally ruin it), or an expensive family gramophone that someone had brought as a trophy from the war ...

Summer camps for children, school essays on, what else, the victory of communism, DDT = spraying planes just like in the U.S. ... “march of science,” reversing rivers and poisoning the land ... but also time with the family, and the first love ... and the new glitter of the city life ... and following your dream, studying hard, being accepted to a good school ...

Then the dorm, the side gig scrubbing hospital floors, studying like a maniac all day and all night ... and finally, after being on the waitlist for several years, being assigned an apartment of your own and making it as a respectable well-off Soviet adult. And if somewhere down the lines you also managed to make “connections” at a local grocery store so that you know who to talk to in order to and buy the “good stuff” – or any stuff – then you truly made it in the Soviet world.

And then, new babies ... babies like me who, while far from rich by the standards of the West, none the less knew nothing about the extreme hardship of the olden days. And by the time I was around, the “new Soviet normal” was on average not that bad, especially if you lived in Moscow and never had one dissident thought in your head because you had never been exposed to even one dissident thought.

Is it how all atrocities go? And what do I do with finding out not so long ago that my family has lost members to the Bolsheviks, but I didn't know about it until I grew up? What I do with the fact that the rosy story of “progress” that I learned at school was a lie – and that there had been a major ongoing injustice, and a bloodshed? And that the communist lie was just a building block on top of many earlier abuses and lies that my ancestors had to go through? What do I do with that?

Letting Go of “Cognitive Autonomy” Leads to a Downfall

I would like to end with a nod at [a sci-fi story about the loss of “cognitive autonomy” and “Interplanetary Holy Tech” that I wrote in 2019](#), without any intention to turn it into an instruction manual of an sort. But first, an excerpt from an interview with Google's Eric Schmidt:

And now [my sci-fi](#):

“By the time lawyers, doctors, bankers, and government officials were personally impacted and practically enslaved on a massive scale, it was too late. Big Tech controlled every aspect of life, tracked everything, and funded every industry. It became the default law enforcement agency and the default

news publisher, and thus it had the power to make or break any pundit, academic, or politician.

Everyone – from governments to low-level assistants-to-robots – depended on technology for every life function. Sex and baby permits required impeccable Digital Citizen Scores. No one could even get a low-level job without abiding by algorithms – and most jobs were automated anyway. Municipal councils owed money for smart city maintenance. The grip was total.

And while many felt instinctively uneasy about giving up privacy and cognitive autonomy, they also felt alone and helpless. Jobs outside of tech were scarce, competition was harsh, and very few had the luxury to even ponder the big picture. So people kept their heads low and did what they had to do to feed their families – complied, wore mandatory smart masks, and learned how to code if they were allowed.

Developers and other high-level tech industry workers preserved their financial independence and cognitive autonomy the longest – gated coder communities became a fixture on every smart urban hub – but eventually they, too, became obsolete, as AI grew sophisticated enough to produce itself.

Shortly after the institution of biologically compromised governance was deprecated, Big Tech became Interplanetary Holy Tech, and you know the rest.”

About the Author

To find more of Tessa Lena's work, be sure to check out her bio, [Tessa Fights Robots](#).